

SCHOOL, DETECTIVE & ADVENTURE STORIES INSIDE!

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Week ending April 5th, 1924.

The Magnet 2^d

Library
of
School & Detective Stories.

EVERY
MONDAY



DICK PENFOLD COMFORTS HIS BROKEN-HEARTED FATHER!

£50 would mean happiness to Penfold's father, but Monty Newland's generous offer to make good the cobbler's loss is refused. See this week's powerful story, "PEN'S PAL!"

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"THE PLUNDERED SCHOOL!"

By Frank Richards.

NEXT Monday's yarn of Greyfriars will stir many mighty agreeable memories. It is a typically great story, full of the spirit of the famous school, but feelings will be mixed as regards a certain lamentable incident which mars a cheery meeting between modern Greyfriars and the Old Boys.

FORTY YEARS ON.

It pans out this way. A party of Old Boys visit Greyfriars. Such an event should, all other things being even, have brought nothing but pleasure—should, but somehow failed to do so. The Old Boys come to Greyfriars, and get a rousing reception. The guests look round the studies and the class-rooms, and recollections are pretty vivid. It is always the way—the once familiar scene, the initials scratched on a window, the chat about the good old times, and the merry happenings now relegated to the limbo of the bygone. But over all these mutual expressions of goodwill hangs a cloud. The shadow is not obvious at first. Greyfriars was proud to welcome the old stagers, and the good feeling was reciprocal. A splendid concert is arranged to do honour to the visitors. On occasions like this Greyfriars can be trusted to come out strong. You can easily picture Bunter drawing magic words from a dummy figure, whilst the remainder of the Removites perform wonders with concertinas and mouth-organs and the like.

THEN THE BLOW FALLS.

The crash has nothing to do with the applause elicited by the array of musical talent which good old Greyfriars puts forth. The concert was right as rain—a much sounder affair, all things considered, than the Concert of Europe, about which the newspaper fellows prate such a lot in season and out. The entertainment was what the French would call *hors ligne*—which does not mean off-side or beyond the limit. But immediately afterwards a particularly painful discovery is made. While Greyfriars fiddled the school was burgled. A whole consignment of valuables, most of them irreplaceable, have been stolen. Who did the plundering? Mystery follows hot on the heels of mystery, and we get a denouement which will cause plenty of surprise. Keep your eye on next week's *MAGNET*. You will be captivated.

AN OLD BOYS' SUPPLEMENT.

It was right on the wicket to keep up the spirit of the time by having a special issue of the "Greyfriars Herald" in honour of the ancient fogeys. Only too often the superannuated fellow gets a rough time. He is passed over with spurnery and despection, as it were. One has known him to be stigmatised as a prosy bore. Sometimes he is to blame for this curt judgment, but not always.

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Even if he is fond of spinning yarns about the old days, he has a lot of merit. He may be a *laudator temporis acti*, as Peter Todd would put it, but it is a very kindly and extremely human failing to browse on the hillsides of the past.

GOOD OLD YESTERDAY.

Any old how, the conductors of the "Greyfriars Herald" are to be congratulated on their sagacity in publishing an old-timers' number. The aforesaid Old Boys hail from happy days long ere the world took such stock of the banana supply, or jazzed to syncopated music instead of gracefully valseing to the dulcet strains of "Santiago," "In Old Madrid," or "The Blue Danube." It would be impossible in the small supplement in question to do full justice to the viewpoint of the old stager. To accomplish such a task one would want something crisp and snappy running to a dozen volumes. You could not really handle the whole subject in much less. But Harry Wharton and his staff have grappled with the problem. They have studied the Old Boy. They are right-down sympathetic to him and his fads and opinions. When the Old Boy was a stripling cricket was cricket. In the same gay period the country was happy and contented, and, in short, the world went very well then. So, for that matter, does it go well now, though the disgruntled do not recognise the lustrous truth. So be on the qui vive for a lively glimpse of the peepshow of the past next Monday. It may raise many an argument, but without argument life would be a pretty flat, stodgy, and unprofitable business.

"THE YELLOW CLAW!"

By Hedley Scott.

I can promise you a rattling finale to this splendid serial. The cat is not permitted any too previous escape from the bag. I consider that the author has manipulated his top-hole mystery exceedingly skilfully. Many readers will be surprised when they discover at the finish the real identity of the master mind behind the supreme mystification of the Yellow Claw. This serial has illustrated a good many interesting things, one of them being the art of keeping a secret to the end, another the wisdom of enlisting the services of Ferrers Locke in the case of a crime camarilla.

"THE SECRET OF DOOM FARM!"

Another yarn of the Mounted Police rounds off next Monday's number of the *MAGNET*. It will please all Magnetites. This time we have to do with the Mounted Police of South Africa. That is the land of the I.D.B.—otherwise, the illicit diamond buyer, and this type of unscrupulous huckster looms in the drama of Doom Farm.

A PLEASANT SURPRISE.

That is something we all want. Pleasant surprises are better than cart-loads of pelf or fortunes neatly packed and sent carriage paid. For long past I have received urgent requests for longer Greyfriars yarns, and as I exist merely for the purpose of trying to come somewhere within sight of the wishes of my chums—you see the modest way I put the matter—I have arranged for a thirty-thousand word Greyfriars yarn to come along almost immediately. You may call this an experiment. Anyway, it comes as a novelty, but it is something which has been asked for time and again. If it proves to be really what is most desired, I shall know how to proceed. This is taking us back to the jolly old bygone again. The *MAGNET* used to give Greyfriars tales of that increased length. Why not again? Of course, this departure will cause a postponement of a new feature I have in preparation.

"THE QUEST OF THE PURPLE SANDALS!"

I have a wonderful series of tales to follow the "Yellow Claw!" Look out for those purple sandals and the big secret they contain! Ferrers Locke is seen taking up a new mission which involves world-journeyings. The great detective has the biggest job he has ever tackled.

FERRERS LOCKE FOR EVER.

That's that! The new series must stand over for one week, but I can promise you a treat in these well-knit yarns of a great trek after a criminal. The whole plot is intriguing, and though a wearer of purple sandals might be regarded with suspicion, and easily spotted, yet this is not so in the special circumstances under review.

LAUGHTER.

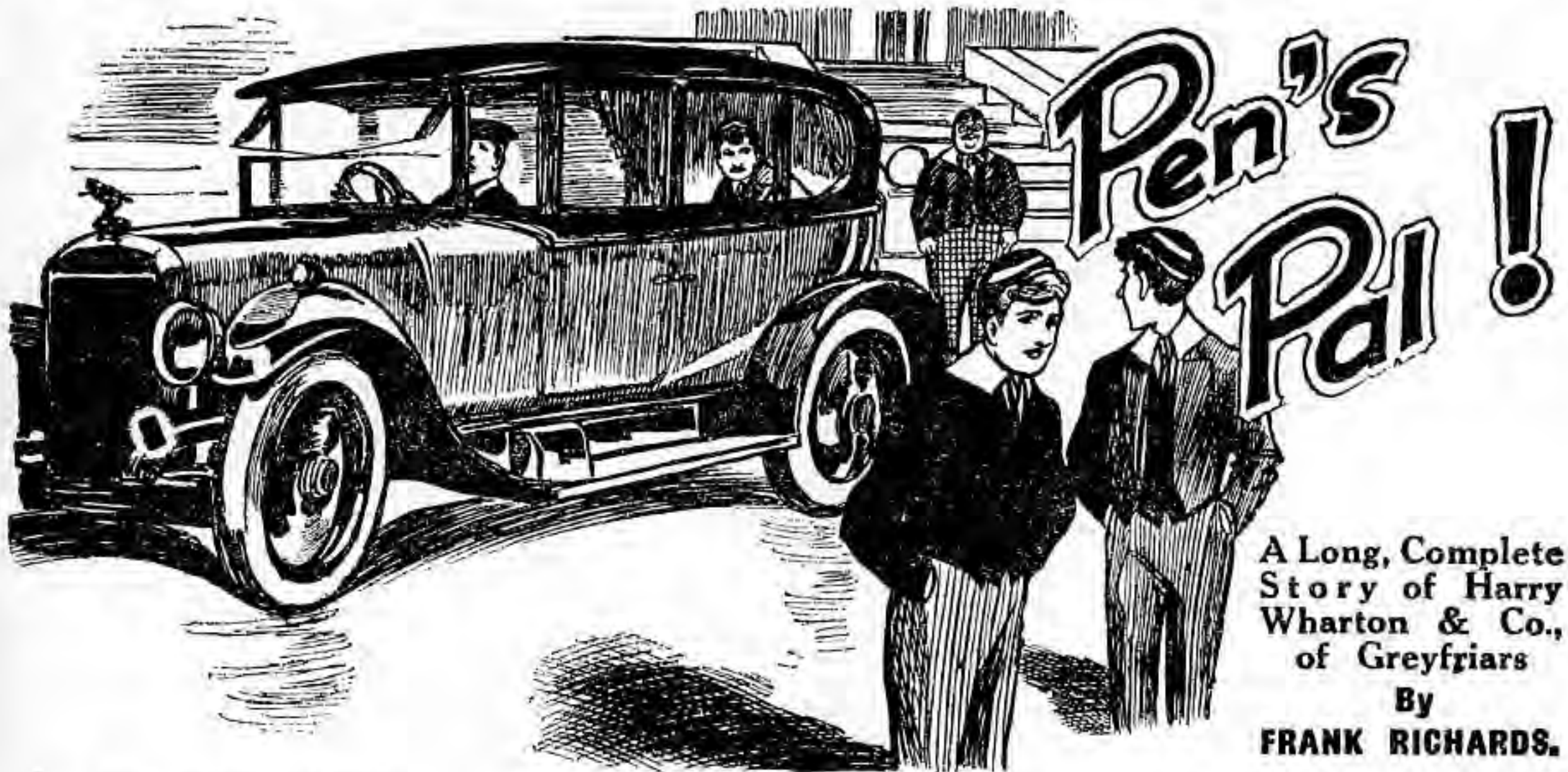
This paragraph has nothing to do with Bunter, or the merry shouts from the onlookers as the doughty porpoise skips away from the ashplant of the enraged prefect. Nothing of that kind. I was just going to refer to a laugh as an article of social enterprise and commerce. Nobody knows the good that can be done by a cheery laugh. It is medicine (of the right sort) just to listen to the invigorating sound. But that means the good laugh. Some fellows always make use of a snigger. That's no good to anybody. Others indulge in the mocking laugh. That, again, is futile. But the right sort of laugh is disarming. It cheers one up, it dismisses anger, it hides a sudden bad temper, it carries one out of the bad patches of life into the sunshine again. "Laugh and the world laughs with you." And, what is more, the said world is eternally grateful to you.

CROPPERS AND CRUPPERS.

A good letter reaches me from Waterford. The writer says: "I should like to suggest to Harry Wharton that I think a special Horse Riding Number of the 'Herald' would be welcomed. I love riding myself, and I have a lovely little horse of my own." That's all very nice indeed, and congrats to the writer. But what about Bunter? Put the porpoise on a horse, and what would happen? Still, for once, W. G. B. might stand out.

Your Editor.

The loss of fifty pounds through listening to the wiles of a stock-and-share swindler deals a devastating blow to Penfold senior, and not a little anxiety and trouble falls on the shoulders of his son Dick. But in Monty Newland, the Jewish junior of the Remove, Dick Penfold possesses a staunch and generous chum. Monty offers to make good the loss, but he is met with a firm refusal. Unable to understand Penfold's sensitiveness in the matter, Monty thereafter stands aloof and a long friendship looks like being broken. Perhaps you will be able to sympathise with —



A Long, Complete
Story of Harry
Wharton & Co.,
of Greyfriars
By
FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Bunter's Strategy!

"SHEENEY!"

It was Bunter's voice. Billy Bunter's tones, far from dulcet, rang along the Remove passage at Greyfriars.

"Sheeney!" bawled Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's this game?" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

The Famous Five of the Remove, coming in from games practice, found Billy Bunter going strong. They strolled along the Remove passage, joining the half-dozen fellows who were gathered round Bunter and chuckling.

Bunter's occupation was really remarkable.

He stooped outside the door of Study No. 8 in the Remove, which belonged to Dick Penfold and Monty Newland. He was bawling through the keyhole at the top of his voice.

"Sheeney!"

Bunter's vocabulary seemed a little limited, but his vocal powers were strong. Undoubtedly, any occupant of the study could not fail to be aware that Bunter was talking to him.

"What's the name of that game, Bunter?" inquired Harry Wharton.

"He's talking to Newland," chuckled Skinner.

"Then he'd better be jolly careful that Newland doesn't come out to him," said the captain of the Remove. "Chuck it and cut off, Bunter, while you're safe!"

"Yah!" retorted Bunter.

"He's safe enough," grinned Bolsover major. "He's fastened the door."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The key was in the outside of the lock. Evidently the door was locked. Billy Bunter had taken some necessary precautions before hurling those offensive epithets at Monty Newland.

"Sheeney! Yah! Sheeney!" bawled Bunter through the keyhole.

There was no answer from within

Study No. 8. Someone was there. Movements could be heard. There was a sound of a singing kettle. It was tea-time. But there came no answer to William George Bunter's gibes.

"Sheeney!" howled Bunter again. "Do you hear, you cad? You're a sheeney! Yah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly owl!" said Harry Wharton. "Chuck it! What's old Newland done, anyhow?"

Bunter blinked at the captain of the Remove through his big spectacles. His fat face was red with wrath and indignation and the exertion of bawling through the keyhole.

"He's a mean beast!" he snapped.

"Rot!" growled Johnny Bull. "Newland isn't mean."

"He's refused to cash a postal-order for me."

"Oh crumbs!"

"He's rolling in money," said Bunter warmly. "You know Newland's got lots of oof. His father bags no end of oof in the City. He's got fivers and tonners, too. And I offered to pay him ten per cent interest if he would cash my postal-order—in advance. You fellows know I'm expecting a postal-order. I mentioned it to you—"

"You did. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, I thought an offer of ten per cent would please him, being a Jew!" said Bunter. "And instead of lending me the quid he kicked me—"

"Serve you jolly well right!"

"Beast!"

"So you're slanging Newland because he wouldn't shell out a quid!" exclaimed Frank Nugent.

"I'm down on sheeneys!" said Bunter loftily. "I'm slanging him because he's a sheeney! Think I'm going to let a Jew kick me!"

"You seem to have let him," grinned Bob Cherry.

"Yah!"

Bunter bent over the keyhole again and roared.

"Yah! Sheeney! Yah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Remove fellows roared, too, with merriment. Bunter's method of retaliation struck them as funny. The fat junior had crept very cautiously along to Study No. 8, slipped his fat paw in at the door and abstracted the key. Before anyone in the study could see him or interpose, he had locked the door on the outside. Then he had started "slanging." With a locked door between him and Monty Newland, Bunter felt secure in telling the Jewish junior what he thought of him. So he proceeded to do so.

"Go it, Bunter!" chuckled Skinner.

Billy Bunter went it.

"Sheeney! Yah! What a boko! Yah! Sheeney!"

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

They had cause for merriment now, of which Billy Bunter was unaware. A handsome, dark-faced junior had come up the stairs, and he stopped as he heard Bunter's shouts. It was Monty Newland. Bunter was too short-sighted to observe him. Moreover, his attention was concentrated on the keyhole.

Evidently Newland had not been in the study at all when Bunter executed his masterly strategy.

Someone was there, apparently Newland's study-mate, Penfold. Bunter's keyhole conversation had not reached the ears it was intended for. It did not worry Dick Penfold, who was going on with getting his tea in the study, regardless.

"Sheeney!" roared Bunter. "Do you hear me, Newland? Yah! Sheeney!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Unconscious of the fact that Newland was standing in the Remove passage, staring at him blankly, Bunter went on howling through the keyhole.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob Cherry. "You're really too funny to live, Bunter!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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"Sheeney!" roared Bunter.

Monty Newland came up the passage, with a rather grim expression on his dark, handsome face. The juniors looked on with grinning anticipation.

"Shee—" Bunter was beginning again, when a hand dropped on his collar from behind, and he was jerked round.

"Ow! Leggo, Nugent, you beast!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What's this game?" asked Monty Newland cheerily.

Bunter blinked at him. He realised that he was in the grasp of the sheeney.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bunter.

"Well?" said Newland genially.

"I—I thought you were in the study!" stuttered Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I thought—I—I— Of course, I—I wasn't calling you a sheeney, Newland, old chap! Leggo my collar!"

"Whom were you calling a sheeney, then?" inquired Newland.

"I—I wasn't—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I didn't—I never— Leggo my collar!" roared Bunter. "Look here, don't you shake me, you beast! Yow-ow-ow!"

Shake, shake, shake!

"Whooop!" gasped Bunter. "Leggo! S-s-s-stop shaking me, you beast! If you make my glasses fall off—ow—and they break—yow—you'll have to pip-pip-pip—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pip-pip-pip-pay for them!" gasped Bunter. "I say, you fellows, make him leggo! Ooooooop!"

Monty Newland administered a final shake, and then sat Bunter down in the passage with a bump.

Then he unlocked the study door, and went into No. 8, leaving Billy Bunter sitting and roaring—and the other fellows roaring, too.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Chums of Study No. 8.

MONTY NEWLAND threw himself into the armchair in Study No. 8.

It was a very comfortable and expensive armchair—most of the things in No. 8 were comfortable and expensive. Newland of the Remove had plenty of money—more than any other fellow, excepting Lord Mauleverer and the Bounder. Dick Penfold's belongings were few; but No. 8 was furnished as expensively as any study in the Remove.

Penfold, who was poaching eggs for tea at the study fire, glanced round with a grin on his face.

"Did you catch Bunter at it?"

"Yes."

"The silly ass!" said Penfold.

Newland did not answer. A dark and gloomy look had settled on his handsome face.

Penfold, busy with his cookery, did not observe it. He finished poaching the eggs and dished them up, and made the tea. Newland sat and watched him in silence.

"Ready!" announced Pen.

Then he noticed Newland's look.

"You don't mind what that ass Bunter was saying, do you?" he asked, in some amusement. "It's rather a compliment to be slanged by Bunter."

"Of course I don't mind," said Newland. "Nobody minds Bunter very much, I suppose."

"I should jolly well say not!" said Pen. "Here, wire into your tea, and don't worry."

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Newland drew a chair to the table and started his tea. But his face remained clouded.

"I don't mind, Bunter, of course," he said, after a long pause. "Still, it's not nice. Nobody likes to be called a sheeney! It's not a pleasant word."

"It isn't," agreed Pen.

"And a fellow can't lick Bunter—the fat fool doesn't know how to put up his hands," said Newland, frowning. "If any other of the fellows should—"

He paused. "Newland, old man," said Pen, very quietly, "the other fellows wouldn't—and you jolly well know it. You're an ass to take any notice of a fathead like Bunter!"

"I know that," grunted Newland. "All the same, a fellow likes to be liked—"

"Everybody in the Remove likes you, old fellow. Bunter would like you no end if you'd cash his postal-orders for him," grinned Pen.

Newland laughed. Then he frowned again.

"Skinner likes to rub it in," he said. "So does Snoop. They never say anything a fellow can punch them for—they're too careful. My people have been in England since the Conquest. I should think I am as English as a descendant of the giddy Normans!"

"Of course you are, old fellow!" said Pen soothingly.

Monty Newland passed his hand over his nose. It was a very well-shaped and handsome nose, but it was, perhaps, a size larger than the average nose in the Remove. Pen looked at him, and burst into a laugh.

"Old man, you're an ass," he said. "Your boko isn't so big as Bolsover major's, and it's a dashed deal better-looking! You're out of sorts."

Newland coloured, and did not answer.

"A cad will use any stick to beat a dog with," said Pen. "I've had pleasant talk from Bunter and Skinner, and fellows like that, because I'm here on a scholarship, and my father's a shoemaker in Friardale. I'm the only cobbler's son at Greyfriars, and do you think that snobbish fellows haven't rubbed it in? It doesn't worry me. I wouldn't change my old father for a duke!"

"It's different," said Newland moodily. "I'm proud of being a Jew, just as Mauleverer is proud of being descended from the Normans; but I'm as English as he is."

"Of course you are," said Pen. "We're a mixed race in this country—Norman, Saxon, Dane, Angle, Pict, and Scot; and why not Jew?"

"I know! But— It's rot, of course, to let silly talk from a fool like Bunter worry me," said Newland. "only it sometimes makes me think that other fellows think the same, only they're too civil to say so. Wharton, for instance—"

"Wharton's a good sort, Newland, and if you think he would agree with Bunter in anything, you're doing him an injustice."

"I know I am," muttered Newland. "All the same, I'm a good footballer, but he doesn't seem to want me in the eleven much. I don't say I'm better than the men he picks for the matches. Still— Perhaps I'm an ass, but—"

"No perhaps about it," said Pen. "You are!"

"I suppose so. But—"

Newland stopped, his handsome brow dark. It was clear that Bunter's unthinking gibes had wounded him, in spite of his sturdy common-sense. Under his cool and assured exterior there was a sensitive nature—a nature more sensitive than many in the Remove.

Tap!

"Come in!" called out Pen.

It was Harry Wharton who looked into the study. Pen gave him a look of welcome; Newland coloured deeply.

"Newland here?" said Harry. "Oh, here you are! I hope you haven't fixed up anything for Wednesday afternoon?"

"No—why?" stammered Newland.

"Good! I want you in the team for Redclyffe. Is it all right?"

"Oh, yes—certainly!"

"Right-ho! I'll put your name down, then." And with a nod the captain of the Remove withdrew.

Newland sat very silent. Pen looked at him with a glimmer of fun in his eyes. It was Pen who broke the silence.

"Well?" he said. "Does that look as if Wharton shares jolly old Bunter's views?"

Monty Newland burst into a laugh.

"I'm an ass, old fellow," he said—"a silly ass! A fellow ought not to be touchy—especially at school!"

"Good!" said Pen. "That's right! Once a fellow gets suspicious, he will always be suspecting somebody of being up against him."

Pen rose from the table. He had finished his tea.

"Hold on!" said Newland. "There's a cake in the cupboard." He crossed to the study cupboard, and handed out a big cake.

"Thanks—I've finished!" said Pen. "I've got to get out, too. I'm going down to see my people in Friardale, and I've got to be back for lock-up."

"Have some cake first."

Pen hesitated, and shook his head. It was a very expensive cake for a junior tea-table; certainly it had not cost less than ten shillings. And ten shillings was Pen's pocket-money for a month.

"Look here, why won't you?" demanded Newland.

"Can't be did," said Pen quietly. "I stand my whack in the study, but I can't afford to keep pace with you. Newland. I'm not taking what I can't give. If I let you stand treat every time you want to, I should soon be sponging on you. You wouldn't want that."

"A dashed cake—"

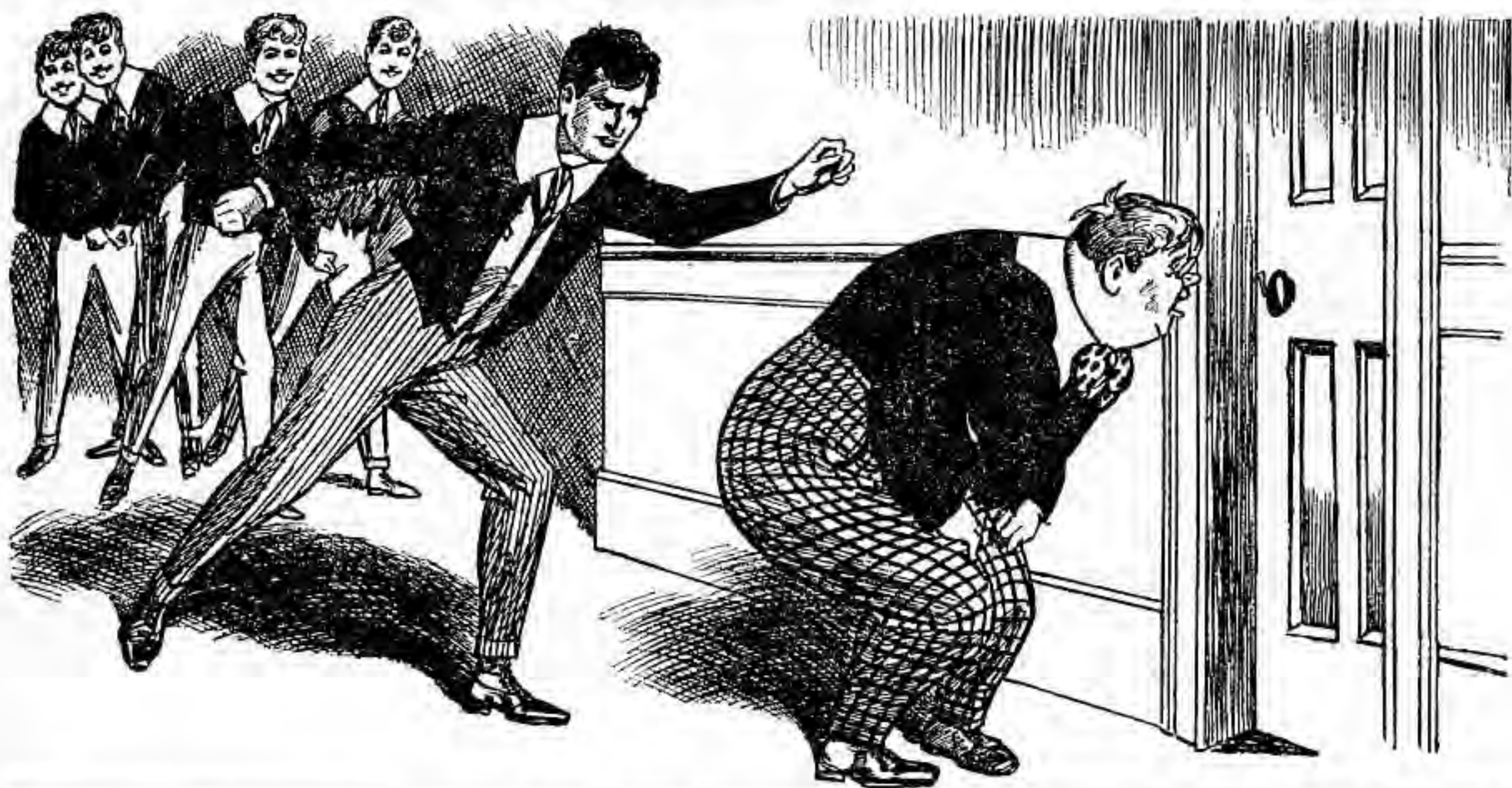
"It was a basket of strawberries yesterday, and a stack of chocolates the day before," said Pen, with a smile. "You ought really to change into another study, Monty, with a richer fellow. Lots would be glad to have you."

"I don't want to change, ass!"

"Then you must stand me as I am—poverty and all," said Pen, laughing. "Ta-ta, old chap!"

And Dick Penfold left the study. Newland did not eat the cake. He had too many good things to care much about them. He crossed to the study window, and watched Penfold going down to the gates. They were great friends, these two, and it was sometimes a trouble to Monty that Pen would not, and could not, share the good things that he had in such plenty. But he knew well enough that the cobbler's son was right, and respected him for it. For it is the law—unwritten, but unbroken—that friendship and service and kindness may be given, but money cannot be given between friends; it blesses neither him that gives nor him that takes. Honest poverty was Pen's lot—at Greyfriars and afterwards, unless hard and honest toil could lift him out of it;

ANSWERS
EVERY MONDAY—PRICE 2s



"Sheeney!" roared Billy Bunter through the keyhole of Study No. 8. "Do you hear me, Newland? Yah! Sheeney!" Monty Newland came up the passage with a rather grim expression on his handsome face. "Shee—" began Bunter, when a hand dropped on his collar and he was swung round. "What's this game?" asked Newland. "I—I thought you were in the study," stuttered Bunter. "Of course, I wasn't calling you a sheeney Newland, old chap!" "Ha, ha, ha!" roared the juniors. (See Chapter 1.)

and Monty Newland was born to wealth, and had never known what it was to be in want of a sovereign. Yet they were pals; but both knew, sub-consciously, that friendship could not have survived if Pen had consented to share what Monty would have been only too glad to share with him.

Monty Newland watched Penfold out of sight, and then left the study, and strolled along the Remove passage. He had forgotten the cake, which lay on the study table.

But that expensive cake did not go begging.

Five minutes after Newland had gone a fat face and a pair of large spectacles peered cautiously into the study. With a podgy grin, Billy Bunter pounced on the cake.

And for many minutes afterwards Bunter's jaws were busy. Bunter had declared that he did not like "sheeneys," but obviously he had no objection to a sheeney's cake! He finished it to the last crumb.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Pen's Trouble!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry's powerful voice boomed out like unto the celebrated voice of Stentor of ancient times. As he spoke he slapped Dick Penfold on the shoulder with a mighty smite.

"Ow!" ejaculated Pen.

It was a couple of days since the little scene in Newland's study. After lessons Dick Penfold was walking by himself in the quadrangle, under the old trees that were beginning to show the green of spring. His hands were driven deep into his pockets, and his brows were knitted in thought—not happy thought.

Harry Wharton & Co., taking a stroll in the quad before tea, came on him; but Pen was too absorbed in thought to notice them, till Bob Cherry greeted him in his boisterous way. Then Pen sat up and took notice, as it were.

"Got 'em?" asked Bob.

"Eh?" Pen rubbed his shoulder.

"Got what?"

"The jolly old blues!"

"No—yes!" stammered Pen.

"Lucid, I must say!" grinned Bob.

"The lucidity is terrific!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "What is the esteemed matter, my worthy and venerable Pen?"

Pen smiled. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh's English was enough to make any fellow smile, even if oppressed by the "blues."

"Oh, nothing! That is—well, nothing!" he said.

"Had your tea?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Nunno!"

"Then come and tea with us, and tell us all about it," suggested the captain of the Remove.

"About what?" stammered Pen.

"The 'nothing' that's making you look like chief mute at a funeral."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I was going to have tea in Hall, but—"

"'Was' is past tense; in the present tense you're coming to have tea in Study No. 1," said Frank Nugent. "Bring him along."

"I—I was just thinking—"

"Bad habit," said Bob Cherry gravely. "Don't get into it! I never do! Now hop it!"

"The thoughtfulness," said Hurree Singh, "is the boot on the right leg that saves a stitch in time. But the too-muchfulness is as bad as the not-enoughfulness. Chuck it!"

Penfold laughed, and walked away with the Famous Five. Worried as he evidently was, the cheery geniality of the chums of the Remove had already lifted the cloud from his brow.

"Go it, Inky!" said Bob. "Your variety of English would make a Prussian Hun smile sweetly. Get on with it!"

"My esteemed Bob," said the nabob of Bhanipur gently, "I learned studiously my excellent English under the

best quality moonshee at Bhanipur. It is well of English, pure and undefiled, though it does not agree with the idiots of this country."

"The what?" yelled Bob.

"The esteemed idiots of this country!"

"He means idiom!" chuckled Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, what's the joke?" asked Billy Bunter, meeting the Famous Five, as they marched Penfold into the School House.

"You are, old chap—no end of a joke!" said Bob Cherry. "When ever you're in want of a hearty laugh, Benty, just go and look in the looking-glass, and there you are!"

"Beast!"

"Only choose somebody else's glass, for economy's sake!" added Bob. "It might crack it!"

"Yah!"

The merry juniors marched on, and Pen was landed in Study No. 1. In that celebrated study there was a gorgeous spread, the Famous Five having pooled resources to "tea" together, as they often did.

Pen joined in the cheery chat round the tea-table, and the cloud of care was banished from his brow.

That, as a matter of fact, was the object of the Famous Five. They knew very well that Pen had some little trouble on his mind, and they wanted to cheer him up.

Poor Pen had more troubles than generally fell to the lot of a Greyfriars fellow.

That he had less pocket-money than any other Removite was a small matter; that he wore older clothes, and had to make his boots last longer, did not worry him much. He was always tidy and neat and clean; and he did not want to swank. That he often went home on a half-holiday to help his father at work in the dusky little shop in Friardale High Street was not a hardship to him—though sometimes, perhaps, he sighed a little in turning his back on the playing.

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fields. Of himself Pen thought little; but when there was trouble in the little house behind the dusky old shop, then he was hard hit. His way of life had made him thoughtful beyond his years. It was said of old that the love of money is the root of all evil; but the want of it may sometimes cause as much evil as the love of it. It was hard to Pen to see his old father growing older and greyer, with little prospect of relief from the toil that had been his lifelong task.

In such things the chums of the Remove could not help him; but they could cheer him up, at least, and that they succeeded in doing. Pen was soon chatting as merrily as the rest, his troubles put to the back of his mind for the moment, at least.

After tea Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull and Hurree Singh went their way, and Nugent followed. Pen had risen to go, but he seemed to linger, the colour fluctuating in his face. Wharton, who understood that the cobbler's son wished to speak to him alone, waited. He was due for a meeting of the Remove Dramatic Society in the Rag, and William Wibley, the president of that society, was liable to be wrathful if a member came late. But if Pen was in deep waters, Wharton was content to let William Wibley tear his hair.

"I suppose—" Pen said, at last.

"Anything I can do, old fellow?" asked Harry. "If there is, you know you've only got to give it a name!"

"No," said Pen. "You can't do anything. But—but—the poor old pater's got himself into a scrape, and I don't know what will happen. You can't advise me, of course—but I wish I knew where to run for advice."

"What about Quelch?" said Harry. "Mr. Quelch is a good sort, with all his crusty ways."

Pen shook his head.

"Is it a business matter?" asked Harry.

"In a way, yes."

"Then what about Newland? He's got his head screwed on the right way, and he'd do anything, I know."

"I know he would," said Pen. "But I can't speak about it to Monty. You see, money would get the pater out of his scrape, and Monty's got lots of money. He knows I couldn't and wouldn't touch it, and, of course, father wouldn't and couldn't! But if I tell him he—"

"Much money?" asked Harry.

"Yes—a lot! I mean, a lot for poor people like us," said Pen, his face flushing. "Your people wouldn't think much of fifty pounds, I suppose. It's a fortune to us."

Wharton's face became very grave.

"No harm in telling me about it, Pen, if you feel inclined. It might be rather awkward telling Newland, as he's your chum and rich. I don't think he would misunderstand you—but perhaps you're right not to tell him."

"I think so," said Pen. "I—I'd like to tell somebody. It's rotten keeping it shut up inside and worrying like this. Of course, you can't help me, but—but, after all, why should I bother you with my wretched little troubles?"

"My dear chap, I want to be bothered, if it would do any good. Go ahead and spin the yarn."

Pen fumbled in his pocket, and threw a crumpled paper on the table.

"Look at that!" he said.

And Wharton, in surprise, picked up the paper and looked at it.

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THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Spider and the Fly!

It was a printed circular, and its wording perplexed Wharton a little—as he looked at it. He read it through, and then read it through again, Pen watching him in silence.

The engraved heading at the top of the paper was:

"SNIKE & SNAGGS,
Stock and Share Dealers."

The rest of the circular was in print in imitation of typewriting.

"We have reason to believe that the shares of the New Huron Lake Gold Mines, Ltd., in the Province of Ontario, Canada, now standing at 5s., will shortly reach par.

Immense possibilities exist in this region, where strikes of gold and silver in huge quantities are of daily occurrence. To those who have the nerve, and the capital, to get in early, fortune seems assured. We have only to point to the shares of the Flick-Flack Gold Mine, which we recommended at 10s. 6d., and which are now buyers at £4 15s. 6d. Those who took our advice at the time have reason to congratulate themselves.

We seriously recommend a purchase of New Huron Lakes at the present rubbish price, and confidently predict that the purchaser will make a handsome profit on his bargain. Our information is that the shares will stand at par, or over, within three months.

We have a line of these shares to dispose of at the present market price, 5s., free of commission."

Harry Wharton blinked at that circular. Of such matters as stock and share dealings he knew, of course, very little; but his plain common-sense warned him that this was roguery. But that such common-sense was not a common gift was evidenced by the fact that such circulars were printed and circulated. Messrs. Snike & Snaggs must have found their profit somewhere.

"How on earth did you get this, Pen?" asked the captain of the Remove.

"I didn't—my father got it by post some weeks ago," said Pen. "I never saw it at the time. Father's a simple old chap, you know—he's lived all his life in Friardale, and hardly ever been as far away as Canterbury or Deal. He knows nothing about City swindlers and their ways."

"But why should they send it to him?" asked Harry, puzzled. "How could they know anything about him?"

"He's got shares in a boot company," explained Pen. "That's a good investment; he put his savings into it years ago, on the advice of his employer at that time. It wasn't much—about fifty pounds or a little over; it brought in a few pounds a year, which came in very handy at Christmas, as you can guess it—"

Wharton nodded.

"And it was a safe thing," went on Pen. "The shares were always quoted about par, and the capital was safe, and always there ready in case of—of any sudden need—illness, or anything of that kind. But now—"

"Now!" said Harry.

Pen pointed to the circular.

"He sold out his shares, and put the money into this rotten gold mine!" he said.

"Pen!"

Poor Pen flushed crimson.

"You mustn't blame him," he said. "He didn't even realise that it was a gamble at the best. He thought he would

make some money—he was thinking of the mater, and—of me—he hates to have me poorer than the other fellows—he would like to see me well dressed—" Pen's voice quivered. "The poor old dad! He's been reading in the daily papers about gold discoveries in Ontario—it's been in all the papers. He doesn't know that there are gangs of sharpers in the City who make a living out of planting worthless shares on people ignorant of such things. You know there are lists of shareholders in all companies, that anybody can see if he likes. These rogues get your name and address from the list, if you hold shares in anything—and they send their circulars through the post. That's how they got this to father. I dare say nine people in ten throw such rubbish into the fire as soon as they see it—it's the tenth man the rascals make their money out of!"

"And your father—"

"He's put his money into that rubbish!" groaned Pen. "He told me the day I went home—the day before yesterday. The poor old chap is fairly knocked over."

"Then he's found it out?"

"You see, after buying the shares, he took to watching the prices in the financial paper," explained Pen. "Instead of rising to par—that's a pound—the shares have gone down and down—and now they are not quoted at all. The last time they were quoted, it was at a shilling!"

"Rotten!" said Harry.

"They're not mentioned in the papers at all now. Of course, it was a bogus company—in a gold boom, I suppose half the new companies are bogus," said Pen. "They get a tract of worthless land near a place where gold has been discovered, and get some low-down engineer to make a spoof report on it—and that's about all, except selling the shares to people who want to get rich quick."

"The rotters!" said Harry.

"Father went to Mr. Gedge, the solicitor, at Courtfield," went on Pen. "Mr. Gedge made an inquiry, and told him that the New Huron Lakes shares are worthless—they will not sell at a farthing each. He told father he could get him a cartload, if he liked, at waste-paper price. Of course, they never were worth anything—they were put up to five shillings in the market by some kind of wangling, I suppose, if they ever fetched that price at all. Snike & Snaggs probably had a box full of them to sell, and got them for nothing, or next to nothing. That circular is simply a catch for mugs, and poor old father was—one of the mugs!"

Wharton wrinkled his brows.

"It's a rotten shame!" he said. "Did Mr. Gedge tell your father that there was nothing doing?"

"Yes—he's a shareholder in New Huron Lakes now," said Pen. "The shares are his—for what they're worth; and that's nothing. They sold him two hundred shares for fifty pounds—they'd have been glad to get fifty pounds for two thousand, I fancy. There'll never be any dividends, and no sale for the shares. Father's savings are gone—for good!"

"It's rotten!" said the captain of the Remove again. "I'd like to be within punching distance of Snike & Snaggs!"

Pen smiled faintly.

"So would I—not that punching them would do any good." He put the circular back in his pocket. "Of course, there's nothing to be done; and I wouldn't mind the money going so much, only the poor old pater is worrying. He feels that he's robbed us by losing it like that; he meant to make us better off, the poor old chap. He feels it awfully—he feels it bad." Pen checked

himself. "Well, it's no use talking; but it's done me good to get it off my chest. Thanks for letting me bother you with it."

"Bosh!" said Harry. "I wish I could help."

"I know you would if you could. It's all right, old scout!"

And Pen slid off the table where he had been sitting.

Thump!

The study door flew open, and William Wibley's wrathful face looked in.

"Are you coming to the rehearsal, Wharton, or are you not coming to the rehearsal?" roared Wibley.

"Coming," said Harry.

"You, too, Pen—that is, if you want the part I've given you in our play as Extra Murderer!" snapped Wibley.

"Leave me out," said Pen.

"Leave you out?"

"Yes."

"You cheeky ass, don't you want to be an Extra Murderer?" demanded Wibley hotly.

"Thanks, no!"

Pen walked away down the Remove passage, and Wibley glared after him.

"Cheek!" he ejaculated. "Sheer, unadulterated neck! Turning up his nose at Extra Murderer! Plenty of fellows in the Remove will jump at being Extra Murderer in my drama. Come on Wharton, you ass! What are you grinning at?"

And Wibley marched the captain of the Remove away.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Monty Newland Wants to Know—and so does Bunter!

"WHAT'S the trouble, Pen?"

Monty Newland asked that question on Wednesday afternoon. It was the day of the football match with Redclyffe, in which Monty Newland was to figure in the Remove team. He had changed already for the game, and he came into the study with a coat on over his jersey. Dick Penfold was in the room, at work at the table.

"Trouble?" repeated Pen, looking up.

"Yes. You can chuck up swotting for a bit, and tell me," said Newland quietly. "I've been waiting for you to tell me, Pen, and you haven't done it. Nearly a week now, and you've been in the deep blues. Can't you tell a pal what the trouble is?"

"I—I didn't mean to be in the blues. I never thought you noticed. Besides, it can't be helped," said Pen, rather vaguely. "It's all right, Monty. You get down to the footer, and let me go on sapping."

"Which means that you don't want to tell me?"

"I'd rather not."

"We've been pals a long time, Pen," said Newland. "Do you think you're playing up in telling Wharton your troubles, and not telling me?"

Pen started.

"Wharton's not told you—"

"Not a word!" Newland laughed. "I was drawing you, old duck, and you fell into the trap at once. I know, at the rehearsal the other day, Wibley was slanging Wharton for being late, and saying that you two were confabbing together in the study, instead of coming to the Rag. I put two and two together, that's all. You don't often confab with Wharton in his study, you see."

"You're jolly keen, Monty, old man."

"Well, I'm a giddy Jew, you know," said Newland good-temperedly. "Jews

may be this, and may be that; but nobody's ever said that they are fools. Now, as I'm so keen, and have spotted the fact that you've unburdened yourself to Wharton, do you think you're playing up as you ought? Perhaps I could help you in the trouble, whatever it is."

"You couldn't, Monty."

"Who knows? It's something to do with your people?"

"How do you know that?"

"More sheeney keenness," said Newland coolly. "You never worry about yourself. If you look blue, it's because of something gone wrong with the old folks at home."

Pen smiled.

"What's happened?" asked Newland.

"The old gentleman up against it?"

"Well, yes," said Pen. "But—"

"Look here, Pen, I won't ask you to tell me anything if you'd rather not," said Newland quietly. "But I think you're not trusting me as you ought to trust a pal. I'm your pal, and Wharton isn't."

Pen frowned a little. It was painful to him to hurt anyone, and he realised that Newland was a little hurt by what seemed like a want of confidence. It was Monty's rather over-sensitive nature once more.

"Couldn't I help you?" asked Newland.

"You could, and that's why I haven't told you," said Pen bluntly.

Newland looked rather grim.

"You wouldn't accept help from me?"

"No, I couldn't. You know I couldn't."

"Because I'm a Jew?"

Pen jumped up, his face red.

"Monty, don't be a silly ass. Look here, I'll tell you the whole story. It's a matter of money, and it would be just like you to offer me the fifty pounds—and I couldn't touch it. I should hate to refuse you, but I should refuse—if you offered it! Now you know why I haven't told you."

"My hat!" Newland chuckled. "Then I can play the generous friend on the cheap, if it's understood in advance that you don't take the fifty."

But Pen did not laugh. He took the crumpled circular from his pocket and handed it to Newland.

"Read that," he said.

Newland read it. He laughed.

"Old game to catch mugs," he said.

"You don't mean to say that any of your people were simple enough to be caught by chaff like this?"

"My father was."

"Poor old chap!" Newland became serious at once. "Tell me how the old boy's got himself fixed."

And Pen told the story, as he had told it to Wharton in Study No. 1. The Jewish junior listened quietly.

"Now you know," said Pen. "You won't talk of it, of course. I don't want



"Penfold said he wasn't touching any money from a sheeney," said Bunter. "Good for Pen," said Bolsover. "He oughtn't to. Bit thick of Newland to offer him money." Monty Newland stood as if rooted to the ground as he heard Bunter holding forth. His face was white with rage. "Newland!" shouted Harry Wharton. "Come on!" But instead of answering his captain's call Newland made a movement to leave the field. (See Chapter 6.)

it jawed up and down the Remove passage."

"Of course! Pen, old man, your pater's got to have his fifty back," said Monty Newland. "He was an awful ass to be caught like that. But those rogues live on duties—excuse me. Now, I'm pretty well fixed for a Lower Fourth fellow, but I haven't got fifty pounds to chuck about. But my father—"

"Don't!"

"My father would send me a cheque for my if I asked him, and told him it was to help a pal. Pen, old man, this is a special case. It isn't like my standing you cakes or buns; it's a thing that won't happen twice."

"That's true enough," said Pen.

"Just for once—a special case—you can stretch a point. I want to help your father. Let me."

Pen gave him an affectionate look—affectionate, but quite resolute.

"It's just like you, Monty," he said. "There isn't a fellow at Greyfriars would think of such a thing but you. You're the most generous fellow in the school. I believe. But if it were twopence instead of fifty pounds, I wouldn't take it—I couldn't. Let's say no more about it."

"Must!" said Newland. "It's got to be done."

"It can't be done."

"It's a special occasion—very special," urged Newland. "It's not for you; it's for your father. I passed his shop in Friardale yesterday, and saw him at work at his bench. He was looking years and years older than when I saw him last."

Penfold winced.

"The poor old dad!" he murmured.

"For his sake, put your pride in your pocket for once," urged Newland. "I tell you my pater will play up. You know he's rolling in money, and fifty pounds to him is like a fiver to another man. Dash it all, what's the good of money if you can't help a pal? Say it's a go!"

Pen shook his head.

"You mean it kindly, Monty," he said. "I know that, and I'm grateful. But I couldn't touch your money—"

"My pater's money—"

"Or your pater's money," said Pen. "You don't realise it, old chap, but sooner or later you would come to look on me as a sponger—a fellow who takes money. You might even think I told you about this just to get the money from you. You'd despise me, and I should despise myself. You'd be right, too; if I take your money I'm a beggar. Don't say any more about it, old fellow."

Monty Newland stood silent, thoughtful. Perhaps, at the bottom of his heart, he realised that Pen was right. For a fellow who accepted charity, after all, was a fellow who accepted charity; there was no getting out of that, or arguing it away.

Dick Penfold sat down to his work again. But as his pen began to scratch, Monty Newland spoke again.

"You won't let me help you?"

"I can't!"

"You mean you won't?"

"You can put it like that, if you like," said Pen quietly. "At any rate, I sha'n't."

Newland was silent again. He was annoyed, and he was hurt. His offer had been a kind and generous one; it was an offer that few fellows would have thought of making. He meant it kindly and sincerely, and Pen's sense of independence seemed to him at least a little strained.

"Well, if you won't, you won't!" he

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said at last, curtly enough. "We needn't quarrel about it."

"No need to quarrel, surely," said Pen. "Monty, old man—"

Pen was interrupted by a crash outside the study. It was followed by the voice of William George Bunter, raised in anguish.

"Ow! Yaroooooh! Bob Cherry, you beast, stop kicking me! I wasn't listening—I never heard the shooney say a word—I don't know anything about it! Yaroooooooh!"

Bump!

"Whooooooop!"

The study door opened, and Bob Cherry's cheery, ruddy face looked in.

"Time to get along, Newland, old man! I hope you fellows weren't discussing anything private. I found that fat villain Bunter at the keyhole!"

Dick Penfold's face was darkly clouded. Bunter had been listening—which meant that his affairs would be talked of up and down the Remove passage, with imaginative additions by Bunter. But it could not be helped now, and the cobbler's son said nothing. Monty Newland gave him a rather curious look.

"My fault, Pen," he said. "If I hadn't made you tell me, Bunter couldn't have heard—"

"It can't be helped now," said Pen wearily.

"I'll kick Bunter—"

"What's the good now? Leave him alone!"

"I've jolly well kicked him!" said Bob Cherry cheerily. "Come on, Newland; the Redclyffe chaps are here already!"

"Right-ho!"

Newland lingered for a moment, and then followed Bob Cherry from the study.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Bunter's Little Way!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. went cheerily into the field, and Monty Newland looked as cheery as the rest. There had been a thoughtful frown on his face as he walked down to the field with Bob Cherry; but it was gone now. Monty was a good footballer, but he was well aware that there were better men in the Remove to play in more important fixtures, such as those with St. Jim's and Rookwood. He was glad to be picked to play in the Redclyffe match; it was not often he played for School. It was a keen, crisp afternoon, and Monty, pleased to find himself in the ranks of the Remove footballers, was prepared to enjoy himself. His brief annoyance with his chum had passed; and, indeed, he forgot about Pen and his trouble, and the fact that Billy Bunter had overheard the story, as soon as the game started. Football claimed all his attention now.

Fane, of Redclyffe, and his men were in rather good form, and the first half was well contested. The only goal taken before the interval came to Greyfriars, and it was taken by the Bounder, who neatly trapped a pass from Newland under the noses of the Redclyffe backs, and sent the leather whizzing in.

Harry Wharton clapped Newland on the shoulder as they walked back to the centre of the field after the goal.

"Good man!" he said. "That was a good pass, Newland."

Monty was aware of that himself; but he was glad that the captain of the Remove had noticed it. As a matter of fact, few things on the football field escaped Wharton's eye. Monty lined up again with the Remove footballers feeling happy and elated.

The whistle went for the interval soon afterwards, and the score stood at one to nil. As soon as play ceased, the thought of his chum came into Newland's mind, and he glanced over the crowd to see whether Dick Penfold was there.

Pen was not to be seen on Little Side; but Billy Bunter was prominent near the touch-line. A number of fellows surrounded Bunter, and they were all laughing or chuckling. They seemed to have been giving Bunter more attention than the play, while the game was going on; and now they were giving him all their attention. Skinner, and Bolsover major, and Snoop, and Fisher T. Fish, Micky Desmond and Russell and Ogilvy, and several other Remove fellows, were grinning round the fat Owl of Greyfriars. Monty Newland strolled over carelessly to see what was on.

Bunter did not observe him—the Owl seldom observed anything more than a yard from his fat little nose. His voice reached Newland clearly as the latter came up.

"Funny, ain't it? Fancy that silly old cobbler dabbling in stocks and shares! He, he, he!"

"Jolly funny, if it's true," said Skinner, laughing. "Old enough to have more sense, I should think."

"Oh, it's right enough!" said Bunter. "I heard it all; Penfold told me all about it."

"Penfold told you?" exclaimed Russell.

"Well, he told Newland, but I was present, you see—"

"With a door and a keyhole between?" asked Ogilvy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Ogilvy—"

"Shouldn't wonder if there's something in it," said Skinner. "I know Penfold's been looking lately as if he'd collected up most of the troubles in the giddy universe. And I passed the shop the other day—you know his father keeps a shop in the High Street at Friardale—and the old man was looking as sick as a boiled owl. I thought perhaps he was going to have the bailiffs in."

"Ha, ha, ha!" from Snoop.

"But stocks and shares!" chortled Skinner. "That's rich! Where did he get the tin from? Sold off his stock of boots and shoes at a reduction for cash, I suppose."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"No; he had fifty pounds," said Bunter. "Had it invested in a good company, Pen said, and sold out to raise the money to buy these shares in the gold-mine."

"What an ass!" said Bolsover major. "Lot of gold in that mine, I don't think! Sorry for the old ass!"

"Oh, serve him right!" said Skinner. "He shouldn't meddle in things he doesn't understand. If he goes quite stony, Penfold will have to leave Greyfriars."

"Why should he?" asked Russell. "He's got a scholarship here, and he doesn't have to pay fees."

"Clothes," said Skinner. "I'm sure his trousers won't last much longer."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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"Oh out it out!" said Ogilvy, in disgust. "That's a beastly caddish joke, Skinner! Pen can't help being hard up."

"Greyfriars isn't a refuge for hard-up cobblers, is it?" said Skinner. "Never heard so, if it is. Can't say I should miss him if he went."

"His pal's got plenty of money," said Snoop.

"Pen won't touch it," said Bunter. "Queer, ain't it? But he won't! 'Keep your filthy money!' he said to Newland. I heard him!"

"What!"

"Newland offered him money?" exclaimed Bolsover major.

"Fairly bunged it at him," said Bunter. "But Penfold wasn't taking any. Turned it down at once. He said he wasn't touching any money from a sheeney!"

"Good for Pen!" said Bolsover major. "He oughtn't to. Bit thick of Newland to offer him money. I suppose he thinks everybody's willing to take a whack of his blessed money! Just like a Jew!"

"Pen told him to keep it and go and eat coke," said Bunter. "'Keep your rotten shekels, you sheeney!'—that was what Pen said."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Newland!" Harry Wharton was shouting. "Monty Newland! Are you deaf?"

Monty Newland became aware of the fact that the game was waiting for him. He had been standing as if rooted to the ground, as he heard Bunter holding forth. His face was white with rage and indignation. Instead of answering his captain's call he made a movement to leave the field and approach Bunter. Bob Cherry ran up and caught him by the shoulder.

"What's the matter with you, Newland? We're waiting to play!"

"I—I—"

"Come on, you ass!" said Bob crossly.

He fairly hustled Newland back to the centre of the field. The second half started, but all Monty Newland's pleasure in the game was gone. His face was set and angry, and he hardly seemed to realise that he was playing football at all.

In the first half he had done well, and Wharton had noticed it, and had made a mental note to consider Newland for a more important match. That mental note was promptly blotted out now.

Newland simply fumbled through the second half.

It was not his fault. He simply could not help it. He was feeling angry and humiliated and miserable, and he could not help thinking of what Bunter had said.

He knew that he ought not to heed the foolish, idle talk of the fatuous Owl. But he heeded it all the same.

Was that why Pen had refused his help—because he would not touch a "sheeney's" money? Was it, as Bolsover said, a "bit thick" to have offered the money? Had Pen regarded him as a swanking wealthy fellow, who thought everything of money—a rich Jew, whose thoughts were only of "shekels"?

With such miserable and bitter thoughts in his mind, poor Monty was not likely to play a good game.

"Newland!" Wharton spoke sharply to him, after a goal had been taken by Redclyffe. "What's the matter with you? Pull yourself together, for goodness' sake! You seem to have gone all to pieces. You simply made them a present of the ball then, and they've scored!"

"All right," said Newland dully.

He tried to do his best after that, but



"Hallo, Shekels!" roared Bolsover major. "Are you offering Pen a loan at shent per shent?" "Ha, ha, ha!" chuckled Skinner. Monty Newland's face flushed crimson. He made a quick stride towards Bolsover, and his open palm came with a loud report across the bully's face. Smack! "Why, my hat—I—I—I—" gasped Bolsover. (See Chapter 7.)

his best was not very good. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh kicked the winning goal in the last few minutes of the match, and the Remove came off victors by two to one. Monty Newland hurried away as soon as he could, Wharton casting a curious and puzzled glance after him.

"I was thinking of Newland for the Rookwood match," he remarked; "but he—"

"The butfulness is terrific!" said Hurree Singh.

"He doesn't seem to stay the pace," said Bob, with a shake of the head. "He started well, and then went all to pieces."

"Later on, perhaps," said Wharton.

So Monty Newland was dismissed from the consideration of the football captain.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Rift in the Lute!

DICK PENFOLD laid down his pen, and rose from the study table with a sigh. There was a tramp of footsteps and a buzz of cheery voices in the Remove passage outside, and he knew that the football match was over. While the heroes of the Remove had been urging the flying ball, Pen had been "swotting" with grim determination through the sunny afternoon. Skinner & Co. often alluded sneeringly to Pen as a "swot" and a "sap,"

and there was no doubt that Pen was the hardest worker in the Remove. The cobbler's son had to give more careful thought to the future than Skinner & Co. troubled to give.

Pen was tired now, and glad to have finished. He expected his chum to come in now that the game was over; but Monty Newland did not appear. Pen glanced at the clock, and left the study, to go down to Hall to tea. In the Remove passage there were a good many fellows, mostly discussing the Redclyffe match.

"Has Newland come in?" Pen asked.

"Haven't seen him," said Bolsover major. "I say, Penfold, is it true that Newland was bunging his filthy money at you, and you told him to keep his rotten shekels? Good for you, old man!"

"No, it isn't true!" exclaimed Penfold indignantly. "I suppose you got that from Bunter, the fat cad!"

"Oho!" said Bolsover major. "Keep your wool on, old nut! Didn't you tell him he could keep his money?"

"No, I didn't!"

"Well, you ought to have, then!" said Bolsover loftily. "There's such a thing as independence, young cobbler. If Newland offered me any of his rotten shekels I'd chuck them at him!"

Pen gritted his teeth. Evidently Bunter had already been tattling up and

down the Remove, and the story had spread in a distorted form.

"You don't understand," he said.

"Oh, I know your pater's been playing the goat and got hard up," said Bolsover major, "but that's no excuse for taking money from another fellow in the same Form!"

"I haven't!" yelled Pen.

"Then you did tell him to keep it and be blowed?"

"No, I didn't, you ass! I hope I've got manners a bit more civilised than yours!" snapped Pen, and he walked down the passage to the stairs, leaving Bolsover major staring after him angrily.

Penfold joined the Remove fellows, who were having their tea in Hall, in a very uncomfortable frame of mind. He was deeply annoyed to have his father's affairs made the talk of the Remove—which would not have happened had not Newland made him explain in the study. Bunter was to blame for having played the eavesdropper and the tattler. Pen tried to keep that in mind. But all the Remove knew now that Newland had offered him money—and that was a bitter humiliation. Newland's offer had been kind and generous; but to the Remove fellows it would look as if the rich junior regarded him as a poor hanger-on to whom he could give money. Poor Pen possessed little but his independence; he did not want to lose that, or to appear to have lost it.

He came out of Hall with a clouded brow.

The dusk was falling as he walked out into the quadrangle. He supposed that Newland would be in the study by that time, or having tea with some friend in the Remove. But as he came under the dusky elms he came on Monty Newland, walking there alone, with a dark brow.

Newland looked up, but no friendly smile appeared on his face. And Pen, who was feeling sore and tired and irritated, did not smile. They looked at one another rather grimly.

"Well, I've heard it all from Bunter," said Newland.

"I've heard it from Bolsover," said Pen. "I suppose nothing else will be talked about in the studies this evening. It's a bit rotten for a fellow's private affairs to be talked of like this!"

"Is it my fault?"

"Well, no. You couldn't help that fat brute listening at the door, I suppose," said Pen. "I wish we hadn't talked about it, that's all."

Newland's lip curled.

"Do you think the fellows are deeply interested?" he asked. "They'll forget it all to-morrow."

"I suppose they will," assented Pen. "But some of them won't forget—"

He broke off.

"They won't forget that you refused to let a pal help you, because he was a sheeney?" sneered Newland.

"Oh, don't be an ass!" exclaimed Pen irritably. "You know that wasn't the reason!"

"I don't know it! Bunter says so, and the other fellows seem to think so. They think—"

"What does it matter what they think?"

"It does matter. A fellow doesn't want to be looked on as a rich parvenu, bunging his filthy money at people who won't touch it," said Newland bitterly. "That's what you've made me look like."

"What rot! I think I've got cause to grouse, if anybody has," said Pen fairly. "I don't want to be supposed to be hanging on to you because I'm poor, and you've got money. I've had hints

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about that from Skinner before now, and I've taken no notice. But now—"

He broke off again. "Oh, don't let's quarrel about it. That won't do any good. I daresay the whole thing will be forgotten in a few days."

Newland shrugged his shoulders.

Bolsover major came along the path with Skinner. He grinned as he saw the chums of Study No. 8.

"Hallo, Shekels!" he greeted. "Are you offering Pen a loan at shent per shent?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Skinner.

Monty Newland's face flushed crimson. He made a quick stride towards Bolsover major, and his open hand came with a loud smack across the astonished face of the bully of the Remove.

Smack!

"Why, my hat, I—I—I—" gasped Bolsover.

Newland looked at him with glittering eyes. For a moment Bolsover major glared at him, and then he came on with a rush, his big fists up. A moment more, and a fierce fight was going on under the dusky elms.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Licked!

"I SAY, you fellows—"

"Buzz off!"

"It's a fight!" said Bunter excitedly.

"Remove?" asked Bob Cherry, stopping. Bob was interested in any scrap-ping that took place in his own Form.

"The sheeney and Bolsover major!" grinned Bunter. "They're going it under the elms."

Harry Wharton & Co. were taking a walk in the quad after tea when Bunter rolled up with his news.

Wharton frowned.

"More of Bolsover's bullying, I suppose," he said. "We may as well give them a look-in."

"Come on!" said Johnny Bull.

"What's it about, Bunter?" asked the captain of the Remove, as they walked towards the elms.

Billy Bunter chuckled.

"You know the sheeney was bunging his money on Pen—"

"I don't!" snapped Wharton.

"Pen told him to keep his rotten shekels—"

"I don't believe a word of it."

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Anyhow, what's it got to do with Bolsover?" demanded Frank Nugent.

"Bolsover's backing Pen up, you know," said Bunter. "Newland was ragging Pen about it, and Bolsover chipped in. As far as I can make out Pen called him a sickening Jew, and Newland hit him in the eye, and then Bolsover said 'Fair play,' and Newland went for him like a wild cat; and after that—"

"Oh, leave it at that," growled Johnny Bull. "You don't know anything about it, that's clear."

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Cheese it!"

There was already a crowd of juniors under the elms when the Famous Five arrived on the spot. In the centre of an excited circle Bolsover major and Monty Newland were fighting fiercely.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Chuck that!" roared Bob Cherry. "You uncivilised heathens, get the gloves on, can't you?"

But the combatants did not heed.

"Separate them," said Harry Wharton.

"Keep off, you dummies!" roared Bolsover major.

"Mind your own business!" snapped Newland savagely.

But the Famous Five did not heed those injunctions. They collared the two juniors and dragged them apart by main force.

"Will you let go?" shouted Bolsover furiously. "Think I'm going to have my face smacked by a sheeney?"

"Let me go!" exclaimed Monty Newland.

"Monty, old man—" urged Penfold.

"Leave me alone."

"Look here, Monty—"

"Mind your own business."

Dick Penfold bit his lip and stepped back. Bolsover major made a forward plunge, and almost dragged over Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull, who were holding him. But they dragged him back.

"Now, chuck this," exclaimed the captain of the Remove. "If you want to scrap, you can come into the gym and put the mittens on."

"Rot!" roared Bolsover major. "He smacked my face, I tell you."

"I dare say you asked for it. It's very likely—"

"The likeliness is terrific."

"You fellows needn't interfere," said Monty Newland, between his teeth. "I'm not afraid of a bully and a cad!"

"You hear him?" vociferated Bolsover major.

"Look here, Newland—" expostulated Wharton. He was very doubtful of the slim, elegant Newland's chances against a burly heavy-handed fellow like Bolsover major.

"Oh, keep out of it," rapped Newland. "Let the rotter come on, I tell you, and leave me alone. I'm not asking you to chip in, am I?"

"Oh, all right, if you put it like that," said the captain of the Remove. "Have your own way."

And the combatants were released.

They rushed at one another at once, and the fight was resumed, hammer and tongs.

"He's game, the jolly old sheeney!" remarked Vernon-Smith admiringly. "He's not got an earthly, but he's game."

And the Bounder's opinion was the general one. Monty Newland was showing any amount of pluck and determination; but he simply was "not in it" with Bolsover major in size or strength or reach. He handed out a good deal of punishment, but he received more than he gave, and at last he went to grass.

"Time!" sang out Bob Cherry.

"Oh, he's not licked yet!" snorted Bolsover major.

"You're right—I'm not!" panted Newland. Pen ran forward to help up his chum, but Newland scrambled up without his aid.

"Come on," grinned Bolsover major.

Newland came on, gasping, but resolute. His nose was streaming crimson, and one of his eyes was swollen and darkening. But he fairly hurled himself at Bolsover major.

"Good old sheeney!" said Russell.

"He's got some grit!"

"Go it, Ikey Mo!" chortled Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Man down!" said the Bounder.

Monty Newland went down crashing. A terrific right-hander had sent him fairly spinning.

He made an effort to rise. But he was done, and he sank back again breathless, his head swimming.

"I guess that's a cinch!" remarked Fisher T. Fish.

"Count!" said Ogilvy.

Skinner took out his watch with a flourish, and grinned and counted ten.

He might as well have counted a hundred, for Newland was quite unable to go on. Penfold helped him to his feet, but Newland drew away from him at once.

"Not having any more?" grinned Bolsover major.

Newland gave him a look, but did not answer. The bully of the Remove burst into a gruff laugh.

"Come and bathe your face, kid," said Bob Cherry, taking Monty Newland's arm. "And you shut up, Bolsover, or you'll have another scrap on your hands."

Newland walked away rather unsteadily with Bob Cherry. Pen looked after him with a moody brow, and then went back to the School House. He went to his study, but Newland did not come there. When the time came round for prep Newland did not appear in Study No. 8, and Pen could easily guess that he was avoiding the study.

Pen did his own prep and went downstairs to the Common room. Monty Newland was there, sitting very quietly by the fire. There were very visible traces in his handsome face—not so handsome now—of Bolsover major's heavy fists. His manner was calm and impassive, but anyone could see that he was feeling severely the effects of the fight under the elms.

Pen crossed over to him, and Newland avoided his eyes.

"Feeling bad, old chap?" asked Pen.

"Thanks, not very."

"I'm awfully sorry!"

"Really?"

Pen bit his lip and moved on. Newland rose and walked out of the Common-room. In the corridor he met Bolsover major, and the bully of the Remove came towards him.

Newland clenched his hands, and his eyes glittered. But Bolsover major's intentions were not hostile.

"I say, Newland," said Bolsover awkwardly. "I hope I didn't hammer you too hard? I was rather wild, you know."

Newland made no reply.

"I'm sorry for what I said," added Bolsover major unexpectedly. "It was a caddish thing to say. I just spoke

without thinking. I hope there's no malice?"

"All serene," said Newland, his face clearing.

"You put up a jolly good fight, but, of course, you're not my weight," said Bolsover major. "I'm sorry. Can't say more than that, can I?"

"It's all right, no harm done," said Newland. And he went on his way. He went to his study, where he sat down to prep with an aching head.

Pen, in the Common-room, had little to say that evening. He knew that his chum was deliberately avoiding him, and he wondered whether it was going to last.

It looked so. On the following day a good many fellows in the Remove noticed that Newland and Penfold were not speaking to one another, and Billy Bunter, of course, commented on it to all who cared to hear.

"Pen's fed-up with that sheeney!" he told the Remove fellows. "He's turned him down at last."

It was unfortunate for Bunter that Penfold came along in time to hear that remark. He did not speak to Bunter, but he took him by the collar and banged his head on the wall, and walked on without a word. Bunter roared, and there was a chuckle from the other fellows.

"Ow, ow! Penfold, you cad! Wow! I say, you fellows, that sheeney has turned Penfold down!" said Bunter.

"Fed-up with chumming with a dashed cobbler, you know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Friends Parted!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. were sauntering out of gates on Saturday afternoon, when Dick Penfold came out. Penfold was hurrying along in the direction of Friar-dale when the Famous Five joined him. Pen's face was deeply clouded.

"Going home?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Yes."

"Nothing fresh up, is there?"

Pen hesitated to reply. The chums of the Remove walked along with him towards the village.

"Well, all you fellows know about the affair now, since Bunter tattled it up and down the Remove," said Pen at last, bitterly.

"It's rotten!" said Harry. "But it's almost forgotten already, Pen. One topic doesn't last long in the Remove."

"No; that's so!"

"I'm sorry to see that you're not on such good terms with Newland," went on Harry. "If there's anything a fellow could do—"

Pen shook his head.

"I can't quite see why Monty's got his back up so much," he said. "Of course, he was annoyed by the talk about him; and then came that fight with Bolsover, and he was ficked, and a good deal hurt. But it doesn't seem quite fair to lay all that down to me. He seems to, somehow."

"I never thought Newland a sulky fellow," said Bob Cherry in surprise. "It's unlike him."

"Oh, he's not," said Pen. "He's a thoroughly good chap. But he can't, or won't, understand why I will not let him help me. I suppose that's at the bottom of it. Of course, you fellows know—all the Remove knows—that Newland offered to get his father to stand what my poor old dad lost to those swindlers in the City. I couldn't let him, of course. It was jolly generous of him."

"It was," said Harry.

"You fellows know that he isn't, and couldn't be, acting like a rich swanker, chucking money about at fellows who don't want it," said Pen. "But some of the fellows made out that it was like that, and, of course, it's hurt him a lot. He seems to think it's my fault, somehow; and perhaps I wasn't very tactful just at that time. I don't know. Anyhow, he doesn't want to be friends now, so that's that."

Pen said no more, but the Co. could understand very well what he was feeling. At a time when he was deeply



"Separate them!" said Harry Wharton. "Keep off, you dummies!" roared Bolsover. "Leave us alone!" snapped Newland savagely. "Mind your own business!" But the Famous Five did not heed these injunctions. They collared the two juniors and dragged them apart by main force. "You uncivilised heathens!" boomed Bob Cherry. "Why don't you get the gloves on?" (See Chapter 8.)

troubled by his father's misfortune he had lost his friend at school, and he felt the loss. But Pen was a good deal too proud to attempt to bridge the gulf, after his first effort to do so had been repelled. If Monty chose to go his own way, Pen was prepared to let him do it.

The Famous Five walked into the village with Pen, and came in sight of the little dusky shop. Generally, old Mr. Penfold was to be seen working at his bench in the little shop, but on the present occasion he was not visible.

"The old dad's not well," said Pen. "That affair has fairly knocked him over. He does nothing but worry about it. He thinks he's more to blame than he is, and—and he can't forgive himself for losing all the money we had put by. I—I shouldn't wonder if he becomes really ill." Pen's voice faltered. "Hallo, here he is!"

Old Mr. Penfold looked out of the shop door.

He had always seemed a hale and hearty old man, but at a glance it could be seen how his trouble had told on him. His face was worn and had a pinched look, and his eyes seemed dim and uncertain. He stared out into the High Street dully, and did not seem to observe the Greyfriars juniors at all, though they were close at hand.

Harry Wharton & Co. lifted their caps respectfully to the old gentleman, and walked on. Pen joined his father and went in with him. The old man stumbled as he went down the step into the little shop. He looked like a man upon whom old age had descended at a blow.

Harry Wharton & Co. finished their ramble in a thoughtful frame of mind. When they came back to the school the captain of the Remove looked for Newland.

He found the Jewish junior in his study.

Monty Newland gave him a cheery nod, as he glanced in at the door.

"Trot in, Wharton," he said.

Wharton came in. Newland had been writing a letter, and he slipped it into an envelope and sealed it, and dropped it into his pocket.

Wharton sat on the edge of the table, feeling a little uncomfortable. He had dropped into Study No. 8 in the role of peacemaker, and he did not quite know how to begin.

"Coming down to games practice?" he asked.

"Yes," said Newland with a smile. "But that isn't what you came in to say."

"Well, no," admitted Harry, smiling too. "If you'll excuse my butting in, I was going to speak about Pen."

"What about Penfold?"

"I'm sorry to see you're not good friends now."

Newland gave him a curious look.

"School friendships are not generally permanent," he said lightly. "Fellows often cham up one term and never exchange a word the next term."

"I know," said Harry. "But—"

"That's all," said Newland.

"It's not always like that," said Harry. "I've got some friends here that I hope will keep my friends all my life. I thought that you and Pen were great pals."

"I dare say we were, in a way. But after all, we haven't much in common," said Newland carelessly. "We manage very well in the study. Pen does his prep and clears out, and lets me have the study."

"Sort of Box-and-Cox arrangement,"

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said Harry. "Not quite so pleasant, I should think, as it used to be?"

"Oh, I don't know."

Wharton gave him a keen look, and slipped from the table. Newland met his eyes cheerily.

"Well, if that's how you look at it, I suppose the less a fellow butts in the better," said the captain of the Remove. "I thought I might help to put matters right, somehow."

"They're right enough as it is."

"Then you don't want to make it up with Penfold?" asked Harry Wharton bluntly.

"Not particularly!"

"Right-ho! Sorry I spoke!" said Harry, and he nodded to Newland and left the study.

He was feeling disappointed and a little scornful.

Monty Newland glanced after the captain of the Remove with a curious smile, and then took the letter from his pocket. It was addressed to his father, Sir Montague Newland. The junior left the study with the letter in his hand, and dropped it into the school letter-box.

Then he went in to change, and went down to games practice. Dick Penfold did not turn up there; he was at home that afternoon. It was not till after tea-time that Pen returned to Greyfriars, and as he came in he fell in with Newland, who was chatting with three or four fellows outside the changing-room.

Pen glanced at him, but Newland did not meet his eyes nor seem to see him at all. He chatted on, unconscious of his former chum, and Pen, with a heavy heart, went towards the staircase.

He had left trouble behind him in his little home in the village—a careworn mother, a sick father, and the shadowed faces of his little brother and sister. It was hard that at such a time he should lose his chum, too—the only fellow in the Remove with whom he had ever really chummed, though he was good friends with almost all. The poet said of old that when sorrows come, they come not as single spies, but in battalions; and it seemed true in poor Pen's case. It was with a heavy heart and a clouded brow that he went to his study to work.

He was going down, as usual, after his prep that evening, when Monty Newland came in. Contrary to Pen's expectation, his study-mate spoke.

"Just a word with you, Penfold."

Pen looked at him. If he thought that Monty intended to break the ice, and offer to heal the breach, he was disappointed.

There was nothing chummy in Monty's manner—indeed, there was a slightly mocking look on his dark, handsome face.

"Well?" said Pen curtly.

"I made you an offer the other day," said Newland, with equal curtiness. "You refused it!"

"Well?"

"You know what I'm speaking of—it was the talk of the Remove passage for a time—"

"I know! What about it?"

"You refused the offer," said Newland. "That, of course, put an end to the matter!"

"Of course!" said Pen.

"I mean, the offer's not still open," said Newland.

Penfold crimsoned.

"Did you think I should change my mind, and ask you for the money I refused once?" he exclaimed fiercely.

"No need to get ratty!" said Newland coolly. "I simply want to have the matter clear. I made you an offer which you refused. I have no intention of saying anything more to you about it. That's all. I thought I'd make it clear."

Pen's lip curled bitterly.

"You needn't have taken the trouble," he answered. "I shouldn't have touched your money if you'd offered it to me again. The position was clear enough before, I should think. You've no right to suppose for an instant that I would alter my mind."

"I'm a Jew, you know," said Newland. "I want to have business matters clearly understood. That's a way of my race."

"Well, that's enough said about it, at any rate!" snapped Penfold. "For goodness' sake don't raise the matter again—and, in fact, don't speak to me at all. I'd rather you didn't!"

Without waiting for a reply, Pen walked out of the study. Monty Newland stood for some moments in silent thought, with a slight smile on his face. Then he reached down his Milton, and opened it, and was soon deep in "Sunday prep."

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Not Bunter's Lucky Day!

"GOING home with Newland? He, he, he!"

Thus William George Bunter on the following Wednesday afternoon. He addressed Dick Penfold.

A big, handsome, and expensive motor-car stood on the drive. A liveried chauffeur stood beside it like a statue. A good many fellows looked at that handsome car, and admired it. Dick Penfold came out of the School House, and he stopped to glance at the car, as several other fellows did. Then William George Bunter propounded his query, with his fat and objectionable chuckle.

"That's Newland's pater's car," went on Bunter. "He's going home this afternoon. His pater's sent the car for him."

"No bizney of mine—or yours," said Pen.

"You've been home with him before, though," said Bunter. "Of course, a sheeney can't be too particular whom he takes home."

"Oh, dry up, you fat owl!"

"Still, I wonder his pater doesn't make him draw a line at cobblers," said Bunter, with a shake of the head. "I could scarcely ask you to Bunter Court, Penfold."

Pen burst into a laugh. It was not much use being angry with a fatuous fellow like William George Bunter.

"I suppose you couldn't," agreed Pen.

"No; not quite, you know," said Bunter. "Of course, I'm not a snob. Really well-born and highly connected people, with ancient, historic names, aren't, you know!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"But there's a limit," said Bunter, "and you're the limit, if you don't mind my mentioning it, Penfold. I really couldn't ask a cobbler to Bunter Court."

"I don't quite see how you could ask anybody," said Pen. "Bunter Court isn't built yet, is it?"

And Pen walked on without waiting for an answer to that question. Bunter glared after him.

"Cheeky rotter!" he said to three or four juniors, who were grinning over Pen's reply. "The cheek of the lower classes in these days is something sickening. Rank Bolshevism, you know! This is what comes of having a Labour Government, and all that. You can always tell a really low fellow by his cheek."

(Continued on page 17.)



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HARRY WHARTON
EDITOR

Week Ending April 5th, 1924.



THE Greyfriars Society of Japers, Jokers, and Merry Jesters had a very busy time on "the First." Scarcely anybody in the school escaped being April-fooled. Even the high-and-mighty Head was among the victims. Skinner hailed him in the Close with the time-honoured phrase, "Your bootlace is undone, sir!" The Head, who never likes to be slovenly in his appearance, promptly stooped down, to find both laces securely fastened. And Skinner, with a muttered "April fool!" took to his heels. But he received a summons to the Head's study shortly afterwards, and he came out squeezing his hands, a sure sign that the Head doesn't approve of April-fooling.

MR. PROUT, the master of the Fifth, received a challenge—a golfing challenge—presumably from Sir Hilton Popper. But when he got there the golf-links were bare, slightly to misquote the old nursery rhyme. Some practical joker had written that letter, and timed it to arrive on the morning of April the First. Mr. Prout would very much like to know the identity of the practical joker, but the latter believes in hiding his light under a bushel!

COKER of the Fifth had his lower limb pulled in a very comical manner. He received a letter from a well-known British film company, begging him to take up film-acting as a profession. "From what I have heard of you," said the writer of the letter, "you are as handsome as Douglas Fairbanks, and would make a big hit on the films. If you would care to come up to London for an interview I will arrange to give you a start in the profession. How would a commencing salary of five hundred pounds a week suit you?" The asinine Coker was actually about to ask the Head if he could go up to London for the interview when Tom Brown sweetly explained to him that it was an April fool hoax. Browney then fled for his life!

BILLY BUNTER received a magnificent hamper on the morning of "the First." He began to think that his rich

relations had turned up trumps at last. But on opening the hamper, in the presence of his grinning schoolfellows, he found it full, not of edible tuck, alas! but a wonderful collection of seed potatoes, complete with eyes, whiskers, and other adornments. These potatoes, though invaluable for the purpose of propagating their species, had one great drawback, as far as Billy Bunter was concerned. They could not be eaten. Snorting with fury, Bunter returned his unwelcome visitors to Joseph Mimble, the school gardener. A loud chorus of "April fool!" followed him as he went.

GEORGE WINGATE, our worthy skipper, who is the tallest fellow at Greyfriars, discovered a small parcel lying on his desk on the morning of "the First." Greatly wondering, Wingate opened the parcel, to find that it contained a book, entitled, "TALES FOR TINY TOTS!" It is also reported that Dicky Nugent of the Second received a book, entitled, "WHAT A MIDDLE-AGED MAN OUGHT TO KNOW!" On hearing of Wingate's "good fortune," Dicky Nugent had the cheek to suggest to Wingate that the latter either read him fairy-stories from his book or that they "swopped" presents. Later in the morning a small, dark stain was discovered in the Sixth Form passage just outside Wingate's study. It was identified as the mortal remains of Dicky Nugent.

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT!

"Father's out," said the small boy to the caller.

"He's a tanner, isn't he?" queried the man.

"Yes; but he's out," reiterated the youngster.

"Very well; I'll call again. Tell him I want him to do some work for me."

The boy nodded.

"I suppose he's a smart man at tan-

ning?" queried the visitor.

The youngster rubbed his sides.

"Rather!" he exclaimed. "He practises on me!"

EDITORIAL!

BY

HARRY WHARTON.

APRIL," wrote Master Richard Nugent in a recent essay, "is famous for its showers, its Cup Final crowds, and its April Fool stunts."

I don't suppose this description found favour in the sight of Mr. Twigg, the master of the Second; but there is certainly a deal of truth in it.

We can do without the April showers; but if there were no April Fool stunts, and no Cup Final, April would be a jolly tame month.

But stay! Doth not Easter fall in April? It doth! Dicky Nugent had left this cheery festival out of his calculations, and so had I. But I'll wager Billy Bunter hasn't forgotten it. He knows perfectly well that—unless anything unforeseen happens—Good Friday will fall on April 18th, and the voice of the hot-cross-bun seller will be heard in the land. Bunter is also aware that Easter Sunday comes on April 20th, and Bank Holiday a day later. And his mind is full of the thoughts of Easter eggs, and Easter hampers, and Easter postal-orders! Possibly he will produce a Special Easter Number of "Billy Bunter's Weekly." In any event, we must certainly have a grand Easter Number of the "Greyfriars Herald."

All things considered, then, April is a most attractive month. On the First, the fun is fast and furious. On the Fifth, we have the Boat Race, and on the Twenty-sixth we have the English Cup Final. Midway between these dates we have the Easter holidays. And from the 1st to the 30th inclusive, we have "the gentle rain from heaven." April would not be April without its showers.

We also have the spring poets. Like the poor, they are always with us. If you are an editor you cannot pass through the month of April without being bored to distraction by these poetical pests. I have had a crowd of them in my sanctum already! Billy Bunter, whose fancy lightly turns to thoughts of tuck, when spring-time comes, brought me an Ode to a Spring Onion. Lord Mauleverer, who believes in eating the bread of idleness, and who goes to sleep for the greater part of the spring, presented me with a sonnet to a "Spring Mattress!" And Alonzo Todd has penned an "Ode to an April Shower," which I am publishing in this issue.

These spring poets are pests to society. It ought to be regarded as an offence against the law to write verses dealing with spring. Then our prisons would overflow with spring poets, and the rest of the community would go their way in peace. It was William Wordsworth who started this particular form of crime, by writing odes to daffodils, and cuckoos, and other harbingers of spring. They called him the Lake Poet. If I had been anywhere near it I should have pushed him in!

An revoir till next week, dear boys!

HARRY WHARTON.

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"G R-R-R-R!"

Billy Bunter gave a jump. He was about to open the door of his study—No. 7 in the Remove passage—when a fierce growl came from within.

"Gr-r-r! Bow-wow-wow! Woof-woof!"

Billy Bunter let go of the door-handle as if it had been red-hot. And he drew back a pace.

There appeared to be a dog in the study, and a very fierce dog, too, judging by the noise it made.

Bunter hated dogs. They had a habit of sniffing round a fellow's calves, and plump calves seemed to attract them more than skinny ones. Bunter's calves were particularly plump, and he could not walk through the village street without getting a lot of inquisitive dogs round him. Some dogs sniffed his calves, and then wagged their tails, and cocked a friendly eye at Billy Bunter. Other dogs sniffed his calves, and then promptly snapped at them, as if they were tempting mutton-chops. And when Bunter tried to drive them away, they rose up on their hind legs and snarled at him.

Bunter could never be sure which dogs would be friendly, and which would be unfriendly. Certainly the dog he could hear now inside Study No. 7 seemed anything but friendly. It was barking furiously.

There were sounds of commotion, too, inside the apartment. There were bangings and bumpings and loud crashes as chairs went toppling over.

It seemed as if a big, fierce blood-hound had been shut in Study No. 7, and was trying frantically to get out.

Suddenly there was a crash against the door, which caused it to vibrate. And the snarling and growling grew fiercer than ever.

"It might not be a dog at all!" muttered Billy Bunter. "It might be some horrible monster! How did it get into the study, I wonder?"

There was a further crash against the door, and it rattled and shook. And there was a low, fierce growl, which sent cold shivers down Billy Bunter's spine. He would sooner have ventured into a lion's den than into that study. Uttering a panic-stricken cry, he turned and bolted down the passage.

Fear lent Bunter wings. He lowered his head like a bull, and fairly charged round a bend in the passage.

Now, it so happened that Mr. Quelch was coming round that same bend from the opposite direction.

Billy Bunter's head cannoned into the Form master's chest with a terrific impact.

"Ow!"

"Wow!"

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Mr. Quelch staggered against the wall, gasping. It took him a full minute to recover his breath.

"Bunter!" he roared, when he had found his voice. "How dare you career round the corridor in that precipitate manner?"

"Sorry, sir!" blurted out Billy Bunter. "I—I'm afraid I wasn't looking where I was going. You see, sir, I was so desperately anxious to get away from—"

"From where?"

"From my study, sir. There's a terrible monster lurking there, sir—a fiery dragon, or something."

"Nonsense!" snapped Mr. Quelch.

"Come and hear it for yourself, sir," said Bunter. "It will make your blood stand on end, and freeze the hair in your veins!"

In his agitation the fat junior was getting slightly mixed in his metaphors.

Mr. Quelch strode away in the direction of Study No. 7, and Bunter, feeling a little braver now that he had a Form master to back him up, followed in the wake of the master of the Remove.

Sounds of snapping and snarling still proceeded from the interior of Study No. 7.

"Bless my soul!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "It sounds like a dog—a savage canine creature in a state of mad frenzy! I will investigate."

Mr. Quelch discovered, however, that the door was locked. He rapped on the panels with his knuckles.

"Is anybody within?"

"Gr-r-r-r! Wow-wow-wow-wow!"

Mr. Quelch sprang back a pace, looking rather startled.

"This is a matter which calls for investigation," he said. "There is most certainly a dog in this study, an extremely ferocious animal, judging by its guttural growls and its savage snarls. I will ask Gosling, the porter, to climb up to the window and look inside, and tell me what he sees."

Mr. Quelch hurried away in search of Gosling. That honest menial happened to be crossing the Close, carrying a pair of steps. Mr. Quelch hailed him.

"I want you a moment, Gosling. Pray bring those steps over here!"

Gosling obeyed, and the steps were placed in position outside the window of Study No. 7.

"Kindly mount the steps, Gosling, and look through the window, and tell me if you can see a ferocious animal inside the study," said Mr. Quelch.

But Gosling could hear the fierce snarling and the repeated bumping and banging, and it unnerved him.

"Sorry, sir," he said, "but I musn't do any climbin' of steps for a week. Doctor's orders, sir. Makes me go all dizzy like."

"Bah! It is craven fear which holds you back!" said Mr. Quelch con-

temptuously. "I will mount the steps myself."

And he did so, his heart beating faster than usual. What grim spectacle would greet his gaze when he peered through the window?

Step by step Mr. Quelch approached the window. Very cautiously he pressed his nose against the panes and peeped into the apartment.

No grim spectacle greeted his gaze. On the contrary, it was a most comical spectacle.

The "dog," Mr. Quelch discovered, was a human dog. It was Alonzo Todd. The Duffer of the Remove was prancing around the study on all fours, making the most hideous noises as he went. Shrinking back against the wall was a small, fluffy kitten.

Mr. Quelch fairly gasped. Had Alonzo Todd taken leave of his senses? Why was he mimicking the antics of a dog in this absurd manner?

"Todd!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

Alonzo continued to prance and growl.

"Todd! Do you not hear me?" boomed Mr. Quelch.

Alonzo glanced towards the window, and flushed crimson. Then he tottered to his feet. There was a red scratch on his long nose, evidently where the small, fluffy kitten had scratched him.

"Are you demented, Todd?" gasped Mr. Quelch. "If not, kindly explain the reason for your most singular behaviour."

Alonzo walked to the window and opened it, the better to hear and be heard.

"I am perfectly sane, sir," he said. "I have merely been training this kitten. It was being attacked by a dog in Friar-dale Lane this morning, and I rescued it. I have now been teaching it how to stand up for itself when attacked by a canine creature."

"Bless my soul!" ejaculated Mr. Quelch. "Really, Todd, you are a most absurd boy! Anybody who saw you prancing around the study in that grotesque manner would have entertained fears for your sanity. And the queer noises you made were truly terrifying. If you wish to give that kitten tuition in self-defence you must adopt a more sensible and less noisy method. You scared Bunter out of his wits, and I confess you gave me quite a start!"

"I am indeed sorry, sir."

"Very well, Todd. We will say nothing more about it."

And Mr. Quelch, trying hard to repress a smile, descended the steps and dismissed Gosling. He then explained to Billy Bunter, who was hovering near, that he had solved the great study mystery, and that the "ferocious monster" was merely the gentle Alonzo!

THE END.

[Supplement ii.]



The Three Japers!

By H. VERNON-SMITH.

HARRY WHARTON sat at his desk in Study No. 1. He was looking rather rattled.

It was April the First, and although the day was Tuesday, Greyfriars had been granted a half-holiday.

Wharton was at work on the next issue of the "Greyfriars Herald." At least, he had been trying to work, but he had been interrupted by a constant stream of spring poets, April-foolers, and others. Hence his rattled look.

"The next fellow who comes barging into this study," growled Wharton, "will go out on his neck!"

Even as he spoke the door opened, and Wharton jumped to his feet prepared to hurl himself hip and thigh upon the intruders. But when he saw who they were his brow cleared, and he sat down again.

Bob Cherry, Frank Nugent, and Hurree Singh—three of Wharton's sub-editors—stepped into the study.

"At your service, O king!" said Bob Cherry, making a graceful salaam. "Got any work for us to do this afternoon?"

Wharton nodded.

"The First Eleven are playing Courtfield Crusaders, over at Courtfield," he said. "I should like you fellows to pop over and report the match."

"All three of us?" asked Nugent.

"Yes. Then I shall have three separate reports to choose from. I'll select the best one of the three for publication."

"Very good," said Hurree Singh. "Your wishes, honoured sahib, shall be observably carried out. We will go over to Courtfield on our bikeful jiggers, and reportfully describe the match."

The three sub-editors departed, leaving Wharton to tackle his editorial. He locked the study door, as a safeguard against further interruptions. Then he settled down to a solid afternoon's work.

Wharton was left in peace until tea-time. The April-foolers ceased from fooling, and the spring poets were at rest.

At five o'clock there was a sound of footsteps in the passage, and a manuscript was shoved under the door of Study No. 1. Then the footsteps were heard retreating.

This happened on three separate occasions. Three manuscripts were poked under the door, and Wharton gathered them up and settled down in the armchair to read them.

The first was in Bob Cherry's handwriting. It was a report of the match at Courtfield, between Greyfriars First Eleven and Courtfield Crusaders.

Bob Cherry evidently believed in brevity, for his account of the match was short and sweet:

"GREAT WIN FOR GREYFRIARS!"

"On Courtfield Recreation Ground this afternoon Courtfield Crusaders were
Supplement iii.

roundly and soundly beaten by Greyfriars. The latter team played delightful football, Wingate putting the ball into the net on three occasions. Gwynne and Faulkner added further goals, and the final score was:

GREYFRIARS 5
COURTFIELD CRUSADERS . 0"

"By Jove, what a handsome victory!" ejaculated Wharton. "I must congratulate old Wingate on doing the hat-trick. Fancy licking Courtfield by five to nothing—on their own pitch, too!" Wharton turned to the next report, which happened to be Hurree Singh's. There was no question as to the authorship of the report, for it was written in Inky's weird and wonderful English.

**"THE APPALLING LICKFULNESS!
GREYFRIARS GO UNDER AT
COURTFIELD!"**

"It is with painful regret that I have to announcefully report that the Greyfriars First Eleven was lickfully defeated this afternoon by the esteemed and ludicrous Crusaders of Courtfield. Our fellows were never in the picture, and they were outplayed at all points. The worthy Wingate did his bestful best, but the Courtfield forwards did their worstful worst, and kickfully scored five goals against us. Let us weepfully shed briny tears as we gaze at the result:

COURTFIELD CRUSADERS . 5
GREYFRIARS 0"

"Ye gods and little fishes!" gasped Wharton, when he had finished reading that amazing report.

He was knocked all of a heap, and no wonder.

According to Bob Cherry, the match had been handsomely won by Greyfriars. According to Hurree Singh, it had been handsomely won by Courtfield.

"Something wrong here," muttered Wharton. "Our fellows couldn't have lost and won the match at the same time! Either Bob Cherry's made a mistake or else Inky has. Anyway, I haven't looked at Nugent's report yet. That will settle the matter."

So far from settling the matter, however, Frank Nugent's report only made it more complicated. Wharton unfolded the manuscript, and read as follows:

**"HONOURS EVEN AT COURT-
FIELD!"**

"The match between Courtfield Crusaders and Greyfriars produced a tremendously keen tussle. Both teams played fast and dashing football, and at the interval the scores were level—one goal apiece. The second half was full

of thrills, and the spectators were wildly excited. Both sides made desperate efforts to get the winning goal, but there was no further scoring, and a great game ended with the score:

COURTFIELD CRUSADERS . 1
GREYFRIARS 1"

Wharton sank back in his chair, almost overcome.

"Fan me, somebody!" he murmured. "I've read three reports of the match, and they're all different! Bob Cherry says that Greyfriars won; Inky says it was the other way about; and now Nugent goes and crowns it all by saying it was a draw! Which of these reports is the correct one? Which am I going to publish? That's what I want to know!"

There was only one way to get at the truth. He must wait until the First Eleven returned from Courtfield. Then he would find out the facts from Wingate.

Wharton put the kettle on, and laid the table ready for tea; then he went along to Wingate's study, to see if the great man had returned.

Wingate was there, having tea with Gwynne and Faulkner.

"Sorry to trouble you Wingate," said the captain of the Remove, "but I want to find out what happened at Courtfield this afternoon. Did you win?"

"No."

"Oh, crumbs! You don't mean to say you were licked by five goals to nothing?"

"Eh? Certainly not!"

"Then—then it must have been a draw?" faltered Wharton, looking utterly bewildered.

"No."

"Not—not a draw!" gasped Wharton faintly. "Then what on earth happened?"

"Nothing," said Wingate, with a smile. "The match was never played. The Crusaders couldn't raise a team, so they had to cry off."

"Oh!"

At last Wharton began to see daylight. His three sub-editors had played a practical joke on him. They had each reported an imaginary match, and they had arranged that each report should differ from the others.

As he quitted Wingate's study Wharton remembered the date. It was April the First. And Bob Cherry, Hurree Singh, and Frank Nugent had conspired together to pull his editorial leg!

"Oh, what a sell!" groaned Wharton. "I fell into the trap beautifully, and no error! It will be a long time before I'm allowed to forget this affair. I shall be ragged unmercifully in the Common-room!"

And he was!

THE END.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY, No. 545.

**BOB CHERRY:**

I don't like the sort of weather they serve up in April, but I think the Cup Final's "jolly fine!" I've seen a good many Cup Finals, and enjoyed them up to the hilt. I hope that one of these days they will allow the Remove Eleven to take part in the battle for the English Cup. How thrilling it would be to read in the newspapers:

"ENGLISH CUP DRAW.

FIRST ROUND PROPER.

ASTON VILLA v. GREYFRIARS REMOVE."

Think we should be able to beat the Villa on their own ground at Birmingham? If we did, it would have to be added to the Wonders of the World!

BILLY BUNTER:

I'm very much in love with April, bekawse Hot Cross Bun Day falls during the month. I should feel very hot and cross if there were no buns. Not that I'm a greedy glutton, or anything of that kind. Perrish the thought! I never eat more than two duzen buns at one sitting, and you will agree that this is very modderate going. By the way, I hear that Good Friday falls on a Saterdag this year, for a change!

DICKY NUGENT:

I only like april the first, but i wouldn't give a thank-you for all the other days in the munth. i like the first bekawse it's all fools day, and you can go round pulling people's legs. i played a ripping joke on mrs. martha mimms, the house dame, this year. i told her there was a copper in the kitchen. she thought i meant a pleeceman, and her face culled up, and she said "i must go and put myself tidy, and make myself look attractive, so that the pleeceman will fall in love with me at first sitel" but when mrs. mimms went to the kitchen, the only sort of "copper" she saw there was the one they boil tea-cloths in! "april fool!" i yelled from the doorway. "never mind, mrs. mimms! if a copper won't do, there's a peeler over there!" and i pokted to one of the kitchen-malids, who was bizzy peeling apples! mrs. mimms nearly had an apple-plectic fit!

DICK PENFOLD:

The rain it raineth every day, when gloomy April comes our way. The "soup," it soupeth every night, and makes me feel downhearted, quite! It floods the village and the school, and every field's a bathing-pool! The Weather Clerk, with ghoulisn grin, delights to soak us to the skin. Non-swimmers daily drown, they say, when April showers come to stay. The weary ploughman homeward plods, with sodden clothes and squelching clods; and from his hat a deluge pours, which swamps the table and the floors. He murmurs to his mate of love: "They've bust a boiler up above!" April's a dismal month and damp; a month of colds and chills and cramp. I'd like to give this month the sack—expel it from the almanac!

HUBREE SINGH:

I have a great liking for the esteemed and worthy month of April. In the first place, we have All Fools' Day, when we can tug-folly pull the legs of our ludicrous school-fellows. Then we have the English Cup Final, when goals are scored kickfully, and when the football fever spreadfully scatters itself all over the country, from John o' Groatfulness to Land's Endfulness. Then we have the Easter holidays, which are a source of joyfulness to every British boyfulness. (I did not mean to be rhymelessly poetical!) Three cheers for the month of April, and long may it rainfully rain!

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 843.

WILLIAM GOSLING (Our Prize Pessimist):

"Wot do April mean to me? Nothiuk! Wot do any month mean to me? Nothiuk! January's jest the same as February, an' February's jest the same as March, an' March is jest the same as all the rest of 'em! Wot chance of rest or respitt is there for a pore, 'ard-workin' man like me? No chance at all. Wot do Easter 'ollerdays mean to William Gosling? Can 'e dress 'isself up in football clothes, an' go an' enjoy 'isself on the playin'-fields? Can 'e borrar a fishin'-rod, an' go an' fish for tadpoles in the River Sark? No, 'e can't! 'E's tied an' bound to 'is dooties, as ever was. Wot I says is this 'ere—'ave pity on a pore, old porter, an' don't forget to give 'im a good tip at Easter!"

HAROLD SKINNER:

I don't like April at all. I dread it! It means that we are on the threshold of an English summer, and I can't afford to buy any furs and snow-shoes!

(Dry up, you cynic! We're going to have quite a decent summer this year. Twenty-four hours sunshine per day, and nary a drop of rain!—Ed.)

BILLY BUNTER'S BALLAD!

(After "Philadelphia.")



Oh, my name is Billy Bunter,
I'm a gorgor and a grunter,
And a scanty snack I always feel like
scorning.
It's a solid hour of feeding
That my constitution's needing,
And I'm off to Mrs. Mimble's in the
mornin'!

Chorus:
With my kitbag on my shoulder,
Faith, there's no one could be bolder,
And that kitbag must be filled, I give
you warning!
I shall have it filled with tuck, sir,
If I get a stroke of luck, sir,
And my postal-order turns up in the
mornin'!

I try to keep a cheery face,
But this is such a dreary place,
A big and briny tear my cheek's
adorning.
But the tears will soon be dry, sir,
And no prospect could be nicer,
For I'm off to Mrs. Mimble's in the
mornin'!

ODE TO AN APRIL SHOWER!

By Alonzo Todd.

I wandered in the woods one day,
Hoping to cure my melancholy;
But I'd forgotten, sad to say,
To bring my broly.

The sun was shining in the sky,
And so I didn't think it mattered;
I had a shock, though, by-and-by,
For down you pattered!

I sheltered underneath an ash,
Alas! it gave me no protection.
For you began to spurt and splash
In my direction!

My soaking garments clung to me,
And I began to quake and cower;
You pattered down with impish glee,
O April shower!

"No use to shelter under trees,"
I murmured, feeling very glum;
And then I started off to sneeze—
"Atish-um-yum!"

I sprinted swiftly back to school,
My limbs were absolutely freezing;
I cannoned into Johnny Bull,
Sneezing and wheezing!

"Great Scott, Alonzo!" he exclaimed.
"What ever has come over you?
Your eyes are wild, your cheeks inflamed—
You've got the 'flu!"

And now I've got to lie in bed,
And take hot gruel every hour.
Atishoooo! I feel nearly dead,
O April shower!

Chorus:
With my kitbag on my shoulder,
Faith, there's no one could be bolder,
Though the world's a dreary desert to
be born in,
When you're absolutely "stony,"
And your mean old Uncle Tony
Hasn't sent a postal-order in the
mornin'!

I could eat enough for twenty,
And of tempting tuck there's plenty:
The window of the tuckshop it's
adorning.
But I can't get tuck on credit,
It's a nightmare! how I dread it
When I go to Mrs. Mimble's in the
mornin'!

Chorus:
With my kitbag on my shoulder,
Faith, there's no one could be bolder,
But the voice of Mrs. Mimble has deep
scorn in:
"I am sorry to unnerve you,
But I really cannot serve you
Till your postal-order turns up in the
mornin'!"

Oh, my name is Billy Bunter,
And I'm hungry as a hunter:
My watch and my belongings I've been
pawning.
For I really must be fed, sir,
Or I'll tumble down stone dead, sir,
At the feet of Mrs. Mimble in the
mornin'!

Chorus:
With my kitbag on my shoulder,
Faith, there's no one could be bolder,
I will stuff until I hear these words of
warning:
"All your cash is now expended,
And your orgies must be ended
Till your postal-order turns up in the
mornin'!"

(My postal-order turned up all right,
but it was a spoof one. Skinner after-
wards konfessed he made it himself! It
arrived on April Fools' Day, and I was the
larking-stock of the school. I feel so
savvidge about it that I should dearly
love to skin a Skinner!—BILLY BUNTER.)

[Supplement iv.]

PEN'S PAL!

(Continued from page 12.)

"You can," said Ogilvy. "I think you're about the cheekiest outsider I've ever happened on, Bunter!"

"Oh, really, Ogilvy—"

"Besides, where's the giddy social distinction between a cobbler's shop and a fried fish shop?" asked Ogilvy. "It is a fried fish shop that your pater keeps, isn't it?"

Bunter turned almost purple.

"You know it isn't!" he shrieked.

"Well, I knew it was either that or a pub!" said Ogilvy innocently. "Is a pub so jolly high class?"

"You—you beast!" gasped Bunter. "You blessed Scotch bounders think nobody's got any pedigree but yourselves!"

"Well, very few have!" said Ogilvy, laughing, "and I fancy that the Bunter ancestral line is the one the family washing is hung out on, and there isn't any other!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Robert Donald Ogilvy followed Penfold—apparently preferring the society of the cobbler's son to that of the aristocratic and exclusive William George Bunter.

Monty Newland came out of the School House, rather resplendent in a handsome coat and silk hat.

"That your pater's car, Newland?" called out Skinner.

"Yes."

"Not an unredeemed pledge?"

There was a howl of laughter from the juniors as Harold Skinner asked that question. Newland flushed red.

"I'll punch you for that, Skinner, when I come back!" he said.

The chauffeur, with the ghost of a grin on his stolid face, opened the door of the expensive car.

Bunter rolled after Newland as he stepped in.

"Not taking that low cad this time?" he asked. "I'll come with you if you like, Newland!"

"Thanks! I'm not taking any low cad!" answered Newland coolly.

"Why, you—you—you cheeky rotter you—"

"Stand back, fathead!"

The door shut, and the big car rolled away. Billy Bunter blinked after it wrathfully.

"Yah! Sheeney!" he howled.

Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, stepped out of the doorway. Billy Bunter, as usual, did not see him.

"Sheeney!" he roared.

"Bunter!"

"Oh! Ah! Yes, sir!" gasped Bunter, spinning round like a very fat humming-top.

"To whom were you speaking, Bunter?" asked Mr. Quelch sternly.

"I—I wasn't speaking, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"What! I heard you shouting, Bunter!" exclaimed the Remove master.

"Oh! Yes, sir. You—you said speaking, sir?" stuttered Bunter. "If—if I was shouting I—I wasn't speaking, sir."

"Whom were you addressing?"

"Nobody, sir."

"You uttered an offensive epithet, Bunter. It was addressed, I presume, to Newland of the Remove?"

"Oh, no, sir! Newland's a pal of mine. I never called him a sheeney, sir. I wouldn't. I know it's an offensive epithet."

"What!"

"I—I mean an offensive epithet, just as you said, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I—I wouldn't think of using such a word, sir. In fact, I don't know the word."

"You don't know the word?" ejaculated Mr. Quelch.

"No, sir; never even heard it that I remember."

"Bless my soul! Bunter, I can scarcely decide whether your stupidity outweighs your untruthfulness, or whether your untruthfulness outweighs your stupidity."

"Oh dear!" gasped Bunter.

"For your stupidity," continued Mr. Quelch grimly, "you have my sympathy—"

"T-T-Thank you, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"For your untruthfulness, it is my duty to punish you."

"Oh lor'!"

"Follow me to my study, Bunter!"

"Wha-a-at for, sir?"

"I am going to cane you, Bunter!"

"Oh dear!"

Billy Bunter rolled dolorously after Mr. Quelch. A minute later there was a loud yell from the Remove master's study.

Bunter came away rubbing a fat paw. He rejoined the group of juniors by the steps of the School House.

"I say, you fellows, isn't it rotten?" he said. "Fancy caning a fellow for calling a sheeney a sheeney, when I told him I never did anything of the sort, too! Quelch doesn't take a fellow's word. He's no gentleman, you know."

"Shurrup, you ass!" whispered Skinner, as Mr. Quelch came down the steps again. But the hapless Bunter had his back to the steps, and he never did shut up if he could help it.

"Sha'n't!" he snapped. "What does it matter to old Quelch if I call Newland a sheeney? My belief is that old Quelch is a Jew himself, you know—a grinding old Jew like Shylock—"

"Bunter!"

Mr. Quelch's voice was simply terrific. Again the unhappy Owl did his humming-top turn.

"What did you say, Bunter?"

But Bunter could not speak. The expression on Mr. Quelch's face froze the prevarication on his fat lips. He blinked at the Remove master in sheer terror, as a rabbit might have blinked at a serpent.

This time Mr. Quelch did not tell Bunter to follow him to his study. He took Bunter by the collar and marched

him there. And this time it was not one yell that rang out. Six successive yells showed that the Owl of the Remove was getting "six."

Mr. Quelch left the School House once more a few minutes later. But Billy Bunter didn't. He crawled away limply to his study, and for quite a long time afterwards, in Study No. 7 in the Remove, there was weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.**Amazing!**

FOOTER this afternoon, Pen, old man!" said Harry Wharton on Saturday, as the Removites came out after dinner.

Pen gave him a faint smile.

"Thanks!" he said. "But if you don't mind, I'm going home. You don't want me specially."

"Well, I can fill your place, of course."

"Easily," said Pen, with a laugh.

"You think a game would buck me, and you're right, old scout. But I've got to get home. I'm rather anxious about my father, and I can only see him on half-holidays. It's good of you, Wharton."

Harry Wharton smiled. He wanted very much to do anything he could to help the fellow who was "up against it," especially as he had lost his chum, for Pen and Monty Newland did not speak now. But there was little the captain of the Remove could do, and he had thought, wisely enough, that a good game of football would help to dispel Pen's trouble, for a time at least.

"Well, if you're going home, all serene," he said. "I'll ask Ogilvy. I hope you'll find your pater better."

"I hope so," said Pen.

And he contrived to smile cheerily as he went. But the smile died off his face very soon. His brow clouded before he reached the school gates.

Monty Newland passed him near the gates. Pen did not speak to him or look at him. He had taken it as a settled thing now that they were no longer friends, and fallen into the way of it. Neither did Monty speak, but his glance followed Pen very curiously till he disappeared out of gates. Then, as he turned away, he coloured a little as he found Bob Cherry's eyes fixed on him.

Bob's look was grim and scornful.

"Anything up with you, Cherry?" inquired Newland.

"Nothing!" growled Bob.

"Just trying to look like a gargoyle for the fun of the thing?" asked Monty pleasantly.

Bob gave him a glare.

"I'll tell you what I think!" he rapped out.

"Do," said Newland. "So pleased to hear that you think at all. You don't look as if you could do it."

"I think you're a pretty sort of worm!" said Bob.

"Same to you, with the adjective left out!" said Newland cheerily. "The adjective wouldn't apply in your case, would it?"

Bob breathed hard. He felt that he was getting rather the worst in this war of words.

"That chap's down on his luck," he said. "Just at this time you let him down. Do you think that's decent?"

Monty Newland's face became serious. "But suppose I haven't let him down," he said. "Suppose there are, as Shakespeare says, more things in the heavens and earth than are dreamt of in your philosophy?"

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**DETECTIVE
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Every Other Friday

"Eh? What are you getting at?" demanded Bob. "You ought to have stood by the chap while he's in trouble, whether you were a genuine pal or not. Time enough to show the cloven hoof when it was over."

"Wisdom while you wait!" yawned Newland.

"Oh, go and eat coke!" growled Bob. And he stalked away. Newland went to the gateway, and stood looking after Pen, who was going quickly towards the village. He noted how Pen's head drooped, high as he had held it in the quadrangle. Monty knitted his brows as he noticed it. But, though he could not have failed to be aware that Pen would have welcomed an advance of friendship, he did not follow the scholarship boy. He turned back from the gates, and walked down to Little Side to watch the match between the Remove and the Upper Fourth.

Penfold went on to the village, walking quickly. He was anxious to get home. It seemed to the anxious boy that his old father was sinking under the blow that had fallen on him. It was the poor old man's self-reproach that hit him hardest. The poor little savings of a life of toil were gone in a foolish attempt to "get rich quick," in the infantile faith of an unworldly old man, who scarcely knew of the existence of the wiles and snares of the great city. That little nest-egg, untouched in the hardest times, a carefully guarded provision against some possible time of severe stress—it was gone beyond recovery, and the poor old man's self-reproaches were bitter and incessant.

Pen approached the little shop with a sinking heart. To his surprise, he found that his father was in the shop, working at the bench in his old style.

He looked up as his son came in, and Pen noticed, with increased surprise and great relief, that the dull, dazed look of hopelessness was gone from the old man's face. He looked his old self again, and Pen realised that something must have happened, though he could not guess what.

"I thought you'd come, Dick," said old Mr. Penfold brightly. "I've got some news for you, my boy! It ain't so bad as it looked."

"Yes, father," said Pen.

"Look at this here letter, Dick! Heaven forgive me for what I've been saying about them folks, Snike and Snaggs!" said Mr. Penfold. "I've called them names, I have—rogues and swindlers—"

"So they are!" said Pen hotly.

"Well, look at that letter."

Pen took the letter in sheer wonder. It was headed:

"SNIKE AND SNAGGS, Stock and Share Dealers."

The rest was typewritten, and it ran:

"Sir,—We are sorry to inform you that the New Huron Lake Gold Mining Co., Ltd., will shortly be in liquidation. It appears improbable that the assets will be sufficient to allow of any return to be made to the shareholders. In these circumstances, we are prepared to repurchase the 200 ordinary shares sold to you by us, if that be your desire, at the same price at which you bought.

Kindly notify us of your decision in this matter at your earliest convenience.

"Yours truly,

"SNIKE AND SNAGGS."

Dick Penfold stared blankly at that THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 843.

welcome communication. He read it twice, and even then he had to give it up as a problem.

That Messrs. Snike and Snaggs were rogues and swindlers, who turned a dishonest penny by planting worthless shares upon unsuspecting members of the public, was as clear as noonday. There was simply not a shadow of doubt on that point.

They had "planted" the gold-mining shares on poor old Mr. Penfold, they had netted his fifty pounds, and the transaction was closed. Now, of their own accord, they had reopened it, and offered to return their plunder—for that was what it came to. The law could scarcely have compelled them to disgorge. Yet they offered to do so. It was a problem.

"The police must have got after them," said Pen, at last. "People like that must overstep the limit sometimes; and perhaps they've got a scare."

"Maybe," assented his father. "I dunno! That letter came yesterday morning. Dick, and you may be sure I answered at once. And I've had their cheque."

"They've paid—"

"I've had the cheque this morning," said old Mr. Penfold. "Fifty pounds, Dick—all my savings that I'd lost, and never expected to see again. I took it straight to the bank at Courtfield, just before they closed, and they say it's all right. What do you think of that, Dick?"

"I think you've had a jolly lucky escape, dad, though I can't quite understand it all," said Pen. "I—I think, too—" He stopped. It was not for him to offer counsel to his father.

But the old man understood, and he nodded at once, and smiled.

"You can bet on that, Dick," he said. "No more stocks and shares for me. I'm putting the money into Savings Certificates, and there it will stay, safe and sound, Dick."

"That's good, dad!"

"Now go in and see your mother, Dick; you'll find her much more bright—much more bright," said Mr. Penfold. And the old gentleman hummed a tune as he turned again to the boot he was mending.

Pen's face, too, was very bright when he left the little shop an hour or two later, and walked back to Greyfriars. Fear of the police, or some other motive, had forced Messrs. Snike and Snaggs to loosen their grip on one of their victims, at least, and the shadow of trouble in Pen's home had rolled by.

Pen's heart was much lighter. As he came into the school, he thought how happy he would have been that afternoon had he only been on his old terms with his chum Monty. But that could not be helped.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Behind the Scenes!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!" shouted Bob Cherry, as Penfold passed the open doorway of Study No. 1 in the Remove.

The Famous Five were there, having a late tea after beating the Upper Fourth on the football field. Vernon-Smith and Peter Todd were with them, and, of course, Billy Bunter had squeezed in; so the study was fairly full. But there was room for one more, and welcoming voices hailed Pen.

"Trot in, Pen!" called out Harry Wharton. "You haven't had your tea yet?"

"Well, I have—" said Pen, with a smile.

"Then come in and have another."

"Sample this jolly old cake, anyhow," said Bob Cherry. "And there's some tea in the pot—and no end of water."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Pen came in cheerfully, and joined the tea-party. He had had his tea at home, but he was quite able to deal with a slice of cake.

"You beat the Fourth?" he asked.

"The beatfulness was terrific, my esteemed Pen."

"Good! I've had some good news," said Pen. "I—I thought perhaps you fellows might care to hear it."

"Of course," said Harry. "Jolly glad, old scout!"

Pen tossed the letter from Snike and Snaggs upon the table. He had brought it to the school with him.

"Read it out, Wharton," he said.

Harry Wharton read out the letter. The juniors listened in as great astonishment as Pen had felt when first he perused that curious communication from Messrs. Snike and Snaggs.

"Well, that beats it!" said Nugent. "It's awfully good news, Pen. So your pater's all serene again."

"Looks twenty years younger," said Pen, with a smile.

"That's good," said the Bounder. "But that letter's a bit of a puzzle. I suppose the police must have been worrying those swindlers a bit, and they felt they needed to be careful."

"Looks like it," said Peter Todd. "Anyhow, it's splendid for Pen's pater to get his money back. I fancy it's about the only case on record."

"Yes, rather!"

Harry Wharton had a very thoughtful look. The letter amazed him, as it amazed the others. The captain of the Remove was wondering; but what he was wondering, he did not mention. A strange thought was at the back of his mind; but whether it was well-founded or not, it was better left unmentioned, especially to Pen. Pen, evidently, had no suspicion but that Messrs. Snike and Snaggs had repented of their rascality, or else had been frightened; but neither seemed probable to Wharton.

Whatever the explanation, it was a wonderful stroke of fortune for Pen and Pen's father, and his friends all rejoiced. It was, as Toddy remarked, probably the only case on record of a "bucket-shop" swindler handing back his loot.

After the spread in Study No. 1 Pen went on to Study No. 8. He found Monty Newland there; though it did not occur to him that Monty was waiting for him to come in. Newland eyed him curiously, but did not speak; and Pen hesitated to break the silence. But he felt that he ought to tell Newland what had happened.

"If you'd care to hear, Newland—" he began diffidently.

"Eh?" yawned Monty.

"My father's out of his trouble now," said Pen. "That's all."

He began to get out his books, letting the matter drop at that. Newland sat up.

"Have New Huron Lake shares turned out a good thing, after all, then?" he asked, laughing.

"No—it's a swindle! But Snike & Snaggs have taken the shares back, and returned the money."

"Draw it mild!"

"It's so," said Pen.

"Is that a giddy jest?" asked Newland.

"No—if you'd like to see their letter you—"

Pen handed over the letter from Snike & Snaggs.

Newland glanced at it.

"Looks like a last-hour repentance," he said.

"Well, they mayn't be such rogues as I thought them," said Pen. "They may have found out that it was an old and poor man they had welshed, and felt that they couldn't keep the money. They're bad; but they mayn't be all bad."

Newland nodded rather indifferently, and sauntered out of the study. Pen returned the letter to his pocket, compressing his lips. They were no longer friends perhaps; but somehow he had expected Monty to be pleased, at least interested, by this good news. Newland seemed to give the matter no thought at all.

Monty Newland strolled down the Remove passage. Harry Wharton called to him from Study No. 1 as he was going to the stairs. The captain of the Remove was alone in the study; the tea-party were gone.

"Come in for a minute, Newland."

Newland stepped in.

Wharton closed the door. Monty Newland regarded him inquiringly.

"Have you heard Pen's good news?" asked Harry.

"He's told me," said Newland indifferently.

"The old man is out of his scrape now."

"So it seems." Newland seemed quite uninterested. "There was no need for me to bung the money on him, after all, was there?"

Wharton looked at him keenly.

"You're still on bad terms with Pen?" he asked.

"I suppose so."

"But you're going to make it up?"

Newland shrugged his shoulders.

"I haven't said a word to Pen, or to anyone else," said Harry quietly. "He hasn't the faintest idea—"

"Of what?" asked Newland sharply.

His indifferent manner vanished, and he made a step towards the captain of the Remove. Harry Wharton smiled.

"You offered to help Pen through this scrape," he said. "Pen refused—as he was right in doing. Later on you went home to see your father."

"Well?" grunted Newland.

"Well," said Harry, "Snike & Snaggs had the old man's money, and they meant to keep it. They were within the law, though, of course, it was a swindle. Why did they give it back?"

"Penfold thinks they may have found out that the man they welshed was old and poor, and so they felt they couldn't keep it."

"I fancy City swindlers in a bucket-shop are not quite so tender-hearted as that," said Harry. "My idea is that someone interviewed Snike & Snaggs on the subject, in the City—"

"Well?"

"And handed over the necessary cash for—"

Newland breathed hard.

"And paid them a little extra for their trouble," went on Harry. "They wouldn't even write a letter for nothing—rogues like that. In a word, someone—a very generous someone—has taken the worthless shares off Mr. Penfold's hands at full price—and employed Snike & Snaggs to carry through the transaction. Doesn't that strike you as likely?"

"Who would be likely to chuck money away like that?" yawned Monty Newland.

Wharton smiled.

"I know someone who would," he said.

"A Remove fellow—whom Bunter calls



Bunter blinked after the departing car wrathfully. "Yah! Sheeney!" he roared. Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, stepped out of the doorway, but Billy Bunter, as usual, did not see him. "Sheeney!" he howled. "Bunter!" "Oh! Ah! Yes, sir," gasped the fat junior, spinning round like a top. "To whom were you speaking, Bunter?" asked Mr. Quelch sternly. "I—I wasn't speaking, sir," gasped Bunter. "Nunno, sir!" (See Chapter 10.)

a sheeney, but who is one of the most generous fellows I've ever come across!"

"My dear chap," drawled Newland.

"A schoolboy like me couldn't drop into Snike & Snaggs' bucket-shop in the City and deal with such characters."

"I know that," assented Harry. "But your father could—and did. Sir Montague Newland arranged all this—because you asked him."

Newland bit his lip.

"You've got no proof of that," he said.

"I don't want any," said Harry. "I sha'n't say a word, of course. Nobody else guesses—and it's a secret, if you choose."

"If it was so, I should want it to be kept a secret, of course," said Newland. He reflected a moment. "Look here, Wharton, you're a fellow to be trusted—I shouldn't have told you, but I don't mind you knowing. If—if I'd been on the same friendly terms with old Pen, he might have tumbled. We—we had a bit of a tiff, and I—I turned it into a quarrel—so that he wouldn't and couldn't guess—"

"I had guessed that—now," said Harry, smiling.

"I—I thought it was up to me to get his poor old father out of his scrape," said Newland, colouring. "I had a jaw with the pater about it, and he handled the matter. Not a word, of course."

"Not a syllable!" said Harry.

It was a couple of days later that Monty Newland came into Study No. 8 as Pen was beginning his prep.

Pen glanced at him as he drew a chair to the table, and sorted out his books.

Newland met his eyes and smiled.

"Pen, old man!" he said.

Pen smiled, too.

"We've been playing Box-and-Cox in this study long enough, what?" asked Newland.

"Quite!" said Pen.

"I never really wanted to row—"

"I'm sure I didn't!" said Pen.

"Well, then, let's forget all about it—if you're willing."

"More than willing," said Pen cheerily.

"Good!" said Monty.

And that was all that was said; it was enough. The two juniors worked at their preparation together, in the old friendly way; and when it was finished they came down to the Common-room together. There was a squeak from Billy Bunter as they came in.

"He, he, he! I say, you fellows, Pen's made it up with the sheeney!"

Bang!

Bunter's head, with Pen's grip on his collar, smote the wall of the Common-room. There was a wild yell from Bunter.

"Yooooop!"

"That enough?" asked Pen pleasantly.

"Yow-ow-ow!"

Apparently it was enough; for William George Bunter had no further remarks to make.

THE END.

(Look out for next Monday's ripping City-jars story, chums, entitled "The Plundered School," and order your MAGNET NOW!)
THE MAGNET LIBRARY—No. 343.

A STIRRING STORY OF THE CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE.



Winning Through!

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Hazard of Trooper James.

"BOYS, I guess we've got to go under. It doesn't seem as if there's much chance for us up here, right away from the rest of the world, but we'll go down fighting. Hark to it, lads! It's the death music of this yere little crowd."

Clem Seeley, the old trapper, looked round sadly at the little handful of well-set-up men, dressed in the uniform of the Canadian Mounted Police, and he thought what a pity it was for such strong, strapping fellows as they were a week ago, so full of vigour, manhood, and life, to have to give a thought to the grim spectre hovering over the log-shanty on the little island in the north-western arm of Great Salt Lake.

They had been fine fighting material, that handful of men, but that was in the far away—let me see how long—six days, was it, since that fierce crowd of French half-breeds and Indians, their passions inflamed by burning spirit, had swarmed on to the island, and every day had drawn their cordon of death nearer and nearer in to the beleaguered band?

Six days! Think of it! Six days, almost without food, and only a drain of water each, and that only at the rising and setting of the winter Indian sun.

And as they fought and starved—fought like the gallant Britons they were, and wore away to but a semblance of their former selves—the two hundred or so fighting men, under the leadership of the outlawed half-breed, Pierre Boreau, gathered the deadly meshes of the net of this unequal warfare round the shanty dignified by the name of Fort Rae.

As if in confirmation of the old trapper's words, the still night air was made hideous by the shrieking and yelling of the drink-maddened fiends, who, wrought to a pitch of ungovernable fury and passion by the utterances and entreaties of half-crazy Pierre Boreau to rise and quit themselves like men, to throw off the yoke of British rule from Canada, to make it a country of their own, leaped madly over the white-carpeted ground and discharged their weapons in the direction of the fort.

True, every now and then the shouts of hourly expected triumph were broken by a shrill scream of pain as some leaping savage or fiendish half-breed became the target of a desperately sighted rifle in the hands of one of the defenders; but such an occurrence was rare.

"No, chums! It's no good wasting a shot," said Trooper James, as there was a momentary lull in the fierceness of the shouting, and the spluttering crackle of guns.

"We must save every cartridge for the last

rush, in case Jem Haynes doesn't get through. But what's that? Here, Seeley, up with that bar; there's a knocking without. Heaven forbid it's Haynes come back unsuccessful! Then, raising his voice to a hoarse whisper, he called: "That you, Haynes?"

"Ay, 'tis me, James! Open quickly, in the name of Heaven!"

The heavy door swung in ever such a little to admit a panting, breathless form. Trooper Haynes stood revealed in the dim, flickering light that came from the fire. His face was white, white as the driven snow without, while down his sunken cheeks ran a trickle of blood. James caught the half-fainting form in his arms. Brandy was brought, and soon the poor fellow recovered sufficiently to tell his story.

"As you know," he said wearily, "it's two nights since I left Fort Rae to reach Fort Resolution at the southern end of the lake; but you can see, boys, I didn't get through. By great good luck I got clear of the dozen or so islands standing in my arm of the lake, but then I was done. I had to turn from the track at the last to avoid being caught. I landed somewhere near the ruined Fort Providence, and they were there."

"What, the rebels?" asked a chorus of voices.

"Yes, more'n a hundred of 'em, with the place stored with powder from floor to roof. The fiends ha' made it their headquarters. Well, I found out so much, and then, with the whole crowd of yelling demons on my trail, I had to strike a bee-line back. Now I got through I never knew, but here I am, although more'n one bullet has marked me for life."

Dull, heavy despair settled upon all. The last hope was gone. Had Haynes succeeded in reaching Fort Resolution, all, perhaps, would yet have been well. But as it was, with not more than a dozen rounds of cartridges each, naught but death stared them in the face.

For a long time there was silence, broken only by the sound of occasional firing from without. Haynes' failure had disheartened them. Suddenly into Trooper James' eyes there came the light of a great resolve. The new recruit, the latest addition to the island fort up in Mackenzie country, stood by the table, and in clear, deliberate tones set forth his intentions:

"Boys, I'm going through the lines, say what you will! There's none here to say me nay, since Sergeant Miles was laid to rest a week since under the stars. Because one has failed is no proof that I shan't succeed. Why, I'll hustle through the crowd and be across the Great Salt Lake in next to no time!"

Even while he spoke he dived into his furs, strapped a pair of snow-shoes on his back,

slung his rifle diagonally across them, and then, having made sundry other little preparations, faced round on the bone-wearied and heart-sick men.

"If I'm not back by Thursday night—it's now Monday—my name is not James. But you can reckon on it, lads. He lifted the bar, swung back the door noiselessly, took one last look at the exhausted defenders, and was gone.

The night was clear and fine, but extremely cold. The young trooper's eyes first critically examined the distant horizon to see whether there was a promise of a snow-storm or not, then satisfied that nothing was to be feared in that direction, he set to work worming his way along over the frozen ground in the direction remote from that in which the half-breeds' camp-fire twinkled briskly among the trees.

There is naught more fierce in human form than the Canadian half-breed when the fire-water is in him; but inflame in him the fire of rebellion, a spirit of enmity against those by whom he is ruled, and he becomes a veritable demon, a fiend of the most merciless type. None could realise this better than the young trooper. He carried his life in his hands, and he knew it!

Forty, perhaps fifty, yards he had gone, when a dark, motionless figure, immovable as a statue, loomed before his line of vision. Not twenty paces distant was an armed sentry. For what seemed an eternity of time the trooper lay motionless. Only when he had satisfied himself that he was unobserved did he start off again in a fresh direction.

At last he reached the shelter of the trees. Here all was blackness. He rose noiselessly to his feet, stretched out his hand to grasp a tree-trunk. But even as his fingers closed, as he thought, upon the wood, he sprang back in alarm, for the tree was no tree at all, but a man. A shrill cry of alarm floated away amongst the pines and towards the distant firelight; but Trooper James tarried not to allow of investigation being made into his personality. Instead, he let drive with all his force at what he could see of the half-breed's head. The blow went home with a sickening crash, and the sentry went down as inanimate and inert a mass as he had been a moment before at his post.

Immediately James turned and vanished amid the trees. Not a minute, however, passed before, like a pack of wolves, a score of dark, lithe forms were hot on his trail, tracking him down to the edge of the ice. Ah, there he was, speeding like the wind across the lake in the direction of the nearest islet. But the trooper was not the only one swift of foot. As the yelling crowd took up the chase in earnest, they gained perceptibly, the while shouting strange orders that the fugitive failed to understand.

Suddenly, however, enlightenment came to him with terrible force. By this time a faint moon had risen, and, looking over his shoulder, he saw his pursuers not a hundred and fifty yards to the rear.

As he leapt forward a startling thing happened. His foot slid through a hole in the ice caused by some warm spring, and down he went, just as a huge muzzle-loader roared from the distant shore towards which his face was set, and sent its iron hail of death screaming over his head.

As the report died away among the islands the policeman rose to the surface, gripped the edge of the ice, dragged himself up, and started off once again.

His keen eyes had noticed the point whence had proceeded the blinding flash of light, and towards it he raced.

At last he was on solid ground again. He clambered up the steep bank. Yes, there was the gun, and the gunner, too. He could dimly make out both, and the man was oblivious of his danger.

The shouts of his pursuers ringing in his ears, the trooper crawled swiftly forward. One catlike spring and he was upon the man, who had just completed reloading the old gun. The suddenness of the attack sent the half-breed to earth with a force that robbed him of his senses; then, hardly stopping to think, James drew a box of matches from his tunic, struck one, swung the great gun round a point, and applied the light to the touchhole. Instantly he sprang backward, and turned in his mad flight. But even as he ran, a stupendous roar seemed to shake the heavens, and a blinding sheet of flame shot out in all directions as the muzzle-loader burst. James saw a confused mass of struggling humanity by the edge of the lake, then he ran as he had never run in his life before.

"The first blow has been dealt to Pierre Boreau's rising," he muttered, and, passing from island to island, he kept his face ever turned to the eastern shore. His work as yet was only just begun.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The "Hold-up."

ONCE clear of the island, and safe—at least for the present—from all probability of pursuit, Trooper James deftly fastened on his snowshoes, and then concentrated all his physical energy in the wild flight over the vast frozen expanse which lay between him and his destination.

He knew full well that he must reach Fort Resolution to bring a rescue-party to his beleaguered fellows in the log-cabin on the island, and to stamp out the red flame of rebellion which had so mysteriously but suddenly risen among the half-breeds of that portion of upper Canada. But why should he not, he asked himself as he glided swiftly and silently along, pay a visit to the ruined fort on the eastern bank, where, if Trooper Haynes' account were to be relied upon, the whole of the ammunition and arms collected by the half-breed rebels were stored.

The moon was now up, and by its white light, reflected in myriads of dancing points on the snow-laden ground, the whole dreary countryside was visible for miles around. The hesitating man drew out his watch and glanced at the face.

"Ten minutes past two. At this rate I ought to reach the ruined fort somewhere about four o'clock," he said.

Mechanically he unslung his rifle, examined it carefully, opened the magazine, filled it with cartridges, and started off again.

A swift run of two hours brought into his line of vision a dark, indistinct mass in the far distance. As he drew nearer the crescent moon revealed to him all that now remained of what in its day had been Fort Providence, one of the strongest and best-equipped outposts of the Hudson Bay Trading Company.

Now ruined, tumbledown log shelters raised their broken walls to the sky. Banks of earth, silent, ice-bound pools, lay on every side. Yet in the midst of the ruins a fair-sized log shanty stood intact, withstanding the ravages of time, and from one small window at the western end a dull, solitary gleam still shone. There was no covering over the badly-cracked glass, a fact which caused no little satisfaction to the young trooper, who, rifle in hand, tiptoed up to it and looked in. The scene that met his eyes was one that set his pulses beating wildly.

Within, on opposite sides of a rough trestle table, a couple of still forms bent forward, their greasy heads pillowed on their arms. A black bottle stood between them, while a dirty pack of cards told how these defenders of the rebel stores spent their leisure time.

In a corner were stacked old-fashioned flintlocks and muskets, in true keeping with the scurried rows of powder-kegs ranged along one end.

Trooper James chuckled grimly.

"So that's the sort of stuff the poor beggars are fighting with—powder that's lain untouched for close on a hundred years, left here, most probably, when the fort was abandoned. Yet there's danger in it, for even an old musket loaded with powder and ball is, in the hands of a good marksman, a deadly weapon. Yes, that lot will have to be rendered useless before I get a move on to Fort Resolution."

As he spoke softly to himself, he drove the butt of his carbine through the little window. The tinkling of the glass, as it fell in a shower within, was answered by a volley of imprecations from the two startled half-breeds, who sprang to their feet, to find themselves covered by the deadly tube of a .44 Winchester.

"I guess the luck's at my end," said the trooper, quietly firing both rascals with a steely gleam. "Don't try and sling your hand to the gun at your hips, or, by hokey, I drill you clean! Now, then, out with those shooters—quick!"

The two frightened rascals obeyed, and laid a couple of heavy revolvers on the table.

How to render them useless? James thought swiftly. Then his eye lit on a chest in the far corner. A key was in the lock.

"Here, you," he said, indicating with the barrel of his carbine one trembling wretch, "just walk over to that chest yonder and fling back the lid!"

The half-breed obeyed.

"Now pick up the pistol nearest you and

fling it straight in. The slightest hesitation or movement to do otherwise, and you're a dead 'un! Now!"

The revolver whizzed through the air, and fell with a clatter into the open chest.

"Now the other!"

Number two followed suit.

"Lock the chest and open the door," continued James sternly. This, too, was done.

"Next, pitch that key out as far as you can!"

The ruffian could do naught but obey. Returning, he flung himself sullenly into a chair, as if his work were done.

"Out of that, sharp!" commanded the trooper. "I've only just begun—in fact, I've come to stay—at any rate, till a big job's finished."

"To business. You with the broken nose, just lift down the keg of powder nearest you. Right! Now take the top off carefully—carefully, mind you, or up you'll go. You, ugly face"—indicating with his gun the other frightened wretch—"just fill that pail with water from the great butt yonder!"

The man did as he was bid.

"Pour the water on the powder until I tell you to stop."

With no good grace the half-breed accomplished the task.

"Keg number two the same," urged James; "and be slick about it. I'm getting tired, and may come and do the work myself—in which case I shall dispense with both of you."

The wretches understood, and hastily soaked the second keg of glistening powder grains until it was rendered useless.

The dawn was paling the eastern sky when the last musket-lock was smashed. Trooper James had accomplished a great deed, and he was wondering how to put the finishing touches on it, when a shout in the far distance caused him to turn. Away behind him a number of dark specks fitted on the horizon. He knew what they meant.

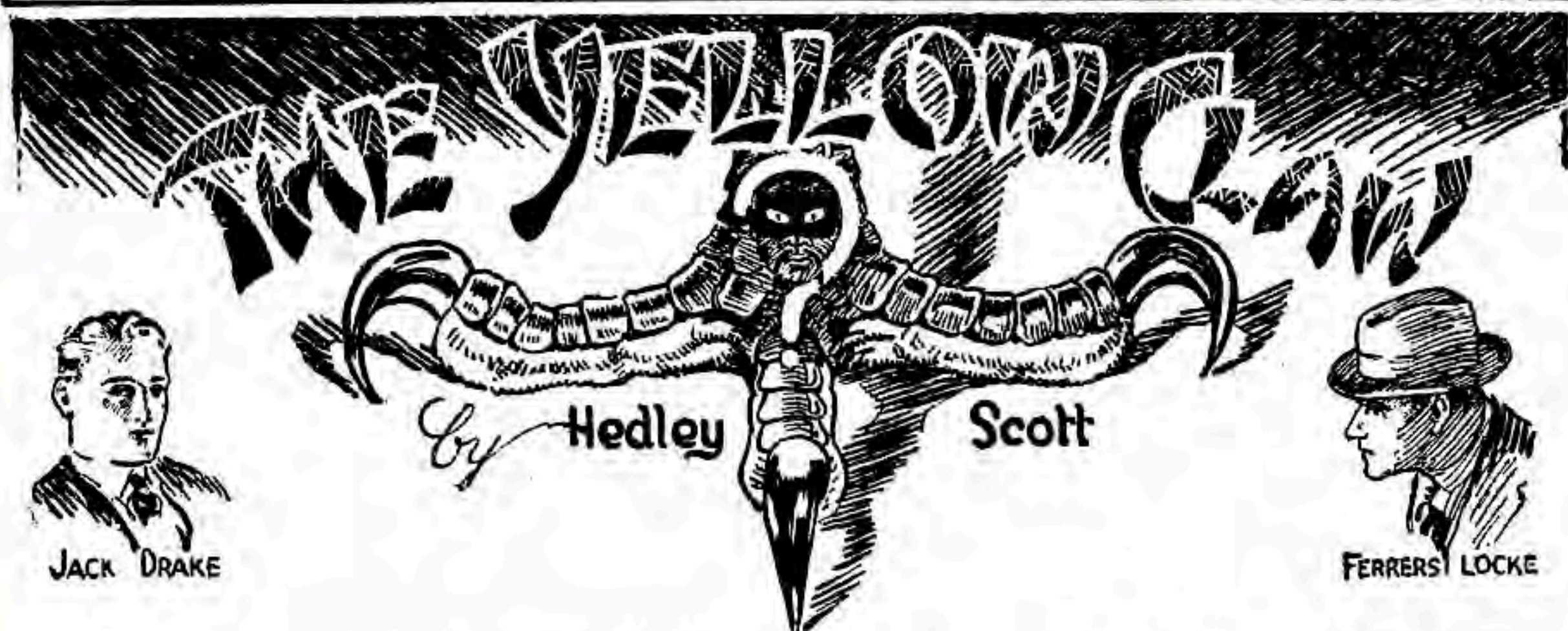
"The fiends are on my track!" he muttered. "It's time I cleared!"

(Continued on page 27, column 3.)



The trooper drew a box of matches from his pocket, struck one, swung the great gun round a point and applied the light to the touchhole. Instantly he sprang backward, and turned in his mad flight. But even as he ran a stupendous roar seemed to shake the heavens, and a blinding sheet of flame shot out in all directions as the muzzle loader burst.

WHO IS THE YELLOW CLAW? READ BELOW AND SEE IF YOU CAN DISCOVER HIS IDENTITY!



The "Wire" From London!

"WELL, thank goodness, that show's over!"

John Huntingdon rubbed away at his face with a greasy rag to remove the grease-paint. The first night at the Royalty, Blackpool, had passed without any excitement so far as the threat of the Yellow Claw was concerned, although there had been excitement in plenty when the curtain had finally rung down on the last scene of the play, "Man and His Money."

The inhabitants and holiday-makers at Blackpool had called time and time again for the lead, played by Huntingdon, to present himself before the curtain. Six times had Sir Malcolm Dunderfield's nephew appeared before the lowered curtain, bowed his acknowledgments, and then "taken his curtain" again. The roars of applause echoed out loud and long even when he had retired to his dressing-room, where Jack Drake, cheerful as ever despite the nerve-wracking evening, was ready to assist him into his ordinary clothes.

Huntingdon occupied a dressing-room on a level with the stage itself, and throughout the whole of the performance Inspector Pyecroft of Scotland Yard had mounted guard outside the door marked with a star, whilst Jack Drake had kept watch on the other side of the door.

Each had been expecting some attack from the emissaries of the society, and each had been highly strung throughout the evening. But the "house" had been cleared now, and the only sounds of life that reigned were the yells of the stagehands as they cleared the stage, and the light laughter of the rest of the company as they removed their make-ups and donned ordinary attire.

There came a discreet knock at the door of the "star's" dressing-room, and Huntingdon, without pausing to turn away from the mirror into which he was gazing, yelled:

"Come in!"

The door opened, to admit the stalwart figure of Inspector Pyecroft of Scotland Yard. In his hand he carried a buff envelope; and Huntingdon, catching sight of its reflection in the mirror, turned swiftly.

"What's wrong, Pyecroft?" he asked anxiously. "Hate the sight of telegrams?"

"Don't know, Mr. Huntingdon," said the C.I.D. man. "But this came for you at the beginning of the first act. Now, don't get waxy," he added, as Huntingdon was about to expostulate.

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"For Mr. Mallish, the manager, gave me orders not to deliver it to you until after the show. He said you were performing splendidly, and it might put you off your stroke."

"Like his cheek!" exclaimed Huntingdon hurriedly, slitting the edge of the envelope. "I—I—"

He broke off as the full meaning of the few words in the telegram became apparent. They were:

"Come at once—Euston Station. Uncle Mervyn missing. Foul play."

"DUNDERFIELD."

IN THE LIMELIGHT.

THE YELLOW CLAW, the chief of a powerful organisation that preys upon wealthy Englishmen.

SIR MALCOLM DUNDERFIELD, a successful City financier, whose family the Yellow Claw has threatened to wipe out.

JOHN HUNTINGDON, his nephew. An actor by profession, Huntingdon invariably fills the leading role in Mark Chaerton's plays.

FERRERS LOCKE, the famous detective, of Baker Street, who has been engaged by Sir Malcolm to bring the dreaded society to book.

JACK DRAKE, the sleuth's clever boy assistant, who is given a job as dresser to Huntingdon.

INSPECTOR PYECROFT, a Scotland Yard detective, who has joined forces with Ferrers Locke.

MARK CHAERTON, a successful playwright, who has also been threatened by the Yellow Claw. He, too, seeks Ferrers Locke's services when his theatrical company starts its tour of the provinces.

After a series of exciting adventures with his mysterious foe, Ferrers Locke journeys to London, leaving Huntingdon, Drake, and Inspector Pyecroft at the Royalty Theatre at Blackpool. On his arrival the sleuth learns that Mervyn Dunderfield, a famous painter and cousin to Sir Malcolm, is missing from his flat in Kensington Square. In the flat itself is found the body of a man answering to the description of the Yellow Claw. The police officials are inclined to the theory that Mervyn Dunderfield has shot the Yellow Claw, but Locke proves to them that the dead man is not the head of the secret society, and, moreover, declares that Mervyn Dunderfield has been carried away by the Yellow Claw in accordance with his threat to wipe out the entire Dunderfield family.

(Now read on.)

"Good heavens!" breathed the actor, his face paling under the make-up. "What on earth's happened to him?"

Seeing the looks of inquiry on the faces of the inspector and Jack Drake, the actor handed them the telegram to read.

"Bad business!" grunted Pyecroft at length. "The Claw gang again, I'll wager!"

"Looks like it!" admitted Drake, shaking his head reflectively.

"I must get off at once," interrupted Huntingdon. "Mallish will have to put an understudy on for a time—until I get back here, at any rate."

"What's that?" asked the gentleman in question, as he entered the dressing-room. "No bad news, I trust, Huntingdon?"

The leading actor quickly explained matters, and reluctantly Mr. Mallish had to admit that Huntingdon should "get away" as quickly as possible. Murmuring his sympathies, the manager withdrew, leaving Dunderfield's nephew to complete his change of attire.

"You had better come with me, Drake," he said at length. "Pyecroft can stay here until Mr. Locke returns from town."

"Suppose the wire is genuine," muttered the C.I.D. man, with a perplexed frown crossing his heavy features. "It isn't a hoax on the part of the—"

He never completed his sentence, for there came a loud knock at the door of the dressing-room, and the call-boy appeared in sight.

"Wanted on the phone!" he jerked out, glancing meaningfully in Pyecroft's direction. "Trunk call, sir."

The C.I.D. man withdrew, and was away for about five minutes. He reappeared, looking ferocious and out of temper.

"The news is genuine," he grunted. "At least, what I heard of it. Ferrers Locke has just been on the phone to me. Just had time to say that Mr. Mervyn Dunderfield was missing, and that some exciting events had taken place in town concerning the Yellow Claw, when we were cut off. I've been calling the exchange every name under the sun, but can get nothing satisfactory from them."

"By Jove, that settles it!" said Huntingdon. "I must get off without delay. Sha'n't be a minute, you fellows!" he added, darting to the door of the dressing-room. "Hail a taxi for me, Jack!"

"Right-ho!" replied Locke's young assistant, following close on the actor's heels.

Huntingdon darted across the stage,

obsessed with strange fears and fancies. He was so preoccupied with his own disquieting thoughts that he failed to hear the raucous shouts of the stage-hands as they shifted the scenery in their usual boisterous fashion.

"Clear! Mind your legs, sir!"

One of the stage-hands yelled the warning as he rushed along on his wooden frame an eighteen-foot flat—a portion of the scenery belonging to the dining-room "set" in "Man and His Money."

To avoid an encounter with moving scenery when the stage is being set one requires a good eye and a clear head. At nights—as was the case at present—when the men are extra anxious to get their work done so that they may get off to bed, the speed at which they erect the scenery in readiness for the first act of the next evening's performance is astonishing.

In course of time actors and actresses become accustomed to "dodging" the scenery when it is on the "move," and thus it was the stage-hand bearing down upon Huntingdon gave little thought to the fact that he might run into the actor. Moreover, the cumbersome piece of scenery he was running across the stage practically obscured his view of anything or anyone in front of him. And it was not until he was about six inches away from the actor that he realised there was any obstruction in his path.

"Look out, sir!" he yelled.

But the words came too late. Huntingdon had scarcely heard them when he felt a severe thump in the shoulder as the wooden upright of the flat struck into him. He lost his balance and fell—fell through a trap-door in the stage, which the property-man had left open a few moments before.

The stage-hand dropped the piece of scenery and rushed forward, his face a picture of concern. Peering into the trap, he saw Huntingdon clinging to one of the rungs in the ladder that communicated with the cellars below.

His alarmed cry brought two or three hands on the scene, and behind them pounded Inspector Pycroft. He pushed his way through the group when he discovered who the victim of the accident was and began to descend the ladder.

"Hold on!" he said encouragingly, as Huntingdon's white face peered up at him. "Soon have you out of that!"

A groan escaped Huntingdon as he stirred on the ladder.

"My leg!" he muttered. "Think I've broken it!"

The words had barely passed his lips when he fainted, and the inspector was only just in time to prevent him falling to the stone floor below. With much panting and grunting—for Huntingdon was no light-weight at ordinary times—Pycroft squeezed his way up the ladder, dragging the now unconscious actor with him.

The stage-hands helped him when he came within reach of them, and between them they carried Huntingdon into the dressing-room. The C.I.D. man administered restoratives whilst a doctor was being sent for, and after three minutes Huntingdon opened his eyes.

He smiled faintly in the direction of the stage-hand who had been the indirect cause of the accident.

"Don't look so beastly worried, Brooks," he said. "It was all my fault!"

The smile left his face as he perceived Jack Drake pushing his way into the room, for with the advent of Ferrers Locke's assistant came the reflection that a journey to London now would be impracticable. He beckoned him.

"You must go, Drake," he whispered. "Pycroft will look after me here. Don't waste any time. My uncle evidently has a special reason for wanting to see me. Don't pile on the agony with the old man; tell him that I've sprained my ankle or something and—"

He swooned again as a sudden twinge of pain shot through his right leg, and Inspector Pycroft looked meaningfully at Drake.

"Better get off, youngster," he whispered. "Don't see much use in it, but Huntingdon will feel more content if he knows that you have gone to meet his uncle. 'Fraid he

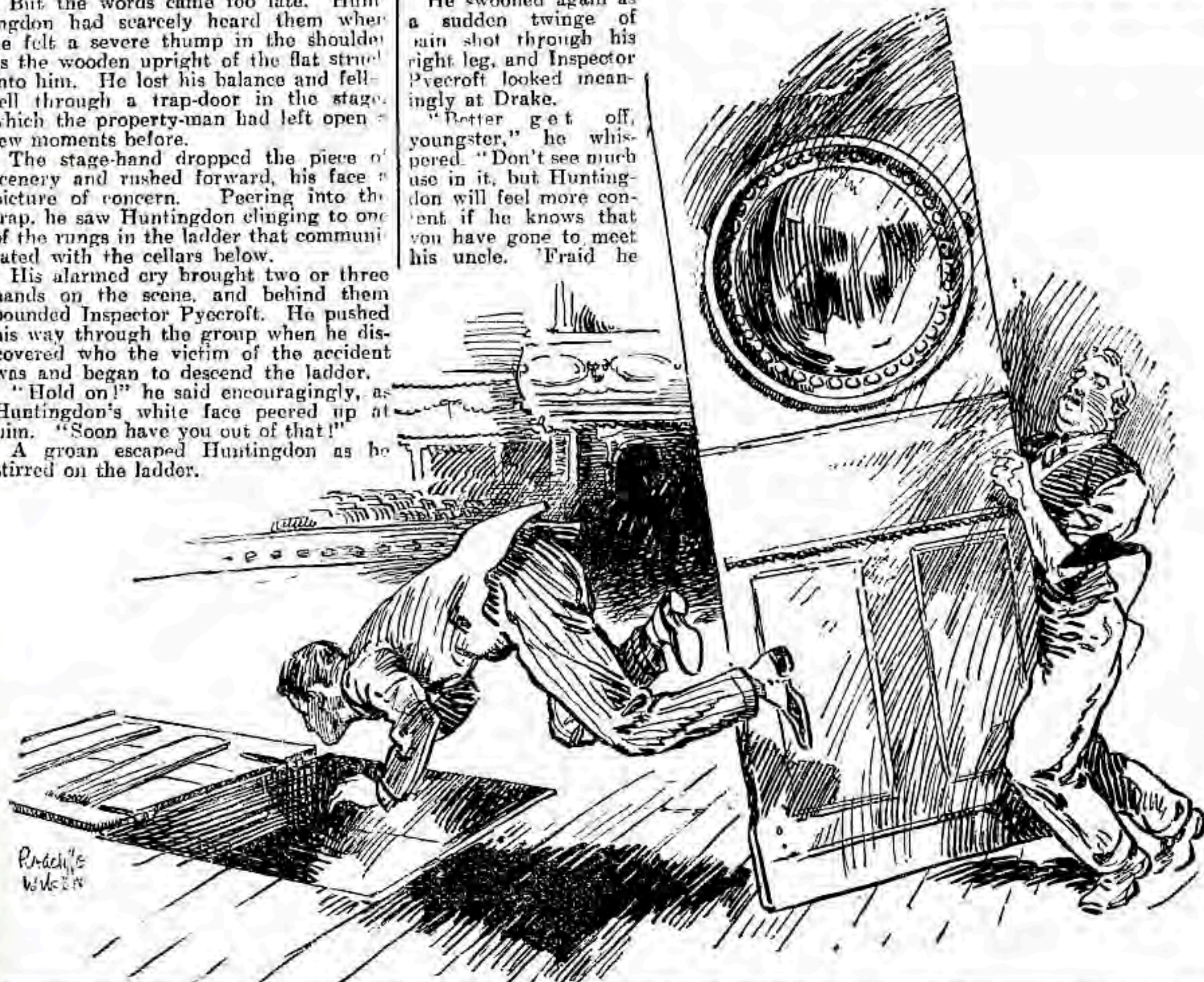
won't be able to walk for a few weeks; it's a broken leg, I know."

At that moment the doctor arrived, and Drake took the opportunity of retiring. He entered the cab which he had chartered, and was driven to the station. Five minutes later he was aboard the midnight express to London. The swift rush through the night air kept Drake wide awake for half an hour, but gradually the rocking motion of the train lulled his senses to sleep. When he awoke it was to hear the porters at Euston plying their trade; and, shrugging his shoulders, the lad stepped from the compartment.

He looked about him for Sir Malcolm, but there was no sign of the City financier on the platform. At the ticket barrier, however, was a chauffeur in livery, who, upon catching sight of Locke's assistant, saluted smartly and stepped forward.

"Excuse me, Mr. Drake," he said, "but Sir Malcolm has been detained in town and has left instructions for me to drive Master John to Park Lane. He said that perhaps you would accompany him. But where is Master John, sir?" he added.

Drake, taken aback at the chauffeur's knowledge of him, did not answer for a few seconds. At the back of his mind was the suspicion that something was amiss—some suggestion of foul play. But the look on the chauffeur's face completely disarmed him. And again there



"Look out, sir!" yelled the stage hand. But the words came too late. Huntingdon had scarcely heard them when he felt a severe bump in the shoulder as the wooden upright of the flat struck into him. He lost his balance and fell—fell through a trap-door in the stage, which the property-man had left open a few moments before. (See this page.)

was no mistaking the fact that the fellow recognised him—although for his part Drake could not call to mind ever having seen the man before.

"Mr. Huntingdon could not undertake the journey," he replied at length. "He has met with an accident."

A look of concern crossed the chauffeur's face at this intelligence, and that look helped to dispel any doubts Drake might have still retained of the fellow's genuineness.

"Then—then I had better get back to my master," said the chauffeur. "I suppose, sir, you will be calling at Baker Street. You see, I know your chief is at home, for he was in consultation with Sir Malcolm early this evening. May I give you a lift to Baker Street, sir?"

"As a matter of fact—er—Browning"—this latter in response to the chauffeur's respectful suggestion—"I wish to see Sir Malcolm on his nephew's behalf, so you will kindly drive me to Park Lane."

"Very good, sir," replied the chauffeur, swiftly controlling the surprised expression that crossed his features.

He moved towards a splendidly appointed limousine as he spoke and held open the door for Drake to enter. Without any misgiving at his heart Locke's assistant stepped into the car, but the moment the door had closed behind him he felt a pair of hands reach out at him from the darkness. Something was pressed against his nostrils, a hand was clapped over his mouth, and before he was fully aware of what was happening Drake became conscious of a sickly, pungent odour filling his nostrils.

The whole attack had not occupied more than five seconds, so swiftly and deftly had it been carried out, but after that five seconds had elapsed Drake fought like a wild tiger to free himself—to force that sickly pad away from his nose—to gulp in fresh air. But struggle as he might he could not shake off the hands that gripped him—hands—there were four of them! He felt his senses giving way, as the pungent fumes of the pad spread to his lungs, filled his head until it seemed as though it would burst. And then as the car began to move off a light from a neighbouring street lamp revealed to him the faces of two dark-skinned Ethiopians, one each side of him. He tried to shake off his captors, but was conscious of his failure, until his head fell forward on his chest and he knew no more.

In the Devil's Punchbowl!

"HALLO, hallo! That you, Pyecroft?"

Ferrers Locke's voice echoed across the telephone wires an hour after Jack Drake had left the Royalty Theatre at Blackpool.

The C.I.D. man had barely seen Huntingdon safely conveyed to a nursing home and returned to his own hotel when the night porter had summoned him to the telephone.

"Sorry we were cut off before," came the private detective's voice through the receiver. "but some confoundedly clever agent of the Yellow Claw had the cheek to get on my roof and cut the telephone cable. I am round at the Yard now, Pyecroft," he added. "And between me and you, old son, things are going to happen shortly."

"Are they?" grunted Pyecroft. "They've happened here all right already!"

He forthwith gave the private detective an account of the telegram which Huntingdon had received, of his accident on the stage, and Drake's subsequent journey to Euston. It was the

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latter piece of information that caused Ferrers Locke to exclaim aloud:

"What? Drake gone to London? Why, the telegram was a fake! I've been with Sir Malcolm all the evening, and I know for a fact that no telegram was sent to his nephew. Tell me, Pyecroft, what train did Drake go by?"

"The midnight express," replied the C.I.D. in bewilderment.

"Thank Heaven I shall be in time!" said Locke fervently. "It's a trick to get Huntingdon out of the way. The Yellow Claw crush won't know that Huntingdon has met with an accident, and, in any case, they won't let Drake slip between their fingers when he turns up in Huntingdon's place. I must get busy, Pyecroft, and cast my net. Sorry to leave you out at the death, but that is unavoidable in the circumstances. Your job now will be to watch Huntingdon like a mouse until you hear from me again. I am not anticipating any more trouble up at Blackpool, but one can never be too certain when dealing with a gang like the Yellow Claw. Cheerio, Pyecroft! Shall not forget your part in the affair when it comes to spinning the yarn in official quarters," he added in a whisper. "So long!"

And to Pyecroft's disgust Ferrers Locke rang off.

"Well, this is a go and no mistake!" muttered the C.I.D. man. "I don't know whether I'm on my head or my heels! And so the telegram was a bit of bluff—thought it was. Confound it! I don't relish the job of being nurse to Huntingdon while all the fun's going on in town. Just my blessed luck!"

And with another grunt Pyecroft picked up his hat and strolled over to the nursing home. Despite the hour, for it was one a.m., he was given admittance when he produced his credentials and explained his object in wishing to occupy the same room as Huntingdon. Still feeling sore at the job of nursemaid which was to be his portion until he received further instructions from Ferrers Locke, Inspector Pyecroft, of the C.I.D. at Scotland Yard, settled himself in a comfortable chair by the fire to keep watch on John Huntingdon. The actor was sleeping soundly, his broken leg had been set, and it would be only a matter of time before he would be able to walk about again.

But even the fact that there were no complications hardly mollified Pyecroft's wrath, much as he liked Huntingdon, for he was visualising a vivid picture of his confrere in London getting "all the fun."

As a matter of fact, Ferrers Locke at that moment was speeding in an ordinary taxi to Euston Station. He was accompanied by two plain-clothes men, fully armed. There was a tense, subdued air of excitement in the sleuth's face that was symbolical of a hawk about to swoop on its prey.

At Euston Station the taxi pulled up in the rank in the usual way, and the driver clambered down from his seat and began to chat with the drivers of the other cabs, whilst still seated in the taxi were Ferrers Locke and the two plain-clothes men.

"Due in five minutes," said Locke, looking at the luminous dial of his watch. "Ah, gentlemen, keep your eyes on that limousine—I rather fancy we shall have cause to remember its outline before the morning has worn away."

He nodded in the direction of the entrance to the station through which a high-powered, smartly turned out, limousine had emerged. The car drew up to the curb directly opposite the platform which was booked to receive the Blackpool express. The liveried chauffeur

stepped down from his seat and walked up to the barrier.

Five minutes after scheduled time the expressed fussed its way into the station, and Ferrers Locke felt a thrill of excitement as he picked out the youthful figure of his assistant.

"There he is, gentlemen," he whispered, indicating Drake with a lean forefinger. "Now we must be fully on the alert."

His companions peered out of the window without disclosing the fact that the cab contained passengers, and intently watched the platform. The driver of the taxi had climbed into his seat directly the express had come to a standstill. The engine of the cab was running, his hand was on the controls ready to throw in his gears at the word of command from the detectives within the cab.

"Look!" muttered Locke at length. "The chauffeur's telling Drake the tale. Stand by; he's entering the car. Quickly, driver—off you go, and for Heaven's sake don't lose sight of that limousine!"

And even as Drake felt his senses departing the taxi on the rank drew out from the curb and followed in the wake of the limousine.

"Gentlemen," said Ferrers Locke briskly, "the chase has started!"

The Raid!

THE smart limousine sped softly out of Euston Station, and, to Locke's surprise, headed for Tottenham Court Road. It was no difficult matter for the driver of the detective's taxi to keep his quarry in sight, and he followed in its wake at a distance of twenty yards.

"Not for dockland, after all," muttered Ferrers Locke, as, some minutes later, the car in front took the road to Kensington.

His companions made no reply. They were intently watching the rear light of the limousine as it raced along in the half-light, now making for Richmond and Kingston.

"Where the deuce are we going?" said Ferrers Locke twenty minutes later, as their quarry merged into the Portsmouth Road. "This is going to be a long chase, gentlemen, by the look of things."

And so it seemed, for the car in front passed The Dittons, took the Esher Hill on top gear, and was lost to sight as it entered the town of Ripley. The taxi made more work of negotiating the famous Esher Hill than the limousine had done, and several valuable minutes were lost. But as the detectives' car entered Ripley they caught sight of their quarry once more, and their driver did his best to make up the ground he had lost.

Thus the chase went on for one hour and a half without a stop, although Ferrers Locke's companions were moved more than once to put a bullet in the tyre of the limousine when they came within shooting range.

"It's a game of patience," said Locke quietly, restraining his companions' impulse. "We must do nothing rash, for I have a premonition that we shall learn more than we expected before the chase has finished."

"You don't think we are being led on a false trail, do you?" asked one of the plain-clothes men. "Do you think the scoundrels in front are aware of our being on their tail?"

"Candidly, I don't," replied the private detective. "And there's nothing to indicate that we are. Remember, this is a main road, well used by commercial lorries and vans at night."

"Yes, I've noticed that," grunted one

"Now!" rapped Ferrers Locke. At the word he drove open the door with a lusty kick and sprang inside. Not a second behind him was Roberts. "Hands up!" The occupants of the room sprang to their feet in terror and amazement, and found themselves looking down the glinting barrels of the intruders' revolvers. "Hands up!" repeated Locke. "Or I'll fire—to kill!" (See page 26.)



of the police-officers, as the taxi gave a sudden lurch to one side, to allow of a heavily-laden lorry clearance room. "Hallo! Our amiable friends are slowing down!"

It was true. The car in front had slowed down to a walking pace, and the taxi behind did likewise. Godalming had been left far behind. In front of them the detectives could see a wild expanse of undulating country. To their right, dropping sharply from the main road, lay a long, spacious basin with here and there a cottage to denote that the place was inhabited.

"The famous Devil's Punchbowl," remarked Ferrers Locke.

"And a suitable place for our cut-throat friends to live in," grunted one of the officers. "Look!" he added excitedly. "They are turning off to the right!"

Even as the officer spoke the rear light of the limousine vanished from view. It reappeared again a few minutes later at right angles from the spot where last it had been seen.

"Come on," said Locke, signalling to the taxi-driver to stop. "We'll follow on foot. My knowledge of this part of the country tells me that we are nearing the end of our journey, for directly in front of the limousine is a marshy piece of waste ground that stretches for miles. If the occupants of the limousine intended to cross that swampy country they would not have come such a roundabout and risky way. They would have taken the branch road from Guildford. See!" He pointed a lean forefinger to a twinkling red light that glowered out strangely from the silent countryside. "The car has stopped!"

"And there's a cottage near by, unless my eyes deceive me!" rapped one of the plain-clothes men.

The detectives piled from the taxi, and, ordering the driver to await their return, plunged down the steep decline

into the marshy ground that formed the basin of the Devil's Punchbowl. The going was hard and laborious, and before the trio had traversed many yards they were beginning to breathe heavily. There was one consolation, however, the car in front was at a standstill, and from the adjacent cottage came a beam of white light that showed the occupants of the limousine entering the porch, carrying between them an inert figure which Ferrers Locke knew to be his assistant, Jack Drake.

"The scoundrels!" he breathed as he pounded along. "I'm sorry for Jack, but he must hang on for a bit."

"Well, he'll be an hour or so before he comes to," jerked out one of the officers. "For he was unconscious, judging by the way he was carried into the cottage. But what are we going to do now, Mr. Locke?" he added.

"Get as near the cottage as possible," returned the sleuth; "and find out the lie of the land before we take any direct action. To act rashly now would be tantamount to giving the Yellow Claw a new lease of life. It's him I want. The rest of the society are merely hired ruffians, of that I have no doubt."

He panted on, half-stumbling over the uneven, swampy ground, and the grunts of his companions made strange music in that practically uninhabited spot. Once within twenty yards of the cottage the trio slowed down into a walk, taking cover wherever they could. At the windows of the cottage, the blinds of which were drawn, they could see the shadowy outlines of men passing to and fro.

They crept nearer.

"I'm going to investigate," whispered Ferrers Locke. "You two hang on here. If I need you, my signal will be a single whistle—you understand?"

The police-officers nodded, and watched their companion disappear in the gloom ahead. Some moments later

they observed a silhouetted figure cross the beam of light that gleamed out from underneath the cottage door, and walk in the direction of the limousine.

It was Ferrers Locke.

He had hit on the bright idea of taking out the float of the carburettor of the limousine—a move that would successfully frustrate any attempt of the inmates of the cottage to escape by car. With every nerve tightly strung, his ears strained to their utmost to catch any suspicious sounds, Ferrers Locke advanced to the wall of the cottage on hands and knees. He made for the direction of the largest window, and halted beneath it.

To his ears now came the hum of voices, and, raising himself gently, he peered through a portion of the glass window that was left uncovered by the carelessly drawn blind. The sight that met his gaze brought a stifled cry of amazement to his lips.

The room he was gazing into was furnished on the most lavish scale. Cosily lounges and rugs and wonderful pieces of bric-a-brac abounded everywhere, whilst the oil paintings on the walls must have been worth a small fortune. These details the sleuth noticed in the twinkling of an eye. The next and he was counting the number of persons present. Seated round a small ivory inlaid table were four hooded figures, whose faces were concealed by black masks. On either side of them were two brawny Ethiopians, clad in European dress.

Before them was a middle-aged, severe-featured woman, holding the arm of a young girl—a pretty girl, whose features contrasted strongly with those of the woman alongside her. And as Locke allowed his gaze to rest for a fleeting second on the face of the young girl, he uttered an exclamation of surprise. For the picture he saw fitted perfectly the description his assistant had

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given him of the girl who called herself Yvonne—the girl who had acknowledged herself to be the daughter of the Yellow Claw. Recovering from his surprise, Locke next became aware of the inanimate figure of Drake himself. The boy was lying stretched out on the carpeted floor, breathing deeply. Kneeling by his side was the chauffeur who had driven the limousine. Gazing at the scene before him with fascination, Locke was surprised and thrilled to hear a voice penetrate the thickness of the window. And the voice was one he had heard before. It belonged to his late midnight visitor at the Criterion Hotel at Blackpool.

Locke tried hard to discover whence the voice came, and it was not until one of the figures seated at the table rose and looked towards the ceiling that he traced it. Beneath the ceiling of the room was a little balcony, heavily draped with curtains. And between the folds of the curtains appeared the masked face and head of a man.

And the face of the man was like unto the Yellow Claw!

Ferrers Locke felt his pulse leap as he gazed upon the outward image of the man who had plied his nefarious and plundering trade with such success. In his heart of hearts he knew the real identity of the master-criminal, for his clues had been pieced together, leaving an almost complete and comprehensive picture. But as he gazed at that masked head appearing between the curtains he felt a shadow of doubt cross his mind. How could two people so vastly apart in every respect occupy the one role? Before the mental question had time to disturb him fully he had backed away quietly from the wall of the cottage.

Pheep!

The single-whistled note pierced the night air shrilly, resembling the call of a bird to its mate, and at the sound the two plain-clothes men, who had been eagerly awaiting such a signal, crawled forward silently and swiftly.

They joined Ferrers Locke, and waited expectantly, each conscious of the heavy and quickened heart-beats of the other.

"Well?" queried the taller of the two.

"Quite well," chuckled the private detective. "The time is ripe. I have scouted round the cottage, and the only

means of exit, other than the door at the front, is the kitchen door leading into the garden at the back. If Roberts and I do the right thing, we shall trap the whole lot of them before they have time to move. You, Smithson, must keep a sharp look-out at the back in case of accidents. Your weapons are loaded, gentlemen?"

"Sure thing!"

"Then come on!" whispered Ferrers Locke.

He advanced without a sound, the plain-clothes man, Roberts, at his heels. Both of them carried a brace of fully-loaded revolvers. As Locke and Roberts reached the porch of the cottage, Smithson, on his part, arrived at the back door opening into the kitchen-garden.

At the door at the end of the porch Locke listened intently. From within came the hum of voices and the jingling of coin.

He nudged Roberts significantly.

"Now!" he rapped.

At the word he drove open the door with a lusty kick and sprang inside, his revolver levelled menacingly. Not a second behind him was Roberts.

"Hands up!"

The occupants of the room sprang to their feet in terror and amazement, and found themselves looking down the glinting barrels of the intruders' revolvers.

"Hands up!" repeated Locke, in a harsh voice. "Or I fire—to kill!"

One of his weapons was directed at the masked head appearing between the curtains in the balcony above; but, to his consternation, the voice—the voice he had grown to know and to remember—still continued to fill the room with its sinister note.

For one moment Locke felt compelled to dispatch a bullet in the direction of that masked face, but a sudden thought entered his mind, and, lowering his revolver, he turned to the amazed occupants of the room.

The masked and hooded figures looked strangely grotesque in the light that gleamed out from an alabaster bowl suspended from the ceiling. The two brawny Ethiopians, their arms raised aloft, looked like a pair of sheepish schoolboys caught in some act of mischief. The chauffeur, and the chauffeur

alone, was the one likely to give trouble. His eyes glinted evilly, and his outstretched hands began slowly to descend as he thought the levelled revolvers of the raiders had passed him by. But he was soon mistaken.

"Put them up!" rapped Roberts, shaking one of his revolvers menacingly. "No monkey-tricks, you scoundrel!"

With a fearsome scowl the chauffeur stretched his arms aloft again.

The woman, who seemed to have more than ordinary interest in the young girl at her side, judging by the way she gripped her arm, was the first to speak.

"What does this mean?" she demanded, with flashing eyes. "Who are you?"

"I am Ferrers Locke, Mrs. Mazelrigg!" was the sleuth's mocking reply. "Kindly release your hold of Miss Yvonne!"

The eyes of the woman addressed as Mrs. Mazelrigg started from their sockets in amazement, and then narrowed as quickly in fear as she heard her name pronounced. But her confusion was but temporary. With an easy smile she turned to Ferrers Locke.

"I think you must be mistaken!" she said haughtily.

"I think not, madam!" returned the sleuth. "We can, however, discuss that matter in a moment. For the time being I must ask you to excuse me."

He bowed low, and turned sharply on the hooded figures, who had not uttered a word since he had appeared in the room.

"A sort of pay-night!" he laughed, as he noted a pile of notes and silver on the ivory inlaid table. "It will be the last pay any of you will receive for many a year!"

His bantering tone ceased on the instant as the hand of one of the hooded figures made a significant move in the direction of his girdle.

"No, you don't!" rapped the sleuth, covering the man with his own weapon. "Smithson!" He raised his voice in a shout, and in response came an answering call and the patter of running feet. A second or so later the other plain-clothes man appeared in the room.

"I will trouble you, Smithson," said Locke coolly, "to bracelet these scoundrels whilst Roberts and I keep them covered. The chauffeur," he added, glancing meaningfully in the direction of that cowering wretch, "can assist you!"

Smithson brought to light from the capacious pockets of his overcoat four pairs of handcuffs. His next move was to whip away the masks from the faces of the hooded figures, and their robes. In each case he revealed an evil-looking lascar, armed with an equally evil-looking knife. With a coolness that is typical of the greatest police in the world, Smithson plucked the knives from the girdles of the lascars and tossed them into a corner of the room. Then he proceeded to make them prisoners by the process of passing one pair of the handcuffs over the outstretched wrists of two of the rascals at a time. Next he approached the two brawny Ethiopians, and "made one of them," so to speak, in the same way. With the remaining pair of handcuffs jingling in his hand, he looked to Ferrers Locke for instructions.

"The chauffeur and Mrs. Mazelrigg," said Locke quietly. "It is against my principles to handcuff a woman, but the lady, in the present instance, is of a very dangerous type. Moreover, her

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evidence will be necessary when the Yellow Claw is placed in the dock."

"But, sir," thundered the outraged lady, "how dare you? I—"

Click!

One ring of the handcuff snapped home on her wrist even as she expostulated, and before her indignant words had died away the other ring of the handcuff had fastened on one of the chauffeur's wrists.

"A nice little party of rogues!" chuckled Ferrers Locke. And then, noting the look of abject terror on the face of the young girl known as Yvonne, he became serious again, although his voice was strangely kind and gentle.

"Fear not, Miss Yvonne," he said, with a reassuring smile that brought an answering smile to the face of the young girl. "We are detectives. We are concerned chiefly with the capture of the Yellow Claw and his rascally agents, and—"

"But I am the daughter of him who calls himself the Yellow Claw!" said the girl, with a show of boldness.

"Poor girl!" said Locke gently. "You are mistaken. You have been cruelly deceived. On my oath as a man of honour, I tell you that the Yellow Claw is no relation of yours whatsoever, let alone being your father."

"But—but—" Yvonne's eyes gleamed excitedly. "But how do you know? How do I know? For I have never seen the Yellow Claw without his disguise. Tell me," she added pleadingly, "you are not joking?"

"Never more serious in my life—or more clumsy in trying to appear so," smiled Ferrers Locke. "But you will know all within a few hours, unless I am greatly mistaken. Will you rely upon me, Miss Yvonne?"

"I will, Mr. Locke," she answered simply. "Thank Heaven you have rid me of the one shadow that has overhung my life! I am content to wait."

The two plain-clothes men had been interested listeners to the foregoing—interested and as much amazed as was the girl herself, interested and amazed as Mrs. Mazelrigg was silent and vengeful.

"And now, gentlemen," went on Locke, in his usual brusque way, "while you are bringing my assistant round, I will discover what lies behind that hideous masked face yonder."

A significant, scornful look flashed between the chauffeur and Mrs. Mazelrigg; but it had scarcely passed when Yvonne started forward.

"That is bluff, Mr. Locke," she said earnestly. "That is merely a cleverly designed mask. Behind it is a—"

"Wireless receiving apparatus?" suggested the sleuth, with an interrogating glance.

"How did you know?"

"I must confess that I guessed—and apparently guessed correctly," smiled Ferrers Locke.

"You have indeed, 'sir!' exclaimed the girl admiringly. "Although I only found out about it myself to-day. I have been a prisoner here for three days—a prisoner inasmuch that I have been accompanied everywhere by Mrs. Mazelrigg, although I have been allowed to walk about the grounds."

"And who keeps this cottage?"

"The chauffeur," answered Yvonne. "He works the wireless, too. The voice you heard speaking when you entered this room was that of the Yellow Claw himself, speaking from London. It is pay-night, and the chauffeur had to journey to London to get these scoundrels' money. They are ignorant and simple-minded enough folk, even if they are cruel and unmerciful. They have always imagined that the voice speaking from the balcony proceeded direct from their chief."

"Very ingenious and quite in keeping with the Yellow Claw's love of dramatic effect," said Locke slowly. "Where it fails in some respects is counterbalanced by the fact that the Claw directs his scoundrelly agents without disclosing his identity."

"That is so," said Yvonne. "And from what I have seen, it has been the practice of the Yellow Claw always to rid himself of his agents after accepting their service for a period of six months."

"Do you mean that he—" began Locke.

"No, no—not that," replied the girl hurriedly. "I mean, he ships them back to their own country, with a good sum of money, and is never troubled by them again. Only Mrs. Mazelrigg and the chauffeur have remained in his service for years."

"Indeed?" said Locke, moving over to the wall at the summit of which was the small balcony. "And how does one reach that balcony?"

"I cannot say," replied Yvonne, "for I have been forbidden to roam above the ground floor. But the chauffeur can tell you," she added.

"Come, my man!" said the sleuth, his lynx eyes on the furtive face of the man in livery. "It is time for you to speak out. How do I reach this balcony?"

For some moments the man was silent, a state suggested, no doubt, by the savage prompting of the woman at his side. But at last he spoke.

"The cupboard at the far end of the room," he said sullenly. "There is a flight of steps leading to the balcony above."

The detective, leaving Roberts and Smithson to keep an eye on the prisoners, walked to the cupboard indicated, and opened the door. The space beyond revealed a narrow flight of iron steps, winding, spiral fashion, to the roof above. Slipping his electric-torch into his pocket, Locke climbed the steps, and eventually found himself on the small, semi-circular balcony.

As Yvonne had said, he discovered a wireless receiving set mounted on a small table directly behind the heavy curtains. A loud-speaker was ranged close to the back of a papier mache head, over the front of which was a Chinese mask, that was supported on a metal pedestal so that it gave the appearance of a human head peering through the folds of the curtains in the manner of the old-time marionettes.

With a grim chuckle, Locke pulled aside the curtaining and gazed down at the occupants of the room.

"Behold the Yellow Claw!" he said mockingly.

(Look out for the concluding chapters of his amazing serial next Monday.)

WINNING THROUGH!

(Continued from page 21.)

He drew back swiftly from the window, settled himself into position, and the next instant was speeding away like the wind over the frozen ground. Soon he took to the level ice, and continued his flight in the early morning light towards far-distant Fort Resolution.

He held on to the bitter end—to the time when, with the falling of night once more, the far-away lights of Fort Resolution winkled in the gathering gloom. Then, and only then, did the half-breeds slacken the pursuit, and, turning tail, melt away, knowing that the cause of Pierre Boreau was lost.

It was an anxious, worn-out little garrison that Trooper James and the strong body of men he brought back with him found within the shot-riddled walls of Fort Rae. They had held out almost to the bitter end—in fact, when it came to counting up, Clem Feeley produced four cartridges among the lot. What they had done with the rest the cold, stark, silent forms lying without in the ever-deepening snow told only too plainly.

And Trooper James? Was he specially rewarded for his pluck and perseverance? Well, yes, he was in the long run, but not much at the time; for actions such as this one are common out there in the great cold land of Our Lady of the Snows!

THE END.

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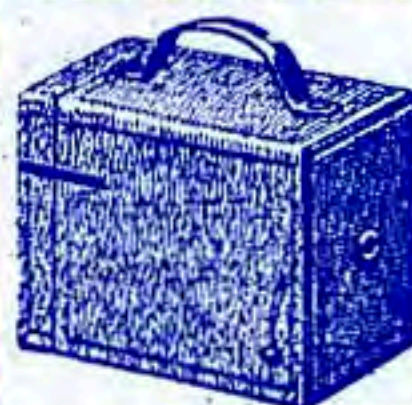


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