

THE YELLOW CLAW! Magnificent Stage and Detective Serial, introducing Ferrers Locke, starts this week!

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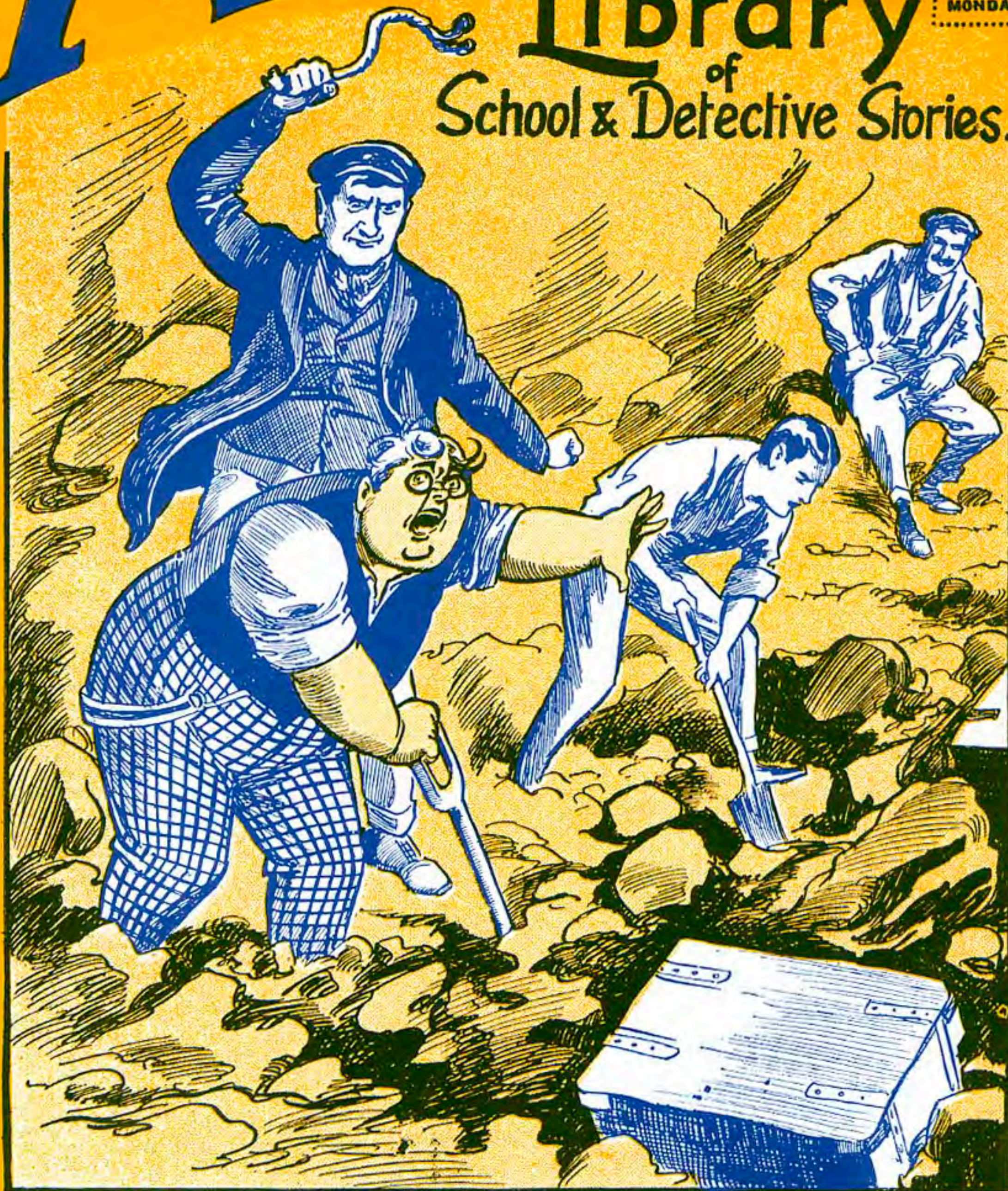
Week ending February 9th, 1924.

The Magnet 2^d

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School & Detective Stories.

EVERY
MONDAY.



"HARD LABOUR" FOR LORD MAULEVERER AND BILLY BUNTER!

(A "striking" incident from the long complete story of Harry Wharton & Co., inside.)

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A STIRRING STORY OF THE AUSTRALIAN MOUNTED POLICE.



THE GOLD ESCORT!

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Chasm!

FOR gloomy and terrific grandeur, there is probably nothing in all Australia to match the Garwarrah Pass, by which the River Torridge breaks its way across the black mass of the Brendon Range.

After the discovery of the Barton Gold-fields, which lie on the tableland at the back of the mountains, a road was constructed along the side of the river gorge.

This is now a fine wide carriage way, well metalled and fenced, but at one time it was a mere shelf cut in the living rock, impassable for anything but foot passengers and pack horses.

Late one afternoon a long procession came winding down the steep pass. It was a gold convoy on its way to the coast. A dozen pack horses, laden with wealth that might have made a king envious, were under the care of three teamsters, and at their head rode an escort of two mounted policemen in their dark, handsome uniforms.

"This place gives me the shivers," remarked Bob Glennie, a well knit, muscular man of middle height.

"Faith, I'm wishing we were well out of it, Bob," replied the other, a tall, slight, good-looking Irishman, by name Peter Denison. "But it's not the scenery that worries me, 'tis the gold"—he shivered as he spoke.

He was quite right. July is mid-winter in Australia, and up at this height the wind was bitter. The sky was grey, and the light rapidly failing. To the right, cliffs towered into the very clouds; from the unseen depths to the left came up the hoarse brawl of the torrent.

For some distance they rode in silence. Suddenly they came to a place where the rocks to the right were cleft as if by a giant's knife, and a narrow pathway sloped away, rounding upwards into the gloom.

"That's a rum-looking place," observed Glennie. "Do you know where the path leads to?"

"Didn't ye ever hear of Mad Niggs?" exclaimed the other, astonished.

"No! Who's he?"

"Faith, that's what no one knows! But he lives up there."

Glennie laughed.

"Lives up there! Nonsense, Peter!"

"Tis the truth I'm telling you," answered Denison. "He came there two years ago, and built a cabin up at the top of that gully. They say he collects things—beetles, you know, and plants."

"Ugh! I don't admire his taste in choice of residence," returned Glennie, turning up his collar, for the wind was increasing. He looked round. "I wish to goodness we could hurry those brutes of horses a bit. We

shn't be in Charlestown till long after dark, at this rate."

They turned a sharp angle of cliff, and out in the distance, far below them, specks of light twinkled up through the darkness. They were the lights of Charlestown, where the convoy was to spend the night. Beyond the rock corner the pass became a little wider, and the cliffs less steep, and patched with clumps of scrub.

"Eight miles more!" remarked Denison. "Hurrah for supper!"

The words were hardly out of his mouth when a fragment of stone suddenly rattled down from the rocks to the right, and striking the pass, leaped over into the depths of the gorge below. Instantly both troopers reined in their horses. They knew that stones do not fall without being moved either by animals or men.

The action saved their lives, for next instant a patch of scrub to the right spat flame, and half a score of bullets swept the pass and spattered against the rocks on the far side of the gorge.

Glennie's deep voice rang out:

"Men, turn the horses, and take them back up the pass!"

As he spoke, there came a fresh volley from the scrub. A bullet struck his horse. It reared. With one spring he was out of the saddle—only just in time. The poor brute dropped over to the left, and vanished into the blackness of the gorge.

Next moment Denison's horse was down, stone dead, shot through the head. Another bullet scarred Glennie's shoulder, but almost by a miracle neither of the troopers was badly hit.

"Down behind the horse!" Glennie heard his chum cry.

He dropped, and from this cover they both began to return the fire of their unseen enemies. But the darkness which had so far saved them prevented them from seeing their enemies. They could not tell where they were, nor how many.

The shooting from the scrub ceased.

"They're thriving to surround us," whispered Denison sharply, in Glennie's ear. "We must get back to the corner."

"You're right. You go first! I'll keep on shooting."

"Ye'll not," said Denison angrily.

"Together, then," answered Glennie.

They were only just in time. Running, bent double, and close under cover of the rocks, they had barely reached the angle before two men leaped down from above, almost on top of them. Denison's pistol cracked, and one, with an ugly scream, reeled and fell backwards. The other, a great, lanky fellow, actually touched Glennie as he dropped into the pass. On the spur of the moment the trooper let drive with his fist, and was lucky enough to catch his assailant on the point of the jaw. The man dropped like a log, and the

troopers darted round the sharp corner just as at least half a dozen more men came charging up the hill towards them.

"Faith, we've got our hands full, I'm thinking," remarked Denison whimsically. He had all the Irishman's delight in a tussle against odds. At present he was actually enjoying himself.

But upon Glennie, who was the senior of the two, and a stolid Saxon, the responsibility of the convoy weighed heavily. He knew that this attack must have been carefully planned, and that in all probability its leader was Matt Dowson, the most dangerous and desperate criminal in the district. If it were he, there would be men placed to cut off their retreat. They would be between two fires.

At that very moment, as if to prove the truth of his suspicions, a rattle of shots came from the distance, far up the pass behind them.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Attack on the Pack Train.

PETER, they're attacking the pack train. Hurry after them, and turn them into the cross canyon."

"An' what'll you do?" replied the Irishman quickly. There was keen anxiety in his voice.

"Hold 'em off here and join you later, if I can. Good-bye, lad!"

Denison melted away into the darkness. Glennie, tight against the rock, waited, listening intently. He heard muttered orders, and could almost swear to Dowson's voice. But he could not distinguish words.

There came a fresh rush. As the first man appeared round the angle, the heavy bullet of Glennie's revolver met him. He leaped into the air, and with a horrible shriek fell plump into the abyss.

"Back, and then all together!" came a hoarse command. Ah, it was Dowson! Glennie knew that he would have no chance if the robbers obeyed. He turned, and, running with all his might, sped up the pass after Denison.

Shots crackled, bullets whistled around him. But luck and the darkness befriended him, and he swung round to the left into the cross canyon, unhurt.

"Hands up!" came a ringing order. Then "It's you, Glennie," in Denison's voice. "Thank Heaven for that!"

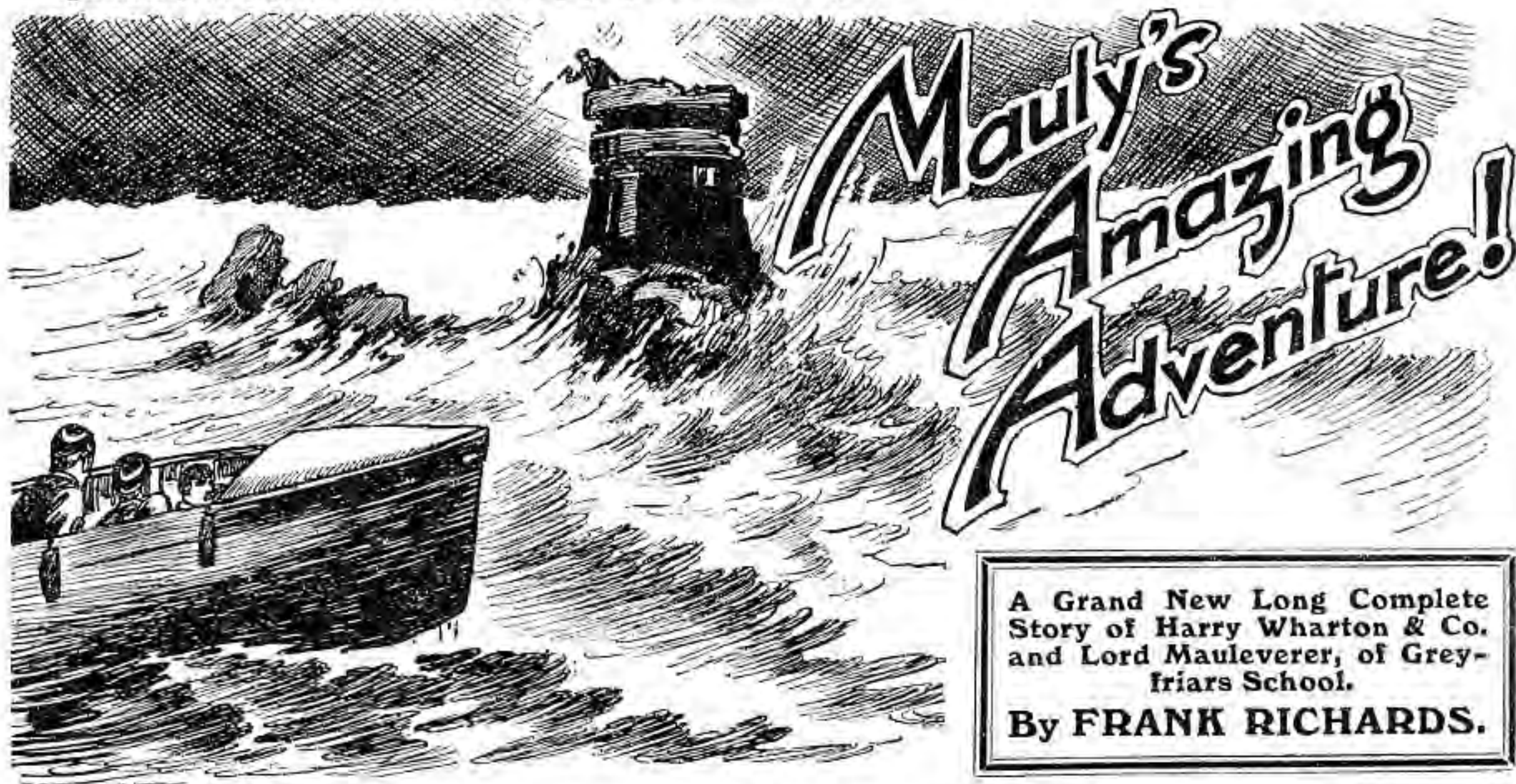
"Where are the horses?" gasped Glennie. "Up here. I've ordered Stringer to take them up to the top, and unload the gold in Migs' cabin."

"Good man! Then we must hold this place till they've finished."

"There are more of the gang up the hill." "I know it. Here they come! Take shelter!"

(Continued on page 26.)

Lord Mauleverer has a natural antipathy to work of any kind—he much prefers to linger in a state of idleness and repose. But most of us are at some time or another compelled to do the things we like least, and so it turns out with Mauly. He has to work—spade work at that. While Mauly works you will scream with laughter; there is something decidedly funny in the picture of the Slacker of the Remove, his sleeves rolled back and the perspiration falling from his noble brow, plying a workman's spade.



A Grand New Long Complete
Story of Harry Wharton & Co.
and Lord Mauleverer, of Grey-
friars School.

By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Mauly Wakes Up!

"WHAT about Mauly?"

Bob Cherry asked that question.

The Famous Five of the Remove at Greyfriars were gathered in Study No. 1. They had their overcoats on, and were ready to go out. Tea was over in that famous apartment, and Harry Wharton & Co. had rushed through their prep, so that by half-past five they were free for the evening.

Harry Wharton had obtained six late passes from Wingate. The heroes of the Remove had decided to visit the cinema at Courtfield, in order to see a new "super-feature" called "The Pioneer Peer." And Lord Mauleverer was going with them.

It was not often that Mauly went to the pictures; indeed, it was quite unusual for his youthful lordship to do anything in his leisure hours except sleep and generally take things easy. Mauly was not an energetic youth. He was known as the Slacker of Greyfriars. So long as he was let alone to recline in undisturbed repose in his study, his soul craved for nothing more. It was only when Harry Wharton & Co. yanked him down to footer practice that he roused himself—and then it was quite involuntary, so far as Mauly himself was concerned.

"Yes, what about Mauly?" said Frank Nugent. "He promised to be ready by now. It's time he put in an appearance."

"We're all ready, so I think we'd better go along and rout him out," said Harry Wharton. "I hardly expected Mauly to keep his appointment. He's so jolly slow."

"The slowness of the esteemed and ludicrous Mauly is truly terrific!" murmured Hurree Singh, in his peculiar English.

The Famous Five left Study No. 1 and went along to the sumptuous apartment that was occupied exclusively by Lord Mauleverer.

Arriving outside the door, they paused. From within the study they heard deep, sonorous sounds of snoring.

"My hat!" exclaimed Frank Nugent.

"He's asleep! The lazy chump!"

"The chortling fathead!" said Bob Cherry. "He must have forgotten his promise to come to the cinema with us!"

"Kim on!" said Johnny Bull grimly.

He opened the door, and the chums of the Remove entered.

Lying on a luxurious sofa in an attitude of sweet repose was the aristocratic form of Lord Mauleverer. Mauly was fast asleep, and the noisy entry of Harry Wharton & Co. did not wake him.

The Famous Five exchanged glances.

"Look at the burbling dormouse!" gasped Nugent. "Snoozing like the Matron's cat, when he ought to be ready to start for Courtfield with us! Mauly takes the giddy biscuit!"

Bob Cherry gave a chuckle.

"We'll soon rouse him from his slumbers!" he said. "Take hold of the sofa!"

The Famous Five all bent down and grasped the under side of the sofa with their hands.

"Lift!" grinned Bob.

They raised the sofa on high. Mauly slumbered on in blissful ignorance of what was going on.

"Now—heave!" said Bob.

The Famous Five heaved.

Mauly went whirling off the sofa into space, and he awoke with a startled yell. Next minute he landed on the hearthrug with a concussion that fairly made the windows rattle.

Thud!

"Yaroooooogh!"

"There!" said Bob Cherry, when he and his chums had set down the sofa in its original place. "Thus are the sleepy awakened! Are you awake now, Mauly, or are those horrible noises you are making merely the result of a nightmare?"

"Yow-wow! Yah! Ow! Begad! Oh dear! Wowp!" gasped Lord Mauleverer.

He sat up on the hearthrug and blinked

round him with quite a dazed expression, wondering whether the school had suddenly collapsed, or whether an earthquake had happened.

The Famous Five roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Groooooogh! Begad, you awful bounders! Yowp!" gasped Mauly, rising slowly and painfully to his feet. "What the thump do you mean by it, begad?"

"What the merry dickens do you mean by snoozing, when you promised to come to the Courtfield Cinema with us!" demanded Harry Wharton.

Mauly gave a start.

"Oh, begad! I—I had forgotten that!"

The Famous Five glared at him.

"Well, now we've reminded you, Mauly, what about it?" said Bob Cherry.

Mauly limped over to the sofa and sat down.

"Don't bother me now, dear boys, I'm tired!" he said.

"Tired!" roared Johnny Bull. "You're always tired, Mauly! You've got to come to Courtfield with us! Wingate's issued you a pass!"

"Yaw-aw-aw! Can't to-day! Too much fag!" said Mauly, closing his eyes.

Harry Wharton & Co. wasted no more time in words. They grasped Mauly, whirled him off the sofa, and gave him four hard bumps on the floor.

Lord Mauleverer roared and struggled wildly.

"Yarooooogh! Yah! Leggo! You rotters!"

"Where's his overcoat?" said Wharton, looking round. "Fetch it, Inky—and his cap!"

Inky fetched Mauly's overcoat and cap.

Bob Cherry rammed Mauly's cap on that bewildered youth's head, whilst Harry Wharton, Nugent, and Johnny Bull between them got Mauly into his overcoat.

By the time that operation was finished the schoolboy earl was wide awake and gasping.

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"Begad! You rough rollers! Groogh! I'll—"

"You'll come along with us now!" said Harry Wharton. "You've delayed us nearly ten minutes as it is, Mauly, you blithering fathead! We've just got time to catch the train to Courtfield, if we hurry. Are you coming?"

"Begad! Can't you fellows leave a chap alone when he's fagged out?" said Mauly in a plaintive voice. "I don't want to go to the pictures! You fellows can go without me!"

"No we can't!" said Harry Wharton flatly. "We're going to take you along, because the exercise will do you good. You've no right to be slacking on a sofa, Mauly. You want a change, and some exercise. Grab him, chaps! We've got to hustle!"

Bob Cherry took one of Mauly's arms, and Frank Nugent the other, and they swept Mauly out of the room and along the Remove passage.

Mauly went, protesting wildly.

He was rushed down the stairs and across the quadrangle to the school gates. He arrived there quite out of breath. Harry Wharton showed Gosling the passes that Wingate had issued, and then the Removites turned their footsteps along Friardale Lane towards the village.

Harry Wharton & Co. set a brisk pace, and Mauly, hemmed in between Bob Cherry and Nugent, simply had to keep up with them or fall over.

"Groooogh! Begad, this isn't a walkin' competition!" he gasped breathlessly. "Not so fast, you rotters!"—puff—"You're makin' me quite out of breath, begad!"

"Pull your socks up, Mauly!" grinned Bob Cherry, who, with Nugent, was walking at a furious rate, with Mauly puffing and blowing in between them. "Fine evening for walking—what? Don't drag!"

"Groooogh! Begad! You beasts! Ooooooogh! Oh dear!"

Mauly had never walked so fast in all his life.

The Famous Five did not allow the pace to relax, and they reached Friardale in record time.

Perspiration was pouring from Mauly's brow, and he was puffing like a grampus by the time he reached the station.

"My hat! We're only just in time! The train's in!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "We shall have to run for it! Come on!"

"Run, Mauly!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Ow! Begad! I can't! Oh dear! Stop! Groooogh! Yarooooogh!"

Mauly was simply whizzed into the station-yard, through the barrier, and along the platform. The heroes of Greyfriars did not wait to purchase their tickets, despite the wrathful roars of the gate-porter.

The guard had waved his flag, and a warning hoot came from the engine.

Inky darted forward and dragged open the door of an empty compartment just as the train began to move.

"In with Mauly!" gasped Harry Wharton.

Bob Cherry and Nugent rushed their captive alongside the train, and while Inky ran with the train and held the door open, they pitched Mauly headlong into the compartment.

"Yaroooooogh!"

"You young rips! Stand away there!" shouted the guard.

"Rats!" gasped Johnny Bull. "Tumble in, kids!"

The Famous Five tumbled into the carriage—quite literally, for in their haste they fell over the recumbent form of Lord

Mauleverer on the floor, and they trod him underfoot.

Dismal howls arose from the luckless lord.

"Yarooooogh! Yah! Woooooogh! Gerroff! Oh, begad! Wow-wow!"

"Shut the door!" roared Bob Cherry, who was sitting on Mauly's head.

Slam!

Harry Wharton shut the carriage door just as the train was passing the signal-box at the end of the platform.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Dished!

"**W**HEW!" gasped Frank Nugent. "Jolly near thing, that!"

"Yes, rather!" said Harry Wharton. "We only just did it! This train will get us to Courtfield in time for us to see the whole performance. We can get back to Greyfriars by half-past nine. Hallo! Cheer up, Mauly! What are you making those noises for?"

"Groooogh! I'm hurt, begad!" gasped Mauly, collapsing in a seat and glaring almost homicidally at his Form-fellows. "Pon my word, I don't often get into a temper, but you fellows are the limit! Wow-wow! Look at me!"

Bob Cherry cocked his head on one side and subjected Mauly to a careful scrutiny.

"H'm! You've certainly been knocked about a bit, Mauly!" he observed. "You've got a smudge of mud on your boko. I think that came from my hoof, because I faintly remember treading on your face. And your tie is dangling at the back of your neck, and altogether you look a wreck. But cheer up! It was your own fault, you know. You shouldn't be such a slacker!"

"Groooogh!" gasped Mauly.

By the time the train reached Courtfield, Mauly, with the aid of Harry Wharton & Co., had managed to make himself more presentable.

Now, quite resigned to his fate, he accompanied them to the Kinema in the High Street. Harry Wharton took the tickets, and they all entered into the inner darkness.

The cinema was well filled, but the heroes of Greyfriars obtained seats together in the "one-and-three." An automatic piano was grinding out a somewhat discordant melody to accompany a comedy.

The comedy was a very funny one and Cholly Chiplin, the comedian in the piece, happened to be Harry Wharton & Co.'s favourite. Directly the Removites were seated they became absorbed in the comical antics of Mr. Cholly Chiplin.

When at last the film flickered to a close and the piano stopped, Harry Wharton & Co. heard a somniferous noise in their midst.

Looking round, they saw that Lord Mauleverer was fast asleep.

"Well, carry me home to die, somebody!" gasped Bob Cherry. "That sleepy idiot is snoozing again—and through a Chiplin comedy, too! Gimme a pin, Franky!"

Frank Nugent obligingly handed Bob a pin. The next picture appeared on the screen—a thrilling cowboy piece. Bob reached round behind him and gave a jab with the pin.

"Yaroooooogh!"

That rending howl arose from Mauly, who awoke and almost jumped out of his seat.

"Wake up, ass!" said Bob. "You've paid to see the pictures, not snooze! Do you take this cinema for a dormitory?"

"Yowp! Oh, begad!" gasped Lord

Mauleverer. "I'll punch your head, Cherry, and—"

"Hold your noise, there!" said a sulphurous voice from the row behind.

Many of the audience were glaring in the direction of Harry Wharton & Co.

"Pax, kids!" grinned Wharton. "We don't want to disturb the other people."

Mauly grunted and subsided, and the picture flickered on. When part two was being shown, Johnny Bull glanced round and nudged the others.

Mauly's chin was sunk upon his chest, and he was sprawled in his seat again, slumbering peacefully.

Bob Cherry took out the pin from the lapel of his jacket.

Jab, jab!

"Whoooooogh!" howled Mauly.

His voice rang through the cinema with startling suddenness.

Harry Wharton & Co. burst into roars of laughter.

The rest of the audience near by also roared—though not with laughter.

"Shut up, you noisy little rascals!"

"Turn 'em out!"

"Wot d'yer mean by spilin' other people's henjoyment?"

"Oh dear! We shall get kicked out in a minute!" said Frank Nugent. "Can't you keep awake, Mauly?"

"Groogh! Wow!" moaned Lord Mauleverer.

His Form-fellows bestowed grim looks on him in the semi-darkness, and then turned their attention to the picture.

Twice during the remainder of the performance Lord Mauleverer commenced to doze, but each time Bob Cherry gently "touched him up" with the pin, and rudely brought him back to wakefulness.

Harry Wharton & Co. thoroughly enjoyed the big picture. "The Pioneer Peer" was a story concerning a young baronet who, sickened of the life of luxury and honeyed ease to which he had been born, had left England for the wilds of the Woolly West. There he worked hard for the first time in his life, and, passing through many perils and thrilling adventures, proved himself to be a "man."

"Jolly good film!" said Bob Cherry enthusiastically, as they emerged from the cinema into Courtfield High Street. "That ought to be an object lesson to you, Mauly! Aren't you ashamed, now, of being such a slacker?"

"Yaw-aw! I'm beastly tired!" said Lord Mauleverer. "Blow the pictures! I want to get back to Greyfriars and have some peace, begad!"

Harry Wharton consulted his watch.

"Why, it's early yet!" he said. "The programme must have been jolly short. Our passes allow us out till half-past nine. It's a topping night. What do you chaps say to a brisk walk back to the school?"

"Good idea, Harry!" said his chums heartily.

Lord Mauleverer gave a gasp of horror. "Walk back to Greyfriars—from here?" he ejaculated.

"What-ho!" said Bob Cherry breezily. "It will do you good, Mauly! You'll sleep like a top afterwards!"

"Oh begad!"

"Come on, Mauly!"

Bob Cherry and Nugent made a movement towards Lord Mauleverer, but that youth backed away hastily.

"Begad! You fellows must be potty! I'm not goin' to walk all the way to Greyfriars!" he gasped. "You can do it if you like, but I'm too bally tired. I'm goin' by train!"

"Rats!" said Johnny Bull. "You're under our wing, Mauly, and we're going to try to make a man of you—not a sleepy automaton. Grab him!"

The Famous Five closed in towards Mauly.



"My hat! We're only just in time!" exclaimed Wharton. "The train's in! Come on!" "Run, Mauly!" urged Bob Cherry. "Ow! Begad! I can't! Oh, dear—yarooogh! Stop!" gasped the slacker of the Remove. He was simply whizzed into the station yard, through the barrier and along the platform. Harry Wharton & Co. did not wait to purchase their tickets, despite the wrathful roars of the gate porter. (See Chapter 1.)

Lord Mauleverer's eyes gleamed. The prospect of a long walk from Courtfield to Greyfriars was appalling to him. It stirred all the latent energy of his soul. As Bob Cherry reached out to grasp his arm, Mauly doubled his left fist and gave Bob a forceful thump on the nose.

"Yarooooooogh!" roared Bob, staggering back.

The others were too astounded to say or do anything but stare.

Next minute Mauly had charged his way between Harry Wharton and Hurrec Singh, and was running up the High Street as fast as his legs would carry him.

"Mam—my only hat! After him!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Mauly! Stop!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Rats!" retorted Lord Mauleverer over his shoulder as he ran. "Rats, dear boys, and many of 'em, begad!"

The Famous Five set out in full chase, but Lord Mauleverer had had a good start.

He fairly romped up the High Street, making a bee line for the railway station. His turn of speed was most remarkable. Harry Wharton & Co. found that they could not gain on him.

Mauly arrived at the station and hastily bought a ticket for Friardale.

There was a train in, and he made a dash for the platform just as Harry Wharton & Co. came pounding into the station yard.

"Mauly, come back!" roared Bob Cherry. "You've got to walk, you slacker!"

Mauly, like Balaam's ass, heeded not.

He ran like a hare along the platform, and plumped himself breathlessly in a first-class compartment.

Next minute the train began to move. Lord Mauleverer jumped up and looked out of the window.

He saw the Famous Five, looking hot and furious, standing by the barrier glaring at him.

"Mauly, you bounder, you'll get a bumping for this!" howled Bob Cherry.

But Mauly only smiled.

He withdrew his head from the carriage window, and pushed up the arm-rests on one side of the compartment.

Then he laid down at full length on the cushioned seat, rested his head in his hands, and gave a chuckle.

"I got rid of 'em, begad!" he murmured. "Jolly faggin', havin' to run like that, but it was better than havin' to walk to Greyfriars. Grooooooh! The bare thought of it makes me shudder. Thank goodness for a spell of rest an' quietness, begad! Yaw-aw-aw!"

Mauly gave a sigh and closed his eyes.

The train rumbled on towards Friardale, and Lord Mauleverer, tired out after the unusual exertions of the evening, slumbered on in blissful repose on the soft, yielding cushions of the first-class railway carriage.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Missing!

"THE awful slacker!"

"The lazy scamp!"

"Who said that Mauly couldn't be active?"

"He dished us properly!"

"The dishfulness was terrific, my worthy chums!"

Thus the Famous Five, as they walked out of Courtfield Station.

Several people in the station yard grinned at them.

"Well, that beats the band!" said Bob Cherry. "Didn't Mauly run! I never dreamed that he had it in him! And I thought somebody had hit me with a mallet, when he biffed me on the boko!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton & Co. laughed over the affair, and set out at a brisk pace down the High Street and took the road that led across the heath to Friardale. They revelled in the keen night air and the fresh wind that was blowing up

from the sea. The famous Five owed their excellent health and spirits to their fondness for the open air.

"Nearly half-past nine!" said Johnny Bull, as they approached the gates of Greyfriars from the Friardale Lane. "I expect Mauly's in by now."

"We shall find him snoozing in his study, no doubt," remarked Harry Wharton. "We'll give him a bumping for being such a slacker. I think we really ought to take Mauly in hand and make a man of him."

"Hear, hear!"

Bob Cherry tugged violently on the bell, and a few minutes later Gosling loomed out of the darkness, grumbling.

"Here we are again, Gossy!" said Frank Nugent cheerily. "Has Mauly come in yet?"

"No, 'e ain't!" snapped the school porter crossly, as he opened the gates. "Which it's practically 'alf-past nine now, and wot I says is this 'ere—if 'e's a minute late, I'll report 'im!"

Harry Wharton looked puzzled.

"Mauly not in yet!" he exclaimed. "But surely he must be! The train doesn't take ten minutes to get to Friardale from Courtfield. Mauly ought to have been in quite twenty minutes ago."

"Well, 'e wasn't!" growled Gosling. "unless 'e climbed over the wall so that I shouldn't see 'im. There goes 'alf-past nine!"

The clock in the old clock tower boomed out the half-hour. Gosling gave a grunt, relocked the gates, and walked on across the Close towards the School House to report Lord Mauleverer.

The Famous Five exchanged wondering glances.

"Well, if this isn't the giddy limit!" said Bob Cherry. "Mauly's not back. And he had a good start and came by train. Where has the silly ass got to, I wonder?"

"Perhaps we scared him, and he's lying low till later, so as to dodge the

bumping we promised him," grinned Frank Nugent.

Harry Wharton shook his head.

"Mauly wouldn't do that," he said. "He may be a frightful slacker, but he isn't a funk. Besides, he'd rather take a bumping from us than risk a wiggling and a licking from Quelch for being late."

Peter Todd and Bulstrode met them in the Hall when they went in.

"Hallo!" said Peter. "What were the pictures like?"

"First rate!" said Bob Cherry. "Seen Mauly?"

"No," replied Peter. "He went to Courtfield with you, didn't he?"

"Yes, but he dodged us coming back," said Harry Wharton. "We decided to walk back, as we came out of the cinema rather early. Mauly got the wind up and refused to walk. You know what a lazy ass he is?"

"Ha, ha! Rather!"

"So he ran away to the station and hopped into a train before we could catch him," said the Remove captain with a worried frown. "It was a Friardale train right enough, and Mauly should have been in long before us, because we walked. I'm bothered if I know where the silly chump has got to."

The Famous Five hunted the school high and low for Lord Mauleverer, but no trace of the schoolboy earl was to be found. That Mauly had not come in yet was quite evident.

The chums of the Remove were discussing the matter in Study No. 1 when a knock came at the door.

"Come in, fathead!" growled Bob Cherry.

There was a gasp outside, and the door opened to admit the austere figure of Mr. Quelch, the Remove master.

The Famous Five gave gasps of horror. "Oh crumbs! Quelch!"

"You will kindly take fifty lines for addressing me in that insolent manner, Cherry!" said Mr. Quelch in a grim voice. "I came to ask you lads whether you have any knowledge of Mauleverer's whereabouts. I understand that he visited Courtfield with you, Wingate having issued you passes until half-past nine. Mauleverer has not yet returned."

Harry Wharton told the Remove master exactly what had happened.

Mr. Quelch's brows contracted into a puzzled frown.

"Goodness gracious! What can have happened to the lad?" he exclaimed, when Wharton had finished. "I will institute inquiries on the telephone immediately."

Mr. Quelch hurried away, looking very perturbed.

"I'm feeling pretty worried about Mauly, although I don't suppose anything serious has happened to him," said Harry Wharton. "If it hadn't been for us playing the giddy goat, he would have been all right. But, still, I expect he went to sleep in the train and passed Friardale. In that case, he ought to be in soon."

Bed-time came, and Wingate of the Sixth herded the Removites away to the dormitory.

"Any news of Mauly?" asked Bob Cherry anxiously.

The captain of Greyfriars shook his head.

"No," he said, "Mr. Quelch has had several messages through from the railway people. Mauleverer was seen to enter the train at Courtfield, but he seems to have disappeared altogether since then. Inquiries have been made at every station on the line, but no trace of him has been found yet."

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The Famous Five looked at each other in grave concern.

"I suppose the police will be looking for him by now, Wingate?" asked Dick Rake.

Wingate shook his head.

"No; the Head doesn't want a scandal unless he can help it," he said. "Probably Mauleverer will turn up all right in the morning, or before. You kids had better tumble in now. It's past bed-time already."

As soon as Wingate had turned out the lights a round of chatter broke out, all of it concerning the mysterious whereabouts of Lord Mauleverer.

Billy Bunter professed to be greatly upset and anxious for the safety of Mauly, whom he claimed as his "best pal." Harry Wharton & Co., however, were really worried, although they expected—and fervently hoped—that the missing junior would turn up in the morning.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Out of the Frying-pan——!

"YAW-AW-AW-AW!"

Lord Mauleverer gave that long, sleepy yawn, and opened his eyes.

All was dark and still, and silent as the grave. Before he had time to wonder where he was, Mauly became conscious of an uncomfortable stiffness of his neck and bones, and, with a grunt, he moved sideways.

Next minute he found himself falling, and then he struck something hard with a terrific bump.

"Yarooooooooop!"

Hurt and greatly bewildered, Mauly sat up and blinked round him in the darkness.

"Wow! Oh, begad! Where the deuce am I?"

It was not until he had struggled to his feet that the answer to that question dawned on him.

He was in a railway-carriage—the same one that he had entered at Courtfield Station. He remembered his escape from Harry Wharton & Co., and jumping into the carriage, and afterwards lying down on the seat. It was that same seat from which he had just fallen.

"Begad!" he gasped, sitting down limply on the seat and shivering, for it was cold. "I—I must have fallen asleep! I wonder whether the beastly train has passed Friardale, and why the deuce aren't the lights on?"

He looked out of the compartment window, and his astonishment and wonder increased.

In the darkness he saw fields and trees, but the scenery was quite strange to him. He crossed to the other window and looked out. There the same dark, lonely vista met his eyes.

"Must have passed Friardale, then!" he muttered. "But what has the train stopped for, I wonder? And why aren't the lights on, begad? Br-r-r! It's beastly cold! What an ass I was to fall asleep! It's all the fault of Wharton an' those other silly bounders. They wouldn't let me rest, begad—not even when I had satisfied them, and was in the rotten cinema. I was fearfully fagged then, and runnin' away from 'em must have made me more tired. Wish this beastly train would get a move on. I shall get into the dickens of a row if I'm not in by half-past nine. It must be gettin' late, begad!"

Mauly struck a match and looked at his gold watch.

Directly he saw the dial he gave a

gasp, and was so overcome with amazement that he dropped the match.

"Quarter-past eleven!" he exclaimed. "Why, it can't be! I'll have another look."

Again he struck a match, and this time he made no mistake.

The time by his watch was sixteen minutes past eleven. Mauly might have doubted the evidence of his own senses at first, but there was no doubting his watch. It was a very valuable watch—too valuable, in fact, for a school-boy to wear. But then, Mauly was a lord and a millionaire, and everything he had was of the very best.

"Begad!" he gasped, dropping the match just as it commenced to burn his fingers. "I—I've been asleep all that time! I've been in this carriage for over two hours, and nobody has woke me up! Oh dear! Where the dickens am I? I—I believe the beastly train is stuck here for the night!"

Feeling greatly alarmed, Mauly again looked out of the train window. Not a sound—not a light anywhere! The train, the whole world, seemed to be empty.

Mauly opened the carriage door and jumped down to the side of the line. All the carriages were in darkness, and not a soul was on board the train. He walked over the flints to one end of the train, and then to the other, and found that there was no engine on the long line of carriages.

Blinking before him in the darkness, the lost Removite saw that the train was on a single track, which terminated, a few yards farther distant, in a pair of buffers.

"The train's on a sidin', begad!" he gasped. "It's been put here for the night. Nobody noticed me at the last station, and the train's been shunted here and left; and—and there was I, asleep all the time! Oh dear! What on earth can I do? It's too beastly cold to stop in that carriage all night. I'm goin' to find out where I am, begad!"

Mauly looked across the darkened fields on either side of him, but not a light, no sign of a house, showed anywhere.

He finally decided to strike out to the right, so he slithered down the railway embankment, climbed a fence, and hurried across the field on the other side.

Lord Mauleverer was wide awake now. All his sleepiness had disappeared. What would the people at Greyfriars be thinking? he wondered. What would Dr. Locke say when he returned? And when would he return? It was now nearly half-past eleven, and Mauly did not have the remotest idea of where he was. He might be two miles, or two hundred miles, from Greyfriars.

He quickened his pace, and climbed another fence. Then he crossed another field, and nearly fell into a ditch. In consequence, he had to take a wild leap in order to reach the other side.

Mauly was not an athlete, but he cleared the ditch in fine style, landing in a clump of bushes on the other side.

"Grooogh! Yah! Ow, begad! This is awful!" he groaned, as he extricated himself. "I seem to be in a beastly wilderness! Confound it, there must be a house somewhere!"

He kept on doggedly, running and stumbling and climbing various fences, not knowing where he was going in the darkness, but grimly determined to get somewhere. There was a fresh, salt twang in the night air that seemed to indicate that he was near the sea.

At last, after what seemed an eternity, he saw a light gleaming in the distance. Mauly quickened his footsteps, and fairly ran towards it. Ten minutes later he

found himself standing before a large, lonely, rambling old house. There was a light shining behind the drawn blinds at one of the lower windows.

Mauly opened the creaking front gate and walked up the weed-grown path to the porch of the house.

Rat-tat-tat!

He banged loudly on the knocker, and the sounds echoed hollowly all over the house.

Complete silence followed for several minutes, and then, just as he was about to knock again, he heard shuffling footsteps inside.

A chain at the other side of the door rattled, and then the door opened, and a light shone out on the lost junior.

Lord Mauleverer found himself peering into the small, beady, inquisitive eyes of a roughly-dressed man of middle age.

"Well?" demanded this worthy in a harsh voice. "What do you want?"

"Sorry to bother you, but could you tell me where I am?" asked the Removite politely. "You see, I'm lost, and don't know my way back to Friardale, begad!"

"Friardale!" exclaimed the other. "Why, you're nearly fifteen miles from Friardale. This is Cliffdale Heath!"

"Oh!" said Mauly. "Are there any trains goin' back to Friardale to-night?"

"Ha, ha! Not much! The nearest village is Cliffdale, and there are four trains a day. The last train leaves just before nine, and the last train to arrive gets in somewhere around ten o'clock."

"An' I suppose that train is shoved on to a siding somewhere and left till mornin'?" asked Lord Mauleverer.

"That's so," replied the other, looking curiously at the Greyfriars junior.

"That's the train I've just come from, then!" said Mauly ruefully. "You see, I got into the train at Courtfield, and went to sleep, and didn't wake till just over a quarter of an hour ago. I found myself still in the train, but on a siding in a strange place. I got out and walked here."

"My eye!"

"Dencid awkward—what?" said Mauly. "Especially as I had to be back at school by half-past nine, an' they'll all be wonderin' where I am. I've got to get back as soon as I can. Any chance of hirin' a car?"

"Not at Cliffdale!" grinned the other. "There's a cab, but you won't get that till mornin'. Anyways, the cabby wouldn't undertake to drive you to Friardale—his hoss wouldn't stand it!"

"Oh, begad!" gasped Mauly in dismay. "Isn't there any conveyance of any sort to be had?"

The man at the door shook his head.

"Then I s'pose I shall have to ring up Greyfriars an' put up at an hotel for the night!" said Mauly thoughtfully.

"You won't find a telephone working anywhere under seven or eight miles from 'ere!" grinned the other. "And as for hotels! Haw, haw! There ain't no such things in these parts!"

Lord Mauleverer regarded him in deep dismay.

"Is that so? Oh, begad! Then what the deuce can I do?" he gasped. "No means of gettin' to Greyfriars—no telephone, no beastly hotel! I'm in the dickens of a fix—what? I—I wonder whether you could oblige me by puttin' me up for the night?"

"Got any money?" asked the other.

Mauly took out his wallet, which was crammed full with notes. He had had a remittance from his bank in London only that morning.

The beady eyes of the man at the door gleamed.

"Wait a minute, young gentleman,

and I'll see what we can do for you," he said.

He shuffled away down the hall, and Mauly heard him enter a room and close the door. Muffled sounds of men's voices reached his ears. Then the door opened, and the beady-eyed man returned and opened the door wider.

"Come in, young gentleman!" he said. "There is a bed-room here that you can have. It ain't a particular good one, but perhaps it will do."

"Anythin' will do, begad!" said Mauly, entering. "I can't stop out all night, can I? And I'm jolly well not goin' back to that rotten railway-carriage. The fellows at the school and the Head will be worryin' over me no end, but I'll get back there as soon as poss in the mornin'!"

"Come this way, young sir!" said the other.

Mauly was ushered into a large room. It was in a dilapidated state of repair, and was most uncomfortably furnished. Two men were seated near the fire, playing cards and drinking. They rose as Mauly entered.

One was tall, dark, and well dressed. He would have been handsome but for the sallow lines of his face and the sinister gleam of his dark eyes as they regarded the junior.

His companion was shorter, more sturdily built, and dressed very flashily. He had a coarse, flabby face, and he leered at Mauly in a manner that caused him to take an instant dislike to the man.

"Good-evening, Master—er—"

"Mauleverer," said Mauly.

"Ah, Master Mauleverer!" said the taller of the pair. "Sorry you're in such a fix! We'll do our best to make you comfortable."

"Thanks, awfully!" said Mauleverer.

"It's good of you to take me in, begad!"

"Not at all!" was the suave reply.

"Gobin, fetch Master Mauleverer a chair!"

The beady-eyed man who had opened the door to Mauly and whom the other addressed as Gobin placed a chair near the fire for Mauly.

The Removite, glad of the comforting warmth of the fire, sat down.

"Care for a game of cards, young 'un?" asked the flabby gentleman affably.

"No, rather not!" said Mauly. "I don't play cards."

"Have a drink; it'll warm you!" said the same gentleman, picking up a bottle and winking slyly at his companion by the fireside.

"Oh, begad! No, thanks!" said Mauleverer, in horror.

"Don't be a fool, Naylor!" said the other. "Master Mauleverer wouldn't think of drinking, I'm sure. But a game of cards is different. Surely, Master Mauleverer, a pleasant little game of nap between ourselves would do no harm?"

Mauly's eyes gleamed. He saw the shifty-eyed Mr. Gobin nodding artfully to Mr. Naylor, and he remembered that he had shown the former gentleman his



A dark form entered the room, and although he was unable to distinguish the features, Mauleverer knew that the intruder was Gobin. With a soft chuckle the scoundrel crossed to the bedside and picked up the junior's jacket. (See Chapter 5.)

wallet full of notes, and shrewdly guessed that the rascal had informed his companions of that fact.

"Come, my boy, you're game for a little flutter, I know!" said Mr. Naylor persuasively. "My friend Mr. Sylvester likes his visitors to be sociable."

Mauly set his teeth hard.

"No; I'm not playin' cards, thanks!" he said. "I think I'll get to bed!"

"Tired!" grinned Sylvester. "Gobin told me of your little adventure. You must have been tired this evening, to sleep two solid hours in a railway-carriage, and get shunted on to a siding."

For the first time, perhaps, in his life, Mauly felt a little ashamed of his slacking habits.

"No; I'm not particularly tired now," he said.

He spoke truly for, in point of fact, he was very much awake.

He disliked and mistrusted the three men, and he felt that he would do well to be on his guard.

Sylvester, Naylor, and Gobin kept him by the fireside, talking, until it was past midnight. They appeared to be very interested in him, but Mauly did not satisfy their curiosity so far as to tell them about himself.

They tried to persuade him to play cards with them, but he steadfastly refused.

Mauleverer was the most easy-going and obliging fellow in all the world, but he had a will of his own, and he could be determined when he liked.

He rose from the fireside at last, and Gobin showed him upstairs to his room. Mauly saw Sylvester and Naylor glance after him as he went, and he chuckled softly to himself.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Not to Mauly's Liking!

"HERE you are, Master Mauleverer, and I hope you'll be comfortable!" said Gobin, settling down the lamp on a small deal table in the bed-room.

"Thanks, I'll be all right!" said Mauly. "Good-night!"

When the door had closed behind Gobin the junior turned round and took stock of the room.

It was, like the lower room, in a very dilapidated condition. The bed was rickety and uncomfortable-looking. He went to the door, with the intention of locking it, but found that there was no key.

"H'm!" muttered Mauly. "Pretty strange surroundin's—what? I don't like those three rascals downstairs, and I'm goin' to keep my eyes open. I think they take me for a fool, begad!"

He undressed and turned in.

He blew out the lamp, and then lay in bed meditating on his unusual position. He thought of Greyfriars, and of Harry Wharton & Co., and of Mr. Quelch, and the Head. What would they say when they knew of his predicament? What had they been thinking all the evening?

Mauly lay awake for a long time, thinking and listening.

He did not hear the others go to bed. The old clock in the hall downstairs chimed two o'clock, and Mauly settled himself more comfortably in bed.

His old drowsiness came over him, and he was about to compose himself to sleep when a sound outside brought him back sharply to wakefulness, and he stiffened.

There was a stealthy footstep at the door.

Mauly lay in bed, and did not attempt to move, but his brain was on the alert.

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his ears were strained to catch every sound, and from the side of the pillow his half-closed eyes peered keenly into the darkness.

The door-knob rattled slightly, and then the door creaked open very slowly. A dark form entered, and, although he was unable to distinguish the features, Mauly knew that the intruder was Gobin.

Gobin shuffled softly to the bedside, and Mauly heard him pick up his jacket and give a chuckle.

The junior tensed his nerves, and then sprang suddenly out of bed. Gobin gave a shrill cry and wheeled round in alarm, but next minute Mauly laid violent hands on him and whirled him back.

"Now, you rotter, I'll teach you to come in an' rob me, begad!"

Biff!

Mauly landed a four-point-seven punch on Gobin's stubbly chin that fairly lifted its recipient off his feet and sent him in a heap to the carpet.

"Yarrrogh! Wow! Help! Yah! Ow-wow!" howled Gobin.

"Come on!" roared Mauly, prancing round him. "I'll give you a thunderin' good lickin', begad! Get up!"

Gobin displayed no desire to get up, so Mauly bent down and dragged him up. Then he commenced to pummel away heartily at the would-be thief, and he drove him round and round the room under a perfect hurricane of uppercuts, straight hits, and hooks.

Gobin howled at the top of his voice, and soon the door was thrust open, and Sylvester and Naylor appeared.

"What the blazes—" began Sylvester.

"Elp!" bellowed Gobin. "Draggin' off! Yarooop! 'Old the little whelp! Ow! Yah! Yarooooogh!"

"Light the lamp, Naylor!" shouted Sylvester.

Naylor lit the lamp, which shed its yellow radiance on a strange scene.

Lord Mauleverer, clad in his borrowed suit of pyjamas, had Gobin in a corner, and he was giving that luckless individual a sample of his fistic powers that was worthy of Jack Dempsey at his best.

Biff! Thud! Whack! Wallop!

"Whooooop! Yow-wowow! 'Elp!" shrieked Gobin.

Sylvester and Naylor sprang forward and dragged Mauly back.

Mauly struggled gamely and hit out straight from the shoulder. He struck Sylvester on the bridge of his rather prominent nose, and made his eyes water, and he got in several telling blows on the flabby person of Naylor before he was finally overpowered and held down on the bed.

Sylvester turned angrily to Gobin.

"What does this mean?" he demanded.

"He came in here to rob me!" gasped Mauly angrily. "The rascal thought I was asleep. He was after my pocket-book. But I soon showed him that I wasn't asleep, begad!"

Sylvester's dark, sinister eyes flashed.

"You blundering fool, Gobin!" he exclaimed harshly, wheeling round on his confederate. "Look what a fix you've landed us in! We shall have to keep the kid now. If we let him go he'll bring the police down on us, and—well, our game will be up in no time. Couldn't you have left it to me? We could have got his wallet in the morning, before he left here, without raising suspicions against ourselves. Now you've bungled everything!"

"Sorry, guv'nor!" whined Gobin. "I didn't think of that! I thought you was goin' to let 'im go in the mornin' without plucking 'im. I must have been mad!"

Sylvester's face was livid with rage.

"The only thing to do is to make this boy a prisoner, and keep him until our

job is over!" he snarled. "It means having to risk whether he is traced here or not, but I don't think there is much chance of that. Tie him up, Gobin—and see that you tie him up properly!"

Gobin secured Mauleverer's hands and legs with a length of cord.

"Now you can keep watch on him all night!" said Sylvester. "If he gets loose, it will mean trouble for you, Gobin!"

"All right, guv'nor. I'll see that 'e don't get away!" muttered the beady-eyed rascal.

The other two withdrew from the room, leaving Lord Mauleverer writhing in his bonds, a prisoner in charge of Gobin.

The night wore on, and then daylight broke.

The first grey streaks of dawn were coming in through the windows when Sylvester and Naylor again entered the room.

"Go down and get some breakfast, Gobin!" rapped Sylvester. "We'll look after this young buck!"

Gobin shuffled from the room, and the other two rascals regarded Lord Mauleverer with gleaming eyes.

"The kid will be useful, Slim," remarked Naylor.

Sylvester nodded, and an unpleasant smile curved the corners of his mouth.

"Just what I have been thinking," he said. "We've got to get our job over as soon as possible—the sooner the safer! That means that we shall need some extra help. Mauleverer, it seems, has been accustomed, so far, to a life of ease. He's got plenty of strength, but he doesn't often use it. We'll give him an opportunity to bring it to the fore. A period of hard work will do him good."

Naylor chuckled.

"You bet it would!" he said. "I wonder who the kid is? He wouldn't talk last night, would he? He seems to be well off, and he talks like an aristocrat. It may be worth our while to keep him—for other reasons."

Slim Sylvester nodded.

"We'll find out who he is," he said. "But meanwhile we'll put him to work in the cave. Gobin will make an excellent slave-master, after the rough treatment he had during the night."

Gobin shouted up from below that breakfast was ready.

Sylvester and Naylor went downstairs, leaving Mauleverer vainly to struggle in his bonds.

Ten minutes later Gobin came up with a crude breakfast, which Mauleverer, after his hands had been freed, ate with relish, for he was hungry.

Gobin watched him balefully through the half-closed slits of his beady eyes.

"No school for you to-day, you little swell!" he said viciously. "You're comin' with me—to do some hard work. That'll be a pretty nasty change for you—what? Yes, rather, begad! Haw, haw! You came here last night for something, you did! Haw, haw!"

The morning meal being over, Mauleverer was ordered to dress himself.

He realised the utter futility of attempting to escape, or of shouting. The house was in such a lonely part that probably few people came within its vicinity during the day. And his captors looked capable of any villainy should their prisoner prove troublesome.

Mauleverer's suspicions concerning the three men had been more than confirmed. What their "job" was he could only guess at, and he was at a complete loss to know the reason for their wanting him to work.

But he was soon to find out.

Gobin brought in some rope, and while Sylvester and Naylor held Mauleverer, he



"You'll get hurt if you come near me, begad!" said Mauleverer grimly. Sylvester and Naylor snarled with rage, and they sprang forward together. Biff! Whack! The junior hit out with the shovel, and he gave Naylor a crack on the side of the head that sent him spinning into the sand on the cave floor. (See Chapter 5.)

bound the junior's hands securely together, leaving his legs free, so that he could walk.

Lord Mauleverer's pockets had previously been searched, and everything of value appropriated by Sylvester. He found nothing, however, that gave him any more information concerning Mauleverer than the junior himself had given him.

"Bring him along, Gobin!" he rapped.

Mauly was taken downstairs to the hall, and then down another flight of stairs that led to a cellar. Sylvester opened a cupboard door, and a click was heard. Mauly was thrust into the cupboard, and he found that the back of it had opened, giving access to a narrow tunnel.

Gobin dragged him through the opening into the tunnel. Sylvester and Naylor followed, closing the back of the cupboard after them.

Traversing the tunnel, which was in total darkness, seemed to Mauly like crawling through a large pipe. At length Gobin halted, and in the light of a pocket torch held by Sylvester, he rolled away a large slab of rock that blocked the end of the tunnel.

Immediately the darkness was penetrated by the grey early morning daylight, and in the distance beyond Mauleverer heard the crashing of waves.

Gobin jostled him roughly out of the tunnel into the open air, and, looking round, he found himself on a rocky part of the seashore, at the base of some tall cliffs.

Sylvester and Naylor clambered out of the tunnel, and the latter rolled back the rock into place. It was a cunningly devised means of secretly reaching the house from the shore.

"Bring him along, Gobin!" rapped Slim Sylvester.

Mauleverer was taken along the shore to a cleft in the cliffs some distance away. Sylvester walked through the cleft, flashing his torchlight ahead. Gobin and Mauleverer followed, and Naylor brought up the rear.

They were in a narrow, lofty, sandstone cave.

The cave floor was composed of deep, soft grey sand. At the farther end was a tumbled mass of sandstone rock stretching from the floor to the top of the cave. Sylvester shone his light on the spot, and Mauly saw that excavations had been made among the rocks and sand, three shovels lying near the hole, and lumps of sandstone being piled up at the side.

"Nice, lonely little dug-out—eh?" laughed Sylvester mockingly. "This is where you will stay, my buck—to work! Underneath this fall of rock a valuable collection of loot lies buried. That stuff took us months to collect. We are a little band of pirates, you see—not old-fashioned pirates of the open sea, but harbour thieves. We have made a speciality of robbing ships in harbour, when the crews were ashore and the officers less vigilant. You may have heard of several mysterious harbour robberies that have occurred from time to time."

Lord Mauleverer gasped.

"Begad! Yes, I have!" he exclaimed. "The coastguards and police have been huntin' for the thieves for months, accordin' to the papers."

The three rascals in the cave burst into roars of laughter.

"The coastguards and police might well hunt!" chuckled Sylvester. "They'd never suspect the presence of this cave, or of our secret way of getting to the house. We worked under their very noses! We accumulated a pile of stuff in this cave, and were making preparations to get away with it, when one day there was a subsidence in the rocks, and the end of the cave fell down, burying all our loot!"

"Now you will understand why we require you to work. That fallen rock and sand has got to be shifted, and the goods dug up again, so that we can get them away and dispose of them. We three have been doing the work daily so far, but I have outside matters to attend to, so that a little extra help will be very useful. You shall supply that help, Mauleverer. We have brought you here to work—see?"

"Oh, begad!" ejaculated Lord Mauleverer in horror.

The three rascals grinned at each other. Gobin, at Sylvester's command, released the captive junior's hands.

Mauleverer was handed a shovel.

"Now then, get down to it!" rapped Sylvester. "You've got to dig—and dig for all you're worth!"

"Begad!" gasped Mauly, blinking at the shovel, and then at his captors. "I'm not goin' to work! I'm no good at diggin', and—"

"It won't take you long to learn!" said Sylvester, with a laugh. "Gobin will look after you, and see that you keep hard at it. Now, Mauleverer, are you going to start?"

"No fear!" roared Mauly. "I'm hanged if I am! Not if I can help it, begad!"

Gobin, with glinting eyes, made a threatening movement towards him; but Mauly sprang back and raised the shovel aloft.

"You'll get hurt if you come near me, begad!" he said grimly.

Sylvester and Naylor snarled with rage, and they sprang forward together.

Biff! Whack!

Mauly hit out with the shovel, and he gave Naylor a crack on the side of the head that sent him spinning into the sand on the cave floor.

He drove the blade of the shovel hard into Sylvester's chest, and was about to follow up this sally with a violent swipe when Gobin's arms closed round him from behind, and he was dragged back.

The three harbour thieves regarded the Greyfriars junior balefully.

"The kid will need some looking after, Slim!" muttered Naylor, rubbing the side of his head where the spade had struck.

Sylvester took a revolver from his pocket.

"This will keep him subdued, I think," he said harshly. "Do you see this, Mauleverer? I'm a good shot, and I'm not afraid to shoot. Take up that shovel

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and get on with the digging, or I'll put you to sleep for good!"

Gobin released Mauly.

The schoolboy millionaire looked in horror at the revolver.

He could tell from Sylvester's looks and tone of voice that he meant what he said. He decided to give in to the rascals for the time being, and bide his time for a means of escape.

He took up the shovel, and, directed by Gobin, commenced to dig.

Gobin also took a hand in the work. Sylvester and Naylor left shortly afterwards, Gobin being handed the revolver and given orders to shoot Mauleverer on the first signs of treachery.

"Find it a bit 'ard—wot?" inquired the beady-eyed rascal, leaning on his spade and leering at Mauly.

"Groooogh!" gasped Mauleverer, on whom his unusual exertions were beginning to tell. "I'm goin' to take a rest, begad!"

"You just keep on with it!" said Gobin threateningly, raising a knotted rope, and making ready to strike the junior.

Mauleverer gave a gasp, and bent once again over his shovel, and continued with his digging.

Gobin was a stern taskmaster, and he did not allow the captive junior to slack. Hard work was a new experience in Lord Mauleverer's life. He gritted his teeth with rage while he laboured, thinking of Greyfriars and the fellows there.

Would they be able to find him? How would this amazing experience end?

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Bunter, too!

"ANY news of Mauly?"

That was the first question that Harry Wharton asked on meeting Wingate on the stairs at Greyfriars next morning. The Remove were all up, and they crowded the landing above, listening eagerly for Wingate's reply.

The captain of Greyfriars shook his head.

"No, nothing has been heard yet of Mauleverer," he said. "I've just been to see the Head. We can't make head or tail of Mauleverer's disappearance."

Harry Wharton & Co. looked gravely concerned.

All manner of conjectures were made as to the whereabouts of the schoolboy millionaire.

"The worst of it is," said Bob Cherry lugubriously, as he and the rest of the Co. walked along to Study No. 1—"the worst of it is, we're quite helpless to do anything. And I feel that it's up to us, as the original cause of all the trouble, to find Mauly. He must be in danger somewhere. He wouldn't have run away of his own accord."

"You're right, Bob," said Harry Wharton. "I feel we ought to do something. Perhaps we shall be able to pick up some information this afternoon at Pegg, after the footer-match. The train he caught yesterday ran on from Friardale to Pegg, and maybe Mauly landed somewhere in that neighbourhood last night."

"By Jove! That's quite likely!" exclaimed Nugent. "We're going there this afternoon, and, as you say, Harry, we may be able to pick up some news of Mauly."

It was Wednesday, and a half-holiday at Greyfriars, and the Remove Eleven were playing a football-match with the fisher lads' team at Pegg.

The morning wore on, none of the Remove paying much attention to the lessons, their thoughts being occupied

by the mysterious disappearance of Lord Mauleverer.

Mr. Quelch was worried, too, and he appeared to be as relieved as the juniors when the final bell rang, and the Remove trooped from the Form-room, free for the remainder of the day.

After dinner, Harry Wharton and the Remove team took their footer clothes and prepared to leave Greyfriars. A number of other Removites had elected to go with them to see the match.

They were crossing the quadrangle on their way to the gates, when a fat form ran down the steps and hastened after them.

It was Billy Bunter.

"I say, you fellows, I'm coming!" he roared.

Bob Cherry grinned.

"What! All the way to Pegg, Bunter, just to see a footer-match?" he said.

"Yes, rather! You know how keen I am on footer!" said the Owl of the Remove, rather breathlessly. "I always like to back up my side, although I'm left out of the team through sheer jealousy."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Draw it mild, Bunter!"

"I know why Bunter wants to come!" grinned Peter Todd. "He knows that there's going to be a feed at the Pegg Boys' Club-room afterwards!"

Billy Bunter looked at Peter indignantly through his spectacles.

"Oh, really, Peter, you beast—"

"Come on, you fellows!" said Harry Wharton impatiently. "We've no time to waste jawing to Bunter. This way to the station!"

The Removites set out at a fast pace along the Friardale Lane, and Billy Bunter trotted after them. He hung on like a leech. As Peter Todd had remarked, Bunter knew that after the match there was going to be a feed, and the prospect of a feed always attracted Billy Bunter like a magnet. He meant to get to that feed by hook or by crook! He ran after his Form-fellows as fast as his fat little legs would take him.

He arrived at Friardale Station in a very breathless state.

Harry Wharton & Co. laughed at Bunter's insistence on coming, and Hurree Singh good-naturedly purchased him a return ticket for Pegg.

Half-past two was chiming from the church clock at Pegg when the Removites arrived at the quaint old fishing town, standing in a sheltered bay on the rugged Kentish coast.

Dick Towler and his merry fisher lads were already on their ground, and the two teams greeted each other cheerily.

A large number of the townsfolk had turned out to see the match. The local boys' team consisted of a fine set of fellows who played an excellent game, and an interesting match was looked forward to by all.

The Removites who were not in the team took their places round the ropes, and the match commenced.

The fisher lads attacked hotly; but Harry Wharton & Co., who were noted for a fine defence, stemmed the rush, and soon managed to get the ball into the home territory.

The spectators were treated to a magnificent display of football, and the Pegg ground rang with shouts and cheers, especially when Towler, the home skipper, scored a magnificent goal with a long shot.

Billy Bunter did not take a great deal of interest in football. He soon wearied of standing in the crowd and watching the game. He saw Squiff score for the Remove, and then he rolled away and stood aloof from the crowd,

A man, who had been watching him closely in the crowd, walked up to Billy Bunter while that youth was standing by the gate of the ground, wondering what he should do to while away the time before the feed came.

It was Naylor, one of the trio of rascals who had made Lord Mauleverer a captive.

"Very fine game—what?" said Naylor affably.

Billy Bunter grunted.

"Not bad," he said. "You would have seen something, though, if I had been in the team. The beasts keep me out. Petty jealousy, that's all it is!"

Naylor's flabby features relaxed into a wide grin.

"Let me see, you belong to Greyfriars School, near Friardale, don't you, young gentleman?" he asked.

Billy Bunter nodded.

"You will pardon my being inquisitive, but I believe that a boy from your school, named Mauleverer, has been missing since last night—is that so?" said Naylor covertly.

Billy Bunter blinked at him.

"Yes, Mauly has completely disappeared," he said. "Do you know anything about it?"

Naylor shook his head.

"Nothing whatever," he said. "I just heard that inquiries were being made at the railway-stations for a school-boy named Mauleverer, that's all. I suppose Mauleverer was a friend of yours?"

"A great pal of mine!" said Billy Bunter importantly. "Mauly and I have always been thick friends. We have so much in common, you know, as we happen to be a bit superior to the other chaps."

Naylor's eyes gleamed.

"Mauleverer is pretty well off, I believe?" he said.

"Mauly's a millionaire," said Billy Bunter, who was always ready to chatter. "Lord Mauleverer and I always stick together. I'm worried out of my life now that he's missing."

Naylor's jaw dropped.

"Lord Mauleverer!" he ejaculated faintly. "You don't mean to say that Mauleverer is a lord?"

"What-ho!" said Billy Bunter, with a fat smirk. "My pal Mauly is a lord, of course! He pals with me, because I happen to have titled relations of my own, you see."

"I see," said Naylor, regarding Billy Bunter craftily. "You've got titled relations, and Mauleverer is really Lord Mauleverer and a millionaire?"

"That's it!" said Billy Bunter fatuously. "Mauly and I head the smart set at Greyfriars, you know. He is well known to all my rich relatives."

"I suppose you are very anxious to find your friend Lord Mauleverer?" asked Naylor.

"Yes, rather!" said Billy Bunter. "I know he must feel awfully cut up about being parted from me. I can't make out where he has gone to."

"I think I can put you on to where he is," said Naylor, lowering his voice. "Mind, this must be very secret, for I may be endangering my life in telling you this. If I undertake to lead you to Mauleverer, will you follow?"

The round eyes of William George Bunter glistened behind his spectacles.

If he discovered the whereabouts of Lord Mauleverer it would be a great feather in his cap. It was very, very seldom that Bunter performed anything momentous. To be the discoverer—and perhaps the deliverer—of Lord Mauleverer would give Billy Bunter cause to "swank," and generally bring it home

to the rest of Greyfriars what an important fellow he really was.

"Do you really know where Mauly is?" he asked breathlessly.

"I daresay I could lead you to where he is in hiding," was the suave reply.

"This is between you and me, of course. You look the kind of young gentleman I can trust and rely on. I have a car outside. Will you come along with me?"

"What-ho!" said Billy Bunter. "It won't take long, will it? I want to be back by the time the match is over. There's a feed on—ahem! I mean, I have rather an important appointment."

"Oh, it won't take long in my car!" said Naylor. "Come along!"

The Owl of the Remove rolled after Naylor, and they left the football ground together. A closed two-seater car was waiting outside. Billy Bunter, on Naylor's invitation, unsuspectingly entered it. The latter started the engine and drove away.

Pegg was left behind in a very short space of time; and Naylor sent the fast little car humming up the steep cliff roads. He chatted pleasantly with Bunter, and found it an easy matter to "pump" the Owl of the Remove.

Billy Bunter's little round eyes glistened with enjoyment and importance. He was going to the rescue of Lord Mauleverer! The whole school would acclaim him as a hero. The name of William George Bunter would, for the first time, carry weight at Greyfriars.

Mile after mile was traversed, and the scenery became more lonely. Nothing but barren rocks and sparse stretches of heath, with the sea thundering far below at the base of the cliffs, could be seen. At length the road deviated from the sea, until, a short distance inland, a lonely house was reached. It was, of course, the house to which Lord Mauleverer had come the night previous.

Naylor drove the car through the wide gates, and told Bunter to get down.

"This is my house," he said affably. "We will stop here for a little while, Master Bunter. You'll have something to eat? You must be hungry."

"What-ho!" said Billy Bunter readily. Naylor chuckled softly to himself.

He had gathered from Bunter's conversation that his one overwhelming weakness was the craving of his inner man.

Billy Bunter accompanied him into the house without a suspicion.

Slim Sylvester was there. He gave a start on seeing Bunter.

"What! Another of them!" he ejaculated. "What does this mean, Naylor?"

"It means," chuckled Naylor, locking the door, "that I have captured another of those college kids—one with rich, titled relations, who are devoted to him, and would probably stump up to a pretty tall tune to get him back. He is a pal of Mauleverer's—Lord Mauleverer's!"

"Lord Mauleverer!" exclaimed Sylvester with a start.

"Yes. Mauleverer is a lord and a young millionaire. Master Bunter here is his friend. They will both pay for the trouble of kidnapping. Meanwhile, of course, we can put them to work in the cave and make them useful."

Sylvester smiled and looked at Bunter.

Billy Bunter blinked.

Vague apprehensions gnawed at his heart, and he wished that he had not fallen in with the fatuous Mr. Naylor's suggestions.

"I—I say, you know, you—you're not going to kidnap me, are you?" he stammered, his knees beginning to knock.

"That's about the size of it, young 'un!" laughed Slim Sylvester. "So you've got rich relations, eh? How

much are you worth to them, I wonder?"

"Nothing!" spluttered Billy Bunter. "I haven't got any rich relations! It was all spoof! Lemme go! I'm going back to Pegg!"

He made a rush for the door, but Sylvester intercepted him and swung him back.

"Yaroooogh! Yah! Help! Police! Murder! Ow-wow-wow!" bellowed Billy Bunter in terror.

"Fetch some rope, Naylor!" rapped Sylvester.

Rope was fetched, and William George Bunter, despite his struggles, was made a prisoner. He wailed and beseeched his kidnappers to let him go, but all to no purpose.

His wild stories concerning his imaginary rich relations had landed him into trouble at last. And William George Bunter, lying huddled in a chair in the lower room of the lonely house, trussed like a chicken, languished in the throes of deep terror, and he fervently wished that he had never insisted on going to Pegg that afternoon simply for the sake of a feed.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The House on the Heath!

"RIPPING game!" said Tom Brown.

"Rather!" agreed Bob Cherry. "We just managed to lick 'em by one. That last goal of Harry's was a corker! Towler and his

team are the gamest lot we have tackled for a long time."

"Hear, hear!"

The two rival teams, flushed with good spirits after an excellent game, adjourned to the Pegg Boys' Clubhouse for tea.

The other Removites accompanied them. Peter Todd looked round for Billy Bunter, but that youth was conspicuous by his absence.

"Where's Bunter, I wonder?" he said. "It's jolly unusual for him to miss a feed. That was really what he came over here for."

"Bunter will turn up, don't worry!" grinned Bob Cherry. "He's like the jolly old bad ha'penny. He wouldn't miss this for worlds!"

But as the time went on and the feed progressed, and Billy Bunter did not appear, the Removites began to wonder.

"Jolly rummy, Bunter not turning up," remarked Harry Wharton when tea was over. "I wonder if he's gone back to Greyfriars?"

"Wild horses wouldn't drag him away from a feed, unless a prospect of something better turned up," said Vernon-Smith. "Personally, I don't think Bunter's gone home. Anyway, we can soon find out at the station."

When the Removites arrived at Pegg Station they inquired for Bunter. He was easily described. The porters and gateman shook their heads.

"We haven't seen him, young gents," said the gateman. "I can tell you for certain that he hasn't been to this station."



"Yaroooogh! Yah! Help! Police! Ow-wow wow!" bellowed Billy Bunter in terror. "Fetch some rope, Naylor!" ordered Sylvester. A length of rope was fetched and the Owl of the Remove, despite his frantic struggles, was made a prisoner. "I haven't got any rich relations," howled Bunter. "It was all spoof. Let me go!" (See Chapter 6.)

Harry Wharton knitted his brows. "Well, that's jolly queer," he said. "First Mauleverer, and now Bunter! We've got a couple of them to hunt for now. Come on, kids! It's getting late. Bunter must be roaming about here somewhere."

The Removites split up into parties, and they scoured Pegg for Billy Bunter, and, of course, for news of Lord Mauleverer.

When at last they gathered by the town hall at seven o'clock, Squiff was the only one who had any news to impart.

"A chap answering to Bunter's description was seen riding in a motor-car, which was leaving Pegg and making towards Cliffdale," said the South African junior. "That was about three hours ago."

Harry Wharton gave a low whistle. "Whew! What the dickens was Bunter doing in a car?" he exclaimed. "I—I hope nothing has happened to him. Perhaps the disappearance of Bunter has some connection with the Mauleverer business?"

"My hat, I wonder!" said Bob Cherry. Harry Wharton set his teeth grimly.

"You chaps go back to Greyfriars. The train leaves in ten minutes," he said. "I'll stay here and look for Bunter. If he's at Greyfriars when you get back you can let me know, because I'll ring up."

"You won't stay alone, Harry, old scout," said Bob Cherry. "I'll risk a wiggling and stay with you."

"Same here!" said Nugent and Johnny Bull together.

"The same-herfulness is terrific, my worthy chum!" said Inky.

"I'll stay, too!" said Squiff promptly.

"Right-ho!" said Harry Wharton. "Perhaps it would be better if a few of us stayed."

Several others offered to follow Wharton's leadership, but the Remove captain announced that Cherry, Nugent, Johnny Bull, Inky, and Squiff would be sufficient.

The others entrained for Friardale, and the Famous Five and Squiff turned back into Pegg, determined to find out where Billy Bunter was, and, if possible, trace Lord Mauleverer.

Harry Wharton felt convinced that neither of the missing juniors were far away.

"Well, which way?" asked Bob Cherry.

"I suggest we follow the road the car was seen to take," said Squiff.

"Good idea!" said Harry Wharton. "But it's getting dark. Let's call in on old Pimm, and see what he can do for us."

John Pimm was the proprietor of a large garage, and he was well known to the Remove juniors, for in the summer he hired out motor-boats as well as cars.

As luck would have it, one of Pimm's cars was just about to set out for a spot near Cliffdale to tow back a car that had broken down, and Harry Wharton & Co. gladly accepted the offer of a lift. Mr. Pimm was of the opinion that the car in which Billy Bunter had been seen had probably taken the Cliffdale road.

Making inquiries on their way, it soon became evident to Harry Wharton & Co. that they were on the right track. The two-seater car containing a man and a schoolboy answering to Bunter's description had passed along that road during the afternoon.

The car arrived eventually at the spot on the cliff road where the other car had broken down. Harry Wharton & Co. disembarked and walked on, promising to

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return within half an hour, or, alternatively, to go to Cliffdale and catch the train back to Friardale.

"Br-r-r-r! Pretty lonely place, this!" exclaimed Bob Cherry as the juniors made their way along the edge of the tall cliffs. "I hope we're not on a wild-goose chase. It's jolly dark, and—hallo, hallo, hallo! Here comes a giddy car that looks like the one in which Bunter drove away from Pegg!"

A small two-seater came humming along the cliff road, and, instead of taking the direct road to Cliffdale, branched off in another direction.

"That's the car, right enough!" said Harry Wharton grimly. "Did you see that fellow who was driving it? He looked jolly suspiciously at us! Let's follow the road and see where it leads!"

The chums of the Remove set out briskly. Some time later the lights of the lonely house on the heath gleamed through the darkness ahead. And standing outside it was the car.

"I wonder if it's any use applying at that house?" asked Nugent dubiously.

"We'll chance it, anyhow!" said Harry Wharton. "Come on!"

They opened the gate and walked boldly up to the front-door.

Harry Wharton banged on the knocker.

The door was opened after some delay, and the beady eyes of Gobin peered out. He fell back with a startled gasp, and next minute the door slammed in the juniors' faces.

"Well, I'm jiggered!" gasped Bob Cherry.

Harry Wharton suddenly raised his hand.

"Listen!" he muttered.

From inside the house a shout sounded.

"Help! Rescue, Remove! Help!"

"That's Bunter's voice!" muttered Johnny Bull.

"And we're going in!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

He banged again sharply on the door, but met with no response.

Bob Cherry and Squiff went to the side of the house and succeeded in opening a window.

"This way, kids!" shouted Bob.

The Famous Five and Squiff piled in through the window.

The room they found themselves in was bare and in darkness. A door led them into the hall. Not a sound disturbed the house, not a light gleamed anywhere now.

Johnny Bull soon discovered that it was possible to wrench out the wooden supports from the banisters at the side of the stairs. These rods made excellent weapons.

With nerves tensed and their weapons raised ready for any emergency, the plucky juniors went from room to room of the house.

Many of them showed signs of recent occupation, and in the lower front room Squiff made a momentous discovery.

It was a Greyfriars school cap.

He looked inside it, and gave a gasp on reading the name on the tab.

"Mauleverer!"

The others crowded round.

"Great pip! Mauly's cap!" ejaculated Harry Wharton. "Then Mauly has been here, too! Chaps, we're gradually getting to the bottom of this mystery. We'll hunt this place from top to bottom."

This they did very effectively, but discovered nobody. They even searched the

cellar and the cupboard; but did not suspect, of course, that the back of the cupboard opened. Wharton hit on the correct solution to the mystery, however.

"Bunter and Mauly have been taken away by some secret exit!" he said decisively. "There's a mystery about this house, and I mean to find out what it is! We won't leave here, chaps, until we've found Bunter and Mauly!"

"No fear!"

"The men who were here a little while ago are bound to come back," went on the Remove captain. "There's plenty of grub downstairs, and the fire's alight in the lower front room. We'll take quarters here, and see what happens!"

The others were all game.

Having succeeded so far in their quest of their missing Form-fellows, they did not intend returning to Greyfriars until they had arrived at a solution of the mystery.

And, ready to brave any emergencies, they proceeded to make themselves as comfortable as possible in the grim old house on the heath.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Mauly's Ruse!

LORD MAULEVERER was lying on some sacks in the cave, his hands and feet bound securely. Darkness had fallen, the wind was howling, and a turbulent sea was crashing on the rocks. Despite the noise of the elements, and his cramped position, the schoolboy millionaire was fast asleep.

Mauly had some justification for sleeping. Gobin and Sylvester had kept him hard at work all day with hardly an intermission. Both the rascals had also toiled at the excavations, and already a number of boxes had been dug up from the tumbled masses of rock and sand.

The day had been the most arduous that Lord Mauleverer could ever remember, and sleep was a luxury and a relief.

He awoke to find Gobin kicking him. The rascal had a lamp, which cast a fitful yellow light throughout the narrow cave.

"Wake up!" snarled Gobin. "We've brought along a pal of yours to keep you company."

Mauleverer looked round him, and, to his amazement, saw Billy Bunter wriggling in his bonds between Sylvester and Naylor.

"Bunter!" he ejaculated, struggling to a sitting posture. "Bunter! You here, begad!"

He could hardly believe the evidence of his own eyes.

"This is what comes of risking my life to come to your rescue, Mauly!" wailed the Owl of the Remove in a plaintive voice. "These rascals have kidnapped me, too! Grooogh! Oh dear! I do feel awful! Nothing has passed my lips since dinner-time to-day!"

Mauleverer looked bewildered.

"How on earth did you trace me, Bunter?" he exclaimed. "I—"

"Not so much jaw!" cut in Sylvester savagely. "You and Bunter have got to help us finish this work to-night. We're going to work all night, if need be—and work hard!"

Mauly looked at his captors in horror.

"Work all night, begad!" he exclaimed. "I've been workin' all day—"

"That doesn't matter! Release his hands and loose his legs a bit, Gobin."

Bunter's hands were also released, and he and Mauleverer were handed spades.

"Start work at once!" rapped Sylvester. "You are not going to stop until all the buried boxes have been dug up!"

(Continued on page 17.)

ANSWERS
EVERY MONDAY—PRICE 2s



MAULY'S MEMOIRS. AN INTERVIEW BY OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT!

"GO away, dear boy!" said Mauly, in a tired voice when I called upon him. "Call another time, preferably when I'm out."

He rolled over on his sofa.

"Your lordship—" I began.

Snorrrrrrr!

I coughed and shuffled my feet, and kicked the coal-scuttle, and rattled the fire-irons; but none of these noises roused the lazy lord. The editor had threatened me with instant annihilation if I didn't get Mauly's memoirs for the Special Number. So I decided to wait till Mauly woke up. I sat down on a chair and commenced to whistle.

Mauly stirred.

"Grooooooogh! What an awful draught there is in here, begad!" he murmured, and sat up. "Oh, it's you whistlin', is it? Can't you leave a fellow alone?"

"Not until I've had a few memoirs, your lordship," I ventured to remark. "Now, to commence. When were you born?"

"Oh, at a pretty early age!" yawned Mauleverer. "Too much fog to remember, begad!"

"Ahem! Is there any outstanding feature of your childhood that you have always before you?"

"Yaas, my nose!" grinned Mauly.

"Oh, blow your nose! I—I mean—Ha, ha, ha! Good joke, your lordship."

But Mauleverer was asleep again.

I roused him at last and dunned him for an incident of his early youth.

"I remember once," said Mauly, "when I was invited to a big social affair at Lord Tiddermister's. I had to take a friend, and I decided to take Nibby, the boots in our house. Decent little kid, Nibby, but others thought it terrible for me to make a pal of a commoner. Nibby and I were the best of pals, begad. He was keen to go to
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Lord Tiddermister's. He had no suitable clothes, so I rigged him out in some of mine. You should have seen all the aristocracy stare, begad, when I introduced Nibby! He was all there, but wasn't used to high Society ways. He upset his soup in Lady Huggett's lap and hit the Marquis of Dudhaven in the eye with the wing of a chicken that slid off his plate. The genteel folk were jolly shocked, begad! And then, in the middle of the ball, Nibby and I turned off the lights and played ghosts, dressed up in suits of armour. Yaas, that was great fun, begad!"

Thoroughly exhausted after delivering this lengthy memoir, Mauly went to sleep again.

"Wake up, your lordship!" I bawled. "I want some of your memoirs of mountain climbing in Switzerland."

Mauly gave a shudder.

"You've been hunting with the hounds, haven't you, and grouse shooting on the moors, and—"

"Oh, bother the confounded memoirs!" groaned Mauly. "Look here, wouldn't you rather have a feed?"

"Rather!" I replied promptly. "But I'm broke. We journalists are a hard-up gang, you know. Editors keep us half-starved, and—"

"Here's ten bob to run away and not trouble me any more!" said Mauly, taking a note from his waistcoat-pocket.

I seized it with avidity, and, bowing low, I crept to the door.

Mauly was already asleep.

I made a beeline for the tuckshop, and remained there and drank Lord Mauleverer's health in foaming ginger-pop, until the wrathful editorial staff came and routed me out.

They wiped up the floor of the editor's office with me, and I had to be carried into the sanny in the w.p.b. for repairs. All because I hadn't got a long list of memoirs from Mauly.

But I had got ten bob "hush" money from him, and it was worth the penalty.

EDITORIAL!

By
HARRY
WHARTON.

AMONG the notabilities—I won't say notorieties—of Greyfriars, Lord Herbert Mauleverer ranks as one of the foremost. Not that Mauly takes any active part in the affairs of the school, activity in any shape or form being quite contrary to his nature; but I am sure that the majority of my readers will agree that Mauly is worthy of a number of the "Herald" all to himself.

Having decided on a special "Mauleverer" Number, we asked Mauly whether he would like to edit it. He sleepily replied that it would be too much fog. Perhaps, however, it is just as well that we did not leave it to Mauly to produce this number. He would probably have forgotten all about it, or would have delivered the "copy" too late for the printers.

We in the Remove are proud of having Mauly in our ranks, for is he not a real live lord—live, that is, when he is awake—and a millionaire forsooth? Not that Mauly ever chucks his weight about because of that. On the contrary, Mauly's weight is often chucked about for him—in the hard, literal sense of the phrase, for we sometimes get exasperated with his lazy ways.

Mauly is universally liked for his easy-going, liberal nature. He takes a good deal of looking after at times because of that, for he falls an easy prey to spongers like Bunter, Snoop, and chaps of like kidney. Mauly comes out of his shell sometimes, of course, and our pet lordling has shown that he can summon plenty of "go" when he likes. Generally, however, he prefers to be left alone.

Bob Cherry has often expressed a desire to take Mauly under his wing, so to speak, and make a man of him. But the course of violent activity that Bob would prescribe for him would probably be too much for the slacker, so Mauly is left to slumber on. Without Mauly in our midst, life in the Remove wouldn't seem the same, somehow.

When I received a "rough copy" of this supplement from the printers I took it along to Mauly for his inspection. But before our tame tortoise had read a word of it his eyes closed and he dreamily remarked, "Jolly"—yawn—"good"—yawn—"begad!"—snore! Now what can you do with a chap like that?

HARRY WHARTON.

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"WHAT the merry dickens—" gasped Harry Wharton. "Visions are about, surely!" said Bob Cherry faintly.

Harry Wharton & Co., Vernon-Smith, Hazeldene, and myself were standing by the bicycle shed one Wednesday afternoon. We had just taken out our jiggers in readiness for an afternoon's cycle spin. Looking round, a strange sight met our eyes.

Trotter, the school page, was trundling a large, handsome bath-chair across the quadrangle, and seated in the bath-chair, his topper tilted on one side and a look of vacant boredom on his face, was Lord Mauleverer.

We blinked at this strange apparition, hardly able to believe our eyes. Mauly in his bath-chair soon attracted attention, and scores of fellows stopped to stare.

"Mauly! What in thunder does this mean?" demanded Bob Cherry. "What's the idea?"

"Oh, nothin'!" replied Mauly in a sleepy drawl. "I'm takin' the air, that's all. Must have some fresh air sometimes, y'know, and walkin' is such a fag. So I've bought this bath-chair, and engaged Trotter to take me for an airin'. Go straight on through the gates, Trotter!"

"Yessir!" grinned Trotter, as he pushed manfully at the bath-chair.

He trundled Mauly out through the gates and turned down the Friardale Lane.

We all regarded each other in great astonishment.

"Well, if this doesn't lick everything!" said the Bounder. "Mauly's going back to his childhood days, when nurse used to push him about in a pram."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The whole school was greatly tickled over Mauly's latest luxury. We mounted our cycles and rode away, laughing.

Meanwhile, Trotter pushed on through the leafy by-ways of the countryside, and Mauly, lolling comfortably in the bath-chair, was soon sound asleep.

Rounding a corner, Trotter suddenly came upon a group of four elegantly-dressed schoolboys. He recognised them as Cecil Ponsonby, the leader of the Highcliffe juniors, and his cronies, Monson, Gadsby, and Vavasour.

The knuts of Highcliffe stared at the bath-chair and at Mauly.

"My word!" gasped Ponsonby. "That's Lord Mauleverer of Greyfriars!"

"In a bath-chair!" ejaculated Monson.

The Highcliffians chuckled. Trotter, scenting trouble, quickened his pace, but next minute the four juniors bore down on him. Pon clapped a hand over Trotter's mouth to prevent him from

yelling and waking Mauly. And, ten minutes later, Trotter found himself tied to a tree, a handkerchief stuffed in his mouth, whilst Pon & Co. trundled the bath-chair away, with Mauly still slumbering peacefully in it.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob Cherry. "Slow up, chaps! Look who's coming!"

We were pedalling at a good pace up the hill that led from Highcliffe School when Bob issued that warning. Looking ahead over the bushes we saw Ponsonby & Co., approaching with the bath-chair. Mauly was still fast asleep.

"Mauly's in the hands of the Philistines!" grinned Wharton. "We'll hide here, you fellows, and catch Pon & Co. on the hop!"

We dismounted and secreted ourselves in the bushes.

Pon & Co. ambled up, laughing softly and discussing what they were going to do with Mauly. A minute later they received the shock of their lives.

"Up, boys, and at 'em!" roared Bob Cherry.

Pon & Co. let go of the bath-chair and fell back as we burst upon them. That attack took place at the top of a hill. And the bath-chair, with nobody to hold it back, moved off of its own accord and, quickly gathering speed, whizzed merrily down the hill.

We were sitting on Pon & Co. by then, and we gazed after the runaway bath-chair in horror. Then we heard a yell from Mauly.

"Oh, begad! Help! Yow-wow!"

Mauly had no time to jump, for the bath-chair zig-zagged off the road and ran clean into the horse-pond at the bottom of the hill.

Splash!

"Yerroooooogh!"



Seated in the bath-chair, a look of vacant boredom on his face, was Lord Mauleverer.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Harry Wharton & Co.

Mauly rose to the surface and clung to his bath-chair, which was floating gaily on the water. At length it floated near enough to the bank for Mauly to jump off. He was in a parlous state.

"Serves you right, Mauly!" said Bob Cherry. "You shouldn't be such a lazy slacker. Now for those merry merchants!"

The bath-chair was pulled out of the water, and Ponsonby and Vavasour were dumped inside it and strapped there. Monson was harnessed to the front, and Gadsby tied at the back to push.

"Now, right away for Greyfriars!" commanded Harry Wharton.

We helped Gadsby and Monson along with our boots, and Greyfriars was reached at last, Mauly bringing up the rear, looking a sorry and woeful spectacle.

But Mauly's woo was as nothing compared to that of Ponsonby & Co. by the time they were allowed to leave Greyfriars.

For it so happened that Dicky Nugent & Co. of the Second, remembering how they had suffered at the hands of Pon and his merry "nuts" a fortnight previous, decided to square up accounts, as it were. And I think the "balance," by the time they had finished with Pon & Co., rested with them.

THINGS WE WANT TO KNOW!

What Gosling said when Lord Mauleverer tipped him a penny for carrying a large suitcase up to his study? And, again, what Gossy said when Mauly, discovering his mistake, made amends by exchanging the penny for half-a-crown?

* * *

How long Mauly's New Year good resolution—to sleep only eight hours a day, instead of twenty-three out of the twenty-four—held "good"?

* * *

How Mauly got on when he spent the vacation in Switzerland? And did he ever reach the summit of Mont Blanc? And is it true that several guides have retired on the strength of our tame slacker's handsome tips.

* * *

How much Mauly received from Mr. Lazarus, of Courtfield, for his discarded wardrobe? And, again, how much that same cute business gentleman realised on the deal.

[Supplement ii.]



MAULEVERER'S MISTAKE!

By
Frank Nugent.

LODER of the Sixth was in a royal rage. He had been looking for Lord Mauleverer all over the school. Mr. Quelch has asked Loder to see that Mauly did the extra work given him for slacking at lessons, and Loder couldn't find Mauly anywhere.

"Me see Mauly go down to Friardale little while ago," said Wan Lung, on being accosted by Loder on the stairs.

Loder gritted his teeth. He was always out to make trouble where a Removite was concerned. He happened to be going to Friardale himself, to attend a meeting, and he was dressed in his best frock-coat. Loder rammed his topper on his head and set out from Greyfriars, determined to hunt Mauly in the village and send him back to Mr. Quelch for a caning.

He reached Friardale, and was walking up the old High Street when, looking into the tobacconist's shop, he saw an aristocratic figure in Etons there, buying cigarettes. It was Mauleverer!

"Great Scott!" muttered Loder, his eyes glinting spitefully. "So Mauleverer has taken to smoking! He isn't the goody-goody he makes himself out to be!"

He darted back into cover as Mauly came out of the shop. Mauly turned down a side-street that led to the dismal riverside quarter of Friardale. Loder clenched his fists together hard.

"He's gone down there to smoke in secret!" he muttered. "I know the little game! I'll follow him, and catch the young rotter red-handed!"

Loder stalked Mauly down the dark street. Mauleverer looked round suddenly, and gave a gasp when he saw the prefect on his track. He hastened his footsteps and managed to dodge Loder in the gloom.

The surly prefect ground his teeth, and plunged into a dark alley down which he thought he had seen Mauly run. He hunted for ten minutes among the dingy, narrow thoroughfares of the Sark bank.

Suddenly, as Loder rounded a corner, three figures rushed at him in the gloom. Before he had time to shout they were upon him. His topper went flying, and there was a terrific scrunch as one of his assailants trod upon it. Loder was rolled in the mud, and he gave a bellow.

"My hat!" came a startled voice from one of his attackers. "It isn't Mauly at all! It's Loder!"

"Oh jeminy! Run!"

The three juniors ran, and disappeared in the gloom, leaving Loder in a parlous state.

Supplement iii.]

Skinner, Snoop, and Stott did not stop running until they were well up in Friardale Lane. They were thoroughly scared. They also had seen Mauly leave the tobacconist's, although they had not seen Loder. They had followed Mauly, suspecting him of going down to the river to smoke, their intentions being to raid the "smokes" from him. Skinner & Co. were hard up, and could not afford to indulge in their dingy habits until pay-day.

Half an hour later Loder returned to Greyfriars. He had not gone to the meeting. He was smothered in mud, and loud laughter greeted his appearance. He had Mauly with him, and took him up to his study.

We all waited outside, wondering what was the rumpus.

"I won't be caned!" we heard Mauly exclaim heatedly. "I've done nothin', begad! An' I haven't been smoking! Go and eat coke, Loder!"

Mauly came rushing out, with Loder after him. We willingly made way.

There was a chase, Mauly running as though in a Marathon. We never dreamed that he had it in him! Loder and Mauly came to grips at the top of

IMAGINARY EPITAPHS.

HORACE COKER.

HERE LIES THE BODY,

NOT OF NAPOLEON BONAPARTE,

NEITHER OF WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR,

But of One who was far greater than they,

To Wit,

HORACE COKER,

Late of the Fifth Form at Greyfriars. He was without doubt the finest fighting-man, cricketer, footballer, oarsman, swimmer, runner, jumper, hopscotch-player, and hoop-troller in the school—in his own estimation! But in the estimation of others he was

A BURBLING JABBERWOCK,

and a fitting candidate for Colney Hatch. He was always rushing in where angels would fear to tread, and he was always threatening to pulverise people, until the day came when he met someone who pulverised him!

He was conveyed on a stretcher to this lonely spot by

GOSLING THE PORTER,

who was handsomely "tipped" for ridding us of Coker's presence.

"The great Horace Coker now has gone,

No longer will he vex us;

He caught a fierce 'straight left' right on His merry solar plexus!"

the stairs. They struggled, and then, with wild yells, they plunged down, rolling over and over in each other's embrace.

Thud!

"Yarooooooogh!"

They landed on the mat at the bottom in a heap. Then, to the amusement of all, Mr. Quelch came along and demanded to know what was the matter.

Loder explained, accusing Mauly of going down to the village to smoke, with three confederates unknown, and with instigating these three to attack him. The Remove master fixed Mauly with a stern look.

"What have you to say, Mauleverer?" he said. "This is a serious charge Loder lays against you."

Mauly gave a tired look.

"I s'pose I'd better tell you everythin', although I meant to keep it dark," he said. "I had a letter from a poor old chap in Friardale—a cripple named Gummer—askin' me for help."

"Bless my soul! A begging letter!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "Mauleverer, I have repeatedly told you to let me deal with any begging letters you may receive. There are many unscrupulous persons who would impose on you, as you are so young, inexperienced, and very rich."

"Yaas, but I thought this was a genuine case, sir," replied Mauly. "I went down to Gummer's place near the river, and took him some smokes an' some money."

"Good old Mauly!" yelled Bob Cherry. "He's an ass, but a good ass!"

Mr. Quelch smiled, and dismissed Mauly, and Loder stamped away.

The next morning we—the Famous Five, that is—were walking with Mauly in the Friardale High Street, when he suddenly gave a start. His gaze was fixed on a disreputable-looking man who was coming out of a public-house.

"Gummer, begad!" he exclaimed. "Then he isn't a cripple at all! An' he's spendin' the money I gave him on drink! I've been spoofed!"

Mauly walked wrathfully up to the man who had written him the begging letter.

Mr. Gummer commenced to limp when he saw Mauly, but Mauly was not in a mood to be further spoofed. He startled Mr. Gummer by giving that gentleman a wrathful punch on the nose.

"Yarooogh!" roared the "cripple."

And he ran at a very respectable rate and disappeared down a side-turning. We roared with laughter.

"Good old Mauly!" grinned Harry Wharton. "I think he'd better leave Quelch to deal with his begging letters in future. But he's got some spirit, hasn't he?"

To which we all heartily agreed.

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WILLIAM GOSLING: Wot I says is this 'ere. I've often wished I could be in Parlyment, an' if I woz a lord I'd get busy in the 'Ouse. One of the first laws I'd pass would be the drownin' of all boys at birth!

ALONZO TODD: The wealth of Lord Mauleverer, if I had it, I should devote to the various charities in which I am interested, especially to that most deserving one, the Society of Providing South Sea Islanders with Tracts and Trousers. I should probably visit the cannibal

islands myself to supervise the work of educating the heathen and teaching them the merits of the red herring as an article of diet.

FISHER T. FISH: Waal, that suggestion sure hits me where I live! Me a lord and a millionaire like Mauly. Gee, but I'd wake up this sleepy old island some! I'd corner everything, from monkey-nuts to men-o'-war. I wouldn't stand idle. Nope, sirs. I kinder reckon, guess, and cal-kew-late that I'd make

sufficient durocks in three years to engage old Rockefeller as my valet.

BILLY BUNTER: Wot a glorious prospect, being a lord! I'd give up skool life and retyre. No more lessons, no more warries. I'd live in marbul hauls, with reggiments of flunkies to attend to mi wants. I'd have feeds all day long, and there woud be no shortage of tuck where I was konserned. I woud pal with the hiest in the land, find out all their secrets, and then write my Reminiscences and make some more munney.

HAROLD SKINNER: You wouldn't see me for dust if I were Mauly! I'd go the pace and paint everything red! I'd buy up Greyfriars, and run it as a school should be run—complete with billiards and smoking-rooms. My time would be occupied between backing winners and seeing life.

HORACE COKER: I have always konsidered that I was cut out to be a lord. My noble bearing and superior ways would fit me for the job. And I'd always ware my koronet at Greyfriars to impress those cheeky Remove kids with my importance.

SIDELIGHTS ON THE SLACKER!

By **BOB CHERRY.**

Mauly doesn't gamble, but if he ever did his favourite game would be "nap."

One day Mauly will take his seat in the House of Lords. We shouldn't be surprised to hear that he had taken his bed.

Mauleverer isn't the only millionaire at Greyfriars. Billy Bunter can claim to be one of the many million heirs in the world!

There's a lazy young lordling, Mauleverer,
To slack a persistent endeavourer!
'Tis no crime, he thinks,
'To snatch forty winks,
And at this he gets cleverer and cleverer!

Skinner sarcastically suggested the other day that if Mauly ever had to work for his living, a suitable job for him would be in a domino factory, painting dots on the dominoes. Mauly, however, isn't as dotty as Skinner thinks. He would probably get into the double-blank department.

Mauleverer comes from a family of long standing. That accounts for his being so tired.

Mauly hates exertion. Indeed, at times it is too much trouble for him even to raise his voice!

Last week Mauly went out for a walk, and returned to Greyfriars with a tortoise. The aggranoying creature had followed him home.

I understand that Lord Mauleverer visited his people in Scotland during the vacation. On alighting from the train at

the station he missed his waterproof, and thought he must have left it in the carriage. Fortunately the train had not yet started, so he rushed back to the compartment, and, putting his head in at the window, cried:

"Say, is there a macintosh in here, dear boy?"

"Na, na, mon!" replied a sturdy Scot reprovingly. "We're all McDonalds!"

This is one of my own creation. Mauly was travelling in an omnibus, and, as usual, he fell asleep. He awoke with a yell of pain as a beefy fellow plumped on to his feet. "My dear sir," said Mauly, "I don't mind your walking briskly over my feet, but I wish you wouldn't loiter on them, begad!"

"Mauly's dog took the first prize at a cat show."

"How was that?"

"He took the cat!"

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TOO MUCH FAG!

By **LORD MAULEVERER.**

Oh, what a hard old world this is!

Its systems nearly all are bad.

I think the one I hate the most
Is risin' in the morn, begad!

I'm awf'ly delicate, y'know,
That only makes my case more sad.
I haven't some chaps' push and go;
I only feel the fag, begad!

I wish I was a dormouse, so
That I could sleep for days and weeks,
And not be wakened from my rest
By Bunter's growls and grunts and shrieks.

Each time I hear the risin'-bell
I think the thing will drive me mad.
I watch the others get up first,
Then out I have to roll, begad!

Some asses are unfeelin', too,
With energy enough for six.
They wake me with a beastly sponge
With water filled, and boots and kicks!

They cannot know—of this I'm sure—
Why always I behind them lag.
The reason is, 'cos everythin'
Is such an awful, beastly fag!
BEGAD!

(I wonder Mauly has enough energy to go to sleep. I very nearly missed getting the above inspiring poem. I went in to see Mauly about something, and found he had gone to sleep writing it. I took it sadly from his limp grasp, otherwise you would have missed this poetic treat.—Ed.)

[Supplement iv.]

**MAULY'S AMAZING
ADVENTURE!***(Continued from page 12.)*

Mauleverer, despite his fatigue, complied, knowing how futile it would be to refuse. But Billy Bunter showed defiance.

"I'm not going to dig!" he roared. "I'm not a beastly navvy! Let me go, or—Yah! Yarooooogh! Wow! Murder! Wow-wow-wow!"

Gobin commenced to belabour him with the knotted rope, and the Owl of the Remove howled at the top of his voice, grabbed the spade, and dug away furiously.

Gobin and Naylor took spades and helped with the work, while Sylvester looked on. Having escaped from the house, via the secret tunnel, on hearing Harry Wharton & Co. break in, the harbour thieves were desperately anxious to get away with their loot as soon as possible.

Lord Mauleverer did his best, whilst Billy Bunter toiled hard, moaning and complaining that he was about to die.

All the buried loot had been dug up by eleven o'clock.

Sylvester's dark eyes gleamed.

"The stuff is now all ready to take away," he said to Naylor. "I intended having it taken through the tunnel to the house, and we could have disposed of it easily from there. But now those confounded boys are there we dare not show ourselves. The stuff will have to be shifted by boat to another part of the coast in the morning. Come, Naylor, we shall have to see if we can get accommodation at Pegg for the night. We dare not go back to the house—not that I'm afraid of the boys, but they mustn't know about the tunnel. Gobin, you stay here all night and keep watch on these two."

Sylvester and Naylor left the cave.

Mauleverer and Billy Bunter sat on the rocks, panting for breath and feeling completely fatigued.

Bunter was puffing like a pair of very old bellows.

Gobin mounted guard over them with a loaded revolver, and whiled away the time by drinking from a bottle that Sylvester had left, and reading a newspaper.

Muttering in a low voice, Bunter told Mauleverer of his capture.

"They kept me in the house all the evening, Mauly," he said, blinking timidly in Gobin's direction. "Somewhere about eight o'clock Naylor came in and said that he had seen some Greyfriars chaps on the road near the house. That made the rotters nervous, and they began packing things away. Then somebody knocked at the door, and Gobin answered it. He slammed it and rushed back, saying that the schoolboys were there. I reckon it was Harry Wharton and the others. I shouted at the top of my voice, and then they gagged me, dragged me downstairs, and took me through the cellar cupboard to a horrible tunnel. That led to the seashore, and we came here. Naylor kept sneaking back along the tunnel, and he said that the boys were still in the house. I believe Wharton and the others are there. They've taken possession of the house."

Mauleverer's eyes glinted eagerly.

"That's toppin'!" he exclaimed. "I hope they find us, begad! If only I could give 'em some clue—"

He glanced towards Gobin. The rascal had emptied the bottle, and he was standing at the mouth of the cave. An idea suddenly entered Mauly's head.

He took a pencil from his pocket, and

fore a leaf out of his diary. And, during the intervals that Gobin's attention was diverted from him, he scribbled a hasty note.

Then he reached for the bottle, slipped the note inside it, and rammed the cork home tight.

"What's the idea, Mauly?" whispered Billy Bunter fearfully.

"I'm goin' to get this bottle into the sea somehow!" said Mauly, between his teeth. "Somebody might pick it up and find the note inside. If so, we shall be saved, begad! I know. Pretend to be ill, Bunter. That will fetch that rotter in, and while his back is turned I'll throw the bottle into the sea. The tide is well up, and the bottle won't be heard falling into the water."

"All right," mumbled Billy Bunter.

Next minute heart-rending moans issued from the Owl of the Remove. He lay prostrate on the sandy floor of the cave and cried out in accents of anguish.

"Help! Oooooogh! Fetch a doctor! I'm dying!" he wailed.

Gobin gave a start, and he walked into the cave, peering hard at Billy Bunter. That youth's moans were truly heart-rending to listen to.

"What's the matter with you, Fatty?" demanded Gobin.

"I'm dying!" moaned Bunter faintly. "The hard work and loss of food is telling on my frail system! Oh dear! Ow-wow-wow-woooooogh! Help!"

Genuinely alarmed, Gobin looked closely at Billy Bunter.

That was Mauleverer's opportunity.

With the bottle grasped in his hand, he crept over the soft, sandy floor to the opening in the cave. The sea was well up, and was so close that the flying spray from the breakers entered the cave.

While Gobin's back was turned, Mauly judged his aim and hurled the bottle.

It went straight out of the opening and fell into the sea some distance out. In the moonlight Mauleverer saw it sink, and then rise, and he stood there watching it float about on the tossing waters.

A growl from Gobin made him turn.

"Come back 'ere, young shaver!" exclaimed the beady-eyed rascal. "Don't think you'll escape while my back's turned, 'cos I can pot you easily with this revolver, and there's nobody around to 'ear it. Your pal isn't so bad as 'e makes out. 'E's bluffin'!"

Mauleverer went farther into the cave and sat down beside Billy Bunter.

The Owl of the Remove soon recovered from his spasm, seeing that Mauly had carried out his part of the plot.

Gobin regarded them sneeringly.

"This time to-morrow you'll both be far away from 'ere, and your pals can look till Doomsday an' they'll never find you!" he said. "Slim Sylvester will require your folks to buy you back—an' the price will be pretty stiff, I can tell you, especially as one of you 'appens to be a millionaire!"

"Rats!" said Mauly, with more cheerfulness than he had felt since first falling into the hands of the harbour thieves. "Things may not go so easily as you think, begad! Anyway, we'll wait and see!"

And he and Billy Bunter laid down, and, thoroughly tired out, were soon fast asleep.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.**At Close Quarters!**

DR. LOCKE, the Head of Greyfriars, greeted Wingate in his study next morning with a worried look.

"Ah! Good-morning, Wingate!" he said. "You doubtless know that neither

Mauleverer, nor Bunter, nor the six juniors who absented themselves from school yesterday evening to find them, have returned. Bunter's disappearance, on top of Mauleverer's, is the most amazing contingency I have ever encountered; and the absence of Wharton, Nugent, Cherry, Bull, Hurrage Singh, and Field is a further source of uneasiness to me. I understand that Bunter disappeared yesterday afternoon at Pegg, and that the other six juniors remained there with the object of finding him."

"That is so, sir," replied Wingate quietly. "They took it upon themselves to stay away from school, but I think they are boys who can be trusted to look after themselves. They evidently believed that they were acting for the best."

"Most certainly, Wingate!" said the Head. "I have every faith in Wharton and the other lads. Nevertheless, I should like you to go to Pegg this morning and see what they are doing: I only trust that they have not fallen into danger, as I fear Mauleverer and Bunter may have done."

"Very well, sir," said Wingate. "I will start for Pegg at once."

The whole of Greyfriars was in a ferment of excitement over the amazing news. Not only had Mauleverer failed to put in an appearance yet, but Billy Bunter had mysteriously disappeared at Pegg, and nothing had been heard of the Famous Five and Squiff.

Wingate caught the first train to Pegg, and, arriving at the little fishing town, he made his way down the old High Street to the harbour.

He quickened his pace when he saw a schoolboy figure, wearing the Greyfriars cap, talking to an old fisherman by the breakwater. It was Harry Wharton.

"Wharton," exclaimed the Greyfriars captain, hurrying up, "where have you been all night? Where are the others? Don't you know that the Head is worrying himself about you?"

"Sorry, Wingate! I've been trying to get through to Greyfriars on the telephone, but the exchange couldn't put me on," replied Harry Wharton quietly. "We're all right. The others are at a house on the heath at Cliffdale, about seven miles from here. We traced Bunter and Mauleverer to that house."

"Great Scott!" ejaculated Wingate. "You know where they are then?"

"Not exactly!" replied Wharton. "But I've got a valuable clue here that will help. Look!"

He held up a bottle and a sheet of paper, the writing on which was blurred by water. It was, however, readable.

"Mr. Willis, here, picked up the bottle from the sea in his fishing-net during the night," said Wharton. "Just by luck he happened to open it, and found this note addressed to me. I came down here to telephone this morning, and Mr. Willis saw me and called me here. It's a message from Mauly."

Wingate took the paper and read it eagerly. This is how it ran:

"Urgent! To Wharton, Greyfriars School, Friardale. Bunter and I prisoners in cave in cliffs between Pegg and Cliffdale. Narrow cleft in cliff gives entrance. Tunnels near by leads to cellar in house on heath. Rescue at once, or too late. MAULEVERER."

Wingate drew a deep breath.

"By Jove! This is splendid!" he exclaimed. "Do you know where this house is, Wharton?"

"Rather!" grinned the Remove captain. "We took possession of it yesterday evening, and we've been there all night."

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Bunter and Mauly have been there, we know for certain, and we made up our minds to wait and see what happened. The others are still there. I came down into Pegg on my own to telephone Greyfriars."

"Then we'll get to the house as soon as possible," said Wingate. "It appears, from Mauleverer's message, that a tunnel leads from the house cellar to a spot near the cave where he and Bunter are prisoners. How did you get here this morning—did you walk?"

"No! I drove in the car that one of the rascals left outside the house last night!" grinned Wharton. "There it is, near the fish market. This way, Wingate!"

Wharton took the wheel of the car, and he drove it rapidly out of Pegg, along the wild cliff road which led to the house that he and his chums had captured.

The juniors were still there when Wingate arrived.

The Removites were astonished to see Wingate. Their amazement increased, however, when Wharton told them of Mauleverer's message that had been picked up in a bottle from the sea.

"My word!" breathed Bob Cherry. "I wonder how Mauly managed it? And what a ripping wheeze! So there's a tunnel leading from the cupboard in the cellar! Kim on, chaps! We'll find where that is!"

"Hear, hear!"

The heroes of the Remove dashed down stairs, Wingate bringing up the rear. Squiff dragged open the cupboard door in the cellar, and Johnny Bull flashed on the light of his pocket torch.

It was not long before Nugent discovered the secret spring that operated the door at the back of the cupboard.

There was a click, and the back part of the cupboard swung inwards, leaving a gaping hole beyond.

"Good egg!" chirruped Bob Cherry. "Now for the giddy voyage of discovery and rescue! Have you all got your sticks?"

"Rather!"

Their hearts beating fast with excitement, the Removites and Wingate plunged on through the tunnel, Johnny Bull lighting the way with his torch.

At length they came to the end, and found a large block of rock in their way. It looked immensely heavy, but Harry Wharton found that it dislodged easily.

They all clambered through the aperture, and found themselves on the rocky seashore at the base of the cliffs.

"So far, so good!" said Harry Wharton. "Now to find the cave where Mauly and Bunter are prisoners. Mauly tells us to look for a narrow cleft in the cliffs. We'll spread out and see what we can discover."

They split into two parties, each hunting the cliffs in opposite directions.

Nugent was suddenly seen to be gesticulating excitedly to the others. They all dashed to the spot.

"Look!" said Frank. "There's an opening down that narrow slit in the cliff!"

The others drew deep breaths.

"By Jove! Then that is probably the cave!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"You kids had better take care. You may run into danger!" said Wingate grimly.

"Oh, bosh!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "We've been trained as Scouts, haven't we, Wingate, old chap? We'll see what's in that cave!"

They crept over the rocks towards the cleft in the cliff.

"You were right, Frank," said Wharton under his breath. "There is a cave here!"

Wharton and Cherry, peering within, saw two dim figures in the darkness, lying on the ground in the sand. One was plumper than the other. Wharton caught his breath.

"That's Bunter!" he muttered. "Mauly's there, too, I'll wager. Come on, kids!"

The heroes of the Remove made a simultaneous rush into the cave, Johnny Bull lighting the darkness with his torch-light.

Lord Mauleverer and Billy Bunter were lying bound and gagged on the floor of the cave. They were alone. Their eyes lighted up with joy when they saw Harry Wharton & Co.

"Hurrah!" roared Bob Cherry. "We've found the giddy wanderers! All serene, Mauly! We'll soon have you free!"

Their bonds having been severed, Mauly and Bunter struggled to their feet.

"Yow! Wow! I'm stiff! Groooogh!" moaned Billy Bunter.

"Thank goodness, you fellows came in time!" gasped Mauly. "We're waitin' to be taken away at any minute, begad! Did you pick up my message in the bottle?"

"Rather!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "Mauly, what has happened? What does all this mean? Where on earth did you get to after you bolted into the train at Courtfield on Tuesday night?"

Mauly grinned, and proceeded to give his Form-fellows an account of his adventures after waking up in the railway-carriage and finding himself on the sidings.

Harry Wharton & Co. and Wingate listened in thrilled amazement to Mauly's story.

"Bunter was brought here yesterday. Naylor lured him to the house," finished Mauly. "We've both been workin' like navvies all night, diggin' up the rotters' loot from the end of this cave. They've taken it away in a motor-boat, an' when they've hidden it they're comin' back to fetch us. They meant to sort of hold us to ransom, you know. They found out from Bunter that I happen to be well off, and Bunter made things worse for himself by swankin' about his 'rich relations.'"

Bob Cherry grinned.

"Well, if this doesn't romp off with the whole giddy biscuit foundry!" he exclaimed. "Mauly and Bunter kidnapped by harbour thieves and made to work! It's a wonder they're both alive to tell the tale!"

Billy Bunter gave a plaintive moan. "I say, you fellows, I've had an awful time!" he said faintly. "I feel that I shall collapse at any minute, unless I have something to eat. I suppose



Squiff dragged open the cupboard door in the cellar and Johnny Bull flashed on the light of his pocket torch. It was not long before Nugent discovered the secret spring that operated the door at the back of the cupboard. There was a click, and the back part of the cupboard swung inwards, leaving a gaping hole beyond. "Good egg!" chirruped Bob Cherry. "Now for the giddy voyage of discovery!" (See Chapter 9.)

neither of you happen to have some chocolate, or toffee, or anything eatable to give me?"

"Not much, Bunt!" laughed Harry Wharton. "We've got more important things to think about than feeding you. Now, kids, we'll lie in wait for those rascals when they return to take Mauly and Bunter away. That hole at the end of the cave will make a fine hiding-place for us."

"Good egg!"

Wingate left the cave, and found a hiding-place among the rocks outside. Harry Wharton & Co., Mauleverer, and Bunter secreted themselves in the excavations in the cave and waited.

Nearly half an hour passed, and then the hum of a motor-boat was heard.

"Here comes Sylvester's boat!" muttered Mauleverer. "Now we'll have some excitement, begad!"

Peering out from their hiding-place the juniors saw a large grey motor-boat stop opposite the cave. It had a small boat in tow. The two men aboard the motor-boat dropped anchor, and then, pulling the small boat alongside, they clambered into it. The rope was released, and the boat rowed to the shore.

"Naylor and Gobin!" muttered Mauly in a thrilled voice. "Sylvester has stayed behind, I suppose, at the place where they have hidden their loot. Here they come!"

Naylor and the beady-eyed Gobin entered the cave.

Naylor gave an exclamation of surprise on being unable to see the two prisoners. Then, while the two rascals were looking about them in the gloom, Harry Wharton gave the signal. With swift suddenness the Removites arose from their hiding-place and flung themselves at Naylor and Gobin.

"Yoooooooooogh!" howled Gobin, as Mauly grasped him and forcibly dragged him backwards. "Wot the— Oooooooooh!"

Naylor, with a snarl, drew a revolver, but before he had time to shoot, Wingate sprang into the cave and closed with him. The stalwart captain of Greyfriars succeeded in wrenching the weapon from the rascal's grasp. Then Harry Wharton & Co. piled on him, and he and Gobin were secured with the ropes that had been taken from Mauleverer and Bunter.

"Got you, my beauties!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "You didn't expect that little lot, did you? We've turned the tables on you properly!"

Gobin writhed and made some blood-curdling remarks, whilst Naylor snarled balefully at the victorious juniors.

"Now, the next thing is to find out where Sylvester is, and what these rascals have done with their swag," said Wingate. "We'll make Gobin tell!"

"Hang you! You won't do that!" snarled Gobin. "I— Yooooooooh! Wharrer you doing?"

Bob Cherry suddenly grabbed him, and he commenced to drag him to the cave entrance.

"We'll give him a few duckings, kids. Perhaps that will make him tell!" grinned Bob. "Lend a hand!"

"What-ho!"

Mauly was the first to go to Bob's assistance. A long stretch of rope was attached to Gobin, and then he was raised on high and hurled into the sea.

Splash!

"Yarrrrrrugh!"

The rascal disappeared with a gasping gurgle. Then Harry Wharton & Co. hauled him in by means of the rope. He lay on the rocks, moaning and



SMOKED OUT!

In the glaring light Harry Wharton & Co. saw Sylvester crouching at the top of the steps of the old lighthouse, a look of demoniacal hatred on his face. "Now, you rotter, you'll have to come out!" shouted Wharton. "Look!" exclaimed Bob Cherry suddenly. "He's jumped into the sea—oh, bravo, Wingate!" At the same instant as Sylvester leaped Wingate dived from the motor-boat into the sea. (See Chapter 9.)

spluttering, looking for all the world like a landed shark.

"Now will you tell us?" demanded Bob.

"Gerrogh! Gug! No! Oooogh! Help! Yooooooooogh!"

Next minute the luckless Gobin went whirling back into the sea. His howls were piteous to hear. He could hardly speak when the juniors once more hauled him in.

"Now, you might as well be a good boy and tell us where your naughty pal is," grinned Bob Cherry. "We're going to duck you till you do tell us. Do you want to go in again?"

"Wow-wow! No! Lemme alone! I'll tell you!" gurgled Gobin. "Sylvester is waiting at the old lighthouse by Doom Cliff. The stuff is there, too. Groooooooooogh!"

The Removites busied themselves at once. Harry Wharton consulted with Wingate, who agreed that the two prisoners should be left in the cave, under guard, while he took the motor-boat, with the juniors on board, to the old Doom Cliff lighthouse, which was situated at a distance of some three miles farther along the coast.

Billy Bunter, Squiff, and Johnny Bull were selected to mount guard over Naylor and Gobin, whose bonds were made so secure that it would be impossible for a Houdini, even, to get free.

The rest of the juniors and Wingate then went aboard the motor-boat, tied the small rowing-boat behind, and Wingate started the engine.

The motor-boat, in his expert and capable hands, churned swiftly through the waters towards Doom Cliff, which was one of the loneliest and wildest parts of the rugged coast.

At length the old lighthouse came into view. It presented its usual solitary appearance. Hundreds of years of buffeting in heavy seas and gales had rendered Doom Cliff lighthouse unsafe, and a revolving light on the cliffs two miles farther on now served its purpose.

As Wingate steered the motor-boat nearer to the lighthouse, the juniors, looking upward, saw a man standing on the low balcony outside the old lamp-room.

"That's Sylvester!" cried Mauleverer. "He looks surprised to see us, begad!"

Slim Sylvester's face was livid with rage and desperation. He realised what had happened, and that the Removites had come to effect his capture.

"Down in the boat, quick!" rapped Wingate suddenly.

The juniors ducked only just in time, for a quick succession of revolver shots whined through the air, the bullets spluttering viciously into the sea around the motor-boat.

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Wingate swung the wheel round and opened the throttle wide. He manoeuvred the craft skilfully between the great jagged rocks at the base of the lighthouse. Then he shut off the engine and turned to the juniors.

"Now's your chance to get off!" he rapped. "But for heaven's sake be careful—the rascal is armed and desperate!"

"All serene, Wingate!"

Harry Wharton & Co. jumped out of the boat on to the rocks, and sprang to the base of the lighthouse. Bob Cherry charged down the door, and the rest of the juniors crowded on the stone steps beyond.

They looked upward through the darkness, and heard footsteps above.

"You can't escape us, you rotter!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "You might as well surrender."

There was no reply, but they heard Sylvester's hissing breath.

"Dare we go up?" muttered Nugent. "If he pots at us with that revolver—"

"We'll smoke him out!" said Wharton with a sudden idea. "We'll get a can of petrol out of the motor-boat and use these old sacks. Soaked in petrol, they'll burn and smoke like the dickens. He'll have to come out!"

"Topping wheeze, Harry!"

A can of petrol and a number of sacks were brought from the motor-boat. The sacks were taken half-way up the stone stairs, soaked in petrol, and then Harry Wharton applied a lighted match.

"Back, you chaps!" he gasped.

The petrol-soaked sacks burst into flames instantly. Jagged tongues of livid flame illuminated the darkness, and dense masses of pungent black smoke rose upward, filling the lamp-room above.

In the glaring red light Harry Wharton & Co. saw Sylvester crouching at the top of the steps, a look of demoniacal hatred on his face.

"Now, you rotter, you'll have to come out!" shouted Harry Wharton.

A snarl of rage sounded above.

Several minutes later Bob Cherry, standing at the lighthouse door, gave a shout.

"Sylvester has jumped into the sea! Oh, bravo, Wingate!"

At the same instant as Sylvester had leaped off the low balcony of the lighthouse Wingate dived out of the motor-boat into the sea.

He swam, with swift, long strokes, towards the fugitive harbour thief.

Sylvester struck out for the shore, swimming desperately, but the stalwart Greyfriars captain rapidly overhauled him.

"Hurrah!" roared Bob Cherry. "Wingate's got him! Out with the boat!"

Wingate and Sylvester closed, and a grim fight for mastery in the water ensued.

"Hang on, Wingate! We're coming!" shouted Wharton.

The juniors scrambled back into the motor-boat. Harry Wharton started the engine and swung the boat round. He drew alongside the struggling pair, and Bob Cherry, Nugent, and Inky all dived in to Wingate's assistance.

Sylvester was quickly overpowered. Wharton flung out a rope and the rascal's hands were secured. Then he was dragged, dripping wet, and cursing roundly, into the motor-boat.

Wingate and the others scrambled aboard.

"Jolly exciting while it lasted, what?" grinned Harry Wharton. "You caught him splendidly, Wingate! Take the wheel, old scout, will you? This craft is rather heavy for me to manage."

Sylvester was made a prisoner and dumped in the bottom of the motor-boat. The fire had burnt itself out by the time Harry Wharton & Co. arrived back at the lighthouse. A search of the old lamp-room soon revealed the stack of stolen goods that the harbour thieves had accumulated.

The Removites loaded the loot on the motor-boat. By the time all the crates and boxes were on the boat was very full, despite its large size. Harry Wharton and Nugent remained on board with Wingate and Sylvester, whilst the others crowded into the small boat at the back.

"Now, right away for the cave!" chuckled Bob. "Kids, this is a fine capture. Won't the police be surprised!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Rather!"

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

The End of the Adventure!

JOHNNY BULL, Squiff, and Billy Bunter were still mounting guard over Gobin and Naylor when the juniors reached the cave. The two prisoners were taken to the house, outside which Sylvester's car was still

waiting. Billy Bunter improved the shining hour by raiding the house larder and feeding until Bob Cherry routed him out.

Wingate went on to Pegg with the motor-boat, Mauleverer, Squiff, and Johnny Bull remaining on board to look after Sylvester and the captured plunder. Nugent, Inky, and Bob Cherry went in the small boat behind. Harry Wharton and Billy Bunter journeyed by road to Pegg in the car, with Gobin and Naylor as their prisoners.

Arriving at Pegg, Wharton drove straight to the police-station, and there told the inspector the amazing story. Gobin and Naylor were taken into custody with great promptness, and then Harry Wharton and Billy Bunter accompanied the police-inspector and two constables down to the harbour.

Not long afterwards the motor-boat was sighted, with the small boat in tow. Wingate steered the fully-loaded craft to the harbour side.

"Here we are again!" grinned Bob Cherry from the little boat behind.

Sylvester was arrested, and the police took charge of the motor-boat and its cargo. Wingate and Harry Wharton & Co. were congratulated warmly by the inspector on their smart work.

Feeling supremely cheerful, Harry Wharton & Co., Mauleverer, Billy Bunter, and Wingate caught the next train to Greyfriars.

Dr. Locke was amazed at the story told him by Wingate and Mauleverer. Meanwhile, Harry Wharton & Co. and Billy Bunter retailed the news to the rest of the school.

Greyfriars was astounded and thrilled. Mauleverer and Billy Bunter were the centre of attraction. When they described how they had been made to work hard in the cave their listeners chuckled.

"Fancy Mauly doing a couple of days' digging!" gasped Bolsover major. "What a change for him! I wonder whether it will cure him of his slacking habits?"

"No jolly fear!"

"Ha, ha! No!"

"Bet it doesn't cure Bunter, anyway," remarked Bulstrode, with a chuckle.

"Hear, hear!"

The Removites had little sympathy to expend on the fat and fatuous Bunter, but with Mauleverer it was different. Speculation ran high as to whether Mauly would profit by his uncomfortable experience. Time would prove.

That evening Harry Wharton, Nugent, and Bob Cherry went along to Mauly's study and tapped at the door.

There was no response, but they heard sounds of slumber from within.

Wharton opened the door gently, and then he and his chums chuckled.

Lord Mauleverer was taking it easy, as of yore. Lying comfortably on his sofa and luxurious cushions, he was fast asleep.

"Don't let's disturb him," grinned Harry Wharton. "I think Mauly deserves his forty winks this time, don't you?"

"Ha, ha! Rather, poor chap!"

And Harry Wharton closed the study door, and he and his chums walked away, leaving Lord Mauleverer to enjoy his nap in undisturbed bliss.

THE END.

(Now you can look forward to next Monday's gripping Greyfriars story, entitled "Bunter's Poor Relations!"—a scream from beginning to end.)

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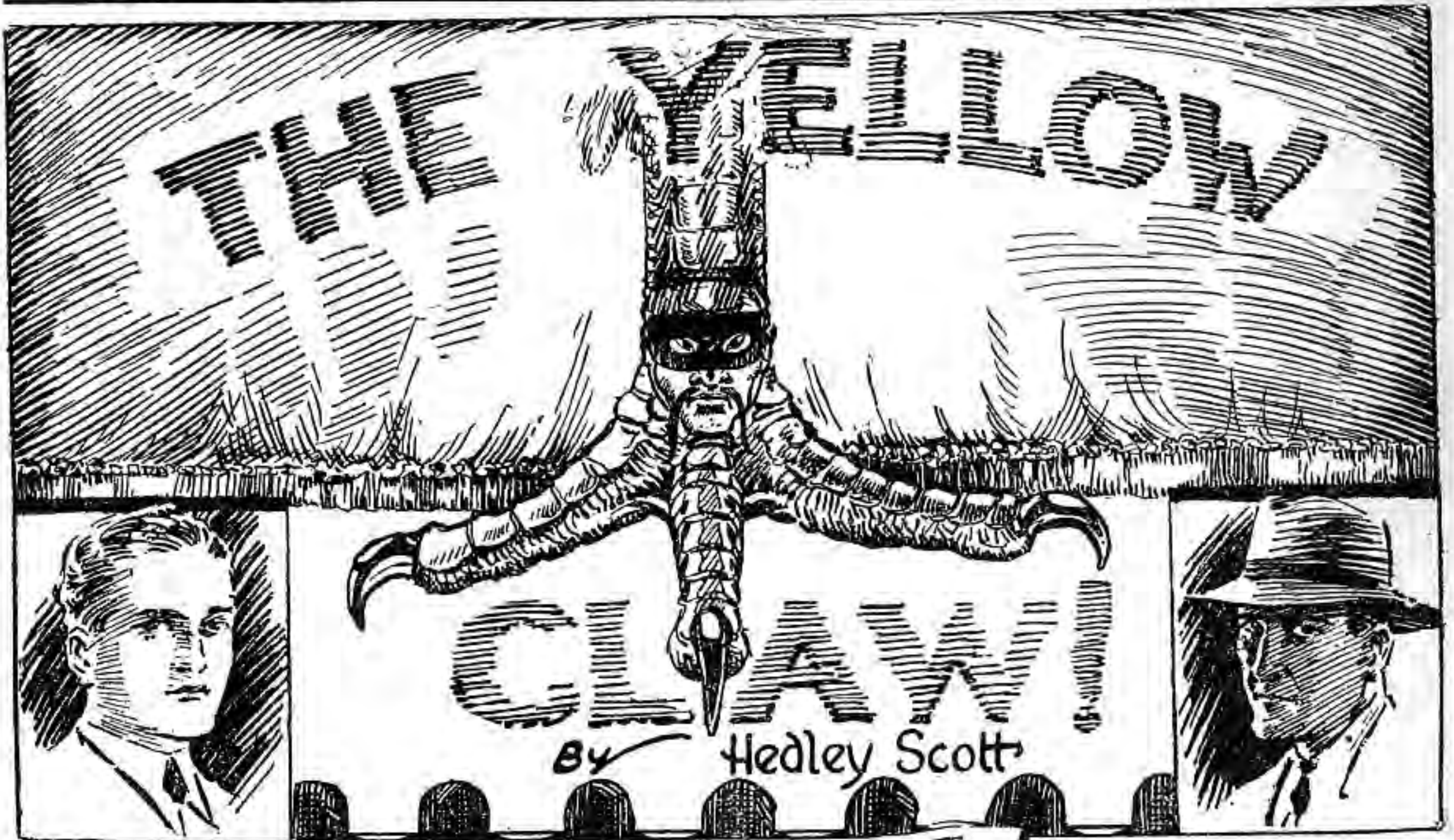
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A Birthday Greeting!

THE dreamy strains of London's latest fox-trot, freely intermingled with the sounds of laughter and the hum of happy voices, floated out gently into the night from the region of Sir Malcolm Dunderfield's palatial residence in Park Lane.

A neighbouring clock had just chimed its sonorous warning of midnight, but the revelry continued with unabated zest. A solitary policeman, the only human presence in the famous Lane that runs parallel with one side of the equally famous Hyde Park, switched his lantern on the house adjoining Sir Malcolm's, and unconsciously stood humming the stirring strains of the fox-trot.

"My, but he knows what's what!" muttered the constable, shutting off the light from his lantern and beginning to move on. "Sir Malcolm's keeping it up late to-night, an' no mistake. Sooner be in there a-talkin' a doocid lot of nonsense to the ladies and quaffing the foaming cup than tramping up and down this 'ere bloomin' Lane! How so—we can't all be successful financiers, I s'pose!"

And with that philosophical reflection the man in blue trudged his monotonous way, humming the air of the dance tune until he reached the end of his beat. But his previous remark carried a deal of truth in it. For Sir Malcolm Dunderfield was the most successful financier of the day. Everything to which he turned his hand bore good fruit. His friends on 'Change had given him the appellation of the "Bulldog." Once his mighty intellect was brought to bear upon any question of finance, Sir Malcolm never "let go" until he had reaped his reward.

And to-day was his sixtieth birthday! Just before the chimes of midnight pealed forth, Sir Malcolm was approached by his butler, who bore a letter on the silver salver he carried.

"Excuse me, Sir Malcolm," he said respectfully, "but I was requested to hand you this letter a minute before twelve."

"Indeed!" replied the master of the house, in some astonishment. "And by whom, pray?"

"The gentleman left no name, sir," explained the butler. "He said that it was a birthday greeting. You would find his name in the letter. I thought he was trying to be funny at first, sir, but he was very much in earnest—very much in earnest."

The suave manservant did not add that

the stranger's earnestness was such that he had tipped him with a crisp pound-note in return for promising to comply with the request.

"By gad," exclaimed Sir Malcolm, slitting the edge of the envelope, "I'm mighty curious! Now, who on earth, begad, would—would—"

He swayed dizzily for a moment, and stood staring down at the sheet of note-paper he had extracted, as though he were looking at a ghost. The butler, thinking that his master had been suddenly taken ill, rushed forward to support him. But, with a muttered ejaculation, Sir Malcolm brushed aside the proffered arm and turned on his heel. Gone now was the proud and distinguished bearing of Sir Malcolm Dunderfield, financier. The back view he presented to his astonished butler was that of a fear-stricken man.

Several of the financier's guests paused in their revelry, and seemed surprised at this sudden change in their host—the man who had been the life and soul of the party a few seconds ago. But Sir Malcolm heeded them not. He stumbled out of the spacious ball-room and sought his library. Then, just as the clock on his mantel commenced to chime the hour of midnight he glanced at the letter which had been delivered to him in so strange a fashion. It ran:

"Dear Brother,—Greetings on this your birthday!"

"The Society of the Yellow Claw demands that you should deliver up to them the sum of one hundred thousand pounds. You are requested to hand over this sum in notes to him who shall be wearing in the lapel of his coat—outside your club at 12 a.m. to-morrow—the same symbol that you find at the foot of this communication. This is the second time of asking. Should you fail us again, the penalty will be death!"

"Greetings on this your sixtieth birthday, brother!"

"THE YELLOW CLAW!"

Beneath the arrogant signature was the rather grotesque imprint of a golden eagle's claw.

Even as Sir Malcolm concluded his perusal of the strange missive for the second time the last stroke of twelve boomed out from the clock before him with a harsh, jangling sound that sent an involuntary shudder down his spine.

"Greetings on this your sixtieth birthday—"

The words seemed ominous, cynical, threatening. Again the financier shuddered. His mind was recalling the sudden and mysterious end of a well-known wealthy member of the Stock Exchange six days previous. He had received such a note as Sir Malcolm's on his birthday. He had died; he was buried now!

"Ugh!" shuddered Sir Malcolm, beginning restlessly to pace up and down his carpet. "I can't do it! I won't do it! Curse the Yellow Claw!"

He endeavoured to shake off the cloak of fear that had settled on him, and attempted to rejoin the revellers in the adjoining ball-room. But he was not at his ease. And his guests sensed the fact at once. They began to besiege him with questions; but although Sir Malcolm begged to be excused on the plea that he was suffering with a violent attack of neuritis, he made no mention of the letter he had received from the notorious Yellow Claw.

He thought of communicating with the police, for he was rather intimate with one or two high officials at the "Yard," but each time he made a move towards the telephone with the idea of putting the notion into practice, something within him restrained the impulse.

And the police had not helped the last victim of the Yellow Claw. True they had shadowed him about for days on end; true it was that two policemen had guarded the unfortunate fellow's residence day and night. True, also, the Yellow Claw had carried out its grim threat. Alec Maldane was a person of the past; he had defied the Yellow Claw. Was it to be Sir Malcolm Dunderfield's fate to follow in the footsteps of his unfortunate business friend?

The financier clenched his hands and bit his lip nervously. His face was lined—lined heavily with care and anxiety. His laughing friends, who had jocularly told him that he looked forty and not a day more, would not be so generous now could they but see him, Forty—

Sir Malcolm looked into the long mirror, and the reflection caused him to brush his hand across his face, as though attempting to hide it. Forty? He looked as old as Methuselah!

He tried to compose himself, and then turned once again to the mirror. The

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sight that met his eyes this time was such as to cause the few remaining hairs on his head to stiffen. His eyes goggled wildly in their sockets; his heart beat at twice its normal rate. For not only was his own figure reflected in the mirror, but that of a stranger's also—a stranger garbed in the flowing, embroidered robes of a Chinese mandarin of high degree! Sir Malcolm's terror-stricken eyes elevated slowly until they came on a level with the reflected face of the mysterious intruder. He stiffened sharply as his gaze encountered a black mask which covered the greater portion of the features, and from which two almond-shaped eyes gleamed out. Below the mask was reflected a pair of thin, cruel lips, curved in a sinister smile. From the upper-lip two long moustaches, plaited Chinese fashion, depended.

And over the broad shoulders of the reflection, like a sleeping asp, hung a long, plaited queue. Below it, from the spacious, embroidered sleeves, merged two lean hands, the fingers of which were sheathed in pieces of metal that gave a claw-like and forbidding appearance.

Sir Malcolm, with a gasp of terror, wheeled swiftly.

"Who—who are you?" he demanded, in a voice that sounded strangely unlike his own.

"I am—the Yellow Claw!" came the sibilant reply.

The Alternative!

A STRANGLERED cry left the lips of Sir Malcolm Dunderfield as the intruder made known his identity.

Fear was written in every line of his face as he gazed at the velvet mask and encountered the piercing eyes beyond.

"Good heavens!" muttered the financier, weakly, groping his way to a chair.

"What do you want with me?"

The tall figure in the embroidered robe moved forward silently and quickly. It halted at the door of the library and sought the handle. Followed the sound of a key being turned in the lock—a sound that roused Sir Malcolm to shake like a fat jelly. He was alone with the Yellow Claw!

"I merely want the pleasure of a little chat with you, brother!" hissed the sibilant voice again. "I will sit down."

The Yellow Claw drew forward a chair and seated himself, taking care, however, to keep his features—or what was visible of them—in the shadows. Then a mocking, cruel light shining in his narrow eyes, he began to speak.

"There is no cause for alarm," he said, in perfectly good English. "At least, not for the moment," he added. "You received a letter from me, Sir Malcolm, did you not?"

The financier shifted uneasily in his chair.

"Yes," he nodded.

"And are you going to obey the decree of the Society?"

Sir Malcolm shifted still more uneasily, and a minute ticked by before he made reply.

"I can't!" he exclaimed nervously. "I—"

"Can't!" rapped the Yellow Claw angrily, whilst a significant movement of his sheathed fingers caused the financier to sit well back in his chair. "You dare to disobey the Society—you, of all people, Sir Malcolm? Ha, ha!"

He concluded with a harsh laugh that almost froze the marrow in his listener's bones.

"I am helpless!" muttered the financier weakly, a bead of perspiration breaking out on his brow. "I can't raise one hundred thousand pounds!"

"So, my dear brother is unwilling—eh?" came the sibilant voice again. "He would follow in the footsteps of Alec Maldane—eh? For the sake of a paltry hundred thousand pounds! Fool!"

"But my fortune is invested!" wailed the unhappy baronet. "I cannot raise the sum you require by to-morrow. My bankers would not advance anything like that sum. And my current account holds only twenty thousand pounds—"

"You can sell your stock!" hissed the Yellow Claw suggestively.

"But I should ruin myself! There would be a panic in the stock markets if I began to sell out!"

"That is no affair of mine!" came the sibilant voice again. "The Society is in urgent need of funds. You know why you should be willing to contribute, don't you?"

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The unhappy financier nodded his head dismally.

"But it was not of that that I came to see you," continued the Yellow Claw. "We need your help. To-day one of our Society was sentenced to ten years' imprisonment. He must be freed—and at once. The Society has selected you as being the most suitable and influential person to effect his pardon or escape. I leave it to you."

"But I cannot help you!" exclaimed the financier nervously.

"You lie!" hissed the sibilant voice of the Yellow Claw. "You are well acquainted with the high officials at Scotland Yard. You must pull the strings, you understand?"

"I cannot—I will not!" Sir Malcolm's courage was returning.

"Then you and yours will pay the penalty!"

"You threaten me—"

"And yours!" interrupted the Yellow Claw, with a cynical smile. "If you fail the Society in either of the tasks put before you you will live just long enough to see your family wiped out!"

"What?" shrieked the financier.

"And your nephew will be the first to die a sudden death. You are very fond of John Huntingdon, are you not? You would not like to lose him, would you?"

"You scoundrel!" exclaimed Sir Malcolm, rising to his feet. "You would not dare to—"

The masked figure before him burst into a roar of cruel laughter.

"Dare?" hissed the Yellow Claw. "The Society does what it wills—and none shall stop it! Mark us well, Sir Malcolm—for you should know our quality—unless you have delivered one hundred thousand pounds into our hands by to-morrow, unless you have also effected the freedom of one of our brothers who was tried in your English courts to-day—Signor Mantillo, I refer to—you will surely die! But, think of it—every member of your family will be wiped out first! Ha! It makes you pause—eh?"

But Sir Malcolm's pause was momentary. With a growl of rage and despite his heavy handicap of sixty years he sprang at the mocking figure before him.

Something flashed into the hand of the Yellow Claw as the enraged financier bore down upon him. A little puff of bluish-grey vapour escaped from a small cylinder he held between his sheathed fingers, and which was directed full in the face of Sir Malcolm Dunderfield.

With a shriek the financier tore at his throat, for it seemed as though he were choking. Some overpowering perfume was robbing him of his senses, was cracking his throat, was paralysing his limbs.

He pitched to the carpeted floor, full at the feet of the sinister and mocking figure of the Yellow Claw.

It was three hours later that Parchester, Sir Malcolm's butler, having seen the last of the guests off the premises, went to find his master before he himself retired for the night—or, rather, the morning.

But Sir Malcolm Dunderfield was nowhere to be found. The butler tapped at his bedroom door, and, receiving no answer, entered of his own accord. The bed, however, was undisturbed; Sir Malcolm evidently had not gone to bed. Rather curious, and not a little anxious, Parchester looked into the study, the dining-room, the sitting-room, the breakfast-room, and, lastly, the library. His curiosity was roused to a high pitch when he discovered that the door of this latter room was locked.

He tapped respectfully at the door.

Silence.

"This is mighty funny!" muttered Parchester, knocking louder at the door this time. "Why is this door locked?"

He stooped down and peered through the keyhole. He could faintly see the outline of a key in the lock—a circumstance that brought a whistle of amazement to his lips.

"Locked on the inside!" he exclaimed.

"Then Sir Malcolm is in the room unless he's gone through the french windows on to the lawn outside, and is walking through the grounds. I'll—"

Without more ado Parchester turned swiftly, and in a very short space of time was pacing the lawn at the back of the house. He halted at length before the french windows of the library. These, to his great surprise, were wide open. Treading softly and cautiously into the darkened

room Parchester began to cross the floor in the direction of the electric-light switch. He had hardly progressed three or four yards when his feet came into contact with something that was lying directly in front of him. So unexpected was the encounter—for the butler knew the position of everything in the room, that he almost toppled over. Then, recovering himself, he reached the switch and flooded the library with half a dozen lights. As his eyes became accustomed to the glare after the darkness of the grounds outside, they sought the mysterious object over which he had stumbled.

"Good heavens!" Parchester darted forward, full of concern and alarm, for on the thick pile carpet lay the inanimate figure of his master—Sir Malcolm Dunderfield.

Parchester was booked for a further surprise yet. Kneeling before the huddled figure, he gazed long and curiously at the pale face. But the thing that held Parchester's attention most was the painted figure of a yellow claw which, after the fashion of an ordinary "transfer," was imprinted on Sir Malcolm's forehead.

"Great Scotland Yard!" exclaimed the butler, taken aback. "Who the—what the—"

His common sense getting the upper hand of his curiosity, he applied his ear to Sir Malcolm's heart. To the butler's joy, it was beating steadily—almost normally. The baronet's breathing, too, was quite regular, but a trifle stertorous. To all intents and purposes, Sir Malcolm had merely gone to sleep in the natural way.

But there was the peculiar imprint of the Yellow Claw to account for. How on earth did that get there? And why should Sir Malcolm choose to sleep on the library floor?

Parchester again found himself studying the rather ominous yellow sign on his master's forehead. And whilst he was thus engaged Sir Malcolm's eyes flickered open. He made a shuddering movement with his hand, as though to ward off something before his eyes, and murmured something that was unintelligible to the butler. Then, with a fearsome glance to right and left of him, Sir Malcolm, under the supporting arm of Parchester, sat up.

"Has—has he gone?" he asked the servant in a trembling voice.

"He, sir?" queried Parchester. "Whom, sir?"

"The—" Sir Malcolm's voice trailed off. He staggered to his feet, still looking furtively in all directions, and was helped across to the settee. "Ah, that's better, Parchester. I suppose I must have—have fainted, you know. I've been feeling rather faint lately, Parchester," he added rather vaguely.

"I'm sorry, sir," murmured the butler sympathetically. "But you will excuse me, sir, if I draw your attention to that—that claw on your forehead—"

"What!" The baronet leaped to his feet, his face as white as chalk. "Claw—forehead!" he muttered nervously. "A glass, Parchester! Quick, man, let me see this thing!"

The butler made a gesture in the direction of the long mirror that directly faced the windows. Sir Malcolm rose to his feet and crossed the room. Then, as his reflection slowly merged into the long, bevelled mirror, he darted back with a cry of horror. His right hand sought his forehead where the curious imprint of the yellow claw stood out in bold relief to the whiteness of his face. He tried to rub the transfer away, but he merely succeeded in smudging it a trifle. Then, with a low-voiced cry of horror and fear, he fled from the library to the nearest bath-room, leaving Parchester scratching his head in perplexity and gazing into the long mirror in turn as though he expected to see a similar yellow claw appear on his own forehead.

"Funny wind-up to a birthday," he muttered. "I'd better see if the master wants me, I suppose."

He joined Sir Malcolm in the bath-room. By this time the financier had scrubbed away the terrifying yellow claw, and his features were red and shiny. He beckoned to Parchester.

"Parchester, I want you to say nothing of what you have seen in this house to-night—you understand?"

"Certainly, sir," replied Parchester, nevertheless wondering if his master had been seized with a sudden fit of madness. "It is my duty to obey, sir!"

"Fine sentiments, Parchester," smiled Sir Malcolm, who had now recovered his composure. "Perhaps this"—he held out a crisp

five-pound note—"will act as a sufficient deterrent should you be tempted to break them."

"You are very kind, Sir Malcolm," said Parchester, pocketing the "fiver." "You may rely upon me, sir!"

"Very well, Parchester—off to bed!" said the financier, patting his butler on the shoulder familiarly.

He watched Parchester until that worthy was out of sight. But although the possession of an unexpected "fiver" had extracted a promise of secrecy from the servile butler, it had not stifled his curiosity. Parchester was not exactly a fool. And, after all, people are not in the habit of falling asleep on library floors, he reflected. Neither are they in the habit of adorning themselves with gruesome transfers. Yes, there was something deep on here—very deep. Parchester found himself lying awake trying to solve the mystery. That was saying something for Parchester, for the butler was fond of his couch. But he was fond, too, of "fivers." There might be more "fivers" to come—he felt practically certain there would be.

Sir Malcolm Dunderfield waited until the butler had disappeared, then he turned on his heel and sought his own room. But real sleep was also denied the financier. When, as he did often, fall into a doze he would awaken suddenly, conscious of the presence of the mysterious Yellow Claw, and hearing, too, the sibilant voice of the head of the dreaded Society which was already a pest to wealthy Londoners.

Sir Malcolm's sixtieth birthday celebration had terminated in an unexpected fashion. The first few hours of the first day of his sixty-first year had also been thrilling and unexpected, to say the least. What had the future in store for him? The financier asked himself the question time and time again as he tossed wearily on his pillows. But when, three hours later, the sounds of bustle and life from without signalled the commencement of another working day the question still remained unanswered.

Sir Malcolm Dunderfield now began to feel alarmed—very alarmed. The Yellow Claw had given him until twelve o'clock in which to comply with their exorbitant requests. If he failed them, every member of his family was in danger besides himself.

The financier, the most hardened and successful speculator on 'Change, felt a thrill of terror for the future—for his family's future. His nephew, John Huntingdon, had been singled out as the first victim to fall by the hand of the Yellow Claw.

And whilst Sir Malcolm underwent a course of mental torture he was conscious of the passing of time—conscious that the dreaded hour of twelve o'clock was fast approaching. He must do something, for he felt the Yellow Claw to be in earnest. Had not Alec Maldane paid the penalty for his obstinacy?

A Startling Accusation!

FERRERS LOCKE, the celebrated detective of Baker Street, threw aside his morning paper as Sing-Sing, his Chinese servant, entered the room.

"Inspector Pycroft wishes to see you, M'st'le Locke," said the Chinese.

"Oh, show him in," said the sleuth.

"Velly good, sir!"

Sing-Sing softly padded out of the room, to return a moment later with a tall, broad-shouldered member of the Force—no less a person, in fact, than Inspector Pycroft of Scotland Yard.

"Good-morning, Pycroft!" greeted Locke, gripping his old friend's hand and wringing it heartily. "Why, man, what's wrong? You look as if you've been to a funeral!"

"Worse than that," grunted the shining light of the C.I.D. "I've just left the chief—"

"Tantrums, eh?" interpolated Locke, with a grimace. "I know, Pycroft. Horlingson is a bit of a tartar when he's roused."

"You're right, Mr. Locke," said the inspector. "He called me into his office half an hour ago, and called me everything he could think of. Told me I was the biggest idiot unbugged because I've failed to locate this confounded Yellow Claw and his equally confounded gang!"

At mention of the powerful society that was paying too close attention to the wealthy inhabitants of London, and which was causing certain individuals at the Yard sleepless nights, Ferrers Locke became thoughtful.

"It's time, certainly, that your crush



Sir Malcolm's terror-stricken eyes elevated slowly until they came on a level with the reflected face in the mirror. Then, with a gasp of horror, he wheeled swiftly. "Who—who are you?" he demanded in a voice that sounded strangely unlike his own. "I am the Yellow Claw!" came the sibilant reply. (See page 22.)

made an arrest, Pycroft," he said at length. "This Yellow Claw Friendly Society, as I call it, is having things too much its own way. Have you found anything in connection with the Alec Maldane affair?"

"Nothing—not a smell of a clue!" snapped Inspector Pycroft sourly. "That's what all the trouble is about. The chief has shoved that nice little job on to me, and expects results in about five minutes."

Ferrers Locke nodded sympathetically.

"And I suppose your visit is the forerunner of a request for me to give you a hand, eh? Don't trouble, old man. I'm frightfully interested in the Yellow Claw, I can assure you. We'll work together."

"You're a blessed thought-reader, Mr. Locke!" smiled Pycroft, blushing slightly. "I'll confess that I'm all at sea, and that I came round to ask your advice and help."

"Both granted," said the private detective. "I'll—"

A furious tocsin on the telephone-bell interrupted his remark, and, with a muttered apology to the C.I.D. man, Ferrers Locke crossed over to the instrument and took up the receiver. His rather brusque manner of answering telephone calls underwent a startling change when he had held the receiver to his ear for about a minute. Inspector Pycroft noted, too, the hard, metallic gleam that shot into the private detective's eyes.

When at length Locke replaced the receiver he turned to the inspector with a smile.

"I must ask you to excuse me, Pycroft," he said. "I've just received an urgent summons that will necessitate my absence from here for about half an hour. If you care to wait here until I return, you may do so with pleasure. I rather think it would be advisable, in the circumstances, for my client—the man who called me up just now—is troubled by the attentions of the Yellow Claw!"

"What!" exclaimed Pycroft, in amazement. "The Yellow Claw? Lor', don't say that confounded gang is busy again!"

"Looks very much like it," chuckled Locke grimly. "But perhaps we shall be able to nip the affair in the bud this time."

"We?" echoed the C.I.D. man.

"Exactly! You asked me for advice and help, didn't you? Well, we're working together. How's that?"

"I feel tons better already!" smiled

Pycroft. And he looked it. In Pycroft's opinion, there was no man on earth who could unravel crime like Ferrers Locke, unless such a person was Inspector Pycroft himself. But the C.I.D. man's natural modesty forbade too much reflection on that point—which was just as well.

Times out of number had Ferrers Locke assisted him in the pursuance of his official duties, and much of the credit had been reflected on Pycroft's shoulders.

"Then you'll wait for me to get back here?" asked Ferrers Locke, slipping into his greatcoat. "Help yourself to the cigars—I can thoroughly recommend these Havanas!"

"Right-ho!" smiled Inspector Pycroft. "I'll make myself comfortable, never fear! Is Drake at home?"

He referred to Ferrers Locke's young and capable assistant.

"No," replied Locke. "Jack is following up a clue in the Marsden forgery case. I've been working overtime this last few days, but I think I've got my man. Drake will be here to report to me at two o'clock this afternoon. So-long!"

So saying, the famous scientific investigator donned his hat, and, chartering a taxi to take him to his destination, was soon speeding through Baker Street en route for Park Lane. He gave the address of Sir Malcolm Dunderfield, for he it was who had summoned him over the telephone. Parchester was already waiting at the open door of the palatial residence of the great financier, and he hurried forward as Ferrers Locke alighted from the taxicab.

"Will you step this way, sir?" he said respectfully. "Sir Malcolm is awaiting you."

Ferrers Locke followed in the wake of the butler, and was eventually ushered into the sitting-room, a sumptuously and comfortably furnished apartment quite in keeping with Sir Malcolm's extravagant reputation.

The financier himself rose to greet the famous sleuth as he entered.

"Good of you, Mr. Locke, to attend so promptly," he said. "Sit down!"

The financier motioned to Parchester, the butler, to retire, and when the door had closed behind that worthy, the smiling face of Sir Malcolm Dunderfield underwent a

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startling change. He appeared worried and excited, and Ferrers Locke was quick to take note of these things.

"And now, Sir Malcolm," he said abruptly, "what's the trouble?"

"As I told you on the telephone, Mr. Locke," commenced the financier, "I have been threatened by the Yellow Claw."

"Quite so," smiled Ferrers Locke. "That is why I promised to get here so quickly, Sir Malcolm. Anything concerning the Yellow Claw is a matter of great interest to me."

"Ah, I wish I had your iron nerve, Mr. Locke!" said the financier, with an apprehensive glance round the room. "But to business. Unless I raise one hundred thousand pounds before twelve o'clock, unless I manage somehow to effect the release of Signor Mantillo, who was sentenced to ten years' penal servitude yesterday, I am a doomed man!"

"Rather a tall order, that," said Ferrers Locke, looking sharply at the financier, "and one which very few men could achieve. May I see the letter you received on your birthday?"

"Certainly," replied Sir Malcolm.

He handed the criminal investigator the strange missive he had received the night before, and watched the detective's face as he perused the contents. For one flickering moment a strange gleam shot into Ferrers Locke's eyes, but it passed almost as swiftly as it had dawned. Nevertheless, its effect, strangely enough, made Sir Malcolmidget uneasily in his chair.

"A nasty sort of birthday greeting," remarked Ferrers Locke, handing back the letter. "Have you heard from the gang by letter before? I see it mentions that 'this is the second warning.'"

"Yes, Mr. Locke. I heard from this accursed tribe of cut-throats a week ago today. And the text of the letter was much the same as the one you have just perused."

"Indeed?" said Locke gravely. "And did it commence 'Dear Brother'?"

Sir Malcolm flushed a deep red and gnawed the ends of his moustache before replying. Then, slowly and obviously reluctantly, came the words:

"Yes, it did!"

To cover his confusion Sir Malcolm went on to relate the visit of the mysterious person who styled himself the Yellow Claw. He also outlined the threat to wipe out

the whole family should he—Sir Malcolm—refuse to accede to the wishes of the Society. Next he described the peculiar weapon the Yellow Claw had used when he had rendered him unconscious, and concluded with a description of the painted symbol of the Society which had been stamped upon his forehead.

"A gas-pistol, I should imagine did the trick," remarked Ferrers Locke. "That sort of weapon is largely being used amongst criminals of to-day. It leaves no traces, is effective in operation, and keeps on the right side of the law. What the peculiar gas is that is being used with such a weapon is a matter of speculation at the moment, but I should imagine that it is nitrous oxide. Once the lungs inhale a very small quantity of the gas the subject is rendered unconscious. The transfer which you found had been stamped upon your forehead was merely the usual formality of the Society when a victim has been singled out. If you remember rightly, Alec Maldane was braided in much the same way."

"Yes, poor fellow," muttered Sir Malcolm, shaking his head. "I knew him well."

"But his warning letter from the gang did not commence with 'Dear Brother,'" said Locke quickly.

"Did it not?" stammered Sir Malcolm, lowering his gaze.

"But to return to the visit of the Yellow Claw," continued the detective. "You remarked just now that he was attired in Oriental robes?"

"That is so!"

"Very strange!" muttered Locke. "A man would have difficulty to roam about London—Park Lane at that—in such garments, unless he were going to or returning from a fancy-dress ball."

"Exactly!" exclaimed Sir Malcolm. "Perhaps this—the Yellow Claw was banking on the fact that his strange appearance would not count for anything if he were seen hanging about my place, because a good number of my guests were attired in fancy dress themselves."

"Ah, then you may have been entertaining the Yellow Claw all the evening!" chuckled Locke. "Were any of your guests in Chinese robes?"

"I believe two or three of them were," answered Sir Malcolm; "but I did not pay much attention to them. You see, there

were over two hundred guests. A difficult job to be 'At Home' with all of them in one evening, you will admit."

"Quite so," assented the sleuth. "I was merely trying to place the idea of the Oriental robes. To a Londoner such attire, under the conditions in which you confronted it, as it were, would be more terrifying than—we'll say a lounge suit. You follow?"

"Then you doubt whether this Yellow Claw is a Chinaman?" exclaimed Sir Malcolm.

"I did not say so," rejoined Ferrers Locke quietly. "But even a Chinaman, Sir Malcolm, is not in the habit of walking about like a pantomime merchant, in the heart of London."

"I see your point, Mr. Locke."

"Strange, too, that Alec Maldane gave a reception the night before he met his end," continued the sleuth thoughtfully. "Unfortunately we never discovered whether his assassin wore Chinese robes, too."

Sir Malcolm glanced hastily at his watch, and shuddered.

"Mr. Locke, may I remind you of the fact that twelve o'clock is fast approaching," he said falteringly. "Unless I have obeyed the instructions of the Yellow Claw by that time I am a doomed man."

"I beg your pardon," said Locke. "I was forgetting the seriousness of the occasion in the interest of tracing this mysterious robed Chinaman. But proceed, Sir Malcolm. I take it that you wish me to—"

"Hunt the Yellow Claw, and exterminate the infernal Society!" rapped Sir Malcolm.

"Also a tall order!" smiled Locke. "But I will do my best. I presume from that that you do not intend to hand them one hundred thousand pounds, or effect the release of Signor Mantillo, either—eh?"

"You are quite right," said Sir Malcolm. "For one thing, I could not raise the necessary cash in time. For another, I would not besmirch my honour or that of my friends in the Force by attempting to effect the release of such a scoundrel!"

"I admire your sentiments, Sir Malcolm," said the detective. "Ten years for firing such a magnificent building as the International Stadium is not half enough for such an arson fiend! Signor Mantillo is indeed a lucky man to get off so lightly. You informed me just now, Sir Malcolm, that the Society has threatened first to wipe out your entire family, and that John



Something flashed into the hand of the Yellow Claw as the enraged financier bore down upon him: A little puff of bluish-grey vapour escaped a small cylinder he held between his sheathed fingers. With a shriek Sir Malcolm Dunderfield tore at his throat as though he were choking. Some overpowering perfume was robbing him of his senses, was cracking his throat—was paralysing his limbs. (See page 22.)

Huntingdon has been marked down as the first victim."

"Yes, yes," assented the financier.

"Then I take it that you desire me to keep a wakeful eye in his direction?"

"Exactly, Mr. Locke. If anything happened to John I would never forgive myself."

"Very well," replied Ferrers Locke. "I will lose no time. My assistant, Jack Drake, will be able to assist me in that direction. Your nephew will have no difficulty in finding Jack a job in the company, will he?"

"If you leave that to me," said Sir Malcolm, "I'll arrange with John that your assistant starts with the company right away. The dress rehearsal takes place this afternoon, you know?"

Ferrers Locke nodded. As a matter of fact he was keenly interested in the histrionic art, and John Huntingdon, the idol of London and the provinces, was one of its cleverest exponents. He had appeared in the leading juvenile roles of all the famous plays by Mark Chaerton—the playwright who had leaped into public favour two years ago and was striding forward to further successes and popularity. His latest creation, "Man and His Money," was billed to "open" on the following day at the Thespian Hall, Shaftesbury Avenue, and the company was giving its dress rehearsal that afternoon.

The forthcoming play was the talk of the theatreland, and Londoners were curious to see it staged. With such a powerful draw as Mark Chaerton, the author of the play, and John Huntingdon in the "lead," the play was booked for a good attendance. Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake had booked two stalls for the "first night."

"I think it would be simple enough for Mr. Huntingdon to give Jack Drake a job as his dresser," remarked Ferrers Locke at length. "I can vouch for Jack's ability and aptitude, Sir Malcolm."

"A good idea," agreed the financier. "I will let John into my confidence and explain matters. I already feel as if the threat of the Yellow Claw is doomed to failure, Mr. Locke. You have comforted me greatly."

"I'm pleased to hear that!" responded the sleuth. "But tell me, Sir Malcolm, have you explained the full details of the case? Have you told me all you know of this Yellow Claw Society?"

"Mr. Locke!" flashed Sir Malcolm indignantly.

"Be calm, my dear sir," returned Ferrers Locke, unperturbed. "I must confess that I get the impression that you are not telling me all you know. Remember, you are placing a deal of responsibility on my shoulders when you hand over this case to me, and it is imperative that I should know the full facts of the matter. How else can I achieve anything. Pardon my saying so, Sir Malcolm, but your attitude on two or three occasions during the last fifteen minutes has been suggestive of a man keeping something back."

"What do you mean?"

"Simply this—you are a member of the Yellow Claw yourself," said Ferrers Locke quietly. "Of that I feel convinced!"

The First Thrust!

"MR. LOCKE," roared Sir Malcolm, rising from his chair, "how dare you insinuate such a thing? How—how—"

His heated words trailed off as he looked at the smiling, confident face of the great detective.

"You are not so clever an actor as your nephew," chuckled Ferrers Locke. "Sit down, Sir Malcolm, and let's face facts."

The financier sank wearily into his chair and faced the detective. Then, with a deep crimson suffusing his features, he commenced to speak.

"You are quite right, Mr. Locke," he said, after the manner of a schoolboy admitting something of which he was not proud. "But how, in the name of all that's wonderful, did you arrive at such a conclusion? I thought I had hidden that ghastly spasm of my youthful days for all time."

"Well, you have," remarked the sleuth. "For, remember, Sir Malcolm, we are talking in confidence. Your secret is safe with me, I assure you."

"Thank you!" replied the financier, with a sigh of relief. "But I'm dying to know how you built up that accusation, Mr. Locke."



Under the speaking tube let into the wall, by which communication from the street below could be obtained, lay the huddled figure of Inspector Pyecroft. With a cry of astonishment Ferrers Locke knelt at the inspector's side and turned the inert figure over. (See page 28.)

"I will tell you," smiled the sleuth. "In the first place, the letter you showed me a few moments ago commenced with 'Dear Brother.' Now, why should such a Society as the Yellow Claw address you in that fashion? It was not customary for them to do so—if one can place any value on letters received by their early victims. Take the case of Alec Maldane, for instance. His warning note commenced without any such familiarity. But that is not all," added the sleuth. "The double task the Yellow Claw has set you is well-nigh impossible of accomplishment in such a short space of time as they have given you. Now, who on earth could effect the release of a prisoner like Signor Mantillo—found in the act of firing the International Stadium—sentenced to ten years' penal servitude, by twelve o'clock to-day? No matter how influential the person was, it would take a little longer than the time allowed you, you must admit?"

"Exactly," assented Sir Malcolm. "But proceed, Mr. Locke. I'm vastly interested."

"Point number three concerns the threat of the society in the event of your failure—the wiping out of your entire family. I must confess that at first I was inclined to sneer at it, but once the theory that you were a member of the society yourself entered my head I changed my opinion. It is no idle threat, I can assure you, Sir Malcolm."

"I don't quite follow you, Mr. Locke," exclaimed the financier, obviously puzzled.

"You will in a moment," smiled Ferrers Locke. "Like all such societies, its members when they take the vows and pass through the initiation ceremony renounce their fortunes to the general good of the society. Usually, too, there is a clause in the documents which they sign that, in the event of a member's death, bequeaths his entire money and estate to the society. I take it that you signed some sort of document when you became a member of the Yellow Claw, Sir Malcolm?"

"I certainly did," remarked the financier. "And if I remember rightly, I did put my signature to such a clause. But I will tell you of my adventures—the adventures that culminated in my becoming a member of the Yellow Claw—when you have finished, Mr. Locke."

"Very well," continued the sleuth. "It is obvious to me that you are no longer an active member of the society. In fact, I would go so far as to say that you have no

intention of leaving your money and estates to such an infernal gang of scoundrels!"

"Indeed you are right," grunted Sir Malcolm. "My money—or the bulk of it—I intend to leave to John."

"Good! Now, don't you see that your death would not help the society at all; at least, not until every single member of your family had been put out of the way. But once such a dastardly plan was accomplished successfully, and you in turn had met with a mysterious and sudden end, the Yellow Claw Society, by some means which at present I cannot fathom, would come forward and claim your vast fortune—it's well-known, Sir Malcolm, that you are a millionaire—without any fear of a relative contesting the case."

"Ah, I can see your line of reasoning now," said Sir Malcolm. "And it could be put into practice, too, for I don't suppose—in fact, I'm certain—that I have more than six relations in the wide world."

"And the Yellow Claw is aware of such a fact, believe me, Sir Malcolm," remarked Ferrers Locke. "But tell me, how came you to be mixed up with them?"

"That is not a very long story, Mr. Locke," said the financier. "But I must take you back forty years. My half-brother and I were spending a fortnight in Paris, seeing the sights and doing what is commonly referred to to-day as 'palating the town red.' Well, we were out one night in the region of Montmartre when my half-brother, who was, I regret to say, a thorough bad lot, fell in with some inebriated old rascal, who promised to take us secretly to the rendezvous of the Yellow Claw. To be brief, my half-brother and I were smuggled into the meeting that was taking place. We were already armed with the passwords and signs of the gang, and dressed in the correct costume."

"All went well for about half an hour. The chief of the gang, who wore the same style of costume as that sported by the Yellow Claw of to-day, and who was also masked, talked in some gibberish which I could not follow for about ten minutes. Then several other members of the society got on their hind legs and spoke, too. In its early stages, you must know, the society was a gang of anarchists—"

"But to-day it has adopted a more lucrative profession, eh?" interrupted Locke.

"Exactly. Well, there was a sudden

(Continued on page 28.)

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THE GOLD ESCORT!

(Continued from page 2.)



A bullet struck Glennie's horse. With one spring he was out of the saddle. The poor brute reared, and then, with a whinny of terror, dropped over into the blackness of the gorge.

There were loose boulders on either side of the narrow track which led up the centre of the canyon. The two troopers dropped into cover just as four men came with a rush into the mouth of the rock cleft. It was now all but pitch dark. The attackers were mere black shadows against the gloom.

"Let 'em have it!" shouted Denison, and the echoes crashed to a stream of bullets from the two revolvers. One of the four went down. The others dropped back. But the main body of Dowson's men had now reached the canyon mouth, and came pouring recklessly in, firing as they came.

"Drop back from rock to rock," Glennie ordered.

The two policemen worked together to perfection. First one fired, then the other, and though they did not see any of their assailants fall, twice a yell or a curse told them of a hit.

But they themselves did not escape scot-free. Glennie was hit again, this time in the leg, and was bleeding badly. Denison had lost a little finger, shot off as clean as if cut with a knife.

Still, ducking and dodging from rock to rock, they fought on steadily, while the robbers, who hardly ever caught a glimpse of them, for the most part wasted their cartridges on the rocks. But after a third had been hit they grew more careful, and copied the defenders by taking cover.

"Peter, I'm getting weak," muttered Glennie, dropping into a new hiding-place beside the other. "We'd better make a bolt for the cabin. Heaven send they've got the gold safe under cover!"

"Faith, they ought to by this! Come on, then."

"There they go. After them, boys!" came

a hoarse roar from Dowson. The troopers ran for dear life, bullets smacking all around them.

Again luck was good to them. The gully curved a little way up, and screened for the moment from the shots, they dashed into the open pathway.

A huge black barrier of rock closed their way. Plastered against its base like a swallow's nest against a wall was a tiny building. The terrified horses, tethered in a bunch beside it, were kicking and squealing.

Someone yelled:

"Who's that?"

It was the voice of Stringer, the chief teamster.

"Don't be shooting us!" shouted back Denison.

Next moment a door was flung open, and, bleeding and exhausted, the two men were safe inside just as a fresh volley rattled on the stout stone walls.

"What is the meaning of this outrage, sir?" came a shrill pipe of a voice.

A little old man, thin, bent, with a scanty grey beard and red-rimmed, spectacled eyes, stood before Glennie.

"Very sorry, Mr. Miggs! Any port in a storm!" replied the trooper; and suddenly reeled over, fainting.

The blood was welling out of his boot!

Instantly Mr. Miggs was transformed. He dashed away into an inner room, and came back with water and bandages. With fingers deft as a woman's, he had the ugly wound washed and bandaged, and the blood stopped. A little brandy, and Glennie rapidly came to. He found himself flat on a cot in a small, low room. Its walls were rough stone, the roof timber, covered with slabs of stone. The back was virgin rock,

in which a door appeared, opening apparently into the mouth of a cave. Furniture there was little, but the place was littered all over with skins of animals and birds, mineral specimens, boxes of dried plants, and the like. It fairly reeked of carbolic and arsenical soap.

Outside all was quiet—an ominous silence; but within Denison and the three teamsters were busy as bees knocking loopholes in the walls.

"Is the gold safe?" was Glennie's first question.

"Right as rain!" cried back Denison cheerily.

"And Dowson?"

"Not a sign of him. But the brutes have shot all the horses."

"Can we hold them off?" queried Glennie anxiously.

Denison came close. He was very white, and his eyes were shining.

"We've only got about two dozen cartridges left," he whispered. "And there's next to no water in the place."

"But they'll not dare attack us here."

As he spoke, a loud shout came from outside.

"Don't shoot! I want to speak to Mr. Glennie."

It was Dowson's voice.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Held Up!

"HELP me to the loophole, Peter," said the wounded man.

"He's not to move!" cried Mr. Miggs shrilly.

"Very well, you parley, Peter," smiled Glennie.

The Irishman went to the loophole.

"What do ye want, ye black spalpeen?" he shouted.

"Will you surrender?" came the gruff answer out of the blackness.

"Surrender to your granny!" jeered Denison. "What do ye take us for?"

"Sensible men," came the voice. "I've got a dozen chaps with me. You haven't a ghost of a show. If we don't rush you, we can starve you. I know you've got no water, and if you've grub for a day I'm a Dutchman! Give up the gold and we'll go off quietly."

Denison's Irish blood flamed up.

"If ye want the gold ye'd better come and take it!" he cried.

"Is that your last word?"

"You bet! And it will be yours, too, if you don't sheer off quick, ye low-down thaving blackguard!"

"On your own heads be it!" shouted Dowson furiously. "Let 'em have it, boys!"

There was a crash of shots, and bullets fairly hailed upon the walls and roof. The window was smashed to smithereens; but the men inside were all below the line of fire.

"Look out! Here they come!" yelled Denison.

And next moment the robbers were upon them. A huge rock crashed against the door, splintering the timber, but the stout frame held.

"Don't waste cartridges," warned Glennie.

It was impossible to see, but the defenders loaded and fired with the utmost steadiness.

A burly brute thrust a rifle through the broken door. Denison swung round, and a yell told that he had not missed.

The low room was thick with smoke. Even Glennie crawled off the cot and took his place at a loophole. For five minutes the battle raged fiercely, and then a sudden silence fell. The robbers had drawn off.

But the exultation of the defending party did not last long. They, too, had suffered. Stringer's arm was broken, and one of the teamsters was shot through the jaw. Worse than all, their last cartridge was gone, except two in Glennie's pistol.

Denison came over and whispered to Glennie.

"If they try it again, we're done," he said.

"I think they had a sickener that time, old man."

"Then they'll wait and starve us out. No one ever comes up this gully. We might be here a month without anyone being the

wiser. Look here, Bob, I'm going for help."

"You can't do it, Peter. The path's full of 'em."

"I don't mean to take the path."

Glennie stared.

"I've been talking to Miggs. There's a way up the cliff. If I can once get outside without them seeing, I'm all right."

Glennie hesitated. The risk was awful, for the whole gorge was full of Dowson's men.

"I tell ye 'tis our only chance," urged the Irishman.

Glennie was forced to give way. Denison flung off his coat, and, in trousers and shirt, slipped out of the window. The others waited in horrible suspense. Glennie's eyes were on his watch. He reckoned that it would take Denison at least three minutes to gain a point of safety.

Two minutes. Two and a half. Then suddenly a rifle-shot cracked in the stillness. A groan burst from all the five men in the hut.

Glennie staggered to his feet.

"Men, there's only one thing to do—barricade ourselves in the inner cave!"

They all set to work, wounded and unhurt alike.

"But my specimens?" groaned poor Mr. Miggs.

"They're only after the gold," replied Glennie consolingly. "They won't be likely to touch your specimens."

The unwounded teamster uttered a sharp yell and sprang half across the room. Moving a large box, a hideous black head had suddenly shot against the wire-netting which covered it.

"It's full of snakes!" cried the man, horribly frightened.

"Snakes!" exclaimed Glennie eagerly.

Miggs ran across to the box.

"Be careful!" he squeaked. "They are tiger snakes, the finest in all Queensland! Their bite is death!"

In spite of his wounded leg, Glennie staggered across the room.

"Mr. Miggs, can you move those snakes from one box to another?" he asked.

"Do you take me for a fool?" cried Mr. Miggs, with great scorn. And, opening the box, he fearlessly dipped in his hand and snatched out a great, twisting wreath of wriggling coils.

Glennie unfolded his plan. The rest listened with keenest attention.

"My word, Mr. Glennie, you've hit it!" exclaimed Stringer emphatically, when the trooper stopped speaking. "Come on, lads, to work!"

The night dragged slowly by, but at last a grey light filtered through the broken window.

"They'll be coming soon," muttered Stringer, whose face was drawn with the pain of his shattered arm.

And half a dozen rough-looking fellows came tumbling in through the ruins of the broken door.

The defenders one and all bolted for the cave, flung to the door, and barred it.

Glennie heard Stringer chuckle. There was a sudden silence in the outer room, broken only by the sound of a hammer and the splintering of wood.

Perhaps a minute passed. It seemed an age to the watchers in the inner cave. Then suddenly rose wild yells of uncontrollable fright, and a frantic stampede ensued.

Glennie quickly opened the door. Not a robber was in sight, but round and round the floor of the outer room glided half a dozen great snakes, their coils rustling, their heads raised, and forked tongues flickering in and out.

"My word, Mr. Glennie, that was a good dodge of yours, putting them snakes in the gold-boxes!" chuckled Stringer. "Them chaps won't be in a hurry to come back."

Almost as he spoke a heavy volley pealed out at the mouth of the gorge. The five gazed at one another hardly able to believe their ears.

"Can Denison have got through, after all?" muttered Glennie.

Again came the sound of shots. A minute later men came running up the gorge.

"Hurrah!" shouted Stringer, wild with excitement. "Militia from Charlestown, and Mr. Denison leading 'em!"

"Now I'll catch my snakes again," said Mr. Miggs, with a sigh of relief.

THE END.

NEXT MONDAY'S PROGRAMME!

"BUNTER'S POOR RELATIONS!"

By Frank Richards

THE title alone of this coming treat, chums, is sufficient indication of something really good. The great W. G. Bunter has no time for anyone on the "rocks," not even relations. And his minor, Sammy of the Second, endorses his brother's £ s. d. views.

The egregious Bunters receive a telegram, notifying them of the visit of a certain uncle and aunt who are supposed to be "rolling in oof." The Removites are presented with glowing pictures of the wealth of the Bunters' relatives, and their curiosity is aroused. What kind of shock the Bunters receive when their "wealthy" aunt and uncle arrive would be best left for you to discover for yourselves. But make no mistake about it, Frank Richards' latest product is a masterpiece.

"THE YELLOW CLAW!"

By Hedley Scott.

The next instalment of this grand stage and detective serial—sees the opening performance of Mark Chaerton's latest play. A surprise awaits the audience at the end of the second scene, act two, a surprise that takes the form of a tragedy. Even Ferrers Locke, cool though he usually is in the face of

unexpected developments, receives a shock. What that surprise is you will learn next Monday, chums. To say more now would be tantamount to spoiling a good thing.

"SMOKE SIGNALS!"

This is the title of another thrilling narrative of the work of the Mounted Police in North-West Canada, booked for next Monday's bumper issue of the MAGNET. These adventure yarns of the hardy men who patrol the outposts of our Colonies will go like hot cakes, I feel sure.

A "STORM" SUPPLEMENT.

To complete a really good value-for-money issue of your favourite paper, there is a special four-page supplement by the heroes of the Remove—Harry Wharton & Co. We get a glimpse of storms of all sorts, fictitious narratives, and solid facts. If I am any judge of my readers' appetites, as it were, there will be a "storm" of applications at the newsagents for next Monday's MAGNET. Take a tip, boys. Get in before the storm breaks, and make sure of your copy of the MAGNET.

Your Editor.

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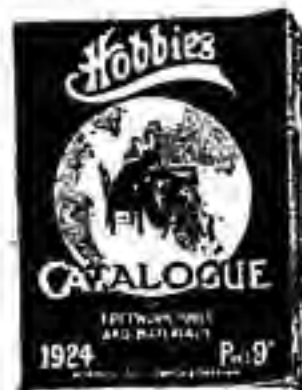
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THE YELLOW CLAW!

(Continued from page 25.)

Heated discussion in the underground room in which the meeting was taking place. Everyone began to talk—with the exception of my half-brother and myself—at once. Some important issue was at stake. Suddenly the chief of the gang turned in my direction and in perfectly good English asked me my opinion. I was terror-stricken and almost dumb. In a moment I was discovered—my facial expressions must have been enough to give me away. We were soon captured and bound.

"The chief of the gang caused us to be placed in two armchairs, from which coils of electrical wire trailed to various switches in the wall. He kindly demonstrated the use of the chairs first, though, by placing two live rabbits in the seats. Then, moving to a switch, he simply pressed a button, and the two rabbits—"

"Were electrocuted?"

"Yes. Well, you can imagine my feelings when I sat in one of those chairs," continued

Sir Malcolm, "and will no doubt think not too hardly of what I am about to tell you. My half-brother and I were questioned—our family history, our financial positions, our prospects were demanded. And we gave them the facts they wanted. I must tell you, too, that my father had amassed a fair fortune, and it was no doubt with that fact well in mind that the chief of the Yellow Claw offered us our liberty if we would become members of his accursed gang.

"Again, to be brief, for time is on the wing, Mr. Locke," continued the financier, "my half-brother and I, rather than be murdered in cold blood, agreed to their proposals. We went through a strange initiation ceremony, and we signed several documents, most of which I barely scanned. Then with a final threat that should we ever disclose any of the facts we had learned in connection with the society we should be instantly killed, the chief allowed us to depart.

"From that day until a week ago I was never troubled by the society. I had forgotten their existence, and I had kept my word, for I never mentioned their existence to any save my half-brother—"

"And what has happened to him?" asked Ferrers Locke.

"The poor fellow is dead," replied Sir

Malcolm slowly. "He was, as I have already said, a bad lot. He spent a small fortune in high living until our father quarrelled with him. Then with a few pounds in his pocket he went abroad. Five years after he had sailed I received a letter—for my father was dead—from a priest in California, who had attended him, saying that he, too, was dead. It was verified by a doctor, too."

"Very interesting," remarked Ferrers Locke, rising to his feet. "I will say an revoir, for I have one or two small matters to attend to."

Ferrers Locke, with an energy that bespoke his interest in the case before him, walked briskly to the end of Park Lane and chartered a taxi. Inside five minutes he was entering the sitting-room of his chambers in Baker Street.

"Hallo, Pyecroft!" he exclaimed as he opened the door. "Sorry to have—"

His exclamation died in his throat, for it was a peculiar and totally unexpected sight that met his gaze.

There, below the speaking-tube let into the wall through which communication from the street below could be obtained, lay a huddled uniformed figure. That of Inspector Pyecroft, of Scotland Yard!

(Another amazing instalment of this grand new serial next Monday.)

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