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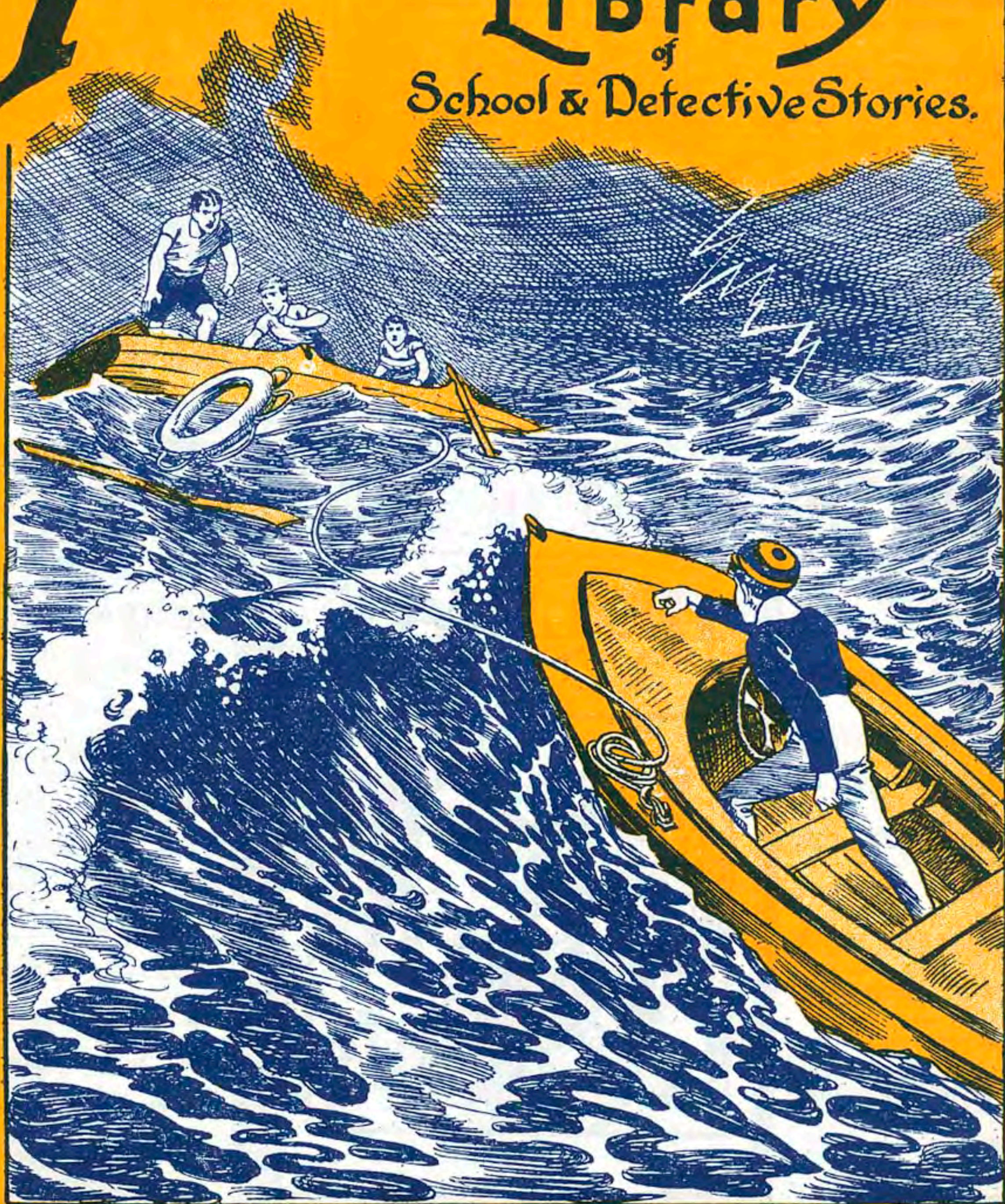
No. 813. Vol. XXIV. Week ending September 8th, 1923.

The Magnet 2^d

EVERY MONDAY.

Library

of
School & Detective Stories.



A FAITHFUL FAG'S DESPERATE ATTEMPT TO SAVE COKER & CO.

(A powerful incident from "The Heart of a Hero!"—this week's magnificent school story of Greyfriars.)

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"THE BROTHERHOOD OF THE WHITE HEATHER!"

NEXT Monday's MAGNET will contain a very special treat. This is the opening of the magnificent and tremendously thrilling serial about the mission undertaken into the interior of distressed Russia by the redoubtable detective, Ferrers Locke. Time and again we have all stood in amazement before the wonderful doings of the great detective. But the new story leaves all that has gone before in the shade. Russia is not a nice country to enter. Peril stalks through the land. Ferrers Locke realises the danger, but there is stern duty to be done, and he is determined to step in and rescue certain people who have been caught up in the whirlpool of revolution. Behind it all there is deep-set tragedy. You will be thrilled by the account of the events taking place in distraught Moscow, while there is a magic air of mystery about it all which enthralled. The yarn is full of the fierce happenings amidst the chaos of the far North.

"THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL!"

What a flutter there will be throughout the kingdom during this grand month of September! For "THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL" is out at last, to bring sunshine into hearts and homes, and to bequeath to British boys and girls its heritage of happy laughter. Nobody can afford to miss this bumper volume, the crowning attraction of the year, and a veritable feast of the gods!

"MONTAGUE, THE MYSTERIOUS!"

Frank Richards has a brilliant yarn for next Monday's MAGNET. Montague Snooks is a new fellow at Greyfriars. He is a boy who is not satisfied with what he considers ordinary humdrum life. He is, in short, a daydreamer, for he has caught up a lot of droll fancies through reading marvellous tales about lords and dukes, and so forth. Montague comes at last to believe that he is somebody quite different. Well, Wibley gets to hear of this weakness, and dear old

Wib thinks it is high time something should be done about it. We can safely leave the rest to the chief member of the Remove Dramatic Society. The story is a real triumph.

"THE PHANTOM HORSEMAN!"

Galloping Dick is again seen to splendid advantage. Next week's yarn in this series will have a big success. It offers something as dramatic and effective as it is unusual. You are bound to be fascinated by the narrative of the highway, with its weird mystery. The Phantom Horseman is the terror of the night, and his actions have struck people dumb with fear. At the psychological moment the intrepid knight of the road, Galloping Dick, shows his hand, to what effect see the new issue of the MAGNET.

A GENEROSITY SUPPLEMENT!

There is generosity unlimited among school chums. They do not dispense it by the thimbleful, but serve out the quality in unstinted style. In next Monday's "Generosity" number of the "Greyfriars Herald" there is no attempt to stress a very obvious fact, but the subject is dealt with in discriminating fashion by wielders of the pen well fitted to handle such an alluring theme. Greyfriars has always been noted for its generous way of doing things. The wonder is the matter has not been treated of before; but better late than never. The supplement next Monday will be found a shining example of how to do it.

Your Editor.

360
Pages

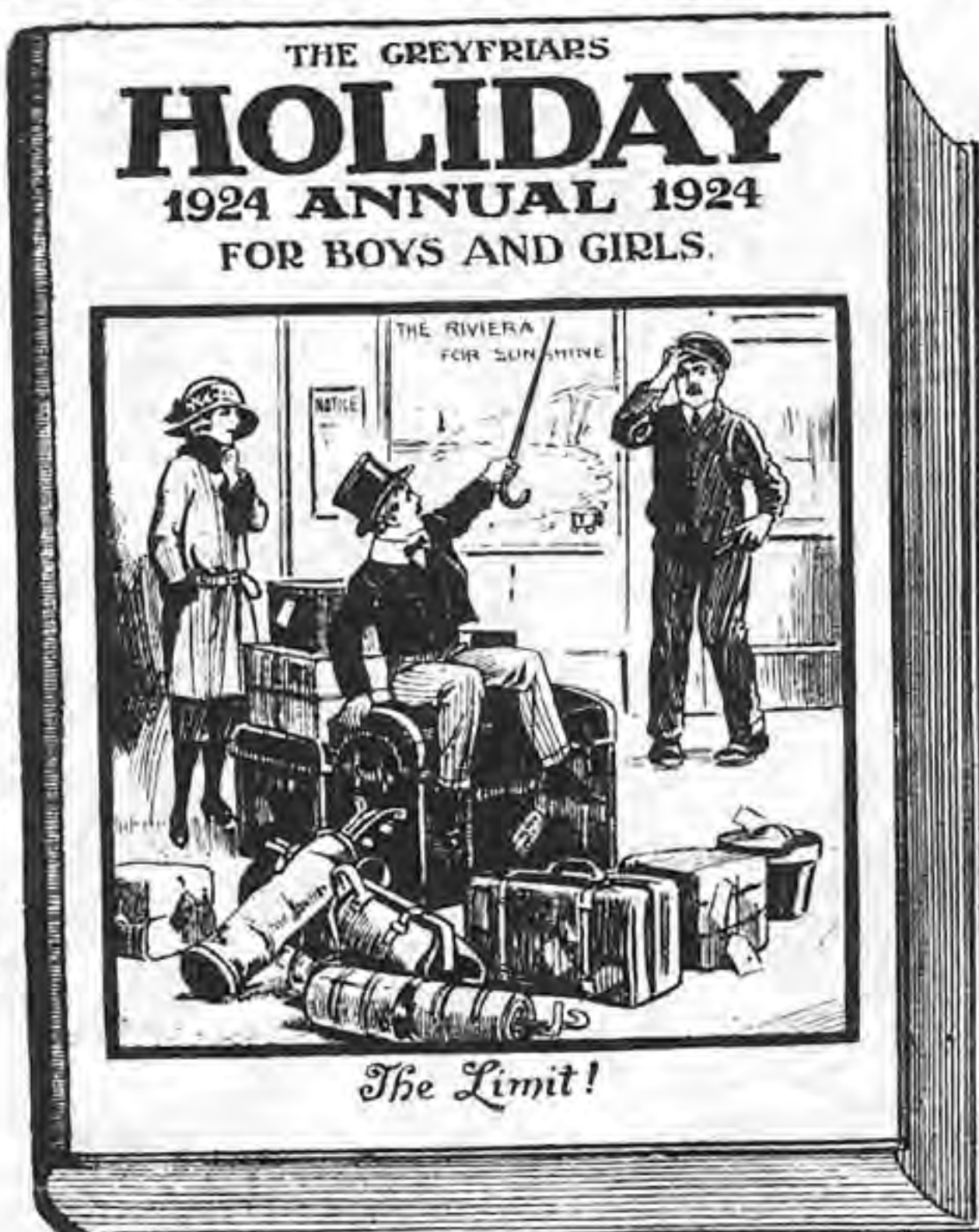
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To save life at the risk of losing one's own is a deed worthy of the highest place on the scroll of heroes. Young Bobbie Severn, who idolises the lordly Coker, proves his loyalty up to the hilt; thereby teaching the stupid but good-natured Fifth-former a lesson that he will never forget. Bobbie Severn's staunch character will make a great appeal; cultivate his acquaintance at once.



A powerful story of school life, bringing to light the sterling qualities of Bobbie Severn, a newcomer to Greyfriars. Related by

FRANK RICHARDS

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Champion of the Oppressed!

"BOTHER Quelch!" grunted Harry Wharton.

"And bother the new kid!" growled Johnny Bull. "What's he mean by turning up at Greyfriars on a Wednesday afternoon, when we want to play cricket?"

The Famous Five of the Remove came out of Mr. Quelch's study looking very rattled.

A new boy was expected that afternoon—a member of the fag fraternity. And Mr. Quelch had asked Harry Wharton & Co. to go to meet the youngster, and bring him up from the station.

Meeting a new boy was an irksome duty at the best of times; and when there happened to be a cricket match on the tapis it was something more than irksome. It was exasperating.

The Famous Five didn't bless Mr. Quelch. And they didn't bless Bobbie Severn, the youngster who was due to arrive.

Even the sunny-tempered Bob Cherry was scowling, as the "Co." emerged from their Form master's presence.

"Wherefore those scowling brows?"

Skinner of the Remove asked the question as he came along the passage, flanked by Snoop and Stott.

"We've got to go and meet a con-founded new kid!" snapped Nugent. "It's going to delay the start of our match with the Upper Fourth."

Skinner looked sympathetic.

"Rough luck!" he said. "But, look here. So long as the new kid is met, it doesn't matter who meets him, I suppose?"

"Shouldn't think it would matter," said Harry Wharton. "Why? You're not going to offer to relieve us of our thankless job, are you, Skinner?"

"Right on the wicket!" said the cad of the Remove.

The Famous Five stared at Skinner in surprise. Harold Skinner was not an obliging fellow, as a rule. Like a true Scout, he always performed one good turn a day; but the good turn was always done for himself, not for others.

"We shall be charmed to take on the job," said Skinner, with a grin. "We're always willing to help our dear playmates out of a fix. We fill our day with sweet deeds of kindness—don't we, Snoopey?"

"Not half!" chuckled Snoop.

"You'll go to the station and meet this kid, Bobbie Severn?" said Wharton eagerly.

Skinner nodded.

"What train's he coming on?" he asked.

"The three-fifteen."

"All serene," said Skinner. "We'll take the infant in tow, and push him up to the school in his perambulator. I've always fancied myself in the role of a male nurse."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Famous Five thanked Skinner and passed on. They thought the cad of the Remove was being really generous for once, and they were grateful. Had they suspected Skinner's motives, however, they would never have entrusted him with the task of meeting the new boy.

Harry Wharton & Co. changed into their flannels, and prepared to do battle with the Upper Fourth. And Skinner, Snoop, and Stott, with their caps perched on the backs of their heads, went waltzing away, arm-in-arm, to Friardale Station.

"I fancy we shall be able to get a free feed this afternoon," said Skinner.

"How?" asked Stott.

"You leave it to your uncle."

The train was late, and Skinner & Co. had to cool their heels on the platform for quite a long time. But at last the train came rolling in, puffing spasmodically, as if nearing its last gasp.

Out of a first-class carriage came a small boy. It would be incorrect to say that he stepped out. He bounced out. He was a freckled-faced little fellow, with a wealth of curly hair, and a pair of sparkling eyes. He seemed to find the world a very pleasant place to live in.

Bobbie Severn was a good-looking little chap, and his knickerbocker suit fitted him to perfection.

"Here's the infant!" said Skinner, bearing down upon the new boy.

The cad of the Remove held out his hand cordially enough.

"Pleased to meet you, young Severn," he said. "Where's your mailcart—in the luggage-van?"

Bobbie Severn laughed.

"I haven't brought a mailcart," he said. "But I'll tell you what. As you look rather thirsty you can have a pull at my feeding-bottle!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Snoop and Stott.

Skinner found the new boy's repartee rather disconcerting.

"None of your cheek!" he said sharply. "Where's your luggage, kid?"

Even as Skinner asked the question a bulky gladstone-bag came hurtling on to the platform.

"Go easy!" said Bobbie Severn to the porter. "That bag might be full of new-laid eggs, for all you know!"

"Which I ain't got time to 'andle bags as if they was delicate pieces of Dresden china!" grunted the porter.

Bobbie Severn picked up the bag, which seemed nearly as big as himself, and struggled manfully towards the exit.

"Hold on!" called Skinner. "Don't be in such a tearing hurry, kid. You've got to take us to the bunshop first, and stand us a feed."

"Eh?"

"It's a time-honoured custom, you know," chimed in Snoop. "When a new kid arrives he's supposed to stand treat to the fellows who meet him."

Bobbie Severn grinned.

"Pity to spoil such a fine old tradition," he said. "But I don't intend to start feeding three lean and hungry fellows like yourselves. What's more, I don't like the look of you."

"What!" shouted Skinner wrathfully.

"You've got a face like a ferret," said the new boy. "And your two pals haven't been blessed with overmuch beauty, either."

"You—you cheeky young cub——" spluttered Stott.

With a great effort Bobbie Severn heaved his gladstone-bag on to his shoulder.

"I'm going straight up to the school,"

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he said. "No need for you fellows to come. I prefer your room to your company."

The new boy, weighed down by the heavy bag, staggered gamely along the road. But he didn't get very far. Skinner darted after him, and seized him by the arm and swung him back. The gladstone-bag fell from its perch, and landed with a thud in the roadway.

"We've had enough of your cheek, you saucy young sweep!" snarled Skinner. "Are you going to stand us a feed at the bunshop, or are you not?"

"Not!" said the new boy promptly.

"Then we shall have to teach you a lesson," said Skinner grimly. "Give me a hand, you fellows!"

Bobbie Severn struggled fiercely as the trio closed about him. He was brimful of pluck, but he was no match for the three bigger fellows, weedy specimens though they were.

The new boy had fallen into the hands of the Philistines. And they were not likely to deal gently with him.

Having overpowered the fag, Skinner & Co. proceeded to strap his gladstone-bag to his back. His arms were pinioned also, and a pair of handkerchiefs, knotted together, were tied round his ankles.

"Now you can toddle up to the school," said Skinner. "It's only about half a mile. By walking an inch at a time, I figure it out that you'll get to the school about midnight!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" chortled Snoop and Stott.

Bobbie Severn was in an unhappy plight. He tried to walk, but could only make snail-like progress with his ankles bound together. He tottered once or twice, and looked like falling. Skinner & Co. stood jeering at him as he tried to struggle along.

"Oh, you cads!" panted the new boy. "Is this your idea of fair play?"

"If you'll consent to stand us that feed we'll release you," said Skinner.

But Bobbie Severn was determined that no amount of persecution would make him give in.

"Just say the word," said Skinner.

But the word was never said. Bobbie Severn was too plucky a youngster to hoist the white flag of surrender. He would struggle to Greyfriars somehow, if it took him all day.

He staggered slowly along the dusty road. The bag that was strapped to his back seemed to weigh a ton. And a fierce sun beat down upon him, for it was a broiling hot afternoon.

Tears came into the fag's eyes, but he forced them back. He would never yield to these cads, even though they devised fresh tortures for his benefit.

The situation was fast becoming unbearable. The long road seemed endless, and the distant tower of Greyfriars seemed to get no nearer.

"Stick it!" said Skinner mockingly. "If you keep up that pace you ought to arrive by the middle of next week."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The laughter of Snoop and Stott died away abruptly as a motor-cycle came whizzing into view.

Coker of the Fifth was seated in the saddle, and he was fairly making the fur fly. Coker had developed the perilous habit of "road-hogging."

On catching sight of the new boy and his tormentors Coker slowed down. A scowl came over his rugged face.

"What's all this?" he demanded, as the machine came to a standstill.

"You mind your own business,

Coker," said Skinner. He tried to speak defiantly, but his tone was uneasy.

"So you're up to your old bullying games, what?" said Coker.

He got off his machine and advanced grimly towards Skinner & Co.

The sight of poor little Bobbie Severn, stumbling along under his heavy hard-cap, made Coker's blood boil. Whatever people might say about Coker, he was a fellow who was always ready to champion the under dog. Any act of injustice stung him to fury.

He was furious now, and he pitched into Skinner & Co. without ceremony. Biff!

A powerful drive to the chest caused Harold Skinner to turn a back-somersault. He rolled over in the roadway with a wild yell, and before he could sort himself out Snoop and Stott landed on top of him.

Moaning and groaning, the wretched trio grovelled in the roadway.

Bobbie Severn had watched the scene with shining eyes. He glanced at Coker with almost dog-like devotion as the Fifth-Former came towards him.

"Poor kid!" muttered Coker. "They've used you pretty badly, I can see that. But it's all serene now. I'll run you up to Greyfriars in my side-car."

"I—I say, sir, that's awfully decent of you!" said the new boy gratefully.

"Rot!" grunted Coker. "And don't call me 'sir,' for goodness' sake. I'm not a master, nor even a prefect—yet."

Coker unstrapped the bag, and Bobbie Severn panted with relief as the heavy burden was withdrawn.

The bag was fastened on to the carrier at the back of the motor-cycle.

Then Coker stooped down and untied the handkerchief which bound the fag's ankles.

"Hop in, kid!" he said, opening the door of the side-car.

Bobbie Severn obeyed promptly enough. And Coker reversed his machine, which sped off in the direction of Greyfriars.

Far behind, Skinner & Co. still grovelled in the roadway, caressing those parts of their anatomies which had come into contact with Coker's fists. And they bitterly repented of having relieved the Famous Five of the task of meeting the new boy.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

A Fag for Coker!

BOBBI SEVERN was lucky to get to Greyfriars in one piece, for Coker, like Jehu of old, was a furious driver.

The motor-cycle dashed and swerved like a live thing. Fortunately, there were no sharp corners to be negotiated, or Bobbie Severn would have been pitched clean out of the side-car.

Coker slowed down on nearing the school—a wise precaution—for the Head did not approve of road-hogging. On more than one occasion Coker had come within an ace of having his machine confiscated.

"Here we are!" said Coker, coming to a halt in the Close. "Which Form are you going into, kid?"

"The Second, I think."

"Then you'd better go and report to old Twigg. He's in charge of the kindergarten."

Bobbie Severn scrambled out of the side-car.

"I—I say, Coker!" he faltered, rather timidly. "I should like to fag for you, if I may."

Coker gave a start. He glanced queerly at the new boy.

"What makes you say that, young 'un?" he asked gruffly.

"Well, you did me a jolly good turn when you rescued me from those rotters, and I should like to—to sort of level things up, if you'll let me."

There was a very eager expression on Bobbie Severn's face. His gratitude towards the burly Coker was very real and sincere. He would gladly have become Coker's devoted slave. The question was, would Coker give him the chance?

"Fifth-Formers aren't allowed to have fags," said Coker after a pause. "That privilege is confined to the Sixth. It's jolly unfair, of course, but there it is."

"But I don't want any wages," said Bobbie Severn. "I'll cheerfully work for nix. And if I choose to fag for you of my own free will, I don't see how anybody can stop me. It isn't as if you were forcing me to fag for you."

Coker nodded thoughtfully. He was very keen on having a fag to fetch and carry for him. Coker liked to ape the big men of the Sixth, and here was a splendid opportunity of doing so.

"All right, kid!" he said at length. "You can be my fag, as you seem so keen on it. But I'm not going to accept your services for nothing. There will be lots of work to do, and it's only fair that I should pay you half-a-crown a week."

Bobbie Severn was quite elated.

"Thanks, awfully!" he said. "I'll start this afternoon. What time would you like tea?"

"Five o'clock," said Coker. "I'm going for a spin on my motor-bike first."

Bobbie Severn carried his gladstone-bag into the hall. Then he went along to interview Mr. Twigg. The result of this interview was that the new boy was allotted to the Second Form.

In the fags' Common-room he came upon his future Form-fellows—Dicky Nugent & Co. They were squatting in a row by the fire, toasting herrings, which were impaled on penholders.

Dicky Nugent turned a flushed face towards the newcomer. Then came the following catechism:

"Are you the new kid?"

"Yes."

"What's your full name?"

"Robert Aunesley Severn."

"What's your pater?"

"He—he's dead."

"Sorry, kid! Where's your home?"

"In the New Forest."

"What's your form at marbles?"

"Pretty good."

These queries by no means exhausted the volley of questions which Dicky Nugent fired at the new boy.

Bobbie Severn had to give his age, weight, and height, and state which wars his ancestors had fought in. He imparted the information cheerfully enough, and Dicky Nugent & Co. voted the new boy rather a good sort. But when they heard that he was going to fag for Coker they called him several sorts of a chump.

"Fancy offering to fag for a hump-tious boulder like Coker!" exclaimed Gatty.

Bobbie Severn bristled up at this.

"Coker's a jolly good sort, and I won't hear a word against him!" he said.

"Any fellow who says rotten things about Coker in my hearing will feel my fist!"

It was a bold threat for a new boy to make. Sammy Bunter started to cackle.

"Montague the Mysterious!"—next Monday's grand story of—

"He, he, he! Coker's a chop-headed chump, and everybody knows it!" said Sammy.

Biff!

Bobbie Severn shot out his right, and his fist smote the surprised Sammy just above the region known as the bread-basket.

"Yaroooooh!"

Sammy Bunter toppled over with a mighty orash. As falls the giant oak, so fell Sammy. And his yell of anguish rang through the Common-room.

"Anybody else got anything to say about Coker?" demanded Bobbie Severn, glaring round the ring of faces.

The fags were silent. Whatever their private opinion of Horace Coker, they decided to keep it to themselves. They had been given proof of the fact that Bobbie Severn was a hard hitter, and they had no desire to get to grips with

chimed in Dicky Nugent. "He'll soon get fed up with fagging for Coker. He'll get more kicks than pence, and he'll soon start looking for a fresh job."

"I say, you fellows," wailed Sammy Bunter, "that new bouncer gave me an awful swipe. I believe he's stove in a couple of my ribs."

"Serves you jolly well right!" growled Gatty.

"Oh, really! I'll challenge the rotter to a proper scrap in the gym, and give him a jolly good hammering. I didn't have a chance just now. He hit me under the wares."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Meanwhile, Bobbie Severn was going strongly in Coker's study. That apartment was in a state of complete disorder when the new boy entered it, but he soon set to work to put everything shipshape.

Bobbie Severn turned his head as the Fifth-Formers came in.

"Shall I serve tea, Coker?" he asked respectfully.

Coker was staring round the study, his jaws agape with astonishment.

"I say, kid, you've made this study look awfully ripping—a home away from home, in fact."

The fag smiled with pleasure.

"It was more like a pigsty when I came in," he said, "but I soon put it to rights."

"This fag of yours, Horace," murmured Potter, "is worth his weight in whipped cream walnuts!"

"Yes, rather!" said Greene. "You've found a giddy treasure, and no mistake!"

The Fifth-Formers seated themselves at the table, and Bobbie Severn waited on them hand and foot.



The sight of poor Bobbie Severn stumbling along under his heavy handicap made Coker's blood boil, and he sailed in. Biff! Biff! Biff! Three lusty drives found Skinner & Co. in a disordered heap upon the roadway in less than five seconds. (See Chapter I.)

him. He would be better as a friend than as a foe.

The new boy glanced at the Common-room clock.

"Time I started getting Coker's tea ready," he observed. And, with a glare at the recumbent form of Sammy Bunter, he strolled out of the Common-room.

"Tough little beggar!" remarked Dicky Nugent, when the door closed. "I rather like him."

"He knows how to hit," said Myers. "I shouldn't care to stop one of his pile-drivers."

"Pity he's going to make himself Coker's slave," said Gatty. "Coker isn't entitled to a fag. And he'll be pretty heavy-handed as a fag master, too, I reckon."

"Well, it's Severn's own funeral,"

When Coker returned from his spin at five o'clock, and stepped into the study with Potter and Greene, he found that a transformation had been effected.

The study furniture was neatly arranged, and the ornaments on the mantelpiece had been dusted and set out in an attractive row. The table was adorned with a snowy-white cloth. The knives had been cleaned, serviettes had been ingeniously fashioned out of paper, and everything looked very charming and inviting.

Bobbie Severn had been to the tuck-shop and obtained supplies. There were rolls and fresh butter, and a pot of Dame Mimble's home-made blackcurrant jam. And there was a cherry cake which made Coker & Co.'s mouths water at the mere sight of it.

The kettle was boiling on the hob, and

Coker & Co. enjoyed the novelty of having their tea prepared for them. Hitherto, they had been obliged to get it themselves.

Bobbie Severn had brewed some excellent tea, and the meal was a great success.

No professional waiter could have performed his duties so swiftly and silently as Bobbie Severn. The new boy proved an ideal fag, and Coker felt thankful that he had not been commandeered by Loder of the Sixth or by one of the other prefects.

"I'm very pleased with you, kid," said Coker, drawing back his chair when the meal was over. "You're a rod in pickle, and no error. Hope you won't get tired of fagging for me, and go off and fag for somebody else."

—Harry Wharton & Co., the famous schoolboys of Greyfriars I

Bobbie Severn looked quite distressed at the suggestion.

"Please don't think that, Coker!" he said. "I'm not a traitor. I've promised to serve you faithfully, and I will. I never go back on my word."

The tea things were cleared away and washed up in record time. And Coker, Potter, and Greene were able to take their ease in their inn, so to speak. They lounged in their chairs, watching Bobbie Severn buzzing to and fro like a busy bee. And they rejoiced to think that they possessed the most capable and efficient fag in all Greyfriars.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Study Wreckers!

COKER of the Fifth found life very pleasant during the next few days. He did not need to stir a finger, for his devoted fag did everything for him.

To serve Coker seemed to be Bobbie Severn's one end and aim. And he served him faithfully and well.

Coker's study was thoroughly cleaned and scoured every morning. Coker's cricket-bat was always oiled and in readiness. Coker's motor-cycle was purged of the mud which it had collected on the roads. Coker's tea was always ready on the stroke of five o'clock. Coker's shoes were cleaned, and his trousers neatly pressed by his faithful henchman. In fact, Bob Cherry declared that it was a wonder Bobbie Severn didn't put Coker to bed, and do all his thinking for him into the bargain.

Harry Wharton & Co. found Bobbie Severn a very likeable little chap. They only saw him at intervals, for Removites and fags had very little in common. But the more they did see of him the better they liked him.

But there were three fellows who owed Bobbie Severn a grudge, and who were already plotting to do him an injury.

Skinner, Snoop, and Stott felt very bitter towards the new boy.

"The little brat is crawling up to Coker, and licking his shoes!" said Skinner, in tones of disgust.

"Cadging for another ride in Coker's sidecar, I expect!" growled Stott.

"Coker thinks the world of him!" said Snoop. "We shall have to do something to make Coker alter his opinion."

"Yes, rather!"

When three fellows plot and plan to do another an injury it is not difficult to find ways and means.

"Tell you what we'll do," said Skinner, with a crafty chuckle. "That young brat Severn spends about an hour every morning cleaning out Coker's study. To-morrow morning we'll wait until he's finished, and then go in and undo all the good work, make a proper mess-up of the place. Savvy?"

Snoop and Stott chuckled.

"Quite a good wheeze!" said the former. "Coker will think his devoted slave is getting slack, and he'll give him a walloping."

"Exactly!"

It was a particularly caddish scheme. But Skinner and his cronies were cads of the first water. Such expressions as "playing the game" were mere empty-sounding phrases, so far as they were concerned. There were few depths of caddishness to which they would not descend.

Next morning Bobbie Severn went about his work as usual. He toiled with broom and brush in Coker's study, humming a merry tune the while. Little did

he dream that all his work was going to be spoilt.

At the end of an hour the study looked spotless.

Well satisfied with his labours, Bobbie Severn withdrew. And scarcely had his footsteps died away, when Skinner & Co. sneaked into Coker's study.

It takes much longer to tidy a study than to make it untidy. And in two minutes the invaders had reduced the place to a state of disorder.

There had been a heap of dirt in the corridor, to which the maid had just swept. Skinner had gathered up the dirt in a newspaper, and he now proceeded to scatter it over Coker's furniture.

By the time Skinner had finished, the bookcase and the mantelpiece looked as if they had not been dusted for a decade.

Stott tossed a couple of books into the fireplace, where they lay doubled over. And Snoop, raking down some soot from the chimney, scattered it over the carpet.

A couple of minutes previously Coker's study had been as trim and tidy as any study at Greyfriars. The place now looked like a dusthole.

"Coker will have several sorts of a fit when he sees this mess!" chuckled Skinner. "And that young toady Severn will be lammed with a fives bat, most likely!"

"Let's fade away," said Snoop uneasily. "We don't want to be caught in here!"

The precious trio quitted the study as stealthily as they had entered it.

Shortly before breakfast Coker had occasion to go to his study. He gave a gasp when he entered the apartment.

"Great Scott! What a pickle the place is in! My fag hasn't done his job this morning. Hope the little beggar isn't beginning to slack off. I'll speak to him about this, and ask him what the thunder he means by it!"

Coker strode to the door, and his stentorian voice boomed along the passage.

"Fag!"

Bobbie Severn was just coming along to see if there was anything he could do for his master. He quickened his step on hearing Coker's voice.

RESULT OF LEICESTERSHIRE PICTURE-PUZZLE COMPETITION.

In this competition one competitor sent in a correct solution of the picture. The First Prize of £5 has therefore been awarded to:

EDITH COLE,
41, Naylor Street,
Miles Platting,
Manchester.

The Second Prize of £2 10s. has been awarded to the following competitor, whose solution contained one error:

J. Godfrey, 2, Guy Street, Leamington Spa. Twenty-four competitors, with two errors each, divide the ten prizes of 5s. each. The names and addresses of these prizewinners can be obtained on application at this office.

SOLUTION.

Leicestershire has never held a very prominent position in first-class cricket. The county has suffered numerous defeats, yet has played much splendid cricket, and at the present period her prospects are extremely hopeful. To King belongs the distinction of being the oldest player to appear regularly.

The great Horace was standing in his doorway, with a Jove-like frown on his rugged face.

"What's the matter with you this morning?" asked Coker testily. "Did you oversleep, or what?"

Bobbie Severn looked surprised.

"I got up at the usual time, Coker!" he said meekly.

"Then why didn't you do my study?"

"I did."

Coker grasped the fag by the collar, and swung him into the apartment.

"You call that done!" he snorted.

"Books in the fireplace, soot on the carpet, and dust a quarter of an inch thick on the furniture! Why, the place hasn't been touched!"

Bobbie Severn uttered a low cry of dismay.

"I—I don't know how the place came to be like this!" he faltered. "I spent an hour on it, first thing this morning. There wasn't a speck of dust when I left it ten minutes ago."

Coker did not seem convinced.

"Well, buckle up and clear up this mess!" he said gruffly. "You've been a jolly good little worker up to now; but it seems that you're beginning to get slack. You promised me you'd always serve me faithfully—"

"And I've kept my promise!" panted Bobbie Severn. Coker's words stung him, and the tears welled to his eyes. "Honestly, Coker, I didn't make all this litter—"

"That's enough jaw!" said Coker curtly. "Pile in, and put the place to rights!"

Bobbie Severn went about his work with a heavy heart. As he looked round the littered study, the old phrase flashed into his mind: "An enemy hath done this." Before coming to Greyfriars, Bobbie had had no enemies; and it distressed him to think that he had now made one—possibly several.

Everything seemed to go wrong that day. It wasn't a Friday, and it wasn't the thirteenth of the month; yet it was one of those days when nothing would go right.

Coker was giving a little dinner that evening. Blundell and Hilton and Fitzgerald had been invited, and Potter and Greene were coming as a matter of course.

The cooking was entrusted to Bobbie Severn, who had proved himself a past-master in culinary arts.

"Call us when the grub's ready," said Coker, glancing into the study. "We shall be in the Common-room."

Bobbie Severn nodded, and went on with his cooking. He was frying sausages in a greased frying-pan. When the sausages were done to a turn, the fag put them in a safe place, and went along to call the Fifth-Formers.

He was absent only a moment. Yet in that brief moment Skinner of the Remove was able to pop into the study, and drop a number of red-hot cinders into the frying-pan, so that the sausages became burnt and blackened, and utterly unfit for consumption.

It was a dastardly trick, but Skinner seemed to regard it as a huge joke. He was holding his sides with laughter when he rejoined Snoop and Stott in the passage.

"No dinner for Coker!" he chortled. "He won't lick his chops when he sees those sosses, but he'll jolly well lick his fag!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Meanwhile, Bobbie Severn had summoned the Fifth-Formers to the

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feast. With keen-edged appetites, they strolled along to Coker's study.

"Smell of burning somewhere," observed Blundell.

Coker threw back his head and sniffed, like a war-horse scenting the fray.

"My hat!" he shouted. "I hope that fag of mine hasn't burnt the sosses!"

Alas for Coker's hopes!

The sausages presented a scorched and blackened appearance. Ravenous though they were, neither Coker nor his guests had any desire to sample the sausages.

"Faith, an' your fag's made an unholy mess of the cookin'!" growled Fitzgerald.

"The frying-pan's full of cinders, by Jove!" exclaimed Hilton.

"If this is the best you can do for us, Coker," said Blundell, "I'm off!"

And he promptly suited the action to the word.

The rest of the Fifth-Formers trooped out in Blundell's wake. Coker and his fag were left alone in the study.

Bobbie Severn's face was the picture of dismay.

"I—I can't understand how this happened!" he faltered. "The sosses were done to a turn when I went along to call you, Coker, and I put 'em away from the fire so that they wouldn't get burnt."

Coker was purple with fury. He had invited his friends to what he described as a "topping little banquet." And the dinner was completely ruined.

"You—you careless young sweep!" snorted Coker, glaring at his fag. "I'm not going to take any excuses for this. First you neglect to clean my study, and then you go and make a hash of the dinner. Come here, you cub! I'm going to lam you!"

Bobbie Severn realised that it was useless to protest his innocence. Coker was in a royal rage, and he was not in the humour to listen to any explanation or excuse. He jerked the fag face downwards across the table, and then picked up an ashplant.

Coker was not usually a bully. But he could be very heavy-handed on occasion; and he fairly let himself go now.

Swish, swish, swish!

The ashplant sang through the air, and came down with relentless force.

Resolved not to make a murmur, Bobbie Severn bit his lip until it bled.

Coker was annoyed that he could elicit no yelps of anguish, and he hit all the harder. He was sorry, afterwards, that he had been so brutal. And there was to come a time when would be sorrier still—when it would be too late to repair the wrong he had done to his faithful fag.

The ordeal was over at last, and Bobbie Severn slipped down, gasping, to the floor. His cheeks were white. There was a smear of blood on his lower lip.

Breathing heavily, Coker tossed the ashplant into a corner.

"That's for spoiling my dinner!" he panted. "And if you give me any more trouble, I'll kick you out, and never ask you to fag for me again! You can cut off now. I'm sick of the sight of you!"

Harsh words, which Coker was destined to recall later on, in bitter remorse. He believed his fag to be disloyal and neglectful of his duty. There was to come a time when he would know differently. But that time was not yet.

His hands tightly clenched, his face still pale, Bobbie Severn walked blindly to the door. He said no word, and it



Coker grasped the fag by the collar. "You call that done?" he snorted. "Books in the fireplace, dust all over the furniture, soot on the carpet and the walls—" "I—I," faltered Severn in dismay. "It was quite tidy when I left the study, Coker." (See Chapter 3.)

was not until he reached the quiet of the Cloisters that he broke down, and his pent-up feelings found expression in a torrent of tears.

It was weak, perhaps, to give way like this. A cynic would call it childish. But, after all, Bobbie Severn was but a child. And he was not the first boy of eleven who has betaken himself to a quiet corner in order to have a jolly good howl.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Sacked!

"It worked like a charm!" said Skinner. "I nipped into the study and spoilt the sosses, and poor old Coker's guests had to go empty away!"

"Coker was a trifle annoyed, wasn't he?" chuckled Stott.

"A trifle! My hat! It's a wonder he didn't have an apoplectic fit!" said Skinner. "He lammed young Severn unmercifully. I could hear it from the passage. I thought Coker was never going to stop. As for the young brat, he looked like a limp rag when he came out."

"We haven't finished with him yet," said Snoop. "We'll carry on with the good work until Coker sacks him."

Skinner nodded. "We'll wreck the study to-morrow morning," he said. "And we'll make a thorough job of it this time."

The cads of the Remove had wrought quite enough mischief already. They had destroyed Coker's faith in Bobbie

Severn; they had brought heavy punishment upon the fag for an offence which he had never committed; but they were not yet satisfied. They recalled the rough handling they had received when Coker had pitched into them for persecuting Bobbie Severn. They had hated the youngster ever since, and they were determined to make trouble between Bobbie and his fag-master—trouble which would result in Bobbie being sacked.

Next morning Bobbie Severn went about his duties as usual. The severe thrashing he had received at Coker's hands had not lessened his devotion to the burly Fifth-Former. If anything, it had increased it.

Bobbie was very anxious to put himself right with Coker, and to win his way back into the esteem of the great Horace.

He cleaned out the study very thoroughly that morning. The carpets were taken out and beaten; the window-curtains were changed; everything was set in its proper place, and carefully dusted.

Bobbie even went so far as to clean the windows—a task which usually devolved upon Gosling, the porter.

"I don't think Coker will have anything to complain about this morning," muttered the fag, surveying his handiwork. "Everything's spick and span, and there's not a speck of dust to be seen."

Bobbie Severn was rather grubby after his labours, and he made tracks for the nearest bath-room.

It was at this stage that Skinner, Snoop, and Stott performed their crowning act of caddishness.

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The trio crept stealthily into Coker's study, and proceeded to wreck it. They set about their task with the destructiveness of the Vandals of old.

The table was turned completely over and dumped upon its back. The bookcase was burst open, and its contents—some dozens of volumes—were scattered over the floor. The sofa was up-ended, and stood tottering against the wall. The cushions were stuffed into the fire-grate, and the mantelpiece was swept clear of ornaments.

The whole business occupied only a couple of minutes. And then the study-wreckers, chuckling softly, withdrew.

"We've fairly done it now!" chortled Skinner. "When Coker sees the damage he'll flay his fag alive!"

"Pity we can't stay and see the fun," said Stott. "But it wouldn't be safe to be within a mile of Coker!"

"No jolly fear!"

The rascally trio scuttled away down the passage.

It was exactly five minutes later when Horace Coker entered his study. For an instant the Fifth-Former stood spell-bound on the threshold.

The study had been in a state of disorder the previous morning, but that was nothing to its present topsy-turvy state.

Never had Coker seen his study in such a pickle—though it had been raided many a time and oft.

Coker stamped into the apartment, waving his arms round and round like a windmill in his frenzy. It didn't take much to upset Coker, and he was upset now—very considerably upset.

"I've got that fag of mine to thank for this!" he spluttered. "He did this out of revenge, I suppose, because I lammed him yesterday. The little brat!"

Coker paused, and glared round the study.

"I can't very well give him another lamming—I rather overstepped the mark yesterday—but I can sack the young whelp, and I'll do it, too! And I'll say a few words to him first!"

Coker was trying to restore his study to some semblance of order, when there was a light step in the passage, and Bobbie Severn, fresh from his ablutions, came into the study.

The fag stopped short abruptly when he saw the wreckage. A horrified expression came over his face.

"Great Scott!" he gasped. "Who's been smashing up the study?"

Coker spun round upon his fag. His expression was warlike; his eyes blazed.

"You know jolly well who did it, you young cub!" he snarled. "It was you!"

Bobbie Severn staggered back before his accuser. He strove to speak—to stammer out a denial—but Coker gave him no chance.

"You needn't deny it!" he said hotly. "This is your idea of revenge for the lamming I gave you yesterday. I'd give you another, only it wouldn't be worth while. You can get out. I'm finished with you. Do you hear?"

Bobbie Severn heard. He could scarcely help doing so, for Coker's voice was tumultuous, like the roaring of many waters. But the fag did not move. His frank blue eyes were fixed on Coker with an expression of mute appeal. He looked the picture of innocence. But Coker reflected that even the most mischievous young monkeys in the Second could assume expressions of innocence which Cherubim or Seraphim might have envied.

"I'm not going to be taken in by that soft look on your face!" said Coker

harshly. "You've wrecked my study, and it'll take me hours to get it straight again!"

Bobbie Severn stepped forward eagerly. "I'll do it, Coker!"

Coker loomed up before the fag—a solid wall of humanity barring his path.

"You jolly well won't!" he snorted. "You won't lay another finger on anything in this study! You're a low-down little traitor. When you first offered to fag for me you said you'd be loyal!"

"And I meant it," said Bobbie Severn quietly.

"Well, you've a queer way of showing your loyalty, I must say! Loyalty! Why, you don't even know the meaning of the word! Is it being loyal to turn my study into a blessed lumber-room—to spoil my dinner—to do everything you can to annoy me?"

The words fell hot from Coker's lips, and each taunting phrase stung Bobbie Severn like a lash. He quivered and drew back, as if from a series of physical blows.

"It's no use wasting words on you," Coker went on. "Here's a week's money. Take it, and quit!"

The Fifth-Former took a half-crown from his pocket, and tossed it to the fag. Bobbie Severn stepped quickly aside, and the coin fell to the floor with a metallic clink.

"I don't want any money!" muttered Bobbie. "I only want to go on fagging for you, Coker—faithfully, as I have always done."

"You want to go on wrecking my study every morning, you mean!" sneered Coker. "Get out, you little traitor, before I change my mind about giving you another lamming!"

With a sob in his throat, Bobbie Severn turned and went blindly from the room.

He could no longer doubt that he was the victim of a conspiracy—a cowardly vendetta, which had been planned to bring about his downfall. He could guess who the conspirators were, too; but he felt too sick at heart to tax them with it.

He was sacked. Coker didn't want his services any longer. And he liked Coker, in spite of all that had happened. He did not blame Coker for believing him guilty. What else was Coker to believe in the circumstances?

Bobbie Severn went out into the sunny Close, and tramped up and down under the old elms—a pathetic little figure. There was sunshine in the Close, but there seemed to be no sunshine left in his young life, now that Coker thought him a traitor.

The Famous Five of the Remove, taking their morning constitutional, caught sight of Bobbie, and they could see at a glance that there was something wrong. They bore down upon him, and Bob Cherry patted the fag on the back.

"Wherefore that worried brow, kid?" asked Bob kindly.

Bobbie Severn looked up wistfully.

"I—I'm sacked!" he faltered.

"What!" gasped Harry Wharton.

"Sacked from the school, do you mean?"

"No, no. Coker doesn't want me to fag for him any more."

"And he's kicked you out?" said Johnny Bull.

"Well, that's a matter for congratulation, not for sympathy. I never could see why you should turn yourself into a slave for Coker's benefit. Coker isn't a bad fellow, in his way, but he isn't worth all that devotion."

"I like him," said Bobbie Severn sturdily.

"I'd go to the ends of the earth for him!"

"Well, there's no accounting for

tastes," said Nugent. "But why has Coker sacked you?"

Bobbie Severn explained about the wrecked study and the spoilt dinner. But there was no need for him to impress upon the Famous Five the fact that he was innocent. They could see that for themselves, though Coker had not seen it.

"Somebody's been serving you a shabby trick, kid," said Bob Cherry. "But don't take it to heart so much. Fagging for Coker is no catch, and you ought to thank your lucky stars that you're free!"

"But I like Coker!" persisted Bobbie Severn. "And I want to fag for him. If only he'd take me back—"

Harry Wharton & Co. could not fail to be struck by the fag's devotion to Coker. And they could not understand why such loyalty should be lavished upon the burly Fifth-Former. It filled them with wonder. Bobbie Severn seemed to put Coker on a pedestal. It was not too much to say that he hero-worshipped him. He could see all Coker's good points and he was blind to Coker's failings.

Harry Wharton stroked his chin thoughtfully.

"If you really want to go back into bondage," he said, "we'll see what we can do."

"Thanks awfully, Wharton!"

"We'll go along and see Coker, and try to convince him that you're innocent. But he's as obstinate as a blessed mule, and the interview's likely to be a wash-out. So don't build your hopes too high."

"And keep your pecker raisefully lifted," said Hurree Singh, smiling at Bobbie Severn. "Remember that it's a long lane that has no silver lining, as your English proverb has it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Famous Five nodded genially to Bobbie Severn, and went along to interview Coker.

The juniors found the mighty Horace burrowing on his hands and knees, collecting his scattered books. It was an undignified attitude for so lofty a person as Coker; and Bob Cherry, having caught Coker bending, so to speak, was seized with a desire to pick up a cricket-stump and address the rear portion of Coker's anatomy. Remembering that he was on a peace-making mission, however, Bob stifled his desire in the nick of time.

Coker turned his head and glared at the juniors.

"What do you kids want?" he snapped.

"We dropped in to see you about young Severn—" began Harry Wharton.

"Well, you can jolly well drop out again!"

Coker's tone was uncompromising. And the juniors exchanged hopeless glances. But they did not beat a retreat without making a further effort.

"It wasn't Bobbie Severn who smashed up the happy home, Coker," said Frank Nugent. "We've spoken to him, and we're satisfied that he's innocent. Somebody who had a grudge against him was responsible for the mischief. The kid wants to carry on fagging for you—"

Coker gave a snort.

"If he dares to show his face in this study again, I'll boot him along the passage!" he growled. "As to the young brat being innocent, I think I'm

"The Phantom Horseman!" is the title of the next Galloping Dick yarn!

the best judge of that. You can clear out, all of you!”

“Look here—”

“Travel!” hooted Coker.

The Famous Five realised that there was nothing to be gained by lingering in Coker's study. Coker's mood was implacable. Had a dozen deputations called to see him on behalf of Bobbie Severn he would have remained firm—or, rather, obstinate. He waved his hand towards the door in a manner that admitted of no further argument, and the juniors retired, looking rather crest-fallen, and went out into the Close to break the sad tidings to Bobbie Severn.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Stormy Seas!

HORACE COKER spent most of his leisure time that day in putting his study shipshape, and creating order out of chaos. It had taken Skinner & Co. a couple of

They suggested to Coker that he gave the fag another chance. Whereat the great Horace gave a snort.

“I wouldn't have him back if he came to me on his bended knees!” he growled. “I'm fed-up with that kid! I liked him awfully at the start, too. He seemed a decent little chap, and he worked like a nigger. He was a sort of fag, valet, and private secretary rolled into one. And then he turned traitor and started serving me shabby tricks. That's just the way with fags. They start off all right, and after a time they get slack and careless, and start playing practical jokes.”

“Are you certain it was young Severn who wrecked your study this morning?” asked Potter.

“Of course! I shouldn't have sacked him if I hadn't been certain, should I?”

“There's no knowing what you might or might not do,” said Greene. “You're such a champion chump at times, Coker.”

after tea,” said Coker. “I'm sick of stewing in this study.”

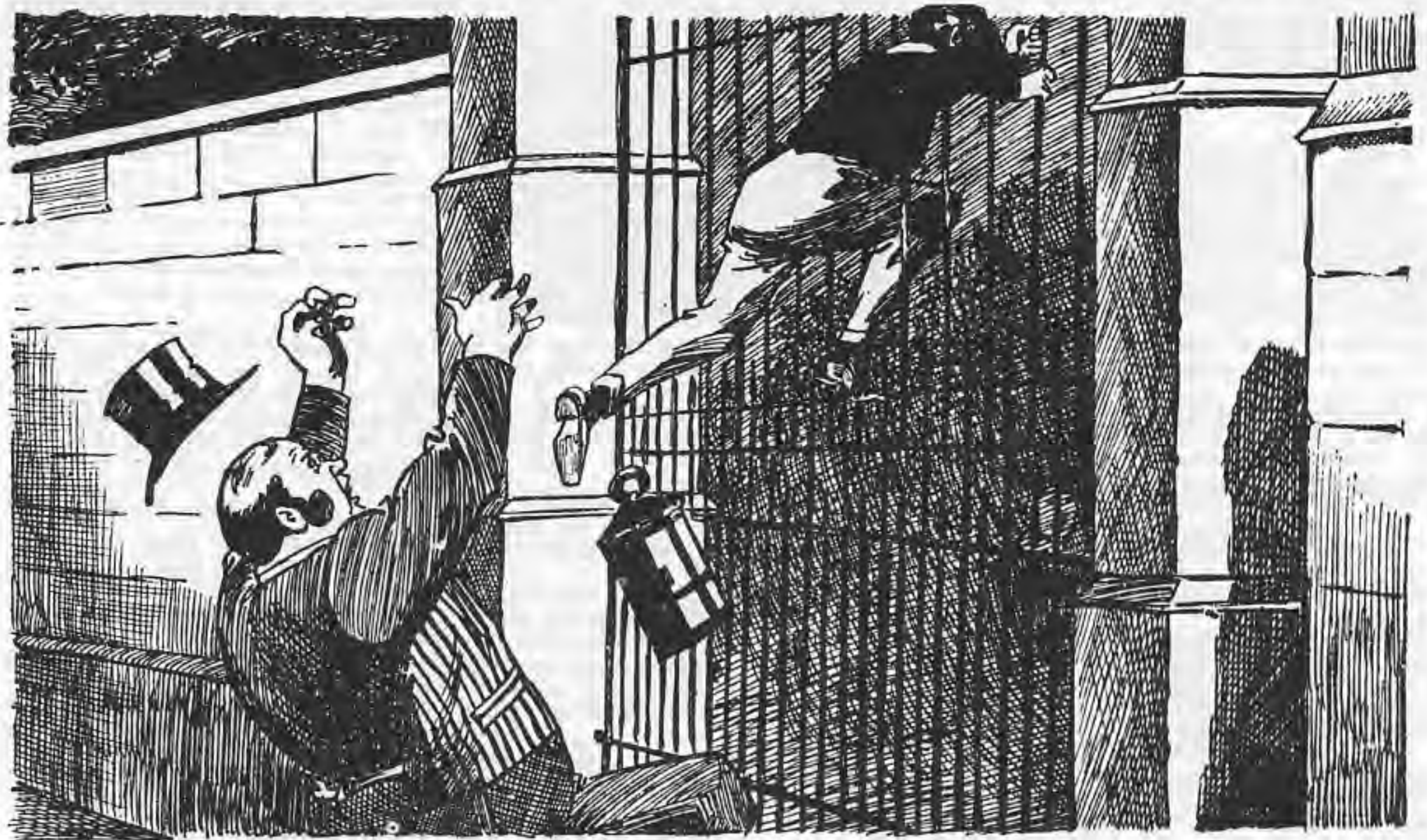
“What's the programme?” asked Potter. “Say the word, and we'll join you.”

“I was thinking of rowing over to Storm Island. It's a long pull in a rowing-boat, but it will get my muscles in condition. You fellows can come, if you like.”

Potter and Greene nodded their assent. It was certainly going to be a wonderful evening, unless the Clerk of the Weather performed one of his quick-change tricks which earned for the English climate the reputation of being so treacherous.

There was nothing much to see on Storm Island, a small tract of land which was cut off in every way from the mainland. But it would be delightful to row across to it on a sea that resembled a mill-pond. Coker was very keen on the expedition, and Potter and Greene waxed equally enthusiastic.

After tea, the Fifth-Formers donned



With amazing agility Severn started to climb over the gate. Gosling made a grab at his ankles, and Bobbie gave a sharp backward kick which caught the school porter in the shoulder and sent him reeling. “Yaroo! Groough!” wailed Gosling. (See Chapter 6.)

minutes to wreck the study. It took Coker a much longer time to make it habitable again.

Potter and Greene looked in from time to time, and murmured soothing words of sympathy. But they didn't offer to help. If Coker chose to grovel on the floor all day, he could go ahead. But Potter and Greene were too dignified, and they had too much regard for the knees of their trousers.

It was not until tea-time that Coker's study resumed its normal appearance.

The Fifth-Formers had to get their own tea. There was no fleet-footed fag to wait upon them now. Bobbie Severn had been given marching orders.

Potter and Greene wanted Bobbie back, in spite of the recent upheavals.

“Look here, William Greene, do you want to go out of this study on your neck?”

“Nunno.”

“Well, dry up, then, and don't criticise your superiors!”

The name of Bobbie Severn didn't crop up again. Potter and Greene were tactful, and refrained from further mention of the fag in Coker's presence.

Coker boiled the kettle, and Potter laid the table. Greene's part in preparing the tea was to stand and stare out of the window.

“Going to be a topping evening,” he remarked. “One of those glorious sunsets that you sometimes write poetry about, Coker.”

“I'm going to get out in the fresh air

shorts and vests and rubber shoes, and went striding down to the school gates.

Crowds of fellows watched their departure.

“What's the game, Coker?” sang out Bob Cherry. “Going to walk to Brighton?”

“I believe Coker's only put his shorts on just to show off his calves!” chuckled Nugent.

“Well, if I had a pair of calves like Coker's, I'd put 'em in pawn!” said Johnny Bull.

“Ha, ha, ha!”

Coker glared at the mirthful juniors.

“What's the matter with my calves?” he demanded.

“They're like some snapshots I took

—You can't afford to miss this tip-top tale of the broad highway!

yesterday—over-developed!" said Dick Penfold.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker's nether limbs were certainly very sturdy, and he was proud of them. The rather-lean legs of Potter and Greene were like matchsticks by comparison. Coker had often been told by his friends that he had a wonderful pair of legs; but the Removites seemed to regard them as curiosities.

"Dry up, you cackling fags!" shouted Coker wrathfully. "As you seem to be mighty interested in our movements, I'll tell you our programme. We're going to row over to Storm Island."

"Mind the sharks," said Bob Cherry. "They won't be able to resist your calves, Coker!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker looked for a moment as if he would wade into the throng of Removites and slaughter them. But he thought better of it, and strode wrathfully out of gates, with Potter and Greene in tow.

The trio took the shore road leading to the little fishing-village of Pegg.

Although the day was drawing to a close, the atmosphere was sultry. But it would be cool on the placid waters of the Channel.

"There's not a breath stirring," said Potter, as he strode along. "Wonder if we're in for another heat-wave?"

"Shouldn't be surprised," said Coker.

The Fifth-Formers soon reached their destination.

There was not a soul to be seen on the sandy shore of Pegg. The fishermen had retired to their cottages, and few holiday-makers ever penetrated to that lonely spot.

The wide expanse of blue sea stretched far-away. There was scarcely a ripple on its surface. It looked cool and calm and inviting. Storm Island could be clearly seen in the distance.

"What about a boat?" asked Greene.

"There's plenty to choose from," said Coker, pointing to a long line of boats which lay close at hand, covered with tarpaulins.

"Why have they beached them so far back from the sea?" asked Potter.

"And why have they covered them with tarpaulins?" inquired Greene.

Coker shook his head.

"Ask me another," he said. "They can't be expecting a storm, surely?"

"These old boatmen are a set of long-faced pessimists," said Potter. "They always seem to be preparing for a giddy storm, and it never comes."

"And they call themselves weather prophets!" said Greene scornfully. "As if we could possibly get a storm on an evening like this!"

But the old boatmen of Pegg were wise in their generation. These hardy men, who went down to the sea in ships, and occupied their business in great waters, were better weather prophets than Greene imagined.

To a landlubber, there seemed to be no prospect of an approaching storm. But the old seafaring folk had already seen signs and portents. That was why they had beached the boats so far back, and covered them with tarpaulins. That was why they had retired to their cottages, intending to do no more work that day.

Coker selected a boat. It was called the Ariel.

"I—I'd rather we didn't have that one," said Potter uneasily.

"Why?" said Coker, in surprise.

"She's a sound, seaworthy tub."

"But one of our greatest poets was

drowned in a boat called the Ariel!"

Coker laughed scornfully.

"Superstition!" he said. "I didn't think you were such an ass, Potter. A good many people have used this boat during the last year or two, and none of them have been drowned. With a skilled sailor like me on board, there's no danger of capsizing, whatever happens."

Potter continued to protest. But Coker, as usual, got his own way.

The Fifth-Formers ran the boat down to the water's edge. Potter and Greene jumped into her, and Coker gave the necessary push-off; then he jumped in himself.

"You fellows take an oar each," said Coker; "and I'll relieve the one that gets tired first."

Potter and Greene got busy with the oars, and Coker sat in the stern and criticised their oarsmanship.

"You're too jerky for words, Potter! And you're not keeping time, Greene. I can see I shall have to give you fellows some lessons in rowing. You don't seem to know the first thing about it."

Potter and Greene, though not brilliant oarsmen, were superior to Coker in that respect. And they chafed under his criticism. Coker was always telling other people how things should be done, though he did them badly himself. He plucked out the mote from his brother's eye, so to speak, without noticing the beam in his own.

The boat glided smoothly enough over the tranquil sea. Potter and Greene grunted as they plied the oars, and Coker continued to sit in the stern and give advice, which made Potter and Greene grunt all the more.

"As you profess to be such a dab at rowing," growled Greene, "p'r'aps you'd like to take a turn?"

"Oh, certainly!" said Coker.

He changed places with Greene—a manoeuvre which nearly caused the boat to turn turtle—and started to wield the oar.

The boat ceased to glide smoothly when Coker took a hand. It made progress by means of short, spasmodic jerks.

"I wish you weren't such a clumsy novice, Potter!" said Coker. "You keep on catching crabs, instead of pulling with a clean sweep."

"Why, you—you—" spluttered Potter. "It's you that's to blame, you prize dummy! You're rocking the boat, you frabjous idiot! Wish we hadn't let you take a turn with the oar. It's putting three lives in peril!"

Potter's pent-up indignation had found an outlet at last. And Coker was too astonished to reply to his outburst.

The island was drawing nearer. The weather was still behaving splendidly, though away in the distance hovered an ominous black cloud, which was coming nearer and growing bigger. The Fifth-Formers failed to notice the cloud; they would not have been greatly disturbed if they had.

After a time Greene relieved Potter of his oar, and the boat covered the remaining stretch of water in good style, for Coker seemed to be improving.

Storm Island was reached without mishap. The boat ran aground on the soft sand, and the occupants scrambled out.

"We'll explore the island for a bit,"

said Coker. "Then we'll be getting back."

"Don't let's leave it too late," said Potter. "I don't fancy being on the sea when it's dark."

"No need for alarm," said Coker. "You're quite safe with me, you know. Even if there was a big sea running—and there won't be—I should be able to row you fellows back all right. I'm a first-class oarsman."

"Bombast, thy name is Coker!" murmured Greene.

Coker spun round suspiciously.

"What did you say, William Greene?"

"Ahem! Nothing of any importance, old chap," stammered Greene.

"You never do say anything important," growled Coker, "so you can shut up! Personally, I never open my mouth without letting words of wisdom pass out."

Potter murmured under his breath a fragment from Shakespeare: "I am Sir Oracle; and when I ope my lips, let no dog bark." It seemed to apply perfectly to Coker.

The trio started to wander across the island. And at length the long summer evening merged into twilight.

By this time, signs were not wanting that there was a storm brewing. At intervals a gust of wind sprang up, and dead leaves were driven along the lane down which the Fifth-Formers tramped. There was a tenseness in the atmosphere, too—a sense of impending calamity.

"We'd better be getting back."

It was Potter who spoke. Potter had a peculiar premonition that things were going to happen—that it would be folly to linger on the island. But Potter did not voice his fears, for he knew that if he did the others would laugh at him.

Coker glanced at his watch.

"Yes, I think we'll be making a move," he said.

They retraced their steps until they reached the spot where they had beached their boat.

Potter glanced seawards in some apprehension.

The sea was calm—that unnatural calm which precedes a storm.

"It won't take us long to get back," said Coker. "The conditions are perfect."

In the gathering dusk, the Fifth-Formers stared to row back to the mainland.

They were half-way across, when the storm broke with a suddenness that was almost terrifying.

Boom!

An appalling crash of thunder seemed to be the signal for all the elements to break loose.

The waters were lashed violently into foam. And a blinding sheet of spray came over the Ariel, stinging the faces of the Fifth-Formers.

The boat was now the plaything of an angry sea, which tossed it to and fro as if it had been a piece of driftwood.

Darkness fell suddenly—a black pall of darkness which seemed to blot out everything save the white crests of the waves.

"It—it's come!" muttered Potter, staring wildly around him. "I knew there was going to be an awful storm. I seemed to sense it in the air."

"Then why the dickens didn't you speak about it?" shouted Coker.

"I was afraid you'd laugh at me," said Potter. "And you would have done; you know that."

The storm gathered in fury, drowning Coker's reply.



THE ONLY MAGAZINE OF ITS KIND IN THE WORLD

The antics of Montague Snooks at Greyfriars will make you roar—

Potter and Greene had been rowing, but they ceased to pull on their oars. It was useless. The sea was in a turmoil, and the puny efforts of the oarsmen would have been futile against the mighty forces of the elements.

It was blowing a hurricane, and the boat was swept hither and thither on the dark waters.

The scribe of old had said that the waves of the sea were mighty and raged horribly, and Coker & Co. had never realised the truth of this statement so vividly as now.

Panic seized upon the Fifth-Formers as they sat gripping the sides of their frail craft. They did not need telling that their lives hung by a thread—that they were completely at the mercy of the storm.

Potter thought of the ill-fated Ariel, which had taken a great poet to his doom a hundred years before, and he shuddered.

Coker sat huddled in the stern, no longer able to disguise his fear. And Greene was, perhaps, even more terrified than the other two.

It was not that these fellows were cowards at heart. Given a fighting chance, they were brave enough. But what chance had they now, with the great waves roaring around them?

It was the sense of helplessness that weighed them down. They could do nothing. The icy conviction came to each of them that they must inevitably be drowned. But not one of them voiced his fears. It was a moment too dreadful for speech.

But, stay! There remained one faint glimmer of hope.

Coker had brought his electric torch with him, tucked into his belt. Why he had brought it he did not know. It was a case of one of those strange promptings which come to all of us at times.

Taking the torch from his belt, Coker flashed it in the direction of the shore.

There seemed precious little hope of such a feeble distress-signal being seen. If it came to that, there was precious little hope that there would be anybody on the shore to see it. Who was likely to be abroad on such a wild night?

But Coker continued to flash the torch, hoping against hope that it would be the means of bringing help to those in peril on the sea!

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Through Storm and Tempest!

"WATCHMAN, what of the night?"

Bob Cherry spoke, or, rather, shouted those words to Gosling, the porter.

Gosling stood in his doorway, peering out into the dark and storm-swept Close. The Famous Five, wearing raincoats with the collars turned up, had battled their way across the Close, in order to have a final word with Gosling before bedtime.

Bob Cherry's query, "What of the night?" was ironical. The juniors could see for themselves what manner of night it was—a night of the wildest description, with the gale shrieking around the old roofs and turrets of Greyfriars.

Gosling beckoned to the juniors. "Come into the porch, young gents, out of the wet," he said.

The Famous Five gladly accepted the invitation.

Gosling puffed reflectively at his clay pipe.



"Great Scott!" gasped Bob Cherry. "That kid's putting out to sea!" "Stop him!" exclaimed Wharton in alarm. There was a rush of feet towards the boat, but before the juniors could reach the spot Bobble Severn had pushed off from the shore. (See Chapter 7).

"Five-an'-twenty year 'ave I guarded this 'ere gate," he said, "but I don't never recollect such a night as this! Jest 'ark at the wind! 'Owling an' roarin' like a mad thing, as ever was! An' the rain! It's comin' down in sheets! If this 'ere storm goes on much longer, we shall either be blown away, or drowned!"

"You've locked the gates, Gossy?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Yes, Master Wharton."

"Then why are you hanging about in your doorway?"

"There's three young gents not in yet," said Gosling. "Takin' shelter somewhere, I suppose."

Gosling spoke carelessly enough. No thought of possible tragedy had crept into his slow mind. But the Famous Five became alarmed at once.

"Who are the three fellows who haven't come in, Gossy?" asked Nugent quickly.

"Master Coker, Master Potter, an' Master Greene."

Harry Wharton gave a violent start.

"You're certain they're not in, Gossy?"

"Positive, Master Wharton!"

"Great Scott! They went out this evening to row over to Storm Island. If they were on the sea when this storm sprung up, they—they wouldn't have a hope!"

Wharton was greatly agitated, and his chums were not less so.

Bob Cherry, who always took the brightest possible view of a situation, expressed the opinion that the storm

which was now raging might be merely a land-storm.

"Only a land-storm!" echoed Johnny Bull grimly. "Listen!"

There was a distant roar which there was no mistaking—the roaring of the giant breakers as they dashed themselves upon the rocky shore.

It was a sound which struck awe into the hearts of the juniors.

They thought of Coker and his companions, adrift in an open boat on that turbulent sea. And their faces blanched and their hands were clenched tightly together.

"Those fellows may be in danger—frightful danger!"

It was Frank Nugent who spoke.

"But it's possible," said Bob Cherry, "that they're safe and sound on Storm Island. If they were on the island when the storm broke, they wouldn't have dreamed of rowing back to the mainland."

"That's true," said Harry Wharton. "On the other hand, they might have been on their way back when the storm came on. And in that case—"

There was no need for Wharton to dwell upon the grim possibilities. On such a night and on such a sea, what chance would a frail rowing-boat have of successfully winning to shore? It would be tossed to and fro like a cork, treated with scant ceremony by the angry waves. And those on board would be in dire peril.

"We must dash down to Pegg and see if we can get any news!" said Nugent promptly.

—and the mystery surrounding him is solved by William Wibley!

"And the dashfulness must be terrific!" said Murree Singh. "If Coker and his esteemed pals are in danger, we might be able to do something."

There were sounds of squelching footsteps in the Close, and a tall form, with head lowered to meet the buffeting of the wind, loomed up in the darkness.

It was Mr. Quelch.

The Remove master battled his way towards the circle of light in which the Famous Five and Gosling stood.

"Bless my soul! It is a terrible night!" he panted. "What are you boys doing here?"

"Gosling tells us that three fellows haven't come in, sir," said Harry Wharton. "Coker, Potter, and Greene went out this evening to row over to Storm Island. And we're awfully afraid that they've been caught in this fearful storm."

"Good heavens!"

An expression of grave alarm came over the Form master's face.

"May we go down to Pegg, sir, and see if anything can be done?" asked the captain of the Remove.

"Certainly, Wharton—certainly! And I will follow myself, as soon as I have acquainted Dr. Locke with the situation. I have grave fears for the safety of those boys. This is no ordinary storm!"

"As I was a-sayin', sir—" began Gosling.

But Mr. Quelch did not wait to hear what Gosling had been "a-sayin'." He hurried away to the Head's study.

"Werry rude of 'im to go off like that!" grunted Gosling. "I'll fetch a lantern an' unlock the gates."

"Buck up!" said Bob Cherry impatiently.

Gosling shuffled into his lodge, returning a moment later with a lighted lantern and a bunch of keys. He need not have bothered about the lantern, for a powerful gust of wind snote it, and extinguished the light.

Groping his way towards the gates Gosling unlocked them, and swung them open.

Just as the Famous Five were passing through the gateway there came a patter of running feet behind them.

"Who on earth—" began Johnny Bull, peering through the gloom.

"It's young Severn!" exclaimed Nugent.

Bobbie Severn, bareheaded and without a raincoat, came dashing up to the school gates.

"What do you want, kid?" demanded Harry Wharton.

The fog paused, pumping in breath.

"I've just heard," he panted, "that Coker's out in this storm!"

No mention was made of Potter and Greene. It was Horace Coker who monopolised the fog's thoughts. Coker, his former fog-master, was in peril.

Coker had used him harshly—had taxed him with treachery—had kicked him out of the study and out of his service. But Bobbie Severn remained as devoted as ever to the burly Fifth-Former. And, now that Coker was in danger, the loyal fog was eager to do everything possible to render assistance, unless it should be too late.

"We're just going down to Pegg to see if we can find out anything," said Harry Wharton.

"Then I'm coming, too!" said Bobbie Severn.

"You can't. You've not had permission. Besides, you're only a babe. You can do nothing to help."

"You'll be blown over a cliff, or

something, if you come out on a night like this," said Bob Cherry. "Better go back, kid."

The juniors did not mean to be unkind to the fog. They liked the little chap immensely, but they failed to see what use he would be in the present emergency. It was quite on the cards that they themselves would be unable to do anything to help.

"I'm coming, I tell you!" Bobbie Severn flung out the words with passionate determination.

Then Gosling, the porter, chimed in.

"Wot I says is this 'ere. Hinfants like you oughter be in bed; an' hoff to bed you goes this hinstant!"

So saying, Gosling slammed the heavy gates.

The Famous Five were already out in the roadway. But Bobbie Severn was not to be denied. With amazing agility, he started to climb over the gates. Gosling made a grab at his ankle, and Bobbie gave a sharp backward kick, which caught Gosling in the shoulder, and sent him reeling.

A moment later, Bobbie Severn dropped lightly down on the other side of the gates, and joined Harry Wharton & Co. in the roadway.

"Persistent little beggar, isn't he?" said Bob Cherry, half admiringly. "He means to come, so we'd better take him in tow."

The party of six set off in the direction of Pegg. The voice of William Gosling was borne to them on the wings of the storm.

"Come back, you young warmint! Come back this hinstant, or I'll report yer."

But Bobbie Severn was beyond recall. He was hurrying along the wind-swept road with the Famous Five.

Progress was difficult, owing to the darkness and the fierce wind which blew up from the sea.

Bob Cherry's cap was whisked from his head, and it went careering along the road. Bob didn't stop to retrieve it.

"Jove, what a wind!" panted Nugent.

"It isn't a wind," growled Johnny Bull. "It's a blessed cyclone!"

The juniors struggled along gamely. And Bobbie Severn was the gamest of all. He actually forced his way to the front, and led the procession.

It seemed an eternity before the party reached the shore of Pegg. But they gained it at last, and came within view of the boundless, dark-heaving sea.

As they drew near to the water's edge they shuddered to think of the fate which would overtake an ordinary rowing-boat on such a sea.

The wind was blowing great guns, and sheets of blinding spray dashed into their faces.

On sea, as well as on land, the storm raged furiously.

"Not a soul about, and nothing to be seen!" was Johnny Bull's comment.

The juniors experienced a sense of utter helplessness. They strained their eyes seawards, but there was no sign of a boat.

As Johnny Bull had said, there was nothing to be seen—nothing save that wide expanse of dark, restless sea.

"Let's hope that Coker & Co. are over on Storm Island, waiting for the storm to subside," said Harry Wharton.

Even as he spoke, a faint light became visible out at sea. It glimmered intermittently, vanishing and appearing in turn.

The juniors quivered with excitement.

"There's a vessel of some sort out

there," exclaimed Nugent, pointing dramatically at the distant light.

"It may be Coker's boat," said Bob Cherry.

"No 'may be' about it," said Bobbie Severn. "It is Coker's boat."

"But we can't see from here—"

"What other boat would be likely to be out in such a storm?" cried Bobbie Severn. "Coker's out there, right enough. And that must be his electric torch that keeps flashing."

The famous Five would have liked to think otherwise. They would have liked to imagine Coker and his companions safe and sound on Storm Island.

But that flashing light was a sure sign that there was a boat in distress. And the boat must indeed be Coker's, since no other craft would be afloat on such a sea.

With a sickening sense of dread, the juniors realised the frightful peril in which the Fifth-Formers were placed.

"They—they'll never get to shore!" muttered Harry Wharton.

"Can't we do anything to help?" Bob Cherry's voice was tense and excited.

"We can do nothing," said Johnny Bull dully. "Impossible to row or swim in such a sea."

The juniors stood on the foreshore, with the wind roaring about their heads. Their eyes were fixed upon the flashing light with a sort of fearful fascination.

The light kept glimmering and vanishing alternately. And the watchers were seized with the dread fear that it might soon vanish, never to appear again.

"Oh, it's awful!" groaned Frank Nugent. "To think that we've got to stand here like dummies, and can do nothing!"

And the Famous Five wrung their hands in sheer helplessness.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Pluck of Bobbie Severn!

"O F course we can do something!" It was Bobbie Severn who spoke.

The mere thought of remaining inactive at such a moment was maddening to Bobbie. He felt that he could not bear to stand and watch that flashing light until it vanished for ever.

"Surely there's a lifeboat in this place?" said Bobbie Severn quickly.

Harry Wharton shook his head.

"The Pegg lifeboat's in dock for repair," he said. "It went out to a wreck last week, and got badly knocked about."

"In any case, the Pegg lifeboat wouldn't be any use," said Bob Cherry. "They'd never put it out in such a sea. Besides, there would be no one to man it."

"They've got a motor-lifeboat at Pinehaven, further along the coast," said Nugent suddenly.

"Then we must send for it at once," cried Bobbie Severn. "Where's the nearest telephone?"

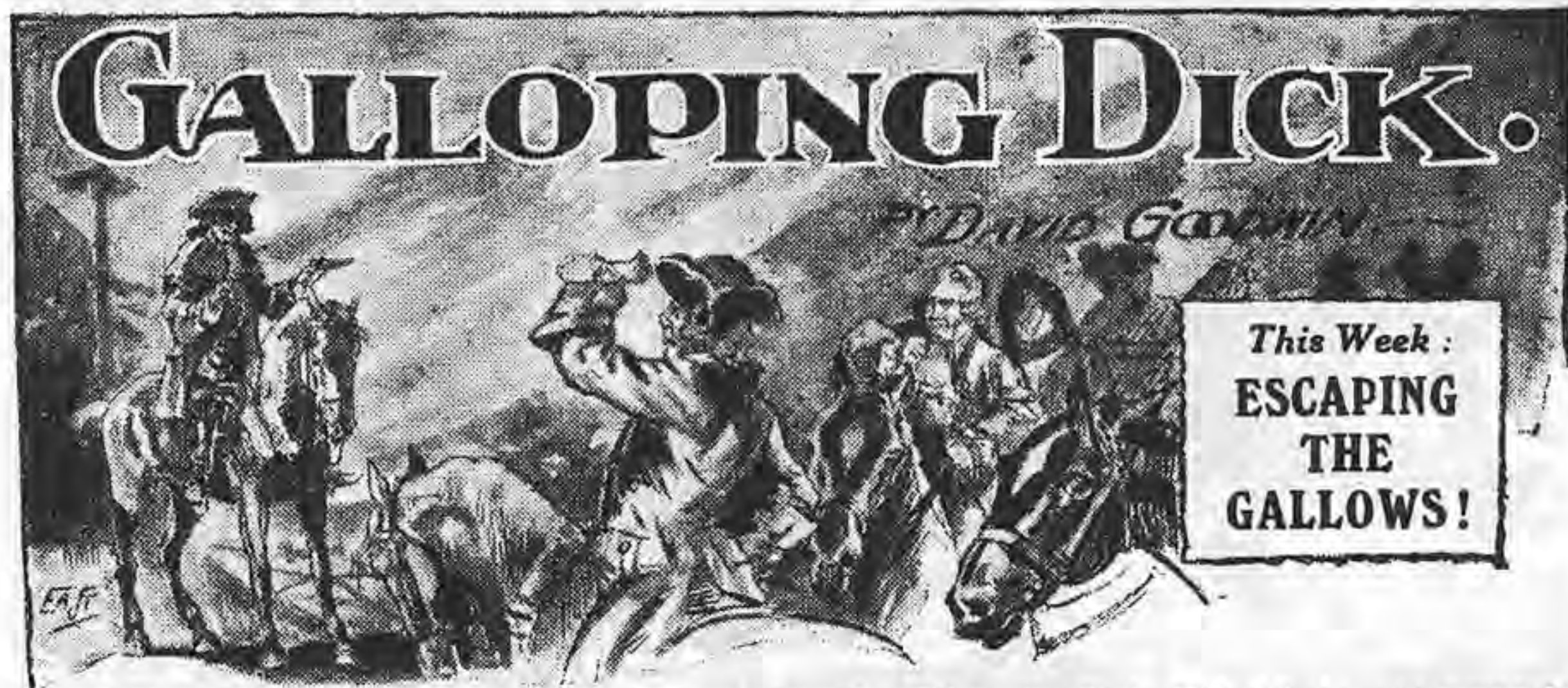
"Cliff House," said Wharton. "You're the fastest runner, Bob. Cut off as quickly as you can, and ring up Pinehaven. Tell them there's a boat in difficulties off the shore of Pegg."

Bob Cherry sped away like a hare. The wind was at his back as he ran, and never in his life had Bob run harder. For every minute was precious. The slightest delay might mean the loss of three lives.

(Continued on page 17.)

360 PAGES! The "Holiday Annual"—now on sale, price 6/-! 360 PAGES!

With his heart full of bitterness against Sir Mostyn Frayne, gamester and rogue, who, in one stroke, has robbed him of a brother and the house and lands which had been the property of the Langleys for generations past, Dick Langley turns highwayman. With a price on his head he roams the countryside, seeking his livelihood behind a mask and a brace of pistols.



**This Week :
ESCAPING
THE
GALLOWS!**

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Boasting Innkeeper!

"HEY, good man! What's up? Is it fair-day in your parish, or have all these rogues gathered together to roast an ox?"

Galloping Dick drew rein by the roadside to let the procession of villagers go past. Not only villagers were there, but a very unsavoury rabble from the towns, many of them far gone in liquor, and shouting and singing as they went. Dick was three days' ride from his own district, and, seeing all this cavalcade among the Wiltshire hills, he pulled up his black mare and asked a passer-by the reason of it.

"Fair-day?" echoed the man with a grin, touching his cap to the young squire, for such he took Dick to be. "Nay, summat better nor that, maister! 'Tis the famous highwayman, Black Michael, as was caught close by here a fortnight ago, tried in Barcombe town, and now they're takin' him in a cart to the gallows on Fumey Hill."

Dick turned away from the villager, and looked with a set face and a beating heart at the grim procession. Six sheriff's men rode by a heavy, dirty farm-cart, in which sat a well-dressed, stern-faced man with a strong, black beard, bound hand and foot, looking with contemptuous eyes at the shouting rabble, who hurled ribald jests at him. Thus was a highwayman taken to execution in the rough days when George III. was king.

"A brave man!" muttered Dick, as he watched the captive's face. "Bound as he is, he makes a better show than the fat sheriff's officers, or the cur-faced hangman, or the drunken rabble that abuse him. I wonder if my end will be like this? No, I'll die by lead or steel before any man shall take me alive to the gallows!" And as the cart passed him he swung his cap off, and cried loudly: "Keep a stout heart, comrade! Galloping Dick gives you greeting!"

The bound highwayman turned his head sharply, and thanked Dick with his eyes. The sheriff's officers started in their saddles, but before any man could answer Dick had spurred Kitty roughly through the drunken rabble, scattering them right and left, cleared the hedge at a bound, and was away in a twinkling.

He was not pursued. Either the sheriff's men had not understood, or else thought one highwayman was enough to have on their hands at a time, and the young rider went on his way as he pleased, reaching another road lower down.

He tried to dismiss the thought of the bound prisoner and the gallows on the heath from his mind, but it kept haunting him all the afternoon.

"There are many of my trade who richly deserve the gallows," thought Dick—"cruel ruffians and cowardly bullies. He may have been one of them, but he did not look it. If I knew he was not, and had a brisk fellow or two to help, I would earn my own death by trying to rescue him. It would be a vain attempt, of course, for there will be a squad of soldiers on the gallows hill to keep order. Peace be to him, whatever his sins! By this time they will have hanged him. They never shall me!"

It was in a gloomy frame of mind that Dick entered a wayside inn as the twilight was falling, and ordered a repast. The hostelry was a rough one, and the meal was served on the tap-room table—there being no parlour—by the innkeeper himself.

"Have you been to the hanging, sir?" said the host.

"No," said Dick curtly. He glanced at the innkeeper, a sleek, oily person, with crafty eyes, prosperous-looking, in spite of the roughness of his house. Dick took an immediate dislike to him.

"Ah!" said the man. "I should have greatly liked to go; we don't get much amusement hereabouts. There is nobody to mind the house. I shall get none o' the custom, either, for the merry-makers will go on to Barcombe now that the hanging is over, and carouse there."

"Indeed!" said Dick shortly. "Then you will make no profit out of the day's work?"

"Nay, nay, sir!" said the host, chuckling softly, and rubbing his dirty hands together. "I must not complain. I have made fifty guineas out of the business."

"Fifty guineas!" said Dick. "How so?"

The innkeeper leered, and stuck his thumbs in his arm-holes.

"It was I that caused the capture of

Black Michael," he said pompously. "You are a stranger about here, sir, or you would have heard the story. By your leave, I will tell it you, for it was a pretty piece of work. Not every man could have done it as neatly."

Dick sat back and looked at the man, who, puffed up with pride, rattled on with his story.

"You see, sir, Black Michael used this house a good deal. It's a lonely place, and he liked the fare. Very free with his money he was, an', of course, I charged him fairish prices, knowin' what he was."

"Well, he made a regular home o' this place at times. He sort o' took to me, too. I'm the man that everyone likes."

"Of course!" grunted Dick. "Naturally!"

"He paid the bailiffs out o' the house once when I got laid for debt, he was that fond o' the place; an' when my old hoss died he bought me a new one. Yes, I did pretty well out o' Black Michael, on the whole."

The man rubbed his hands and chuckled.

"But you can wager your head, sir, I'm wide awake. I don't often let a chance o' makin' a bit o' coin go by. So one day I hears there was a reward o' fifty guineas out for Black Michael."

"Fifty guineas, sir! It ain't to be picked up every day, an' when I see that notice up I knew 'twas as good as in my pocket. But Black Michael hadn't been to the inn for a week or two. He seemed to be fightin' shy. But I knowed how to fetch him, you trust me!"

"He's got a young son at Barcombe that sometimes comes here on the sly to see him. He's the only creature Black Michael cares about in this world. So I got word to him that his son was lyin' here sick to the death, an' I sends a message to the sheriff at Barcombe."

"The sheriff's men—eight o' 'em—hid in my back-kitchen an' waited. Black Michael came hot-foot to see his son—he, he!—an' the sheriff's men nabbed him beautifully—not before he'd stunned three of them, though. So I got my fifty guineas in gold, an' Black Michael's dancin' on nothin' to-night on Fumey Hill."

Dick, who had sat in his chair petrified, breathing harder and harder as the man

Don't miss next Monday's grand highwayman story, chums!

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 813.



"You hound!" exclaimed Dick. "You dare to sit there and brag to me that you betrayed a man who trusted you! Take that, you cringing dog, and that!" The innkeeper howled and yelped frantically, while Dick, bursting with indignation, laid into him with a riding-whip. (See Chapter 1.)

told his story, leaped up with a flushed face.

"You hound!" he cried. "You dare to sit there and brag to me that you betrayed a man who trusted you—a man who made good your losses and saved you from a debtor's prison—for the sake of the blood-money on his head! I would his ghost might come and settle scores with you! Take that, you cringing dog, and that, and that, and that!"

The innkeeper howled and yelped frantically, while Dick, bursting with indignation, laid into him with a riding-whip with all his strength. Then, after besting the knave three times round the tap-room, he threw down a crown to pay his score, and strode out into the road.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Moving Finger!

"PAH!" said Dick, as he strode away to get into the open again after sitting through the darkness. "It is good to be rid of that rogue! He actually gloried in his dastardly trick—thought himself a rare smart fellow! To think of a jolly night-riders coming to his end through the greed of a vile innkeeper!"

He urged Kitty to a canter, mounting the long slope that led to the lonely road over the hill.

"Thank goodness, the hostleries round my district are kept by innkeepers of the good old sort!" he said. "They know their friends. They would not sell me for six times fifty guineas, though they might whenever they chose—"

He reined up suddenly.

"Why, this is the road up to the gallows hill! An eerie place at night, with such a fruit swinging from the gibbet. There will be no one about.

"Beshrew me, I've a strange desire

to go and see Black Michael!" muttered Dick. "Something seems to draw me there. Here goes! Come up, Kitty!"

He pushed on, impelled by his strange resolve. It was not a pilgrimage many would care to make on such a night. The road soon outran the hedges, and passed on to a desolate heath, over which the wind moaned drearily. Kitty pricked up her ears, and went gingerly.

"A cold lodging," said Dick, shivering a little. "Is that our friend yonder?"

He felt the mare trembling slightly under him. Something creaked dismally, not far away, and, shifting his position, Dick saw what he had come to see.

Black against the rising moon, the figure of the dead highwayman swung limply from the rope that hung it from the arm of the grim gallows. The night wind swayed Black Michael gently to and fro, and the dolorous creaking was made by the rope in its sheers.

Dick rode up till he was close against and level with the executed man. He looked soberly at the quiet, white face before him, with the strong, bushy black beard masking the lower part of it.

"Well, comrade," said Dick, as though the man were alive and could hear, "I have come to pay my last respects to you, and I would, with all my heart, that you were riding over the down with me. When—"

He broke off with a gasp of astonishment and horror. Was it fancy?

No! As the hanging figure swung, Dick distinctly saw the little finger of one of its bound hands move, beckoning him.

So gruesome was the sight that for a moment Dick was on the point of clapping his heels to Kitty and galloping as if the fiend was after him. But he soon recovered himself. Plainly it was no supernatural horror. By some miracle the man was still alive.

The instant he was convinced of this,

Dick stood up in the stirrups, grasped the swinging figure, cut the rope, and lowered the man to the ground. Then Dick jumped down and cut his bonds.

Slowly the highwayman sat up, and Dick watched as if spellbound. Black Michael, lifting a hand to his mouth, drew from it a small, carved tube of beaten silver, the outer end of which had been hidden in his beard.

"Brandy!" he said hoarsely.

Dick had some in a flask. Too astonished to speak, he gave it to the highwayman, who drank it off.

"Ha!" said Black Michael, rising up and chafing his limbs. "That's better! I feel a new man again. Why," he continued, turning to Dick, "you are not one of the three! Where have I seen you?"

"On the highway this afternoon," said Dick. "Odd's blood, man, you nearly scared me stiff! Did that silver tube save your life?"

"Ay," said Black Michael, smiling, "and for the second time! It is a trick of the West Indians, and was taught me by an old buccaneer captain. It is sadly hard on the throat, but I have practised it much, knowing it would be useful. I always carry the tube about me, and if I need it, my beard hides the end. No rope, you see, can strangle me, for my lungs draw breath through the tube. Three comrades were to have come at midnight and cut me down, but, thanks to you, young sir, I am free in good time. Whom have I the honour—"

"Galloping Dick at your service."

"Ha! Your fame is even greater than Black Michael's, young as you are," said the highwayman.

And they exchanged a hearty hand-grip.

"And now," said Dick, "I have something to tell you concerning your capture, which I conceive you may not know."

Quickly and curtly he related to Black Michael the innkeeper's story. The highwayman, before Dick had finished, began to pace the turf furiously with grim and lowering face.

"The cur!" he cried. "I was taken in his house, but I did not know he had sold me for the blood-money! I never dreamed it could be! Fool that I was to trust the man! And he owed me loyalty. I was his good friend. I will kill him! Nay, though, that is not fitting. I will not sully my hands with the creature's blood!"

"Oh, as to that," said Dick, "I gave him a horsewhipping on the spot! But, ecod, sir," he added, laughing, "can you not think of a plan to teach the rogue a better lesson? It is simple enough!"

"Nay, I cannot say that I do," said Black Michael blankly.

"Come along, man, and I will show you. It is not fitting the rogue should enjoy the fifty guineas he has earned for betraying you. He must render them up, though he is too mean a quarry to present a pistol at. Now, sir, remember you are not Black Michael, but his ghost!"

"His ghost?"

"Ay. You have a fine white pallor through the hanging, and your voice is excellently hollow. See, here is the noose that hanged you, with the end cut off. Put it round your neck—so! Now you make a gruesome spectre indeed, fresh from the gallows tree!"

"Ho, ho!" laughed Black Michael. "A goodly jest, indeed! You have a pretty wit, Dick! Come, let us get forward, for I am wishful to begin hunting the innkeeper without delay."

Hard to beat, always a treat—the MAGNET!

They made their way to the inn on foot, Kitty trotting behind Dick, and when they arrived there, Dick hid himself behind the porch and waited gleefully.

"Now, Michael," he said, "give three heavy, solemn knocks, and wait till the rascal comes."

The big highwayman smote three times on the door. Presently the innkeeper, who had gone to bed, came shuffling down.

"Who's there, in the fiend's name?" he growled.

Then he flung open the door, and saw before him the huge form of Black Michael, with uplifted hands, dead-white face, gleaming eyes, and the hangman's noose round his neck.

The innkeeper gave a fearful scream, and staggered backwards into the tap-room. Black Michael followed with slow, measured tread.

"Keep off!" screamed the innkeeper. "Oh, keep off! I never harmed you! Why have you come to haunt me?"

"Till the world's end!" said Black Michael, in an awful voice, while Dick shook with laughter outside the porch. "I have come to shadow thee by night and by day, save that thou dost fulfil one thing!"

"What is it?" shrieked the innkeeper, falling on his knees.

"Bring here the blood-money that thou gained by selling me to the gallows!"

The innkeeper, as fast as his quaking knees would carry him, scuttled upstairs. He hurried down again, and poured a pile of golden guineas out upon the table.

"Take it!" he cried. "Take it, but haunt me no more!"

He sank down, covering his head in his arms, and gibbering foolishly, just as Dick strode into the room, laughing till his sides ached. Black Michael swept the fifty guineas into his wallet.

"Come," he said, "upon your hind legs, rascal! I am no ghost, but Black Michael, the highwayman, whom you betrayed for money! Be thankful I do not strew your knavish brains on the floor!"

And he gave the gibbering innkeeper a couple of sound cuffs. The man started up, flushed, and with a yell of earthly terror, fell on his knees and shrieked for mercy. Another hearty cuff, however, sent him scuttling upstairs to his bedroom, almost dead with sheer fright.

"We must divide the spoil," said Black Michael, as they strode outside. "The idea was yours, Dick, and a rare good one."

"Not so," said Dick. "The jest was worth twice fifty guineas to me. The blood-money will buy you a good horse, brother, with which I wish you much success on the road, and no need to use that silver tube again!"

"Good-night, comrade!" said Black Michael. "May many a fat purse come to your holster! It has been a merry night!"

And so they parted, and each went his way.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Baronet's Dilemma!

"**D**RIVE on, idiot! The plague take your long, useless carcass! Why don't you get on?"

Lurching and groaning, the claret-coloured post-chaise rolled painfully along the short cut between the Knaresford and Fenton highways. It was wet and muddy weather, and the short cut was in bad condition, and it

was all the horses could do to draw the chaise along at all.

Out of the window, the fat countenance of Sir Neil Watkin, of Fenton Hall, crimson with rage, cursed the postboy.

"The road be terrible bad, sir!" cried the postboy, a hungry-looking, long-legged youth in rather shabby livery. "I'm doin' all I can. I'm feared we shall stick, after all. Oh, there she goes!"

The chaise blundered into a couple of deep, miry ruts, and stuck fast. The postillion lashed the straining horses, but for all their efforts the vehicle refused to budge. The door was flung open, and Sir Neil jumping heavily out on to the clearest spot he could find, shook his fists at the postboy and roared with passion.

"Fool! Jackass!" he bellowed. "I told you not to come this way! Hold your tongue! How dare you say I ordered you to take the short cut! I'll stop your supper for this!"

The wretched postboy jumped down into the mire, and, urging the horses forward, put his shoulder to the wheel. It made no difference.

"Push harder, fool!" cried the baronet. "Ah, here come some yokels! They shall help. Why, it's the cottagers from Red Mire Farm. Here, Bullock, Grant, come and haul this chaise out of the mud! I shall be late for dinner."

Four honest-looking but very poor countrymen, with hay-rakes over their shoulders, arrived on the scene. They saluted the baronet, and, putting down their rakes, gripped the wheel-spokes of the chaise. They did not look very pleased at the job, but they worked their hardest.

"That's it, pull away, you rascals!" cried Sir Neil. "It's moving!"

The chaise moved forward a foot or two as the sturdy peasants heaved at the spokes; but they could not get it clear, strain and haul as they might. While

they were dragging their hardest, a cheery voice broke in on their labours:

"At it, lads! Ho, heave-ho, and up she comes!"

They glanced up and saw a handsome young horseman, smartly dressed, on a coal-black mare. He bowed to the baronet, with a smile.

"A bad road, sir. You'll soon be free, I hope."

Sir Neil turned his back rudely on the stranger, and fell to yelling at the men again.

"Push away, you idiots! Hang it, you're no more use than old women! A crown apiece if you get it out!"

The young stranger jumped down from his mare, and joined the peasants at their task, pushing heartily.

"Now, then, all together!" he cried. "Whip up those horses, postboy! One, two, three, and out she comes!"

The young rider's weight turned the scale, and the chaise came out of the mud with a rush, and gained the firmer ground beyond.

"At last!" growled the baronet. "Long enough over it, too!" He jumped into the chaise and slammed the door. "Drive on!" he shouted to the postboy.

The young stranger expected to see the countrymen crowd forward for their reward, but instead they merely glanced at each other grimly and shrugged their shoulders.

"Here, hold hard, sir!" said the stranger, in astonishment. "Are you not going to pay the men for their trouble? You promised them a crown apiece."

"What the plague is that to you?" snapped the baronet. "Drive on, idiot! Do you hear?"

"Hold!" cried the horseman to the postboy, in such a tone of command that the lanky youth pulled up, with a frightened face.



"Who are you?" roared Sir Neil, purple in the face. "I am one who won't see a poor man cheated of his earnings," returned the stranger coolly. "Gallop, Dick, at your service!" And the baronet found himself looking down the muzzle of a horse-pistol. (See Chapter 3.)

David Goodwin comes out strong in next week's fine yarn!

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"What in the fiend's name do you mean by it?" roared the baronet, purple in the face. "Who are you?"

"I am one who won't see a poor man cheated of his earnings," returned the stranger coolly. "Gallop, Dick, at your service! Out with your purse, sir, and hand it over!"

And the baronet found himself looking down the muzzle of a levelled horse-pistol.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Squire Ashby Says Too Much!

SIR NEIL gasped, and his face turned from red to white. With an undercurrent of muttered imprecations, he hurriedly hauled out his purse, looked at it for a moment, and then handed it to Dick Langley, as though it hurt him sorely to part with it.

"Only six guineas, and chiefly silver!" remarked Dick, turning the contents out in his hand. "Here you are, lads! Divide it up fairly amongst yourselves."

He pitched the handful of money down on the turf by the roadside, where the four countrymen, astonished and delighted, quickly shared it.

"Now, sir," said Dick to the baronet, "you can proceed. Remember in future that it's cheaper to pay what you owe willingly than to be made to pay it! Drive on, postboy!"

Sir Neil made no reply, but sank back in his seat, with a gloomy, pensive air, muttering, "Gallop, Dick—Gallop, Dick!" over and over to himself as the chaise drove on.

"Well, my lads," said Dick, turning to the peasants, "you've got your crown apiece, with the lawyer's costs thrown in."

"We be mighty grateful, sir," said the first of the men, a big, frank-faced man in threadbare homespun, saluting with great respect. "Bain't us, mates? We ha' heard o' you, sir, and of many a kind deed of yours to a poor man."

"But why were you going to let that man go without paying you?" inquired Dick.

"He's got the whip hand of us, sir," said the man sadly. "You don't know Sir Neil, or his two neighbours—Sir Oliver Bligh and Squire Ashby. 'Tis said they be the three meanest men in England, an' I believe it. They works together all three to screw every farthing from every inch o' land they have an' every man that's on it."

"Are you tenants of theirs?" asked Dick.

"Nay, sir; but we're under debt to them—leastways, to Sir Neil. We lives down by the Red Mire, which is a great bog, half on Sir Neil's and half on Sir Ashby's land. For our debt he makes us work at drainin' the bog, so he'll make good land of it for nothing. As for the chaise, we dursn't refuse; but we knowed he'd never part with a farthing, though he'd promised."

"Ho, ho!" remarked Dick. "I see. These gentlemen need a lesson, and I think I may teach it to them. Show me the bog you call the Red Mire."

They gladly led him to the place, where Dick got rid of them, and they went to their homes.

The young highwayman dismounted and carefully explored the big, shaking tract of moss and bog before him, a kind of spongy basin of land that lay between firm pastures on one side and rising ground covered with pine woods on the other.

Then he rode back to the high-road pensively. Following his rule, he stopped at a wayside hostel and ordered a meal, as though he did not feel a danger in the world. He dined well, and his table was shared by a talkative and bumptious squire, who seemed to prefer the inn to his own board.

"Have you travelled far, sir?" he said to Dick, whom he took for a wealthy young man of fashion travelling.

"From Milton," replied Dick.

"Milton! Egad, sir, that's the place this cursed highwayman hails from—Gallop, Dick! We are none of us safe, sir. Only this afternoon he robbed my good friend, Sir Neil Watkin."

"Indeed!" said Dick, suppressing a chuckle. "May I ask your name, sir?"

"I am Maynard Ashby, of Bickling Manor," said the stranger pompously.

"Oh," thought Dick, remembering what the peasants had said, "this is No. 2 of the 'three meanest men,' then?"

"Is it not a disgrace," cried Ashby, striking the table, "that a man should lose his money to such a knave? I should fear for my own purse but that I defy any highwayman to rob me. Ecod! It would tickle me to nail the rogue and claim the reward!"

Dick, who had been thinking busily, looked at the squire with a knowing wink.

"That is true," he said. "But still you might catch him. He is not always on the black mare. I know this highwayman well, and I know his ways, too. He has been here some days. Shall I inform you?"

"Yes, yes," said Ashby eagerly. "I see you are a clever fellow, and have marked him. Tell me!"

"Well," said Dick airily, "I happen to know he makes his home just now in the Bickling Woods, and this is how I should catch him if I wished to. About ten to-morrow night he will leave his mare in hiding, for he cannot ride over the bogs, cross the pasture-land, and skirt round the edge of the Red Mire. If he gains the woods you will never find him, but he could be stopped on the way."

"Yes!" exclaimed Ashby. "What would you advise?"

"I should take a couple of trustworthy comrades, not stupid serving-men. Sir Neil Watkin might like to join you. There is a clump of alders a few hundred yards from the mire. Let one of you hide in it. Another one could take a position among the willows farther back, and a third by the little coppice away on the right."

"Thus you could be sure of intercepting him, whichever way he passed. The one to whose hiding-place he came closest could spring out, clap a pistol to the rogue's head, and call up his comrades to assist in the capture."

"Odd's blood, I'll do it!" cried the other, rising abruptly.

Squire Ashby, muttering his thanks, hurried away, and Dick left soon after, laughing silently.

Next morning saw Dick for once without the black mare, which was left in good hands. He spent four hours upon the Red Mire, exploring every part of its dangerous basin, leaping from one tussock to another, and learning the intricate paths across it with the skill of the practical snipe-shooter, till he knew them thoroughly. Then he went to the far corner of the mire, where the four cottagers were at their work of delving and dyking.

"Tell me, lads," he said, "what is the amount of your debt to Sir Neil and his two friends?"

"We owes him fifty guineas, sir, among us," said the big cottagers. "'Twas a law-suit he had against us, sir, because our ponies strayed on his ground. He got the ponies, too, an' holds the debt over us to keep us at this work. By fair wage, it's been paid three times over."

"Listen, now," said Dick. "At half-past ten to-night be ready in your cottages with a lantern apiece and fifty yards of good cart-rope, to hurry to me when I call."

"We'll do it, sir," said the big man, "whatever it may be, for we'll do anything you axes us."

The gloom of night had settled upon the Red Mire, and by the clump of alders not far from its border crouched a nervous figure. It was Squire Ashby, with a long pistol in his hand.

Presently, gliding across the turf, came a dim form. Ashby peered at it with beating heart and greedy eyes. It was the highwayman at last, alone, unsuspecting, and with five hundred guineas as the price of his capture bracing up his courage. Squire Ashby sprang out.

"Hold!" he cried.

The active figure of Gallop, Dick leaped lightly aside, the pistol went off, harmlessly enough in the dark, and Dick ran like a deer, pretending to cry for mercy.

The excited squire rushed blindly in pursuit.

Right over the border of the Red Mire they sped, and in a very few moments Dick, bounding like a goat from tussock to tussock of the shaking swamp, whose paths he had mastered, heard the dismal bellow of Squire Ashby as he floundered into the bog and stuck there.

Away went Dick, and, leaving the bog by the far side, he doubled back round the border, where he found the other two would-be captors, Sir Neil Watkin and Sir Oliver Bligh.

Dick showed himself, and the two men rushed furiously after him. In their blind haste, the two pursuers soon found themselves in the same plight as Ashby, wallowing frantically in the mire.

Stifling his laughter, Dick gave a long, clear call, and in less than a minute the four bewildered cottagers were by his side.

"Now, then!" cried Dick. "Two baronets and a squire stuck in the mire, and only one cart-rope to haul them out by! We must put them up to auction! Now, Sir Neil, who'll give the best price for a pull out of the mud?"

"Save me—save me!" bellowed Ashby. "I'm sinking! Ten guineas to get me out!"

"Fifty!" shrieked Sir Neil. "The ooze is up to my lips!"

"Fifty!" repeated Dick. "Any advance on fifty? Gone at fifty guineas! Hitch the rope on, Sir Neil!"

The baronet was hauled out bodily, covered with horrible black mud. Sir Oliver paid seventy guineas for his rescue, and Ashby bid the same sum.

The three mud-caked, crestfallen magnates were held back by Dick till they had given written orders on their stewards for the money, which the big cottagers carried quickly to their houses and cashed in guineas, and Sir Neil had given a full receipt to the debt of the cottagers. Then the two baronets and the squire were allowed to depart.

THE END.

(Now look out for next week's ripping story.)

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THE HEART OF A HERO!

(Continued from page 12.)

Cliff House, the girls' school at Pegg, was in darkness.

Bob Cherry raced up the drive, and tugged violently at the bell.

Clang, clang, clang!

The bell pealed loudly through the slumbering building. And Bob kept on tugging till he got a response.

An upper window was thrown open, and a nightcapped head appeared.

"Good gracious! What ever is the matter?"

It was the voice of Miss Penelope Primrose, the headmistress.

"I'm Cherry, of Greyfriars, ma'am," shouted Bob. "There's a boat in danger off Pegg, and I want to telephone to Pinehaven for the lifeboat."

Miss Primrose wisely refrained from bombarding Bob Cherry with questions. She hastily donned a dressing-gown, and came down and unbolted the door.

"This way, my boy!" she said quickly. And she led the Greyfriars junior through the hall and into her study.

The electric light was switched on, and Bob Cherry jumped towards the telephone.

The hour was late, and several precious minutes passed before Bob was able to get a reply from the operator.

"I want the Pinehaven lifeboat station—quickly!" panted the junior. "It's a matter of life and death."

More precious minutes elapsed.

Bob Cherry chafed and fumed at the delay.

"Why are they so long-winded in this part of the world?" he muttered impatiently.

"Patience, my boy, patience!" counselled Miss Primrose. "They will reply in a moment."

There was a buzzing on the line, and then a gruff but alert voice spoke.

"Pinehaven lifeboat station here. What's wanted?"

In a few breathless sentences Bob Cherry explained the situation. Three of his schoolfellows, he said, were adrift in an open boat off Pegg. They were utterly at the mercy of the storm. Their only hope lay in the prompt despatch of the lifeboat.

"We'll put out at once!" came the reply, with alacrity.

Bob Cherry replaced the receiver on its hooks and reeled back. He would have fallen but for Miss Primrose's supporting arm. For Bob had spared neither effort nor energy during those breathless moments. He had raced at top speed from the shore, and he was exhausted.

Miss Primrose took the junior in hand and gave him a restorative.

"You had better remain here for a while," she said kindly. "You can do nothing more. Why not rest on the couch?"

The old lady meant well; but there was a strange irony in her invitation. For how could Bob Cherry possibly rest on a couch at such a critical time?

True, Bob had done everything that could be done. But rest of any sort was out of the question, until the danger was past.

"I must be getting back, ma'am," he muttered. "My chums are waiting for me on the shore."

"But it is such a terrible night! You will get wet through!"

Bob smiled grimly.

"I can't very well get any wetter than I am already," he said, glancing at his drenched garments, which had received a baptism of spray as well as a deluge of rain.

With a sigh Miss Primrose led Bob Cherry to the door, and ushered him out into the night.

Bob lost no time in getting back to the shore.

His chums were still there, with Bobbie Severn. Reinforcements had also arrived from Greyfriars. Mr. Quelch, haggard and anxious-looking, was striding to and fro. And Wingate and Gwynne, of the Sixth, had joined the party.

"That you, Bob?" shouted Harry Wharton.

"Yes."

"What luck?"

"The lifeboat's putting out at once! It ought to be on the way by now."

"Thank Heaven!" muttered Mr. Quelch fervently.

Bob Cherry gazed out to sea, and he beheld two sights which cheered him vastly.

The light from Coker's boat was still flashing—proof that the boat and its occupants still survived. And the sea had grown calmer. But it was still an angry sea, on which no rowing-boat could venture with impunity. But the size of the breakers, and the sound of their roaring, had diminished.

Bobbie Severn clutched Harry Wharton by the arm.

"How long will it take the lifeboat to get from Pinehaven to Pegg?" was his eager question.

"Twenty minutes, kid, at least."

Twenty minutes! It seemed an eternity—a slow-moving cycle of years. In twenty minutes a tragedy—or a series of tragedies—could well happen.

The vital question was, could Coker & Co. hold out during that stretch of time? Already they must have shipped water, and be in dire danger of foundering. The miracle was that their boat had held out so long as this, in such a storm.

Bobbie Severn felt that he could no longer remain kicking his heels on the shore of Pegg. He did not dare to glance seawards now, for fear the light should no longer be there.

"Coker must be saved!"

The fag had muttered the words to himself over and over again. But he felt that the time for words was past. Coker could not be saved by mere speech. Action was wanted—swift, resolute action.

Bobbie Severn turned on his heel, and dashed into the nearest boathouse.

The place was in darkness, but Bobbie could dimly discern, lying in a corner, three lifebelts, with ropes attached. He gathered them up in his arms, and rushed out.

Wrenching the tarpaulin off one of the boats, the fag emitted a grateful whoop of joy, for Providence had directed his steps to the only motor-boat on the beach. Perhaps that same Providence, with a view to fulfilling Bobbie Severn's destiny, had purposely made the plucky little fellow familiar with the working of such a craft. For only a few months previous the fag had spent a lengthy holiday with his uncle on the Norfolk Broads, enjoying the delights of motor-boat racing. And now the knowledge he had culled was to stand him in good stead. Bobbie tossed the lifebelts into the small craft, which he proceeded to run down to the water's edge.

It was desperately hard work, and in the ordinary way Bobbie Severn would never have managed it single-handed. But in that moment he seemed possessed of a strength which was super-human.

Harry Wharton & Co. heard the grating of the boat on the shingle, and they looked round quickly, with startled faces.

"Great Scott!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"That kid's putting out to sea!"

"Stop him!"

There was a rush of feet towards the boat, but before the juniors could reach the spot, Bobbie Severn had pushed off from the shore.

The fag started the motor, and the next instant he had vanished into that maelstrom of seething water.

Harry Wharton made a megaphone of his hands, and shouted.

"Come back, kid! It's madness—madness, d'you hear?"

Bobbie Severn may have heard, but he did not heed. Wild horses would not have turned him from his purpose.

The boat rocked from side to side, and the plucky fag was buffeted and blinded by the seething spray. But he felt glad that he had taken this course. Better by far, he reflected, to be doing something, than to be one of those "who only stand and wait."

The storm was raging less furiously now. But the sea was still a thing to be feared, and it took the control of the boat out of Bobbie Severn's hands. But it bore him in the right direction—outwards and onwards, towards the light which still glimmered faintly out at sea—the light of Horace Coker's electric torch.

To those who were huddled together on the shore it seemed a mad venture—a hazard which could only end in disaster.

Harry Wharton & Co. gazed at the surging seas, and shuddered.

Well might the poet have written:

"Treacherous in calm, and terrible in storm,

Who shall put forth on thee, Unfathomable sea?"

Bobbie Severn had chosen to defy the terrors of the deep; and it seemed that he was to pay the forfeit with his life.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Safe to Shore!

"IT'S all up!"

Coker's voice was dull and listless. It was the voice of a fellow who has resigned himself to the inevitable.

For a long time—exactly how long, nobody knew—the Fifth-Formers' boat, the Ariel, had weathered the storm.

Coker, Potter, and Greene had passed through a terrible time, and their dreadful ordeal was by no means at an end.

They had imagined that each succeeding moment would be their last.

The boat would have foundered long since, had not Potter and Greene frantically baled her out with the two small hand-bowls that they found among the tackle.

Whilst his companions worked, Coker continued to flash the light shorewards. But there was no answering signal, and black despair had Coker in its grip.

The heavy sea caused the boat to perform weird antics. First it would be carried up on to the crest of a giant wave, then it would be dashed down into a chasm of seething water.

The Fifth-Formers were sick and

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dizzy. If only their craft had been carried towards the shore, they would have been able to nurse a hope of being saved. But the boat was being borne in a westerly direction, neither towards the shore, nor towards Storm Island. It was adrift on the open sea, thrown hither and thither as if it had been a cockleshell.

Potter and Greene, utterly worn out with their exertions, desisted at last.

"It's all up!" repeated Coker.

"Afraid so, old chap."

Potter tried to keep his voice steady, but he wasn't very successful.

"We're shipping water fast," muttered Greene. "And I'm too fagged to go on baling out. Besides, what's the use?"

"We'd have been just as well off if we hadn't attempted to bale her out," said Potter. "We've simply been prolonging the agony."

"My torch won't hold out much longer," said Coker. "The battery's failing."

It was as desperate a situation as could possibly be imagined.

The tempest was beginning to decline, but it would not die down quickly enough to save the exhausted Fifth-Formers.

"I suppose it means the—the end of everything?" said Greene, with chattering teeth.

And the angry breakers seemed to roar mockingly:

"You're doomed—you're doomed!"

The boat was beginning to sink. Coker stretched his hand across to Potter.

"This is good-bye!" he said huskily. Potter gripped the proffered hand, but he could not speak. He tried to, but the words were strangled in his throat.

Then Greene gave a shout.

"I say, there's a boat coming!"

"Impossible!"

And then a voice, a voice that seemed strangely familiar, hailed the Fifth-Formers.

"Hold on, you fellows! I'm trying to get alongside. I've got lifebelts here."

"It—it's young Severn!" cried Coker, in amazement.

Well, might Coker be amazed. It was amazing to think that a boat had been able to put out successfully on such a sea. It was more amazing still to know that that boat was manned by Bobbie Severn, the fag whom Coker had taxed with treachery and disloyalty.

Coker thought he must be dreaming.

But it was no dream. It was reality.

"I'm just going to sling out the lifebelts. Hang on to them!"

Bobbie Severn's voice was wonderfully steady in the circumstances. And his aim was equally steady.

A lifebelt came whizzing towards the sinking boat. So true was the aim that the lifebelt nearly knocked Coker backwards. He clutched at it, and promptly placed it over the head of the exhausted Greene.

"Got it?" called Bobbie Severn.

Coker gave a shout in the affirmative.

"Good! Here comes No. 2!"

The second lifebelt fell short of its objective. Bobbie Severn hauled it back and took fresh aim. He was in dire

peril as he did so, for he was actually standing upright in the wildly rocking boat.

Bobbie's second throw was successful. Coker grabbed at the lifebelt and passed it on to Potter.

"No, no!" protested Potter. "That's yours!"

"Rot! No nonsense, George Potter!" said Coker, in quite his old manner. And he thrust the lifebelt over Potter's head.

The third lifebelt came sailing across the intervening space between the two boats. Coker adjusted it in the nick of time, for the next instant the boat turned turtle, and the Fifth-Formers were hurled into the water.

Even with the lifebelts around them they were far from safe. They had visions of being borne away, and ruthlessly dashed upon the rocks.

But Bobbie Severn heartened them with a great shout.

"You see that light moving towards us? That's the motor-lifeboat, on the way from Pinehaven. This old cockleshell is useless; it's half full of water."

Coker would have raised a cheer, but at that moment a wave surged over his head.

He came up some yards away, gasping and spluttering. And he found himself quite close to Bobbie Severn's boat.

That boat had held out gallantly until now. But it could do so no longer. It was heeling over on its side, and Bobbie Severn's position was precarious in the extreme.

"Have you got a lifebelt, kid?" Coker jerked out the words anxiously.

"There were only three," came the reply. "But don't worry about me, Coker. I shall be all right. The lifeboat will be here in a jiffy. Let's give a shout when it gets nearer, or they mightn't see us."

Scarcely had Bobbie Severn uttered the words when a giant wave caught the boat broadside on, and the fag was precipitated into the swirling water.

For a moment Bobbie disappeared completely from view. But Coker was waiting and watching, and as soon as he saw the fag's head appear above the surface he ploughed his way towards it. Then he seized Bobbie around the middle, and supported him in the water.

The lifeboat came cutting at top speed towards the spot. It was the very latest type of lifeboat—fast, efficient, and seaworthy.

"All together!" shouted Coker. "Let's hail it!"

The three Fifth-Formers shouted in chorus. Bobbie Severn did not join in the shout. He was unconscious, and lay limp in Coker's arms.

"Ahoy, there!"

The shout was heard and answered. The engine of the lifeboat stopped working, and the vessel slowed down.

Sturdy men in oilskins hurled ropes towards those in distress.

Coker and Bobbie Severn were the first to be taken on board. Then came Potter, and, last of all, Greene. They had not been picked up a moment too soon, for all were in the throes of exhaustion.

The lifeboat promptly put into Pegg. Waiting on the shore, weary with their long vigil, were the Famous Five, Mr. Quech, and Wingate and Gwynne. They had despaired of Coker & Co. being saved, and as for Bobbie Severn, they had not for one moment expected to see his face again.



The boat was beginning to sink. Coker stretched his hand across to Potter. "This is good-bye!" he said huskily. Potter gripped the proffered hand, but he could not speak. He tried to, but the words were strangled in his throat. (See Chapter 8).

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But the miracle had been accomplished, and the three Fifth-Formers, together with Bobbie Severn, to whom they owed their lives, were brought safely to shore.

"Thank Heaven they are safe!" said Mr. Quelch fervently.

And the Remove master's thanksgiving was earnestly echoed on every side.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

"Whom the Gods Love——!"

BLUE skies and brilliant sunshine. The storm, which had raged with such diabolical fury for half the night, was over now.

The old Close at Greyfriars looked clean and fresh, as if a water-cart had passed through it.

The leaves lay thick on Gosling's doorstep, and a branch of one of the elm-trees had come crashing down during the night. It lay where it had fallen, a reminder of one of the most terrible storms that had ever visited that part of the coast.

Blue skies and brilliant sunshine! Yet a shadow hung over the old school.

Bobbie Severn, whose heroic action had thrilled all Greyfriars, lay ill in the sanny.

He was desperately ill. He had regained consciousness on being brought ashore by the lifeboatmen, but when he opened his eyes he failed to recognise the friendly faces that were bending over him—the faces of the Famous Five and Mr. Quelch. And instead of talking in his natural tones, he had begun to babble incoherently, wild words and strange. For the fag was delirious.

Gently they had carried him back to Greyfriars. Gently they had tucked him into a warm bed in one of the sick wards. Dr. Short had been summoned from Friardale, and he and the Head had remained at the bedside during what was left of the night.

Coker, Potter, and Greene, who enjoyed robust constitutions, were already recovering from their terrible ordeal. But the fag who had saved their lives had overtaxed his strength, and put his endurance to too stern a test. The excitement and the exposure had proved too much for him, and he was ill—very ill indeed!

There was no rising-bell on that sunny August morning. It was not that Gosling had overslept, though he might well have been excused for doing so. It was because absolute quiet was essential on behalf of the boy who lay between life and death.

Coker of the Fifth was one of the first to rise. The sleep had done him a power of good physically.

Mentally, however, Horace Coker was in a state of anguish. He was haunted by bitter remorse.

When he had dressed Coker hurried round to the sanny. He knew that Bobbie Severn was in a critical condition, but he hoped with all his heart that the fag had taken a turn for the better.

The matron was hovering outside the door of the sick-room. Eagerly Coker went up to her.

"Is—is he better, ma'am?" he asked.

The matron, kindly soul though she was, did not believe in pretending that things were brighter than they actually were. She shook her head sadly.

"No, Master Coker. I am sorry to say that the poor lad is worse." Dr.



The lips of the dying boy were framed in a smile of welcome. Coker advanced towards the bed and dropped on his knees. "Forgive me, kid," he muttered. "Forgive?" echoed Bobbie Severn. "Why, I've nothing to forgive. Don't give way so, Coker." (See Chapter 9.)

Short describes his condition as extremely grave."

"Oh!" That was all Coker could say. A sob came into his throat, and he turned and went blindly down the stairs.

Out into the sunny Close he went, and tramped up and down beneath the elms. The glorious sunshine and the carolling of the birds seemed a mockery.

All Nature appeared to be simply humming with joy and gladness, as if quite indifferent to the fact that a Greyfriars fellow lay at death's door.

To and fro tramped Coker, a prey to bitter reflections.

Potter and Greene came towards him, as if bent upon joining him, but Coker waved them away. He wanted to be alone, to review the incidents of that terrible adventure through which he had passed.

One thought seemed to dwarf all others.

Bobbie Severn had saved his life!

Had the rescuer been Harry Wharton, or Bob Cherry, or even an utter stranger, Coker would not have been so amazed. But it was the fag whom he had taxed with disloyalty—whom he had lashed with his tongue, and with a cricket-stump also—who had saved Coker from a terrible fate.

If Bobbie Severn had not put out with the lifebelts, the Fifth-Formers would never have been able to hold out until the lifeboat came.

"The pluck of the kid!" muttered Coker. "It was wonderful! Not one in a thousand could have done what he

did! He risked his life to save mine—my worthless life. And if he should die—heavens, if he should go under!"

The thought was unbearable.

"He sha'n't die! He mustn't die!" muttered Coker wildly. "Surely Providence couldn't be so cruel? He'll pull round—he'll rally. He must! Oh, he must!"

Coker felt that he owed so much to Bobbie Severn. He desired desperately that Bobbie should get better, so that he, Coker, might make it up to him in every possible way.

"He was my fag. There was nothing he wouldn't do for me!" exclaimed Coker. "And now there's nothing I wouldn't do for him! If he pulls through—pray Heaven he will—I'll do everything in my power to make him happy. He shall never suffer at my hands again. Oh, I wish I could see him, and talk to him, and tell him what a brute I feel! I'm sure he'd understand. But if—if he were to be taken away, and I never had a chance to speak to him——"

Another unbearable thought. Nearly all the thoughts that coursed through Horace Coker's mind, as he tramped beneath the elm trees, were unbearable.

The burly Fifth-Former suffered more acute mental anguish in those few dreadful moments than he had suffered in his whole life before.

And he was not the only sufferer.

Skinner and Snoop and Stott, the real villains of the piece—the cads who had brought about the estrangement between Coker and his fag—they suffered also.

More splendid treats to come—watch the CHAT!

Their natures were not so sensitive as Coker's, and they did not suffer to the same extent. None the less, they were stricken with remorse. They, too, hoped and prayed that Bobbie Severn would turn the corner, and that he would soon be speeding along the high road to recovery.

Lessons proceeded as usual that morning. But very few fellows could concentrate on Greek and Latin at such a time. The thoughts of one and all, from Wingate of the Sixth down to the tiniest fag, were centred upon Bobbie Severn.

At intervals during that long and anxious day bulletins were issued concerning the sick boy's condition.

Hopes rose high in the afternoon, when Bobbie Severn was reported to be sleeping peacefully. But those hopes were ruthlessly shattered when night fell.

Prior to evening prayers the Head quietly announced that the patient had had a serious relapse.

"I will not attempt to dissemble the facts," said Dr. Locke. "The poor lad is in a highly critical condition, and he is not expected to recover!"

The Head's grave words fell upon Coker's ears like a death-knell. He covered his face with his hands, and his burly frame was shaken by a great sob.

The brief evening service was usually gabbled through by the Greyfriars fellows. Boy-like, they attached but little importance to the words of the familiar psalms and prayers.

On this occasion, however, they fervently echoed the words of the old Psalmist:

"I cried unto Thee, O Lord: I said, Thou art my hope, and my portion in the land of the living. Attend unto my prayers: for I am brought very low."

With equal fervour they joined in the words of the hymn:

"Thine arm, O Lord, in days of old,
Was strong to heal and save."

After prayers Coker obtained permission from the Head to stay up beyond the usual hour. He knew that if he went to bed with the others he would not be able to sleep. So he went out into the dusky Close and tramped to and fro under the old elms, as he had done that morning.

The chilling conviction came to Coker that Bobbie Severn was dying.

"Whom the gods love die young."

How Coker hated that time-worn phrase! Thousands of great and good men had lived to a ripe old age. They had not died young. They had lived to help mankind in a hundred ways. How absurd to suggest that the gods did not love them!

To Coker, the thought of Bobbie Severn being cut down in the spring-time of his youth was tragic and terrible. He could gain nothing of cheer or consolation from that empty phrase about the good dying young.

To some people death seemed an overwhelming calamity. To others it was nothing more than the lifting of a latch—the passing from an unhappy and imperfect state to a perfect and happy one.

Coker himself had been very near to death only twenty-four hours previously. And he had been very thankful indeed to emerge from the valley of the shadow.

Life was sweet, life was priceless. And Coker could not bear the thought of Bobbie Severn being cut off untimely from a world in which there was so much joy as well as sorrow, so much sunshine as well as shadow.

Slowly the long hours dragged by. The world seemed to be standing still.

Coker's eyes were fixed upon the lighted window of the room in which Bobbie Severn lay. It was a shaded light, and from time to time he saw the silhouetted figures of the Head or the doctor as they crossed before the blind.

Bobbie Severn's mother was present in the sick-room also. She had been summoned that evening from her home in the New Forest.

A chilling breeze sprang up in the Close. But Coker did not notice it. His thoughts were not of himself as he continued his monotonous tramping.

When the school clock sounded the hour of midnight Coker went to the sanatorium for news. His heart was beating strangely as he climbed the dimly-lighted staircase.

On the landing he was met by the matron. Her kindly face was pale and troubled.

Coker did not need to ask any questions. The matron's expression was eloquent. Bobbie Severn was indeed dying.

"He is calm and quite happy," said the matron softly. "He wishes to speak with you, Master Coker, before—before the end."

Coker nodded dully. He passed on, and stumbled into the sick-room.

He hardly noticed those who were present at the bedside. Bobbie Severn's wide blue eyes were inviting him. And the lips of the dying boy were framed in a smile of welcome.

Coker advanced unsteadily towards the bed. He dropped on his knees beside it.

"Forgive me, kid!" he muttered brokenly.

"Forgive you? Why, I've nothing to forgive!" said Bobbie Severn. "Don't give way so, Coker, old man. I know I'm not going to live, but it's all for the best! I'm not afraid to take the road that we all must take sooner or later, even the strongest of us. And why should I be? You remember what the hero in 'Peter Pan' said? 'Death will be an awfully big adventure.' That's just how I feel about it. The only thing that upsets me is to see you take it to heart so. It's the same with the mater. I've tried to convince her that it's all for the best, and I wish she wouldn't take it so hardly."

Coker had broken down completely, and he was sobbing like a child. And the others in the sick-room were strongly moved. The calmest person present was the one who was so shortly to pass into "the undiscovered country," from which no traveller returned.

The end was not long delayed. And when it came a strange calm fell upon that room of death, as if some unseen and comforting presence were near.

The passing of Bobbie Severn was perfectly tranquil. He fell asleep with a smile upon his lips. And to those who looked on death did not seem such a terrible thing after all.

The Head crossed to the bedside. Reverently he folded the hands over the breast. And he looked down very wistfully at the smiling face of Bobbie Severn.

"He was a very gallant little gentleman," murmured the Head.

They laid Bobbie Severn to rest in a little churchyard in the heart of the New Forest, where his early boyhood had been spent.

There was a simple stone, with an equally simple inscription:

"Sacred to the Memory
of
ROBERT ANNESLEY SEVERN,
who died nobly,
September 7th, 1923.
Aged 12 years."

When the last offices had been performed, Horace Coker was compelled to leave Greyfriars for a time. He thought that life would never be the same again. But Time, the great healer, would soon dull the edge of his sorrow.

But Coker will never forget, and Greyfriars will never forget, the gallant little fellow who was with them for such a brief season—the fag who had been loyal to the last, and who had possessed the heart of a hero!

THE END.

(There is another magnificent story of Harry Wharton & Co. in next Monday's **MAGNET**, entitled: "Montague the Mysterious!" You'll enjoy every word of this breezy yarn, chums, so be sure and read it.)



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Remember, Monday is **MAGNET** Day!



HARRY WHARTON



FRANK NUGENT



BOB CHERRY

THE GREYFRIARS HERALD

Supplement No. 141.

HARRY WHARTON
EDITOR

Week ending September 8th, 1923.



MARK LINLEY



MURREN SINGH



PETER TODD



As depicted by a number of Greyfriars Celebrities.

BOB CHERRY:

My ideal friend is a fellow who is always merry and bright and sunny-tempered. He may be a dunce in class and a duffer at games, but I shouldn't despise him on that account. So long as he wasn't a grouser or a grumbler, I could forgive him lots of faults. The fellow who always has a grievance, and who goes about with a face as long as a fiddle, is no friend of mine.

MARK LINLEY:

I think my ideal of a friend is a fellow who is cheerful without being rowdy, brilliant without being boastful, and a gentleman without being a snob. I should also expect my ideal friend to be generous and good-hearted, and brave as a lion when it came to a scrap. I should expect him to face the strong and to help the weak, and to be kind to animals. Some may think that the last-named qualification is a frivolous one, but I have no use for a fellow who displays cruelty in any shape or form. I have a friend at Greyfriars who answers to the description I have given; but I will withhold his name, because he is no lover of the limelight.

BILLY BUNTER:

My ideal friend is a fellow with a feeble appetite, who turns up his nose at his dinner when he sits down to it, and then passes it over to me. I also have a grate affection for a fellow who is jennerus, and who willingly advances a trifling loan on the strength of an expected postal-order. Mean and stingy beasts, such as Wharton and Cherry and Nugent, will never find a place on my list of friends. I have nothing but contempt for such skinflints! They can go down on their hands and neeze and beg for my friendship, but they'll never get it!

SAMMY BUNTER:

What's the use of asking me to describe my ideal friend? I haven't got a friend in the whole wide world. No one to simperthize with me in my troubles, no one to share my sorrows, no one to hold me by the hand and swear internal friendship. Boo-hoo! Mine is

a sorry plite. I am frendless, forsaken, and utterly fed up!

HAROLD SKINNER:

Frankly, I don't believe in friendship. It's a lot of sentimental nonsense. People are only pally with you for what they can get. It doesn't go any deeper than that. You may fancy you've got lots of friends; but wait till you're down and out, and see what their friendship is worth then. They'll be the first to turn and sneer at you. Bah! All this gush about eternal friendship gives me a pain!

ALONZO TODD:

My ideal of a friend is a meek, mild, and docile person, who never raises his hand in wrath to strike a schoolfellow. He never uses shocking and disgraceful language, such as "Chump!" or "Fat-head!" or "Burbly jabberwock!" He is as gentle as a cooing dove, and as calm as a placid ocean. Moreover, he is not unmindful of the sad plight of his fellow-men in the Cannibal Islands, and he sends them a regular supply of socks, spats, and umbrellas to contribute to their comfort. Alas! I know nobody at Greyfriars who answers to this description, so I am still looking for my ideal friend.

WILLIAM GOSLING:

My ideal friend is the young gent what comes up to me at Christmas-time, or jost before he goes on his summer holidays, and slips a Treasury-note into my willing palm, and murmurs in my ear: "A little tip for you, Gossy, old sport, in consideration of your kind services during the term." I takes off my battered hat to a young gent like that what doesn't forget the poor and needy in the day of their affliction.

DICKY NUGENT:

My ideal pal is the chap who takes an interest in my tame bunnies and my white mice, and who helps me to swell my collection of tram-tickets and sigarett pictures. A fellow who is interested in my hobbies is interested in me. That stands to reezon, duzzent it? And a fellow who is interested in me is natcherally my pal, and i must say he shows jolly good taste.

**PAL
O'
MINE!**

By **DICK PENFOLD.**

When I'm batting at the wicket,
Feeling nervous as can be,
There's a voice that bids me "stick it!"
There's a smile that heartens me.
Whether I compile a forty,
Or a modest eight or nine,
You are ever staunch and sporty,
Pal o' Mine.

When I swot at "preparation,"
And the Latin, French, and Greek
Fill my soul with consternation,
Your advice I always seek.
Prompt and loyal help you render,
And no longer do I pine
To hurl my books into the fender,
Pal o' Mine.

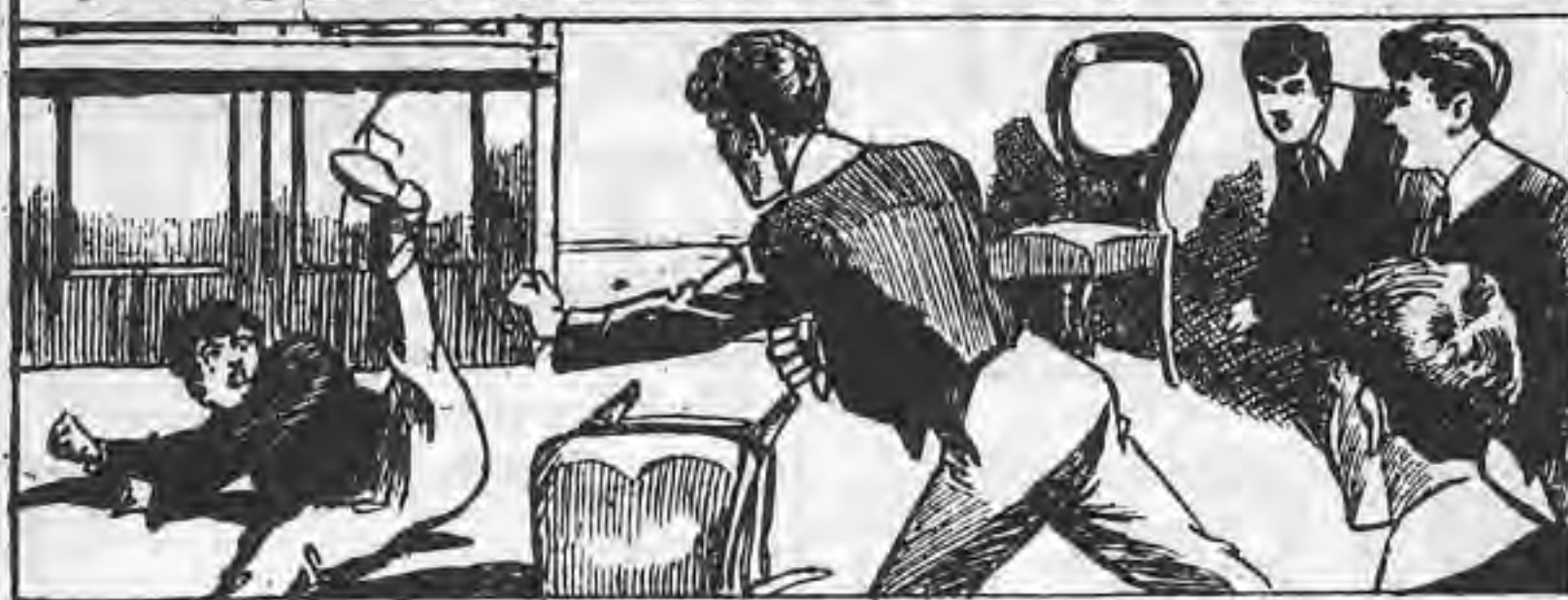
When I'm feeling bright and happy,
You are blithe and merry, too.
You're a most amazing chappie,
Sunshine seems to spring from you.
In a hundred forms of pleasure
We are eager to combine,
And you prove a perfect treasure,
Pal o' Mine.

When I'm floored by dark depression,
And the skies are far from blue,
Then I make a frank confession
Of my schoolboy cares to you.
When the imps of worry chase me,
And I'm half-inclined to whine,
With wise words you cheer and brace me,
Pal o' Mine.

Comrade, we have stood together
Through the sunshine and the showers,
Braving every sort of weather,
Sharing calm and clouded hours.
Though the cynics may deride it,
Friendship is a thing Divine;
Yes; for we have proved and tried it,
Pal o' Mine.

"The Remove to the Rescue!" by Mark Linley—next Monday!

From Friends to Foes!



By MARK LINLEY.

IT takes a very small thing to start a quarrel. I've seen many a friendship shattered by a mere trifle. Staunch pals can often face the big things of life together; but a slight difference of opinion will often wreck the boat, as it were.

That's how it was with Dick Russell and Donald Ogilvy. They were an inseparable pair—the David and Jonathan of the Greyfriars Remove. It seemed as if their friendship was founded upon a rock, and that nothing could drag them apart.

Then came one of those trifling incidents to which I have referred.

Russell and Ogilvy shared the same study; and one afternoon Russell invited Bolsover major to tea. He clean forgot to mention the matter to Ogilvy. He took it for granted that his chum would have no objection.

But Ogilvy did object, as it turned out. He couldn't stand Bolsover major. Russell, on the other hand, rather liked the bully of the Remove, despite his faults.

Ogilvy was very sulky during tea. He refused to eat anything, and he sat in the armchair and read a book while Russell and Bolsover polished off the good things on the table.

Russell couldn't make out what was wrong with his chum. But he soon discovered what was amiss.

As soon as Bolsover had gone, Ogilvy jumped up from the armchair, and turned furiously upon his study-mate.

"Why didn't you tell me you were inviting that boulder Bolsover to tea?" he demanded.

"It clean slipped my memory," said Russell. "But you didn't mind, Don, surely?"

"Didn't mind?" echoed Ogilvy scornfully. "I strongly objected! I can't stand that bullying cad at any price. And it was like your cheek to invite him to this study without giving me the tip. But I suppose you've become pally with Bolsover all of a sudden? It's a good thing to get on the right side of a bully. You're not in danger of getting any black eyes, then!"

It was a bitter taunt, and it was unjust, for Russell, a fine fighting-man himself, wasn't afraid of Bolsover major.

Ogilvy had spoken in the heat of the moment, but his pride would not allow him to withdraw the words.

"You're a cad to say that, Ogilvy!" said Russell angrily. "You're accusing me of buttering up to Bolsover so as to save my own skin. That's what it amounts to."

"If you call me a cad, Russell—" began Ogilvy.

"You are a cad for saying what you did!"

The fat was in the fire now, with a vengeance. Those two, who had hitherto been such staunch chums, were quarrelling over a mere trifle. Hot words had been exchanged, and now came the natural sequel—a fight.

Ogilvy rushed at Russell, and they closed, and fought fiercely.

Round and round the study they tramped and swayed, fighting like tigers.

The furniture suffered sadly in the process. Chairs were overturned, crockeryware was swept off the table, and went crashing to the floor; and Ogilvy, jumping back to avoid one of Russell's straight lefts, put his foot through the glass panel of the bookcase.

Of course, Ogilvy had no chance against such an experienced boxer as Russell. The fellows who had come crowding into the doorway to watch the scrap knew well what the end would be.

Ogilvy took heavy punishment, and lasted out well. But presently a powerful drive in the chest sent him crashing into the fender, and there he lay, half-dazed and hopelessly beaten.

Russell strode out of the study without a word. It seemed that the friendship was at an end—that the efforts of the Remove, peacemakers, who did everything possible to patch up the quarrel, would be in vain.

For a whole week Russell and Ogilvy continued to share the same study, but no word passed between them. Their friendship, however, was too deeply rooted to be permanently shattered.

When Russell was suddenly taken ill—he contracted a serious chill as the result of a cross-country run in a deluge of rain—Ogilvy began to think things over, and he realised that he was in the wrong. He visited his old chum in the sanny, and apologised for the hot words he had spoken. Russell received him with open arms, and thus the breach was healed.

After that, Ogilvy tried to get on better with Bolsover major, for Russell's sake. And on the day that Russell was released from the sanny, Ogilvy actually invited the bully of the Remove to tea, knowing that it would please his chum.

And on this occasion, Ogilvy did not sit sulking, like Achilles in his tent. He waited on his guest, and he chatted cheerily to Russell; and it was the merriest tea-party of the afternoon!

EDITORIAL!!

By Harry Wharton.

OUR merry little supplement deals this week with Friendship. It is a grand, but not an easy subject to write about, and I'm not going to pretend that I can do it justice. The full value and virtue of friendship cannot be estimated in cold print. However, I think my chums will catch something of the spirit of friendship in these pages; and, if so, I shall be well rewarded for tackling this very big subject.

Of course, the only friendship that really matters in this queer old world is the true and unselfish sort. So-called friends are "as plentiful as leaves in Vallombrosa," as Mr. Frank Richards would put it. But the sort of pal who sticks to you through thick and thin, through fair weather and foul, is the one who really counts. If you have such a friend, don't be careless of his friendship, but prize it as you would prize a pearl of great price.

But I must hurry up and finish, for Tom Brown wants to share this column with me, and if I go rambling on, Brown will find no room for his merry nonsense!

HARRY WHARTON.

FRIENDS I DON'T FANCY!

By TOM BROWN.

The fellow who, after you have had the good fortune to make a century at cricket, gives you such a hefty thump on the back that you double up with anguish.

The "friend" who sticketh closer than a brother when he knows that the morning post has brought you a fat remittance!

The fellow who thinks that friendship gives him the right to bluntly criticise all your actions, and pull you to pieces generally.

The pal who invites you to a "magnificent study banquet," and then feeds you with dry toast and dog-biscuits!

The friend with a long list of troubles and physical ailments, who never wearies of reciting them to you, and treats you as if you were a family doctor!

The person who swears eternal friendship one minute, and punches you on the nose the next, because you don't see eye to eye with him on a certain point.

The man who wrote "Save me from my friends!" was evidently thinking of some of the types I have quoted!

"Tales of Mean People!" by various members of the Remove Form!

That which at first sight seems to be mere ill-luck dogging the fortunes of Sir Ralph Connor, racehorse owner, turns out to be something far more material when Ferrers Locke, the wonder detective, throws his overwhelming evidence into the scales.



ROGUES OF THE TURF!

A gripping mystery story featuring the world-famous private detective, Ferrers Locke, and his no less redoubtable assistant, Jack Drake. Told in the inimitable style of

OWEN CONQUEST.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Last Hope!

"WHETTSTONE'S training stables, sir!"

The diminutive stable-lad raised his whip and pointed to the neat, red-brick house, and the adjoining yard and stable buildings that lay in the hollow, as the trap that had met Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake at the station breasted the crest of a sharp rise.

The famous detective of Baker Street roused himself out of the reverie into which he had fallen during the drive.

"Nearly there now, my boy," he said, over his shoulder to his young assistant, who occupied the rear seat of the trap; and Jack Drake craned round to study the buildings and the smooth, green exercise-grounds that lay to their left.

Ferrers Locke fell silent again, as the spirited mare between the shafts was held on a tight rein, whilst the descent was made.

He was thinking of the rather long telegram he had received on the preceding evening, and wondering just what sort of mystery he would find to grapple with here at this sleepy little spot near Oldleigh, in Hampshire.

"Request that, if possible, you come to Whettstone's training stables to-morrow to look into a grave and baffling problem that has left my trainer and myself at our wits' end," it had read. "Trap will meet 9.30 train from Waterloo, and I will be at the stables to meet you.—Connor, Oldleigh Hall."

"Well, we shall soon know what is troubling Sir Ralph Connor, Bart," Ferrers Locke thought; for on the previous day he had determined the identity of his prospective client.

Ralph Connor had only recently succeeded to the title and estates on the death of his father, and a string of magnificent and even famous racehorses had been included in his legacy.

For several years the late Sir James Connor had suffered with a serious heart trouble he had known might carry him off at any moment. So that the risk of important entries becoming void by his death should be obviated, he had run his racers in his son's name.

But whereas Sir James had been an enthusiastic owner and breeder of thoroughbreds, Ralph was known to have had little

interest in racing matters. He had closed the private training stables at his ancestral home, Oldleigh Hall, and given the whole string into the care of a local trainer named John Whettstone within a couple of weeks of his father's decease.

Into the yard rattled the trap, and two men advanced to meet them as Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake alighted.

One was a handsome young fellow of about five-and-twenty, with a slight, brown moustache, and steady, grey eyes.

The other, who must have been slightly over forty, and whose hair and side-whiskers were grizzled, was dressed in riding clothes. His weather-beaten face was open and kindly, though, like the younger man, he looked worried.

"I am glad you have come, Mr. Locke," Sir Ralph Connor—the clean-limbed young fellow was he—offered his hand. "Let me introduce you to Mr. John Whettstone, my trainer, then we will go into the house, and I will acquaint you with the full reasons for my wire of yesterday."

Ferrers Locke shook hands with the trainer, and then made known Jack Drake as his assistant.

A few minutes later, Ferrers Locke and the lad found themselves in John Whettstone's quietly-furnished sitting-room.

"Mr. Locke," the baronet said suddenly, "I have a horse named King of Spades entered for the Prince Edward Handicap. His winning or losing of that event is almost a matter of life and death to me, and I have suspicions that he might be prevented from even starting."

Noticing the glance of surprise Ferrers Locke shot at him, Sir Ralph smiled a trifle bitterly.

"No, I am not a betting man, Mr. Locke," he said. "Nor was my father before me—not habitually. Yet, just as my entry, Sandfly for the City and Suburban, my Derby hope, the Leopard, and my Ascot Gold Cup horse, Salamander, were heavily supported, so is King of Spades for his Manchester engagement. But let me explain."

"My late father ran his horses purely for the sport. For many years it was generally known that he never supported any of them for as much as a sovereign," he continued, as, with trembling fingers, he lit a cigarette.

"Judge of my surprise, then, when, a few weeks before his death I learned that he had opened accounts with certain commission agents."

"Believing that we were quite a rich family, I chaffed my father about becoming a gambler in his old age. I shall never forget the look of pain and remorse that was upon his face as he raised his eyes to mine. He made a confession to me, then, that left me staggered."

"Certain investments of his had become worthless during the war, and he had been so hard hit that he had been forced to raise a large sum by mortgaging Oldleigh Hall,

the old home that has been in the possession of the Connors for upwards of two centuries. He told me this, and of a plan he had formed to clear off the debt, so that, when he passed over, I should find the estate unencumbered and be rich, as I had always expected I should be."

He crumpled his cigarette impatiently between his fingers, and tossed it into the fireplace.

"At long odds, and in my name, he had backed Sandfly for the City, the Leopard for the Derby, Salamander for his Ascot engagement, and King of Spades for the Prince Edward Handicap. He hoped that more than one of these animals would win, for he believed them some of the best of their year. But even if only one of the four was successful the winnings would be ample to clear off the mortgage and set us on our feet once more. My father died, and all four horses which were entered in my name were sent here. Now, Mr. Locke, do you recall what happened to Sandfly, the Leopard, and Salamander?"

Ferrers Locke took a general interest in all branches of sport, and, after a moment's thoughtful pause, he nodded.

"All three horses were struck out of their races a day or so before they were decided, unless I am mistaken?" he said.

"Exactly; because there was no other course to take," the young baronet agreed almost fiercely. "They were 'got at,' Mr. Locke—deliberately injured so that they could not run. Mr. Whettstone will confirm as much."

The trainer nodded.

"Sir Ralph is quite right, sir," he said. "A few days before the City and Suburban, Sandfly was found to be dead lame, and Sir Ralph had to scratch him, so that he did not compete. We thought this was pure ill-luck, and that he had injured himself in some way in his box, whilst when three days prior to the Derby a similar thing happened with the Leopard, so that he could not be sent to Epsom; at first we believed that was an accident also. But, thinking it over, I began to grow suspicious, and I determined that I would have Salamander watched night and day. This I did, taking it in turns with my head lad, Ted Beamish, to watch over the colt. But, even these precautions proved fruitless."

"Ah, what happened?" murmured Ferrers Locke, who was plainly deeply interested.

"What is supposed to have happened is this," answered Whettstone, with a half-doubtful, half-pained expression stealing into his kindly face. "We arranged that Beamish should sit with the horse in his box from nine in the evening until two, when I would relieve him. All went well until a few days before the Ascot Gold Cup, when, going to the box to take his place, I found the door ajar, and Beamish stretched upon the floor. He was stirring, and when I asked him what was wrong he said that someone, whom he

Ferrers Locke's next great case is quite out of the beaten track!

had thought was I, had called to him; he had opened the door, and, receiving a heavy blow on the head with what he had taken to be a sandbag, he had remembered no more. In the morning Salamander was found to be as badly lamed as the other two colts."

"You suspect that Beamish might have lied—that the man who called to him and struck him down might have existed only in his own imagination, and that it was his hand that crippled the horse?" Ferrers Locke inquired quickly, not failing to notice the trainer's sceptical tone.

"I'd hate to misjudge anyone, Mr. Locke, and Beamish has been in my employ since his apprentice days," the trainer answered almost sadly. "Yet the fact remains that he has a large family and an invalid wife to support, and is always more or less at his wits' end for money. Then there was no sort of wound on his temple where he said he had been struck."

The trainer's eyes suddenly blazed with anger, and he clenched his hands.

"By heavens, if I could prove that he accepted a bribe to lame Salamander, I'd take the law into my own hands, and—"

His voice broke harshly. "As a rule, I am an easy-going, peace-loving man, Mr. Locke, but villainy of this sort makes my blood boil."

"You must not jump to too hasty conclusions because Beamish's forehead failed to show a wound," Locke protested. "A sandbag seldom leaves such. Is there anyone else in the stables you suspect?"

The trainer gave a helpless gesture. "Until we can fix upon the culprit, we have got to suspect everyone," he said. "It might be any one of the dozen lads I employ, though, if Beamish's tale is to be believed, it looks as though an outsider is responsible."

"It will be the end for me if it happens again in the case of King of Spades," Sir Ralph said. "Mr. Locke, matters with me are more desperate than most people suppose. I have been unable to keep up the payment of the heavy interest upon the mortgage, and the mortgagees threaten to foreclose unless the whole amount is paid off within a month. Only if King of Spades wins can I do this and save my old home."

"So he is the last hope?" Ferrers Locke said, nodding understandingly.

"The very last!" Sir Ralph agreed, his handsome face grave.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Equine Doubles!

"LET me see," Ferrers Locke murmured, as he rose to his feet, "the Prince Edward Handicap is now four days hence. I should like to see the horse and also the box in which it is kept."

A move was made back to the stable-yard. A wizened little man of between thirty and thirty-five was leading a sprightly-looking

chestnut racer towards the open door of a box. But he pulled up as Sir Ralph halted him.

"Oh, Beamish, bring King of Spades here for a moment, will you?" he requested; and, somewhat to Locke's surprise, John Whettstone laughed, though the detective was to understand next moment.

"You have made the same mistake that I used to make at first, Sir Ralph," the trainer said. "That isn't your horse King of Spades. That's Chinese Idol, a colt of my own, who, towards the back-end, will be almost as good. Beamish, bring out King of Spades. You will see then, gentlemen, how alike the two animals are."

The trainer had taken the halter rope that was about Chinese Idol's glossy neck. He stood waiting with the thoroughbred whilst Beamish, the head lad, opened the door of another box and brought out a second magnificent, upstanding chestnut.

Jack Drake uttered an exclamation of amazement.

"Why, there's not a pin to choose between them!" he cried, as he stared at the two splendid, high-spirited racers, who at first glance certainly appeared to be living duplicates of one another.

"Other people have thought so, and marvelled how I can tell them apart," John Whettstone said, as he produced a wallet from his pocket and opened it. "And look at this."

He had taken from the wallet a number of folded papers, and, as he sorted them over, one slipped from his fingers and fell to the ground. The trainer did not appear to notice the fact, however. He took a photograph that had obviously been cut from some sporting paper, and, chuckling, handed it to Sir Ralph.

The baronet saw that it depicted a smart-looking thoroughbred, and beneath was printed: "Sir Ralph Connor's King of Spades, which promises to become a sound favourite for the Prince Edward Handicap."

Sir Ralph passed it to Jack Drake to see. Then—

"I suppose, in reality, this horse isn't King of Spades at all, but your Chinese Idol?" he suggested.

"Exactly," the trainer returned. "The Pressman who got this snap must have glimpsed him at exercise, and was taken in. But he doesn't know, the public aren't likely to know, so everyone is satisfied. But it's rather laughable, isn't it?"

Ferrers Locke had been closely studying Ted Beamish, the head lad, until he had seen the trainer drop the paper he had taken from his wallet. Then the detective had stooped and picked it up. Folded as it was, he had been holding it between his finger and thumb, and now he held it out to Whettstone.

"You dropped this, Mr. Whettstone," he said. "Now to solve the mystery of how you avoid mixing up these two racers. Ah,

I have it! King of Spades has just the slightest patch of white on his right fore-leg."

"You've hit it, Mr. Locke. You have sharp eyes," the trainer commented.

"A detective has to have," Locke said; for Beamish, who was returning Chinese Idol to his box, was out of earshot. "Is that the one difference between the horses?"

"The one and only difference. Both are four-year-olds, and a similar number of hands," the trainer replied.

"And what is your opinion regarding King of Spades?" Locke inquired, as he stroked the racer's long, velvety nose. "Do you think that, if all goes well with him, he will win?"

"I am positive of it. He is the biggest racing certainty for many years, always supposing he can be got fit and well to the starting-gate," John Whettstone asserted.

"The thing is, will he be got there fit and well?" Sir Ralph put in, a trifle glumly.

The investigator turned towards him, a very determined expression in his keen eyes.

"Sir Ralph, he shall," the famous detective assured him quietly. "You have the word of Ferrers Locke."

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

What Happened in the Night?

ONCE he had marshalled his facts, Ferrers Locke had become alert and active.

He had examined King of Spades' box, to find that it was stoutly made, and that the upper and lower doors at its front could be locked from either side. John Whettstone had cordially invited the detective and Jack Drake to be his guests during their investigations, and Locke had made arrangements for the guarding of the race-horse.

During the day-time Jack Drake was to keep constant watch upon the racer. Then, during the two nights that would elapse ere he would be despatched to Manchester, in readiness to fulfil his engagement, he—Locke—and Whettstone, the trainer, were to take turns in keeping a close vigil in his box.

"I'll take my turn to-night," the detective had said, "and I shall sit within sight of him with a loaded revolver in my pocket. To-morrow night, you, Mr. Whettstone, can do likewise and borrow the weapon."

Then Locke had turned to Sir Ralph and inquired the names of the bookmakers with whom the young baronet's father had supported the three horses that had been tampered with, and also King of Spades.

It was to discover that the late Sir James had split his wagers amongst four well-known firms; but the largest investments had been made with a concern called Field & Company.

Supporting the horses long before their races, Sir James had obtained very long odds, as his son had explained. In the case of King of Spades, Sir Ralph would be entitled to no less a sum than sixty thousand pounds, if the horse won, and half this amount would be due from Field & Company. The position of affairs had been very similar with the three other horses that had been "crooked."

Leaving Jack Drake in the stable-yard, Ferrers Locke lit his favourite briar and walked the three miles into Oldleigh Town, where, at an inn, he arranged for a trunk call to London. He telephoned to a friend of his who was editor of a well-informed sporting weekly, and from him he obtained details of the commission agents with whom the late Sir James had done his business, being told in strict secrecy their standing, the names of the various partners in the firms, and the like. There was a curious little smile upon Locke's mobile lips as he at length left the hostelry and turned his steps back towards the training stables.

Over an early tea the detective studied the current issue of the "Sporting Era," which gave particulars of the horses engaged in the Prince Edward Handicap.

Apparently the public thought Sir Ralph's luck must change, for King of Spades headed the list, and he was forecasted a favourite at 5 to 2. Next him came a five-year-old named Kentish Drover, quote at 6 to 1, whilst another four-year-old, called the Major, filled third place at 100 to 12.

Locke did not look past this third horse, but, for a moment, his long, white index finger rested upon its name, and once again there was an enigmatic smile upon his lips.

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Finishing his tea, he strolled out and joined Jack Drake, who was standing near King of Spades’ box.

“You had better go in and ring for some tea, my boy,” he said. “I’ll take a turn here.”

“This seems mighty slow work, sir,” Jack Drake complained. “So far, there doesn’t appear to be the sniff of a clue, and we are just where we were when we arrived this morning.”

Ferrers Locke shook his head as he lighted a cigar.

“On the contrary, my lad,” he objected, “I could name now the man who lamed those three other horses, and who is under the mistaken impression that he is also going to ‘crook’ King of Spades, if I felt so disposed.”

Jack Drake stared at his master in blank amazement.

“Then you must have seen a lot that I have missed, sir!” he gasped. “Do you really mean to say that—?”

“I mean that I am going to catch him red-handed and expose him,” Ferrers Locke interrupted. “Now slip away and get your tea, so that you can return here. I shall snatch a few hours’ sleep before I begin my all-night watch—a vigil, by the way, that will be kept merely to throw dust into our man’s eyes. Nothing will happen to-night.”

Jack Drake left his master in a distinctly piqued frame of mind. But he had seen that Ferrers Locke was in one of the mysterious moods he sometimes assumed, and he had known that it would be a waste of time to question him.

The celebrated investigator proved a correct prophet. That night Trainer Whettstone saw Locke comfortably installed in King of Spades’ box, and when he repaired there early on the following morning, John Whettstone found both the detective and the horse as fit and well as when he had left them.

Only half-speed exercise was given to the several horses due to go on the morrow to Manchester. But when Locke remarked that King of Spades looked fit to race for his life the trainer agreed, and again he declared that nothing would beat the colt if he saw the course a fit horse.

Leaving Jack Drake in the stable-yard after breakfast, Ferrers Locke once more tramped into Oldleigh and again put a trunk call through to some acquaintance in London. He did not return until late in the afternoon, when he found a telegram awaiting him.

As he ripped open the envelope and read the wire, he uttered an exclamation of annoyance. He turned to John Whettstone, who had given him the message as he had entered the house.

“I’ll have to make a flying visit to town, Whettstone,” Locke said. “This is from my friend and colleague, Inspector Pycroft, of Scotland Yard, and he wants me to join him and travel to Dover with him to identify a man the police there have detained on suspicion of being a well-known International crook. But it doesn’t matter very much, as it is your turn to-night to watch the horse.”

“Not a bit,” the trainer replied. “I suppose you will be back some time to-morrow morning?”

“Oh, yes,” Locke agreed. “You had better take my revolver, and if anyone plays any monkey-tricks, don’t hesitate to use it.”

“I won’t,” John Whettstone answered, as he slipped the weapon into his pocket. “They are not going to get at King of Spades if I can prevent it.”

Ferrers Locke discovered that there was not a train for London for over an hour, and, refusing the offer of Whettstone’s trap, the detective announced his intention of walking to the station, though the weather had taken a rather ominous change.

The sun had retired behind black, threatening clouds; there was not a breath of wind, and the air was stifling, suggesting that a storm might break ere long. The trainer predicted that the detective would find himself in a deluge before he reached the station; but in this he proved wrong.

The threatened storm was still holding off when, after examining Locke’s revolver, John Whettstone seated himself in King of Spades’ box at ten o’clock that night, though occasionally flashes of sheet lightning were illuminating the lowering sky.

At half-past ten a maid crossed the stable-

yard bearing a tray, upon which was a light supper and a cup containing coffee. When she had knocked upon the door of King of Spades’ box, and been requested to enter, the girl saw in the light of an oil lamp that hung on the stable wall the trainer seated near the magnificent colt.

He took the tray, wished her good-night, and rose to his feet to lock the door after her.

By midnight the storm that had seemed imminent since early evening broke with a vivid flash of lightning and a reverberating crash of thunder that seemed to shake the stable buildings to their foundations.

Curiously enough, although John Whettstone had certainly locked the upper door of the box after the maid had left him his supper, it now stood slightly ajar. As another flash of lightning lit-up the yard, it revealed a dark figure tip-toeing towards the racer’s quarters.

The prowler, who held some square-shaped dark object in his hands, paused outside the box and cautiously applied his eyes to the chink between the framework of the box and the partially open door. The lamp still

through the driving rain, and once again the yard was deserted.

Until nearly five in the morning the storm continued. Then it ceased almost as abruptly as it had burst, and it was at just about this time that the telephone at the bedside of Sir Ralph Connor, in Oldleigh Hall, whirled sharply and incessantly, presently awakening the sleeping baronet.

“Who are you, and what the dickens do you mean by disturbing me at this unearthly hour?” Sir Ralph demanded crossly, though his face instantly cleared, as he recognised the voice that replied.

“I am Ferrers Locke,” it said. “Sorry to call you up so early, Sir Ralph, but I want you to come to the stables just as quickly as you can.”

“King of Spades!” Sir Ralph gasped, his face going white. “Has he—?”

“I hope that he is unharmed,” was Locke’s reply. “You probably heard that I was called to London by a telegram, but the wire was just a ruse on my part, and I have been no farther than the inn at Oldleigh. Please come as soon as you can, Sir Ralph.”

Sir Ralph Connor sprang out of bed, and made one of the most hurried toilets of his



A cry of dismay burst from the lips of Jack Drake and Sir Ralph Connor, as they saw the shivering form of King of Spades in its box, with John Whettstone, the trainer, lying in an unconscious heap upon the floor. To all appearances both horse and trainer had been drugged. (See Chapter 3.)

burned within the stable, and the unknown could plainly make out the man and the horse within. He raised the dark object he held, and stood waiting.

Over an hour must have passed, yet the dark figure remained motionless before the box, so motionless that its owner might have been a statue carved in stone. Rain had commenced to fall heavily, and the man must soon have become drenched to the skin. Yet he paid no more heed to this fact than to the incessant claps of thunder and the brilliant flashes of lightning that ever and again made the yard almost as light as day, and penetrated even into the box of King of Spades.

Suddenly there came a tremendous thunder-clap that was like the reports from a number of big guns. It was followed by a flash of lightning more vivid than any that had gone before. It lit up brilliantly the interior of the horse-box. Yet, stay! Was it the lightning alone that did this? It was almost as if at least a part of the momentary intense, bluish glare came from the dark object the watcher held in his hands.

Almost instantly he turned and crept away

career. A quarter of an hour later found him seated astride a hack and galloping towards the establishment of John Whettstone. He could see Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake standing outside the gates. Locke had aroused Jack by throwing handfuls of small stones at his bed-room window.

The gates were locked, but the detective calmly opened them with a skeleton-key upon quite a large bunch, which he took from his pocket.

Locke walked towards King of Spades’ box; but, with a hoarse cry, Sir Ralph dashed past him, and stood staring aghast.

A crowbar lay on the ground near at hand, and the upper door, which was swinging wide, showed signs of having been wrenched open with the long, metal bar. The baronet ran forward, and gave one look into the box, which was still illuminated by the sickly yellow light of the oil-lamp. Then—

“Drugged!” he cried. He spun round on Locke, and pointed excitedly to the box. “You have failed—failed!” he declared angrily.

Ferrers Locke walked to the stable, and glanced within, as did Jack Drake.

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A cry of dismay burst from Jack's lips as he saw the figure of John Whettstone stretched prone upon the floor by his chair, with a finger crooked through the handle of his coffee-cup. The trainer's eyes were closed and he was breathing stentorously, and it certainly seemed that Sir Ralph had been right in his conviction that Whettstone had been drugged. The colt stood before him mangled, but he had lost all his good looks. His noble head drooped, and he was shivering as if with an ague.

Sir Ralph clambered over into the box, searched the unconscious Whettstone for his keys, and finding them, unlocked the lower door. He led out the racer, and groaned.

The horse could only move at a limping walk, and could scarce put his right hind hoof to the ground.

"A pail of water, my lad," Ferrers Locke said, tapping Jack Drake upon the shoulder.

And when his assistant brought it to him, the detective dashed it over John Whettstone with a lack of ceremony that caused Sir Ralph to stare at him in amazement.

The trainer's lids flickered: he gasped, and then opened his eyes. He struggled up, and collapsed weakly into the chair he had been occupying when the maid had brought his supper.

"Wh-what's been happening to me?" he muttered thickly, clutching at his temples with both hands. Then, as if suddenly realising the truth: "I drank the coffee brought me for supper, and—and couldn't keep my eyes open. By heavens, I was drugged! The horse? Don't say, Sir Ralph, that—"

"It is I who intend to do a certain amount of saying, Mr. Whettstone!" Ferrers Locke cut in grimly. "I am glad you did not give yourself an overdose, or there would have been a delay in bringing a rather ugly business to a head."

The trainer staggered to his feet.

"An overdose? What the thunder do you mean?" he demanded.

"Just what I say—that you drugged yourself as a 'frame-up,' after you had struck the horse over the hock with a hammer, which you have now contrived to dispose of!" Ferrers Locke retorted.

"It's a lie—an abominable lie! You must be mad!" the trainer cried indignantly. "Sir Ralph, do you hear this fool's insane accusations? Thank goodness you are not likely to believe them, but—"

"I think Sir Ralph will believe, when he examines this," the detective interrupted quietly.

And from his pocket he produced what was plainly a photograph, and handed it to the bewildered young baronet.

Sir Ralph glanced at the photo, then he uttered an exclamation of angry surprise. For the photograph showed a man kneeling beside the right hind-leg of a horse, with a hammer held raised in his hand. And the face of the "nobbler" was unmistakably that of John Whettstone!

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Ferrers Locke Explains!

"YOU, Whettstone—you! By Jove, I can hardly credit the evidence of my senses!" Sir Ralph Connor said, as the trainer snatched the photo from him and stared down at it with amazed eyes. "Whilst you pretended to be my friend, you spoiled the chances of Sandfly, The Leopard, and Salamander in turn, and now you have lamed my last hope—King of Spades! Oh, you cur! If you were a younger man I don't think I could keep my hands off you! You have ruined me!"

"I commenced my vigil outside the box

very soon after the scoundrel began to prepare his 'frame-up,' by coming out of the stable, relocking the doors after him, and bursting open the upper door with the crow-bar," Ferrers Locke said. "Hoping the storm, which would mean lightning, would rage during the night, I provided myself with a special camera I usually carry in my suitcase. Mr. Whettstone must have thought it was a most vivid flash of lightning when I took my flashlight snap of him in the act of laming his charge, but he seemed unsuspecting. I could have told you yesterday that he was the culprit. I suspected him from the moment he dropped from his wallet a voucher from a firm of bookmakers."

"You will remember, Sir Ralph, that I picked this up and handed it back to him. But this was not before I had seen through the thin paper that it was a bet of five hundred pounds upon The Major, who now stands third in the wagering. When I made inquiries as to the commission-agent with whom your father had taken the wagers over the four horses, and found that one of the partners in Field & Company was named James Whettstone, and that he was a brother of your estimable trainer, my case was as good as complete."

"All along they had made sure that you should not win, whilst they must have raked in thousands in lost ante-post wagers made by the public."

"But, why—why did you not tell me this yesterday, Mr. Locke?" Sir Ralph cried. "Had you done so, I would have removed King of Spades, and he would not have been the hopeless wreck he is now."

"Hopeless wreck?" Ferrers Locke shook his head at him protestingly. "My dear Sir Ralph, King of Spades is as fit as ever he was," he answered. "You shall see for yourself."

(Concluded on page 27.)

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"Ten to one on King of Spades!" welled up in a mighty chorus as the splendid creature owned by Sir Ralph Connor, answering one light cut of the whip, shot out half a length in front of its two opponents and flashed past the winning post. (See Chapter 4.)

He went to a box further along the row. Unlocking the doors with one of his "skeletons," the detective brought out a racer that appeared to be a pure chestnut.

"But this is Chinese Idol," Sir Ralph said, utterly puzzled. "He has no white on his foreleg, and—"

"No; because on the night before last, whilst I was supposed to be keeping watch over King of Spades, I dyed it out," Ferrers Locke smiled. "This horse is King of Spades, and he is ready to race for his life. It is Chinese Idol you are holding. I also amused myself by manufacturing a white splash on his leg with a little pigment, which I fixed with a certain preparation only spirit could touch. Then, with the aid of my skeleton keys, I changed the animals about."

As he heard, as he realised that it was his own horse, and not King of Spades he had lamed, the face of John Whettstone was fiendish. The mask of benevolent kindness the arch-hypocrite usually contrived to wear had fallen.

"You have been clever, Mr. Locke, but King of Spades hasn't won yet!" he snarled. "And, by heavens, he never shall!"

Quick as a flash he dragged from his pocket the revolver the detective had loaned him. He swung it up to fire point-blank at the thoroughbred. But Jack Drake acted in the nick of time. He struck up the trainer's arm, and the bullet whizzed skywards.

Jack sprang at the man and tripped him. Both went down heavily, and for a moment they rolled over and over upon the ground, fighting desperately for the possession of the weapon. Then both Locke and Sir Ralph intervened, and the revolver was torn from Whettstone's grasp.

As excited stable-boys peered from their quarters over the stable buildings, they saw Locke, Jack Drake, and Sir Ralph quitting the yard with King of Spades, whilst, with his hands impotently clenched, their employer glared his hatred after them.

Ferrers Locke, Jack Drake, and Sir Ralph Connor stood in the grand-stand at Manchester, eagerly watching the horses for the big race parading prior to cantering away to the starting-gate.

After the storm of two nights before glorious weather had set in, and the warm sunshine shone on the polished coats of the nine horses due to compete, the sheen of which vied with the gorgeous silks of their jockeys.

King of Spades, looking a picture, was first away to the starting point, and he was followed by the horse that carried John Whett-

stone's money, the Major, who was highly thought of and "expected" by his connections, and who now shared co-favouritism with Sir Ralph's chestnut. Kentish Drover, also well fancied, was galloped off next. The rest of the small field followed, and an expectant hush fell upon the vast crowds, as the start was awaited.

In another part of the stand John Whettstone stood with his glasses in his hands and his lined face was anxious. He had the information that the Major would be a "good thing" without King of Spades in the field, and had backed him when he had stood at 20 to 1. There had been a time when he had felt that the ten thousand pounds he stood to win over the colt was as good as in his pocket. But with the "King" a starter, much of his confidence had gone.

The flag fell, and, to the usual roar of "They're off!" the nine horses leapt away in a line.

For over a furlong they did little more than canter, for the Prince Edward Handicap distance is two miles, and none had begun really to race as yet.

On, on over the green turf they came, with King of Spades plainly chaling under the dawdling pace. Then, the well-known jockey upon him, Vic Crawford, knowing he could stay every inch of the distance, let him have his head, and instantly the "King" shot ahead of the others, moving with the long, easy stride that was so characteristic of him.

The pace quickened from that moment, for the Major moved up on close terms with the leader, with the others streaming out in a line behind. An outsider called Sea Bath was last, and second last was Kentish Drover. The latter was, however, galloping easily and plainly had plenty in hand.

The field remained thus for a mile or more, the speed of the running steadily improving, as King of Spades, who was still in the van, covered furlong after furlong. Then an excited murmur ran through the onlookers. The major had noticeably improved his position, and was challenging King of Spades, whilst, responding to the hands of his jockey, Kentish Drover was overhauling horse after horse, and drawing up with the leaders.

Approaching the last turn, Kentish Drover was at the flanks of the Major, who was now almost neck and neck with King of Spades. Four lengths behind, an animal named Saturn was gamely speeding along, his jockey perhaps hoping for some accident that would give him the race.

Round the turn, King of Spades, the Major and Kentish Drover swept, the second-named now on terms with the "King," and with Kentish Drover fast drawing up.

Saturn was left hopelessly in the rear, and the three leading colts thundered down almost in a line towards the winning-post. For a quarter of a mile they remained thus, neither of the three seeming to gain any advantage, and the fingers of Sir Ralph shook slightly as he watched through his glasses.

Only fifty yards to go now, and all three jockeys hard at work with their mounts. The names of the leaders were shouted in turn by the watching crowds, as, stride by stride, neck and neck, they thudded onwards. As they came within a dozen yards of the post Vic Crawford touched King of Spades with his whip for the first time.

"King of Spades! King of Spades w-i-n-s!" "Ten to one on King of Spades!" welled up in a mighty roar.

And it was right. The one light cut reminded the splendid creature that the time had come when he must do his best, and, with a wonderful finishing burst, he shot out half a length in front of his two attendants.

It was thus that, an instant later, he dashed past the winning-post, with the Major and Kentish Drover dead-heating for second place.

John Whettstone waited for the "all right," then viciously tore up a voucher he took from his wallet. Whilst away in his palatial offices in the West End, as the result came through, his brother James, in a fit of insensate rage, swung up a chair and smashed to atoms a perfectly good and costly tape machine.

He knew that, to keep his reputation and clients, he must pay out the large amount Sir Ralph had won from him. Thus were the two rascally brothers punished in their own coin, as Sir Ralph put it.

In the grand-stand Ferrers Locke turned to the jubilant baronet, and held out his hand.

"Congratulations, Sir Ralph!" he said. "No, no!"—as, with his eyes alight with gratitude, the baronet opened his lips to speak. "Don't say you owe it all to me. It's a little brown dye and a stick of white grease-paint that you have to thank for the win that is going to save that fine old place of yours down at Oldleigh."

THE END.

(Don't miss the opening chapters of our grand new serial, with Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake as the central figures, starting in next Monday's MAGNET. The title? "THE BROTHERHOOD OF THE WHITE HEATHER!" Something to shout about!)

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Walter Bryan, 24, Rider Haggard Street, Pretoria, Transvaal, South Africa, wishes to correspond with readers anywhere; ages 14-17; interested in stamps, and amateur magazines, as he wishes to contribute to these periodicals.

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