

THE SECRET OF SHARK'S TOOTH!

This Week's Magnificent Story of Harry Wharton & Co.

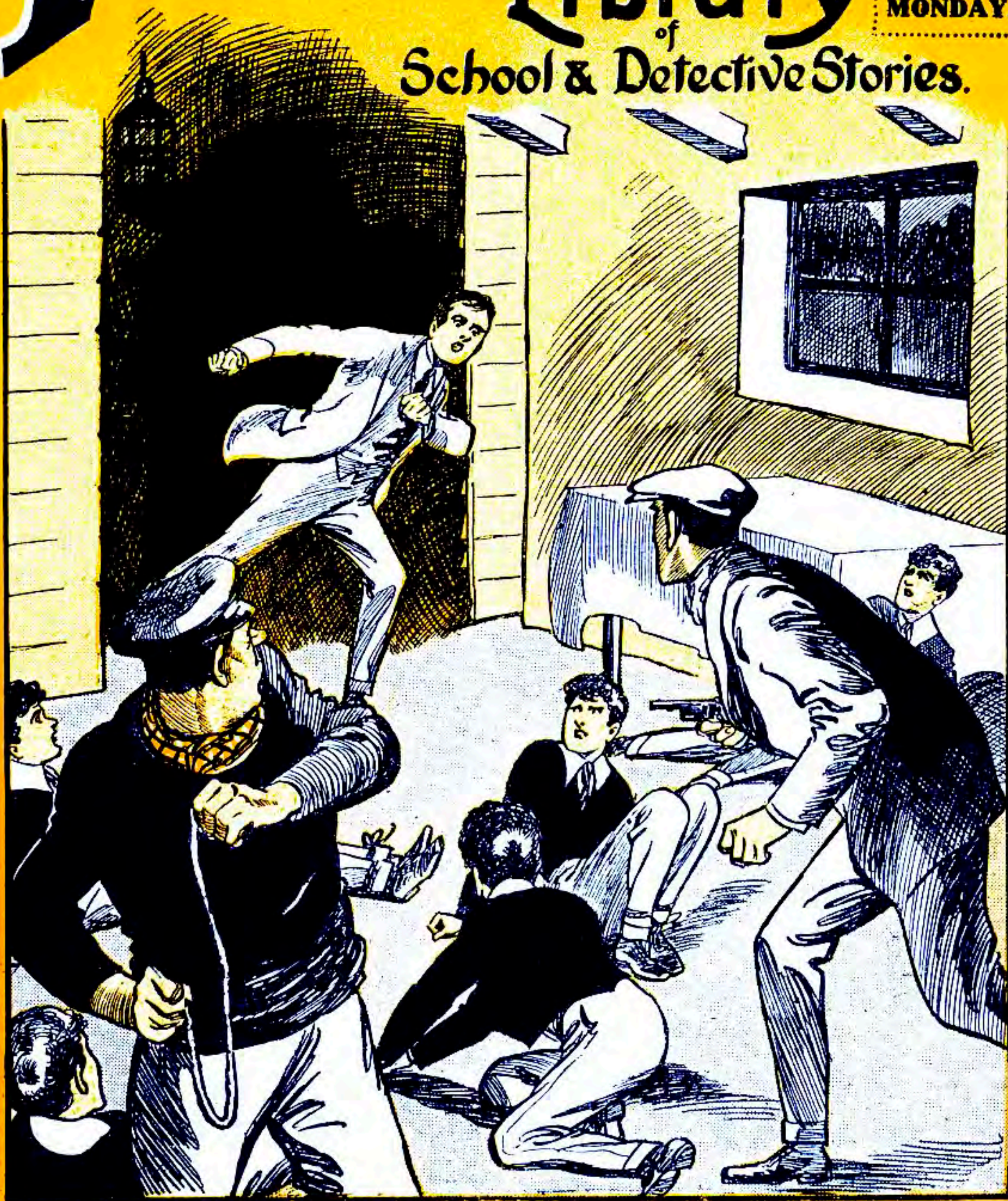
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The Magnet 2^d

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EVERY
MONDAY.



THE SECRET OPENING IN THE WALL!

A SURPRISE FOR THE CAPTORS OF THE REMOVITES!

(An arresting scene from this week's splendid Gregfriars story, inside.)

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TOPPING COMPLETE STORY OF THE "GOOD OLD DAYS!"



THE FIRST CHAPTER.

A Hero and a Traitor!

"WE must draw lots to decide which of us shall be branded with the chart of living death!"

"No, captain. Let the chart be branded on me. I'm only a lad, while you may need every man you have to fight your way through the Spanish foe!"

The scene was a strange, weird one.

It was in the old days, when the proud Spanish dons claimed to be the masters of all South and Central America, and declared that the mariners of other nations had no right to sail on the waters washing the shores of that rich country, which they called the Spanish Main.

The Spaniards cruelly tortured and killed without mercy all men not of their own race whom they captured on the Main; but, despite this, the vast treasures in gold and silver to be found in the wonderful lands of Yucatan, Peru, and Mexico induced many a bold heart to take his life in his hands and to voyage to the Spanish Main and defy the dons.

Because these adventurers made war on and plundered the Spaniards alone, they were called buccaneers, to distinguish them from common pirates.

Among the most famous and daring leaders of the buccaneers was Captain William Dampier. Voyaging to the Spanish Main, he had left his ship in a secret bay, with a small crew on board, off the coast of Yucatan, while he himself, with the greater portion of his men, had marched far inland to an unknown land which lay across the Isthmus of Darien.

The buccaneers had been in quest of a Silver City, of which they had heard from an old Indian, whom Dampier had saved from a death of torture at the hands of the Spaniards.

In the Silver City was hidden a great treasure, and the Indian had promised to guide them to it out of gratitude. Led by him, they had pressed on through a country so wild and trackless, so full of terrible perils, visible and invisible, that they had realised that they could never find their way back if they lost their guide.

Not one of them knew the way. Without the old Indian's guidance they would all be like men lost in a terrible maze of terror and doom.

They had gained the Silver City and found the treasure, and had then turned their faces towards the coast, loaded with the precious metal which was to make them rich men for life.

But when the return journey was not yet completed they had been menaced by a grim peril, and a fearful disaster had befallen them.

They had been tracked down by the Spaniards.

More than once the dons had thrown themselves in vastly superior numbers across the path of the buccaneers; and, though Dampier and his men had fought their way through, the Spaniards had followed them like bloodhounds.

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It was a terrible journey! The buccaneers were starving and in tatters; many of them were suffering from gaping wounds, the feet of others were bleeding; but still they had fought their way on, staggering under their silver loads.

And then, when he had been most needed, Alacor, the old Indian guide, had fallen—dying.

It was in a grove in the heart of the trackless forest, in which the trees grew so closely together that hardly a ray of sunlight penetrated to it; and it was choked, too, with glowing flowers, and with fruits and berries such as the buccaneers had never seen before.

"I can go no farther!" Alacor had gasped. "I am doomed, seniors! But there is a chance for you, if one of you will give his life for the sake of his comrades!"

"What mean you?" Dampier had demanded quickly, while his men had waited breathlessly for the reply.

For answer, Alacor had crawled to some bushes, and plucked some berries, and when he crushed these together his fingers were stained with a fluid like red ink. And he had told the buccaneers that with this juice, which would leave a permanent mark on nothing save the skin of a living man or lad, and a sharp dagger's point, he could brand upon the arm of one of them a chart, which would lead them to safety and life; but he told them also that the crimson fluid was a deadly poison.

Whoever was branded with it would not die at once, but within three days a stupor-like sleep would fall on him, and he would never awaken again.

The old Indian knew of no antidote to the poison, nor was there any available ink.

And the dons were hot on their track, and they had realised that they must all perish, unless one of them was willing to brave death for the sake of his comrades.

They had looked at each other with pale faces and horror-frozen lips, and then Captain Dampier had uttered the words which had been already set down, and had been instantly answered by the other speech, which was spoken in a ringing, boyish voice, in which there was not a trace of fear.

From the buccaneers' ranks stepped forward a young hero; while simultaneously there shrank farther back, until he was nearly out of sight, one on whose livid features was a cunning, evil expression which marked him out as a foul traitor.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Betrayed to the Dons!

"NOEL HART!"

The name burst involuntarily from the buccaneers as they gazed at the lad who had offered to sacrifice his life for them.

Noel Hart was tall and brave, and still strong, despite all he had undergone. He had been a London apprentice, but had joined the buccaneers in the hope of making his fortune by daring danger on the Spanish Main.

And who was the traitor?

None of the buccaneers knew Mark Fangs for such, or he would have died then and there. But he was no less a vile traitor at heart because his cunning had hitherto enabled him to conceal the fact.

He was a brutal-faced man, with furtive eyes. Once he had been a thief in London. In the dead of night, he, along with other rogues, had broken into the shop of Master Crofts, the merchant who was Noel's master. The apprentice had driven them off, after soundly cudgelling Fangs, whom, however, he had not seen clearly, owing to the mask he was wearing.

The thief had fled, but had vowed vengeance. Afterwards, finding London too hot for him, he had joined Captain Dampier, with the intention of killing Noel by treachery, if he could, and of enriching himself.

He had not the courage to attack the lad openly; but he knew that the Spaniards would reward him richly if he betrayed the buccaneers to them. Unknown to his companions he had stolen from their camp in the darkness, and, finding out the dons, had made a treacherous bargain to sell Captain Dampier and his men at the first opportunity, for which he was to receive a large share of the silver for himself, and to be allowed to go free; while his comrades, including the boy he hated, were to die.

His motive for shrinking back was because he was afraid that if lots were drawn the fatal choice might fall on himself.

"You are a brave lad!" exclaimed Captain Dampier, clapping Noel on the shoulder. "But we should be disgraced cowards for ever if we accepted your offer. No! We will draw lots, and he who chooses the marked leaf shall bear the brand of death!"

He plucked some leaves from the nearest bush—a leaf for each buccaneer—and marked one with a tiny stain of the crimson juice. Then he threw them into his hat, and shook them together.

The skipper himself was the first to essay his fate, and Mark Fangs was forced forward and made to draw a lot. One after the other the buccaneers took their turns, and they had to be quick, for old Alacor was gasping his life out on the ground, and growing weaker every second.

"The boy has it!"

The buccaneers spoke in hoarse tones as Noel drew out and held up the marked leaf.

Dampier wished to take the terrible ordeal on himself; but Noel refused to consent, and there was no time for arguing. Already the eyes of Alacor were glazing.

Kneeling on the ground, Noel held his bared arm firm as a rock. His brave face never faltered as the trembling fingers of the old Indian guide imprinted on his flesh with the dagger's point and the crimson poison the chart of death.

"Now, hasten on your way, seniors!" said Alacor, with the death-rattle in his throat. "Three times the sun will rise and sink, and then the youth will die; but by that time you should reach the sea!"

He fell back dead.

The buccaneers wasted no time. As they

(Continued on page 27.)

Ever keen to help a lame dog over a stile, Harry Wharton & Co. find themselves plunged into an exciting adventure in their efforts to assist an innocent man from becoming the victim of a miscarriage of justice. Although their actions are, strictly speaking, against the law, the Co. determine to stick to their guns, with the result that they probe—



A Long Complete Story dealing with the adventures of Harry Wharton & Co. of Greyfriars. Told by FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Pirates of Pegg!

RIPPING afternoon, you fellows!" Harry Wharton, Bob Cherry, Frank Nugent, and Johnny Bull were standing together under the old gateway at Greyfriars, when Billy Bunter trotted up to them with that genial but slightly breathless statement.

And certainly it was "a ripping afternoon"—an ideal spring afternoon of sunny skies and fresh, exhilarating breezes. And, moreover, it was a half-day at Greyfriars.

But, though the four juniors must have heard Billy Bunter—and must, in all honesty, have agreed with his statement—they did not agree verbally. They remained staring towards the School House steps, and they ignored Billy Bunter.

As a general rule Billy Bunter was not interested in the weather—indeed, from the fact that Bunter's eyes were glued to the paper bags the juniors carried, it was apparent that his thoughts were not upon the weather now.

And yet he seemed keen to point out that it was a ripping afternoon, and he tried again.

"Ripping afternoon, you fellows!" he repeated a trifle warmly now. "I say, you know, you fellows might—"

"Wish old Inky would buck up!" remarked Harry Wharton impatiently. "We'll miss bagging a boat if he doesn't come along soon."

"Smithy's out, I expect," said Frank Nugent. "I suppose he's trotting round trying to borrow a stove from somebody else."

"Ripping afternoon, you fellows—"

"We were silly asses to forget the spirit-stove!" grunted Johnny Bull. "Must have one, though—too jolly cold for cold drinks yet."

"Ripping afternoon, you fellows. I say, you know—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Bunter!"

Bob Cherry turned and looked at Bunter then.

"My hat!" Bob continued. "Wonders will never cease. Bunter's actually made a truthful statement! Yes, old lard-tub, it is a ripping afternoon."

"Oh, really, Cherry!" grumbled Bunter. "I say, you know, you fellows might have told me you were going for a picnic up-river this afternoon! I'd have agreed to come and—"

"That's why we didn't tell you, old fat top," said Bob Cherry gravely. "So we're going for a picnic up-river, are we, Billy?"

"Trust me to find things out!" grinned Bunter. "I heard Wharton talking about a boat, and I jolly soon put two and two together. I say, you fellows, you can count me in. You'll want somebody to look after the grub for—"

"We can eat the grub ourselves, fatty!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"If you'll hand over those bags I'll carry them for you," said Bunter briskly. "I'm coming, you know."

"Are you, you fat frog—" began Johnny Bull.

"Half a minute!" remarked Bob Cherry thoughtfully, winking at Harry Wharton. "Perhaps Bunter would make a useful member of the party, after all. As we've got to wait for Inky, perhaps you'd like to trot on ahead and bag a boat for us, Bunter—"

"Oh, really, Cherry!" Billy Bunter fairly beamed. He had scarcely expected to "wangle" himself into the party quite so easily as this. "Oh, really, Cherry!" he grinned. "That's a jolly good idea! I'll just—"

"Buzz off at once, then, old tulip. And mind," warned Bob Cherry, "that you grab plenty of cushions, Billy."

"Rely on me!" grinned the delighted Bunter. "I'll trot off at once, old chap."

And Bunter did. He trotted through the gates, his fat little legs going like

clockwork, and disappeared in the direction of the old boathouse on the Sark.

"That's got rid of Bunter for the afternoon," chuckled Bob Cherry. "Queer, you chaps, isn't it, how some fellows will jump to hasty conclusions! Take Bunter, now. Just because he heard Harry talk about getting a boat out, he at once jumps to the conclusion that we're going for a picnic up the river!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wonder how long he'll wait at the boathouse for us?" murmured Bob. "Until he gets too hungry to wait any longer, I expect. Still, he can't blame us—"

"You spoofer, Bob!" laughed Harry Wharton. "Poor old Bunter! Oh, good! Here's Inky!"

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh came hurrying up just then, a brown paper package under his arm.

"All serenely good, my chums!" smiled the Indian junior. "I borrowed the needful spirit-stove from the esteemed Toddy."

"Good egg!" said Harry. "Let's start, then."

And Harry led the way through the gates, and they started out—not like Bunter, towards the Sark, but towards the sea in the opposite direction. If Billy Bunter intended to wait for the Famous Five at the boathouse that afternoon, then he was booked for a long wait.

But the Famous Five did not trouble themselves about Bunter's troubles. It was the second picnic of the season, and they meant to make the most of it—without Billy Bunter's presence or aid.

In a very few minutes they had reached the beach, and, with the aid of the school boatman, had launched a light sailing-skiff. Once afloat, Bob Cherry took the tiller, and Harry Wharton took charge of the little sail.

"Now for Black Rock Island!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, as he shook out

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the sheet. "It's a bit early for boating; but it's a topping day, and we'll make the most of it. This is A 1, you chaps!"

"Ripping!" said Franky Nugent.

And it certainly was ripping. The breeze was keen, but the April sun was warm, and the juniors' faces glowed with radiant health as the light craft snorted over the crisp waves towards the dull outline of Black Rock Island.

But Harry Wharton & Co. were not fated to land on Black Rock Island that afternoon.

Hardly had Frank Nugent spoken, when Bob Cherry gave an exclamation and pointed across the bay towards the little fishing village of Pegg.

"If I'm not mistaken, here come the giddy pirates of Pegg!" he grinned. "That looks like their boat, anyway!"

Harry Wharton stared long at the distant white sail across the bay, and then he nodded.

"It's Dicky Trumper and his pals right enough, you fellows," he said, looking thoughtful. "Better look out for squalls!"

"They've spotted us," said Nugent.

There was no doubt about that now. The distant craft's course was obviously set towards them, and she bore down rapidly upon the Greyfriars boat.

The juniors recognised the boat clearly now. It was an old fishing-boat; but, unlike the Pegg fishing craft, its hull shone with gleaming paint, and its snow-white sails glistened in the sunlight.

It was undoubtedly the Swallow—the old fishing-boat that had been presented by the mayor of Courtfield to Dick Trumper & Co., of the Courtfield Council School, when the local curate had formed those cheery youths into a band of Sea Scouts.

Dick Trumper and his men called themselves the Pegg Sea Scouts; but Bob Cherry preferred to call them the Pirates of Pegg.

The juniors watched the approach of the Swallow rather anxiously now.

On the playing-fields the Removites and Council School boys were the best of friends and rivals; but, apart from sport, no little good-humoured ragging took place between them.

"Eight of 'em," said Harry Wharton with a rueful grin as he counted the figures on the oncoming craft. "We'll stand no chance if they are up to any larks."

"I expect the beggars have guessed we've got grub aboard, and mean to raid us," said Nugent.

"They'll have to fight for it, then!" said Harry grimly.

"What-ho!" grinned Bob Cherry, reaching for an oar with his disengaged hand. "Get ready to repel boarders, me hearties!"

The juniors prepared themselves for trouble, grabbing oars and boathooks—anything that was to hand. Though an old boat, the Swallow was a speedy craft, and her crew—many of whom were, like Dick Trumper, sons of Pegg fishermen—handled her skilfully.

She rapidly overhauled the smaller craft, and the Greyfriars juniors could see the crew now, looking smart and businesslike in their sea-scouts uniforms. Dick Trumper was standing on the little hatchway, holding on to the mast, and by his side were Walter Grahame and Solly Lazarus, his chief henchmen. And all wore broad grins on their cheery, healthy faces.

Scarcely twenty yards of sparkling sea separated the boats now, and suddenly all doubts as to their rivals' intentions left the minds of the Greyfriars juniors.

A strip of black bunting appeared suddenly at the top of the Swallow's mast,

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and painted on it in white was the skull and crossbones. It fluttered bravely in the breeze, and Bob Cherry chuckled as he saw it.

"The merry old Jolly Roger!" he grinned. "They mean business, then?"

As if to prove his words a loud hail came from Dicky Trumper.

"Heave to, you lubbers!" he bawled. "Heave to, or we'll sink you!"

"Rats!" yelled Harry Wharton. "What's the game, Trumper, you ass?"

"Heave to, or we'll jolly soon show you that!" bawled Dick Trumper back.

"We're going to search that craft. Resist, and we'll make you walk the plank."

"As I thought—after the grub," murmured Bob Cherry. "It's piracy on the high seas."

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Haunted Hut!

HARRY WHARTON grinned.

It certainly was piracy—sheer, high-handed piracy. But

it was like the cheery Dick Trumper & Co. And after all, as Harry ruefully reflected, all was fair in love and war. In their "rubs" with the Courtfield Council School boys, the Famous Five had come out best on more than one occasion. It was now the turn of Trumper & Co.

"No good trying to get away—they'd catch us up long before we got to the island," said Harry.

He let the little sail down with a run, and the boat slowed down gently. Then followed a roar of triumph from the pursuing craft, and a moment later the Swallow's sails were flapping down.

As he saw this Harry Wharton's eyes suddenly gleamed.

"We'll do them yet with luck!" he whispered quickly. "Stand by, you fellows, and when their boat stops alongside push off and start rowing like blazes!"

Harry's chums did not grasp his plan, but they obeyed his orders without question.

As the larger craft glided gently alongside Harry pushed off with his boathook, while Bob Cherry lunged with his oar.

They put all their force into the thrust, and the light boat danced away like a cork on the waves.

"Look out!" yelled Dick Trumper.

Evidently the leader of the sea-scouts grasped Harry's idea, for he yelled, and made a flying leap for the Greyfriars boat. He was followed at once by Walter Grahame.

The latter fell sprawling in the boat, and Johnny Bull pounced upon him in a flash. But Dicky Trumper was scarcely as lucky.

His feet touched the gunwale of the Greyfriars boat, and as he strove to regain his balance Harry Wharton's boathook took him gently in the ribs, and he fell backwards into the sparkling sea.

Splash!

"Hurrah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Leaving the luckless leader of the Council School boys struggling and yelling in the water, the Greyfriars juniors leaped to their tasks, laughing and cheering triumphantly.

Harry Wharton jumped to the tiller, and as Bob Cherry and Hurree Singh

grasped the oars, he brought the boat round with her nose to the wind.

"Now pull, you beggars!" he yelled. "This is where we smile."

And the Greyfriars juniors did smile—loudly—as their boat leaped away, pulled by lusty arms. They had no fear of Trumper's coming to harm—he was a hardy youth, and could swim like an otter.

"Done 'em fairly," grinned Harry Wharton gleefully. "They've got no oars, and they'll never catch us by tacking against the wind. It'll take them some time, too, to rescue poor old Trumper."

He glanced back with a chuckle. The wrathful crew of the Swallow were just hauling their luckless leader from the water. His feet touched the deck of the old fishing-boat at last, and as he stood up, dripping with water, he shook his fist furiously at the grinning Greyfriars juniors.

"You wait, you rotters!" he howled wrathfully. "We'll make you sit up for that!"

The Famous Five sent an ironical cheer ringing across the water in reply. But they did not wait. Bob Cherry and Hurree Singh tugged manfully at the oars, and the Swallow dropped behind quickly.

"Poor old pirates!" chuckled Bob Cherry, grinning down at Walter Grahame, who was squirming on the footboards with Bull and Nugent sitting on his chest. "We've done 'em brown, and we've captured a giddy prisoner. What shall we do with him, you chaps? Maroon him on the Shark's Tooth, I vote."

The captured Council School boy ceased to struggle abruptly and blinked up in alarm at that.

"Here, you asses!" he panted, his rugged features going pale. "You—you won't—"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"No, we won't do that," he grinned. "Now, Grahame, old top, what's it to be? Will you make it pax and give your parole, or shall we have to hang you on the yardarm? That's what they do with merry old pirates, you know."

"Pax it is," said Grahame, his good-humoured face breaking into a grin. "Let me get up, you asses!"

Johnny Bull and Frank Nugent jumped up, and Walter Grahame scrambled up and rubbed himself ruefully. He had sustained a good many knocks in that brief encounter, but he wasn't a fellow to bear malice.

"You can take a hand with the oars," said Harry Wharton, "and if you're good we'll let you join in the picnic. If you get up to any monkey tricks we'll do as Bob suggests, and maroon you on Shark's Tooth."

"I'll be good then," grinned Walter Grahame. "I wouldn't land on the Shark's Tooth for a pension."

"We're going there all the same," grinned back Harry.

"To the Shark's Tooth?" echoed Bob Cherry in surprise. "But—"

"We've got to have tea somewhere, and there's nowhere else without going ashore," said Harry. "We can't go back towards Black Rock Island unless we want to be collared by Trumper and his pals. Anyway, I've often wanted to explore the place, and now's the chance."

"Right-ho!" grinned Bob Cherry. "I'm game!"

The rest of the Famous Five nodded and also grinned. But the Council School boy did neither. He stared aghast at Harry Wharton.

ANSWERS
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A strip of black bunting suddenly appeared at the top of the "Swallow's" mast, and painted on it in white was the skull and crossbones. It fluttered bravely in the breeze, and Bob Cherry chuckled as he saw it. "The merry old Jolly Roger," he grinned. "Heave to, you lubbers," roared Dick Trumper, "or we'll sink you!" (See Chapter I.)

"You—you're not thinking of landing on Shark's Tooth?" he ejaculated in alarm.

"Why not?" grinned Harry.

"It—it's a beastly hole," said Grahame with a shudder. "You fellows have heard—"

"We've heard it's haunted," grinned Harry. "But that's one reason why I'm keen on exploring the show. There's an old ruined hut—"

"Crazy Joe's hut," said Grahame quietly. "He built it ages ago. He lived there alone for years—until he was found murdered one day. He was a bit potty, and he had money, I believe. Anyway, nobody's set foot on the place since. His ghost haunts the place."

"What rot!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"It isn't rot," said Grahame. "You won't catch any Pegg fisherman going near the place either at night or daytime, anyway. It's a jolly difficult and dangerous place to approach, too. Don't go, you fellows."

"We're going, old top," said Harry. "If you don't want to come you can step out and walk back, Grahame, old son. Now, bend to it, you chaps. The sooner we put the Shoulder between us and those giddy pirates the better."

"They're starting after us now!" exclaimed Nugent.

It was true enough. As Harry glanced round he saw that the distant Swallow was already in chase, heeling over as she forged through the dancing water on a landward tack.

But they were drawing near to the Shoulder now, and Bob Cherry and Hurree Singh were putting all they knew into the rowing. In less than ten minutes they had rounded the huge, jutting rock, and when once the Shoulder was between them and their pursuers Harry breathed with relief.

"We've got to get on the island before they round the Shoulder now, you chaps," he exclaimed. "Here, I'll take a turn at rowing now."

He took charge of Bob Cherry's oar, and Walter Grahame took the other, and together they made the light boat fairly hiss through the water.

Nor was there any sign of slackening about Walter's rowing; his sympathies

were, naturally, with his own chums behind; but he had given his word, and he did his best to play up to it.

He was silent now. Though a plucky enough youth in the ordinary way, the thought of landing on Shark's Tooth was not a pleasant one. A fisherman's son, he had all the simple fisherfolks' dread of the supernatural.

But he had no intention now of showing that he funk'd it, and he pulled away with a will. They were well in sight of the Shark's Tooth now—merely a rocky islet some fifty yards across, bare and desolate; and almost surrounded by jagged, half-submerged rocks. It looked what it merely was—a mass of piled-up rocks rising on the landward side to a high, ragged pinnacle, from which the island had obviously derived its name.

"No sign of the merry pirates yet!" grinned Frank Nugent, who was steering now. "Where shall I steer for, Harry?"

"Far side of the island," said Harry. "We want to get out of sight before Trumper and his pals round the Shoulder. Watch out for sunken rocks, though. Carefully now, you chaps!"

Harry's warning was needed, for sunken rocks abounded now, and they paddled on cautiously, Frank Nugent's eyes scanning the clear water keenly as he steered the boat between the treacherous snags.

Another few moments' pulling and then they came in sight of a broken-down wooden jetty, set in a tiny pebbly beach. From the jetty a faint rocky pathway wound up a stretch of rising ground, and ended at a tumble-down wooden shanty built sheer against the rocky wall at the foot of the pinnacle, and facing seawards.

The juniors stopped rowing and gazed at the desolate scene in silence.

At the moment a cloud had obscured the sun, casting a deep shadow over sea and island, and adding a hundred-fold to the forbidding aspect of the gloomy place. There was not a scrap of vegetation on the island—no sign of life. A deathly stillness hung about the haunted hut and its surroundings—a stillness accentuated by the eerie cries of stray sea-gulls.

"Jove, what a creepy hole!" breathed

Harry Wharton, breaking the silence at last. "I don't wonder nobody ever comes here, Grahame. It's beastly!"

"Going to land here?" muttered Bob Cherry.

"No—we'd be spotted at once," said Harry quietly. "Let's try farther on."

They moved on again, strangely subdued. Twenty yards or so farther on Harry gave the word to halt, pointing to a jumbled pile of high rocks as he did so.

"We can land there," he exclaimed. "We can drag the boat up on that shelf of rock, and it won't be seen behind that pile. Carefully now."

The boat was edged in to the rocky shore, and one by one the juniors sprang out. It was an easy matter for the six to drag the light boat up on to the ledge, and it was soon safely hidden from sight.

"That's good enough," said Harry, glancing round him. "Your merry pals won't spot that, Grahame, old son. And I fancy they'll funk searching the island—or even landing on it."

"They won't funk it if they know you're here," said Walter Grahame grimly. "Let 'em spot you, and you'll see."

"We don't intend to let them spot us," grinned Harry. "If you're thinking of giving the alarm, Grahame, old top—"

"I've given my word to play up," said Grahame, "and I'm going to play up."

The Council schoolboy's word was good enough for Harry Wharton, and he nodded, laughing.

"Right, then—we won't gag you, old son. I vote we have tea first, and then start exploring, you fellows."

"Good egg!"

All the juniors were ready for tea, and they soon had the stuff for the picnic ashore. A little gully, well screened by rocks, was found, and the cloth was laid on a flat slab of rock. Harry Wharton fished out the little kettle and spirit-stove, and it was then he discovered he had no matches—neither had the others.

"Well, what a rotten sell!" grumbled Bob Cherry. "Water, milk, sugar, and coffee—and no blessed matches! Isn't that the limit?"

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"We'll have to make the best with water and milk," grinned Harry Wharton. "There's plenty of grub, anyway. Why grouse?"

There was plenty of grub—sandwiches, cakes, sardines, and biscuits—plenty to go round; and the Famous Five and Walter Grahame were soon making it less plentiful.

"Not so bad, after all," grinned Harry Wharton, looking at the Council school-boy. "We'll finish shifting this lot, and then start hunting for that spook of yours, old man."

"If you'll take my tip—" Grahame was beginning soberly, when he stopped abruptly and a scared look spread over his face.

To the ears of the boys there sounded heavy footsteps—the scrape of hob-nailed boots on the rocky pathway. In a flash Harry Wharton was on his feet, and peering out through the screen of rocks. Then he started.

Walking down from the haunted hut was a man—a burly, ugly individual, wearing a ragged fisherman's jersey.

"All serene—it's no spook!" grinned Harry, as the other joined him. "I thought you said no fisherman ever set foot here, Grahame?"

"Phew!" whistled Grahame softly. "Charlie Pengelly, by Jove! What on earth's he doing here—no good, I'll bet! Keep out of sight, you chaps."

"You know him, then?" whispered Harry.

"Yes; he's the worst character and waster in Pegg village," breathed Grahame. "I don't like this, you chaps. What—"

He broke off abruptly. Without warning, the fisherman on the pathway had jumped to one side, and crouched down behind a mass of rock, his eyes fixed out to sea.

The next moment the watching boys saw why. Round the rocky corner of the islet a sailing boat came into view, hugging the rocky coast dangerously close. To the juniors' ears came the ring of youthful voices.

"The giddy pirates of Pegg!" chuckled Bob Cherry softly. "Hark to Dicky Trumper. He's trying to persuade his pals to land here."

"And his pals aren't having any!" grinned Johnny Bull. "Jove! Look at that merchant's chivvy!"

The face of the man hiding behind the rock was looking ugly now, and his eyes glittered as they watched the oncoming boat. Then quite suddenly a look of deep relief came over the coarse, savage features of Charlie Pengelly. And Harry Wharton & Co. grinned their relief as they saw the reason.

Evidently the cheery skipper of the "pirate" craft had been overruled by his men, for the Swallow suddenly changed its course and went heeling over on a fresh tack towards the mainland.

"They've funk'd it!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "Poor old Dicky Trumper! I guess he's feeling sore now. Hallo, that queer merchant's moving!"

As the Swallow vanished round the island the fisherman emerged from hiding and stepped down to the water's edge. The juniors saw something then that they had missed until now—a dinghy moored to a jutting rock in a sheltered channel hard by the little jetty.

The burly man dropped into the dinghy, and when he sprang ashore again he had a parcel under his arm. Without a glance round him he started to return up the pathway.

"Now's our chance to get a match," grinned Bob Cherry. "Shall we stop this chap and ask for one?"

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THE THIRD CHAPTER.

More Mystery!

WALTER GRAHAME gripped Bob Cherry's arm.

"Don't let him see you!" he hissed warningly. "That brute's a rough customer, and if he's up to no good we'll have our hands full. I know the rotter!"

"Yes; let the ugly beggar go," agreed Harry in a whisper. "We don't want trouble with a chap like that. He's up to no good or he wouldn't have been so scared of those kids landing or seeing him. Quiet!"

As still as mice the boys watched as the man passed their hiding-place and went on towards the gloomy shanty. He reached the doorway and vanished into the shadowy interior.

"That chap doesn't seem to be afraid of spooks, anyway!" grinned Bob Cherry.

Walter Grahame stared uneasily towards the haunted hut.

"I vote we clear out of this, for all that," he said quietly. "The place gives me the pip, and I don't like—"

"No reason why we should," exclaimed Harry Wharton. "We needn't go near that chap. Anyway, let's finish tea first."

They dropped down into the hollow again, but all seemed to have lost their appetites, and they ate little. The eerie silence, and the deep air of mystery that hung over the island was getting on their nerves.

They finished at last, and were about to carry the spirit-stove and utensils to the boat when Harry Wharton gave a warning hiss as once again they heard the sound of footsteps descending the rocky path.

In a flash the juniors were peering out from cover again.

It was Charlie Pengelly, and the burly fisherman was empty-handed. He came clattering down the path, and, reaching the dinghy, he sprang into it and grasped the oars.

A moment later he was edging the unwieldy craft out of the tiny, rocky channel. Standing up in the boat, he paddled it stern foremost out into open water, and then he seated himself and began to pull with powerful strokes.

In less than a minute the dinghy had vanished round the islet in the direction of the mainland.

"Oh, good!" breathed Harry Wharton in relief. "I'm glad to see the back of that sneaky merchant. Now we can explore the island at our leisure, you chaps. It's early yet—"

"Let's clear out!" muttered Grahame.

"Still funky of spooks?" grinned Bob Cherry. "Hark to the bold, bad pirate!"

"We're going to look into this!" said Harry grimly. "I'm no end keen to see that parcel that chap was carrying. He hadn't got it when he came back. Come on! You can stay behind if you funk it, Grahame."

"I'm coming," said Walter Grahame, flushing.

And he went—though with obvious unwillingness. In a moment they had reached the path, and were walking boldly towards the shanty. The sun was clear of the clouds now, and in the bright sunlight the place did not look half so forbidding.

But as they went on Harry Wharton suddenly stopped short and gripped Bob Cherry by the arm almost unconsciously.

"Did—did you chaps see that—at the window?" he breathed. "There's somebody still there—"

"I saw something, too," muttered Nugent uneasily. "It—it looked like a face!"

"I believe I saw something more," whispered Grahame, his face scared. "I—I told you fellows—"

"Oh, rot!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, his brow wrinkled. "There's somebody there; but we're six. If there's trouble—Come on!"

Harry broke off impatiently, and led the way, his eyes fixed suspiciously on the small, grimy window of the haunted hut. But he saw nothing more, and a moment later they reached the door.

Harry kicked it open and marched boldly inside.

Save for the six juniors, the hut was empty. It was a single-roomed shanty, and, but for a dirty table and an empty, dusty box near, it was bare of furniture.

Harry's chums crowded in after him, and then they looked at each other blankly.

"Well, my hat!" breathed Frank Nugent. "I'd swear I saw someone at the window. I saw something move, anyway."

"Perhaps the sun shining on the glass of the window?" suggested Bob Cherry, serious for once, "or else you dreamed it."

"I saw it, too," said Harry Wharton with conviction. "It—it's queer. And where's that parcel that chap Pengelly brought here?"

"Great pip!"

The juniors looked at each other queerly as Harry reminded them of that. There wasn't a sign of a parcel anywhere! But there were signs of Charlie Pengelly's visit there still. The air of the room was still redolent of tobacco and spirits. On the dirty table were fresh crumbs and wet stains—the marks of a bottle and glasses that had stood upon it recently.

Then Frank Nugent discovered something else. On the wooden floor cigarette-ends were scattered—cork-tipped cigarette-ends!

This last discovery bewildered the juniors most of all.

"Pengelly smokes a clay pipe," muttered Walter Grahame. "He's not the chap to smoke cork-tipped cigarettes. This beats the band!"

It was certainly more than strange. They had been puzzled to account for Pengelly's presence on the island—especially as it was reputed to be haunted, and no local fishermen ever ventured there. They wondered what the disreputable fellow was up to there.

But there was nothing mysterious about that, really. What was mysterious was the disappearance of the parcel—the problem of the cigarette-ends. And Harry, Frank, and Grahame were still convinced that they had seen something at the window.

What did it mean?

"It's all rot, of course, about spooks," exclaimed Harry Wharton, wrinkling his brows thoughtfully. "But there's something queer going on here, you chaps. It beats me. I vote we have a jolly good hunt round the place."

"Let's clear out," muttered Walter Grahame uneasily. "I've had enough of this show."

"The esteemed Walter is rightfully wise," murmured Hurree Singh, who was looking far from comfortable. "Let us do the quickful clear, my chums."

"What rot!" said Bob Cherry, his eyes gleaming. "Let's get to the bottom of this, you chaps. Spooks be blowed!"

Frank Nugent and Johnny Bull were as keen to explore as Harry and Bob; and Hurree Singh and Walter Grahame were overruled.

They left the wretched hovel and started the search eagerly. But they found little. Twenty yards from the hut was a much smaller lean-to shanty, built like the bigger hut sheer against the rocky wall; but, unlike the fisherman's cabin, which was boarded at the back, its rear wall was composed of the bare rock only.

Inside was a pile of rusty hooks and a heap of rotted nets. That was all.

Outside the shanty, some yards away, a spring of clear, fresh water bubbled out over the rocks, and close by was an old rusty bucket.

And that was all they did find. The juniors searched every inch of the island after that, poking into crannies and clefts in the rock, and even climbing the pinnacle. But they gave it up at last. The mystery of Shark's Tooth—if it was a mystery—was beyond them.

"No good hanging about any longer," said Harry Wharton, glancing about him, with a slight shiver. "I'm feeling a bit fed-up with the show myself now. Let's go!"

The gloomy island was certainly not a cheery place to linger on, and even the irrepressible Bob Cherry had lost his high spirits and wanted to get away. Walter Grahame and Hurree Singh made no attempt to hide their fear of the place, and a move was made for the boat without delay.

All that remained of the picnic was packed up, and in a very few minutes the boat was threading its way carefully between the treacherous rocks.

There was no sign of the Swallow to be seen, and once clear of the desolate island the spirits of the juniors rose quickly.

"It's been a bit of excitement, anyway," said Harry, as he shook out the sheet. "I wish we could have found out what's going on there, though. It beats me!"

"We'll come again!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"You won't catch me coming," said Walter Grahame briefly. "Blow the mystery! I've had enough."

The juniors chuckled, but Walter Grahame did not laugh. Despite his statement that he had had enough of the mystery, it was plain that he was still disturbed in his mind concerning it.

Harry Wharton was also looking thoughtful, and he did not speak again until the skimming boat was well beyond the Shoulder. Then, as the little fishing-village of Pegg, nestling in a hollow in the cliffs, came into sight, he grinned across at Walter Grahame.

"We'll drop you off at the jetty, if you like, Grahame," he said. "You ought to think yourself jolly lucky, old son. We don't often treat prisoners of war like this, you know."

"Not much!" said Bob Cherry grimly.

"Let's hope he'll remember it if one of us has the luck to fall into the enemy's hands," said Harry Wharton, laughing.

"I'll remember!" grinned Walter Grahame. "Hallo! Here's the jolly old jetty! Cheerio, you chaps!"

The boat touched the jetty, and the Council School boy sprang out, still grinning.

But his grin quickly faded.

He had scarcely jumped ashore, and Harry was just about to push off, when a tall, hard-featured man strolled up to the edge of the staging.

"You youngsters been along the coast?" he asked carelessly.

"We've just come round the Shoulder," said Harry Wharton.

"Seen anything of a young fellow wandering about along the beach—sandy-haired chap, wearing a blue suit and without a hat?"

"We've been too far out to see any one on the beach," said Harry. "Why?"

"It doesn't matter," said the stranger.

He was turning away when his eyes fell upon Grahame's curious face, and he gave a start.

"Your name's Grahame, isn't it?" he asked curtly.

Grahame nodded.

"Got an elder brother, haven't you—a clerk at Bentley's Engineering Works in Courtfield?"

"Yes," said Walter Grahame, who seemed to recognise the man. "Why?"

"Seen your brother since dinner-time?"

"No," muttered Grahame wonderingly. "He hadn't returned from the office when I left home at noon. But—but—"

"It doesn't matter," said the man again.

And, giving the startled Council School boy a sharp look, the stranger resumed his pacing of the jetty. Grahame stared after him for a moment, and then he turned and set off at a run towards the white cottage where he lived.

"Queer that!" murmured Frank Nugent. "Who is that chap? I—"

"I've seen him somewhere," said Harry Wharton, frowning. "In Courtfield, I think. I wonder— Anyway, let's get home now; it's not our business."

But as the light boat glided away towards the school landing-stage, Harry Wharton's face was looking more thoughtful than ever. And it was not of the mystery of Shark's Tooth that he was thinking.

Certainly the incident that had just taken place seemed innocent enough—the questions the stranger had asked appeared to be innocent, at all events. But Harry had not failed to note the grim and significant meaning underlying them.

Who was the stranger? And why had he asked those questions about Walter Grahame's brother?

Harry Wharton wondered.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Stranger Again!

"BEASTS!"

That was the greeting the Famous Five received when they arrived back at Greyfriars and entered the School House. And it came from the lips of Billy Bunter of the Remove.



Dick Trumper took a flying leap for the Greyfriars boat. He was followed by Walter Grahame. The latter fell sprawling in the boat, and Johnny Bill pounced upon him in a flash. Dick Trumper was scarcely as lucky. His feet touched the gunwale of the Famous Five's boat, and Harry Wharton's boathook took him gently in the ribs. Splash! The leader of the Council School boys fell backwards into the sparkling sea. "Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Removites. (See Chapter 2.)

Billy Bunter met them in the Remove passage, and he gave them a glare that bade fair to crack his round spectacles into splinters.

"Beasts!" he repeated indignantly as the juniors grinned at him. "I waited nearly all the blessed afternoon at the boathouse for you, you beasts!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You were pulling my leg, you rotters!" hooted Billy Bunter. "You said you were going on the river, and you never went near it. Beasts!"

"Poor old Billy!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "You shouldn't jump to conclusions, old nut. We merely said we were going to get a boat out, didn't we?"

"Beasts! You jolly well led me—Yarrough! Leggo!"

Billy Bunter howled as Bob Cherry's finger and thumb gripped a fat ear.

"There's a little too much of the beast about you, old top!" said Bob Cherry grimly. "You've got a bit heated, Billy. Sit down and cool off a bit."

Bump!

Billy Bunter sat down. He could not help himself. Bob Cherry had curled his leg behind the Owl's fat knee and pushed. And as he went down with a yell, something fluttered from his pocket on to the floor.

It was a letter, and as Harry Wharton stooped, smiling, to pick it up, his eye caught the inscription on the envelope. Then he jumped. The name was "Harry Wharton," and it was written in the well-known hand of Clara Trevlyn, their girl-chum of Cliff House School.

"Why, that's for me!" he gasped, snatching up the letter. "You fat frog! M-my hat!"

With an angry exclamation Harry Wharton tore open the letter and read it.

"Well, you fat rotter," he breathed, glaring down at the alarmed Billy Bunter, "what are you doing with this? It's for me, and I should have got it at noon. You—you—"

"Oh crumbs!" faltered Billy Bunter, blinking up at the letter. "I—I say, you fellows, it wasn't my fault!"

"What?"

"I forgot all about it!" groaned Billy Bunter, blinking up apprehensively at the wrathful Wharton. "It was handed me at the gates just after dinner, and I hunted for you fellows everywhere. Then I spotted you at the gates with that grub, and—and the note clean slipped my memory, you know. I say, it wasn't my fault, honest injun!"

The others had read the note by now, and they fairly glowered at Billy Bunter.

For the letter read as follows:

"Dear Harry Wharton,—Can you and your chums come to tea with us this afternoon at four? It is Marjorie's birthday, and we're having a spread. If you cannot come, please telephone before that time.—Yours sincerely,

"CLARA TREVLYN."

"You—you fat idiot!" roared Bob Cherry. "You've done us out of a ripping afternoon, blow it!"

"That's not the point," said Harry, his face angry. "What on earth will the girls think of us? They wouldn't get a phone message, and they'd think we were coming. They'd hold up tea for us, I suppose. It—it's too thick! I've a jolly good mind to boot you along the passage, Bunter."

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"And I will," roared Bob Cherry warmly. "You fat—"

But Bunter hadn't waited to be booted. He had anticipated such a proceeding, and he sprang to his feet like a jack-in-a-box, and flew for his life, just escaping Bob Cherry's boot as he went.

"Well, that's the limit!" grunted Johnny Bull. "Hadn't we better phone and explain, Harry?"

"Can't explain very well by phone!" growled Harry Wharton, in disgust. "Look here, you chaps! We'd better trot over and see them. It's early yet, and we'll get back easily before lock-up."

The rest of the Famous Five agreed willingly enough. They were furious at the thought that their girl chums at Cliff House would think them too churlish and rude not to have even acknowledged the invitation, innocent as they were in the matter.

Without even visiting the end study, they hurried out of doors and across the quadrangle.

"We'd better take the Cliff Road, and then cut across the fields," said Harry. "It'll be a jolly nice walk, anyway."

They started out seawards once again, and very soon were treading the crisp, spongy turf of the cliff path. It was very pleasant up on the breezy cliff top, and they felt glad they had started, though they felt none too happy at thoughts of their errand.

But as it happened, the Famous Five were not fated to get the chance of explaining things to their girl chums that evening.

Just as the chums were about to turn from the cliff path on to the well-worn path across the heath to Cliff House, Harry Wharton halted. To his ears had come the faint crunch of feet on the pebbly beach below them.

The spot was about half-way between Greyfriars and Pegg village, and was a lonely one. Moreover, the sands just there were none too safe, especially to strangers.

Curious to know who was down there, Harry stepped to the edge of the cliff and peered over. Then he grinned, and his face cleared.

"Who is it?" asked Bob Cherry, joining his chum. "If it's a stranger we'd better warn—"

"Only Wally Grahame," said Harry. "He knows every inch of the beach. All serene. I thought it might be a stranger, who didn't know the place."

"Looks as if he's taking home somebody's washing," grinned Bob Cherry. "Watch me make him jump! I'll drop this on his napper."

As he spoke Bob stooped and tore up a strip of soft turf. He was about to pitch it below, when Harry suddenly grabbed his arm.

"Hold on, Bob!" he whispered tensely, staring down at the beach. "Look! Who's that following Grahame?"

The others saw what Harry had seen now—the figure of a man skulking along the beach some fifty yards behind Grahame, and obviously tracking the Council School boy.

"I don't like the look of this, you fellows," muttered Harry. "See who that chap is?"

"The chap who spoke to us at the Pegg Jetty this afternoon," breathed Frank Nugent.

"Yes; it is," said Harry. "And—and I've just recollected where I've seen the chap before, you fellows. It was in Courtfield. He was in uniform. He's a sergeant of police at Courtfield."

"Phew!"

The juniors whistled, and stared down

with added interest at the scene below—a significant scene to them now. All unconscious that he was being followed, Walter Grahame was stumbling along, a bulky, hefty-looking parcel in his arms—the parcel which Bob had referred to as "somebody's washing."

And then, quite suddenly, Walter Grahame turned off at a tangent, and, walking quickly towards the cliff below them, he vanished from their sight.

But the juniors knew where he had gone. The cliff at that spot was literally honeycombed with caves, and his sudden disappearance from view did not amaze them, though it surprised them.

But it did amaze the man behind. He was staggered for a moment. He stopped dead in his tracks, and then quite abruptly—as if he feared losing his quarry—he started to run forward.

What took place next happened so quickly that the watching juniors only grasped it when too late.

Instead of following directly in his quarry's tracks, the man started across the sands at a tangent from where he stood.

"Look out!" yelled Harry Wharton, his voice thrilling with sudden dread. "Oh, look out! Stop!"

But Harry's frantic warning came too late.

The man sped across a strip of pebbly beach, and then he came to a patch of wet-looking sand. It looked harmless enough to a stranger; to the juniors it was a spot of deadly peril.

As if he had suddenly struck a huge patch of glue, the man stumbled, staggered a step, and then went down headlong on his knees. He struggled desperately to rise. He got to his feet, obviously bewildered.

For an instant he stood still, and then he seemed suddenly to become aware of his terrible danger as he felt the remorseless, hungry, dragging of the quaking sand round his feet. Madly, desperately, he strove to wrench his feet from the clinging, sucking ooze.

"He's in! He's done, unless we're quick!" shouted Harry hoarsely. "He's in a quicksand! Come on!"

"Don't struggle, man!" bawled Bob Cherry with all his might. "Keep quiet! Keep your head!"

But the man did not heed—even if he heard. The treacherous, horrible sands were dragging him down. His knees were already covered. He had obviously quite lost his head in his frantic terror. He wrenched and struggled madly, and then, as if he realised the uselessness of that, he yelled in frantic fear.

"Help! Oh, help!"

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Grahame's Brother!

"HOLD on!" roared Harry Wharton. "Coming!"

He was already running, with his chums at his heels. It was not far to the rocky path leading down to the beach, but even as he ran Harry knew in his heart that they could never get down there in time to be of aid. The unfortunate man was still yelling, and the frantic horror in his voice sent a chill to their hearts.

And they certainly would have been too late! Harry knew it as he clattered pell-mell down the dangerous, twisting pathway at a perilous pace, and came once more in sight of the man.

He was already submerged up to the armpits, and the juniors had fifty yards of pebbly beach to cover yet!

But, happily, someone was before them.



Eager to aid, the Famous Five got a grip on the blanket wherever they could. Then they pulled—pulled desperately. Alone the stranger could never have achieved his task. But the combined weight of the juniors told at last. Slowly the horrible quicksand gave up its victims with a queer sucking sound. (See Chapter 5.)

It was young Walter Grahame. He had evidently heard the man's terrified cries, and he was running back across the sands even as the juniors reached the beach.

The boy reached the edge of the firm sand, and without hesitation he wrenched off his coat and flung it outwards, retaining a grip of one end of the garment as he did so.

The man was quiet now. He had evidently recovered his nerve, for he had ceased to shout and struggle, and had stretched out his arms horizontally, checking the down pull slightly.

But as the coat slapped within his reach, he clutched at it desperately. His grip closed upon it, and held—more than held—for the sudden wrench jerked Walter Grahame clean off his feet, and he sprawled helplessly forward on his face in the horrible, glutinous mud.

A cry of fear escaped the boy—an involuntary cry which was followed by a shout as another figure came racing madly across the beach from the farther cliffs, twisting something into a rope as he ran.

He was a tall, sandy-haired young man, bareheaded, and wearing a dark, blue sergo suit. He pulled up short on the edge of the firm sand, flung the improvised rope—it proved to be a twisted blanket—and threw it across the patch of treacherous sand.

The man had already released his grip of the jacket—it was useless now—and his grasp closed on the end of the rope. And only just in time, for only his head and arms were visible now.

At the same moment Walter Grahame, firmly in the sucking grasp of the quicksand himself now, flung a frantic arm over the improvised rope.

"Hold fast—hold fast for your lives!" panted the stranger.

He braced himself, and it was at that critical moment that the Famous Five came pounding up.

They rounded the ugly patch of ooze with a rush, and, jumping to the stranger's side, Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry got a grip of the blanket. Eager to aid, Frank Nugent, Johnny

Bull, and Hurree Singh got a grip where they could—of the rope, of their chums' bodies and clothes.

Then they pulled—pulled desperately. Alone, the stranger could never have done it. Together, their combined weight and strength accomplished the task, and happily the blanket held.

It was pull devil, pull baker for a matter of seconds, but slowly the horrible stuff gave up its victims with a queer sucking sound, and, in turn, first Walter Grahame and then the tall man dropped sprawling on the firm sand, safe but speechless and exhausted, their clothes covered with the slimy, glutinous mud.

They lay where they had fallen, gasping and panting, and utterly spent, and while they lay there the sandy-haired youth did something which left the Famous Five speechless with surprise.

He stooped and whispered something to Walter Grahame, and then he went speeding across the beach like the wind, and vanished round a rocky bulge in the cliffs.

"Well, my hat!" panted Harry Wharton. "What—"

He broke off as the rescued man staggered to his feet, and, turning swiftly, stared after the fleeing youth. At the same moment Walter Grahame rose also, and stood swaying, his hand on Bob Cherry's shoulder.

His face was white, and he eyed the man with glittering eyes. It almost seemed as though he contemplated attacking the fellow.

The man turned abruptly, and as he met Walter Grahame's glance his face went grim.

"I've got to thank your brother and yourself for my life!" he exclaimed.

"That was your brother, of course?"

Walter Grahame said nothing, but his look was full of bitter hate. The rescued man placed a hand on his shoulder.

"You risked your lives to save me, youngsters," he said. "And you knew—you both must have known—what I'm doing here. It—it makes things hard for me, kid. I'm only sorry things are as they are. But I sha'n't forget. When

the time comes what he's just done will weigh heavily in his favour. I'll see to that."

He gave the staring juniors a few gruff words of thanks, and after Harry had pointed out the path up the cliffs he hurried away, his wet and clammy clothes clinging to him as he ran.

The juniors looked curiously at Grahame, who was staring after the man. Knowing who the tall stranger was now, they could scarcely help guessing something of the truth. But though they longed to question the boy, they felt it kinder to refrain.

"You'd better cut off home, too, Grahame!" exclaimed Harry quickly, as he noticed that the boy's teeth were chattering. "Run home and get your things—Why, what's the matter with your foot?"

"It—it's all right," muttered Grahame, through his teeth. "I gave my foot a twist when I went down. It—it's not much, though. I'm all right. You—you fellows needn't bother to wait. I—I'd rather you didn't."

"But—but we can't leave you like this, Grahame," said Harry quietly. "Look here, we—we don't want to barge in—it isn't our business—but we know you're in trouble, old man. If we can help you in any way—"

He broke off awkwardly.

"You fellows can't help. You would if you could, I know," said Walter. "You—you know what this means. You know what's happened?"

"We know nothing," said Harry. "except that the chap we've just rescued is a police-officer, and we guess that he's after your brother."

"That's true," said Grahame, gritting his teeth. "He must have followed me from Pegg, followed me to find out where my brother is hiding."

"But—but—"

"I'll tell you what the trouble is," said Walter Grahame thickly. "You'll know soon enough, in any case. They're after my brother for theft—the theft of over a thousand pounds, the wages of

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the men at Bentley's Engineering Works."

"Phew!"

"I guessed something was seriously wrong when that chap asked those questions at the jetty this afternoon," went on Grahame. "And I rushed home. I found my mother crying. She soon told me what was wrong. My brother works in the office at Bentley's. He had a good job. He's assistant to a chap named Hunt, the cashier. Every Saturday morning it's their job to go to the bank in Courtfield for the wages together."

Walter Grahame paused. The juniors thought they could guess something of what was coming.

"They went as usual this morning," continued the boy, "and after handing over the cheque, as usual, they started back with the cash—a bit over a thousand it was—in a taxi together. They'd hardly left the bank when Hunt, the rotter, started talking to Dick, asked him to bolt with him and the money."

"My hat!" breathed Harry Wharton. "And your brother—"

"Refused, of course!" snapped Walter. "Then Hunt laughed it off, pretended he was joking, and, after a while, offered Dick a cigarette. Like a fool my brother took it. It was drugged. When Dick came round he found himself lying in a ditch outside Courtfield. The taxi had vanished, so had Hunt with the bag of money."

"So—so that's it?" gasped Bob Cherry. "But, hang it all, didn't your brother tell what—"

"He went straight to the police and told them, yes," said Grahame savagely. "But they wouldn't believe the story. He could see they suspected he was in league with that brute Hunt. The firm wouldn't take his explanation, either. They let him come home, though. He got home at about three. At half-past three that chap—Sergeant Mills—came for him."

"Oh!"

"Then my brother played the goat again," muttered Grahame bitterly. "He saw the sergeant outside, and he was terrified. He lost his head and bolted out of the back door; didn't even stop for his hat. The sergeant spotted him, and chased him down here."

The juniors' eyes went involuntarily in the direction of the rocky bluff, behind which Grahame's brother had vanished. Walter saw the movement, and laughed mirthlessly.

"I might as well tell you fellows the rest," he said grimly. "I know you've guessed where he's hiding, and I know I can trust you not to give him away, Wharton. He's hiding in the caves round the bend—in the Black Cavern. I guessed that, and I rushed here at once. I saw Dick. He told me all about it. He wouldn't listen to me. He vowed he wasn't going to prison, and he vowed he'd never let them catch him. Then I hurried back home. I got some grub and blankets, and—well, you know the rest. That chap followed me."

There was a silence. Then Harry Wharton spoke.

"He—he's bound to be caught, Grahame," he muttered. "If this man doesn't know the caves they'll soon find someone to show them. He won't be safe there, I'm afraid."

"I know—I know that," said Grahame, despair in his voice. "And yet," he added, staring down bitterly at his ankle, "if this hadn't happened to-night he would have been safe. He might have got the chance to get on Hunt's

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track, to clear himself. Oh, what awful luck!"

"What—what do you mean, Grahame?" breathed Harry.

"I mean—" Grahame was beginning bitterly, when he stopped and his eyes gleamed strangely as he gripped Harry by the arm.

"Wharton," he said tensely, "you offered just now to help me. Would you help me now you know the truth?"

"Gladly, if I could," said Harry eagerly; and his chums nodded.

"Would you help me if it was against the law?" insisted the Council School boy through his teeth.

Harry Wharton was silent a moment. The rest of the Famous Five shifted uncomfortably.

"I—I don't know," said Harry slowly, glancing at his chums. "It all depends on what you want us to do, Grahame."

"I'm going to ask you, anyway," said Grahame doggedly. "I ought not to do, but I'm desperate. I'm crooked, and can't do it myself. If you refuse, I can't blame you. But I'm going to ask."

"Well?"

"Will you fellows come here, or get someone to come here, with a boat to-night, Wharton, to take my brother across at dark to the Shark's Tooth and land him there? That's all!"

"The—the Shark's Tooth?" ejaculated Wharton. "I—I see. You think he'd be safe there? Well, he—he might. But—"

"He might—yes," agreed Grahame grimly. "But that's not the only reason for his going there, Wharton. Listen! You fellows remember what happened this afternoon. You saw! You wondered what the mystery was. I did also, until I heard my brother's story this afternoon."

"Go on!" breathed Bob Cherry.

"I remembered several things then. Why they came to me I can't tell, nor why I connected the two affairs. But I suddenly remembered that Hunt, the cashier, was thick with Charlie Pengelly. They always went fishing together. I saw them together two nights ago in Pegg. I—I began to think then. I told my brother."

"I think I see what you're driving at," said Harry Wharton in a tone thrilling with excitement.

"I remembered also," said Grahame, "that there's a secret hiding-place on Shark's Tooth. I'd clean forgotten that. My father used to tell us so. Nobody's found it, unless Crazy Joe did. And"—added Walter slowly—"unless Charlie Pengelly did."

"Oh!"

"Then my brother told me something else. When I told about the cork-tipped cigarettes we found in the hut, he fairly jumped. He told me that Hunt never smoked any other kind. Now do you see?"

"You—you think—"

"I'm certain; I'm certain that Hunt bolted there with the cash. He was rowed over by Pengelly. He was there all the time we were there. You remember we saw something? He saw us coming and hid."

"Great Scott!"

"He's there now," said Grahame, gritting his teeth. "But he may not be there to-morrow. Pengelly—the scoundrel—has a boat—a seaworthy fishing-boat. Don't you see the plan? He knows the Channel like a book. He'll run that brute Hunt across to France—perhaps to-night. He'll never be caught then. My brother—don't you

fellows see why my brother must go to-night to catch the brute before it's too late?"

Harry Wharton nodded, his brow troubled. It was certainly a sound theory to account for those queer incidents on the Shark's Tooth; it was more than possible that it was true. But—

"Why don't you tell the police your suspicions?" he said quickly. "They'd soon search the island—"

"We're not risking it!" vowed Grahame. "They'd only bungle the job, for one thing, even if they believed the yarn. And—well, my brother can't stay in those caves. They know he's there; we've got to find another hiding-place. If—if there's nothing in our suspicions, then we couldn't find a safer place than the Shark's Tooth."

"That's so," agreed Harry uncomfortably. "And—and you want us to row him over there after dark to-night?"

"If you would—if you only would," said Walter Grahame, his voice trembling with eagerness. "I'd never forget it, you fellows. My brother's innocent; I swear he's innocent! You—you'd be helping an innocent man to save his honour, you fellows!"

"If I thought he was guilty," said Harry grimly, "I wouldn't consider the idea for a moment, Grahame. But—but the—"

He paused, and eyed his chums uneasily—questioningly.

"Why not?" breathed Bob Cherry. "We've been up against the bobbies before, Harry."

"I'm game, anyway," said Johnny Bull bluntly.

"I don't like it," muttered Harry, after a pause. "We'd be running a big risk, too; we'd have to break bounds, of course. But—but we might do it."

"You—you'll do it?" breathed Grahame.

"Yes; we'll do it, Grahame," said Harry, with sudden decision. "After all, though we'd be working against the law, we'd also be trying to aid the cause of justice. Yes, we'll do it!"

"Oh, good!" breathed Grahame thankfully. "You—you fellows are good sorts. I—I—"

"We'd better see your brother first, though!" snapped Harry. Now he had made his decision, he put all doubts and fear behind him. "We'd better tell him what—"

"No; don't do that!" said Grahame, with an alarmed glance up at the frowning cliffs above them. "The police—they may be watching us even now. Leave him; he knows you fellows, and he'll do what you tell him. And—and then—"

His voice weakened; he swayed, and would have fallen had not Harry grasped him. Now his anxiety was allayed, now the excitement of telling his story had left him, a wave of weakness and pain swept over him. His face was white as death, and he shivered in every limb.

"Hold up," said Harry Wharton kindly. "We'd better see you home, Grahame. You've no need to worry now, old man; we'll see to your brother. We'll have to postpone our visit to Cliff House, you fellows. Come on!"

They started along the beach slowly. Grahame could scarcely hobble along, and they had to half carry, half support him all the way to Pegg. It was a trying journey for all, but they reached his home at last, and saw him safely inside. Then they started back for Greyfriars at a brisk trot.

It was dusk when they arrived at the old school, and long past calling-over. But the thought of trouble with Mr.

Quelch did not worry them much. They realised they were about to risk far bigger trouble before morning. They were beginning to realise now the full seriousness of what they contemplated doing.

But they did not falter. They had given their promise to the Council School boy, and they meant to keep their word. And they hoped for the best.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Billy Bunter on the Trail!

BILLY BUNTER of the Remove gave a violent start.

The fattest, greediest, and most curious busybody in all Greyfriars was lying in his bed in the Remove dormitory.

But Bunter was not asleep; he only wished that he could get to sleep. The fact was that Billy Bunter was writhing in the throes of an acute attack of indigestion. In such circumstances, slumber—even to Billy Bunter—was an impossibility.

Billy Bunter did not often get indigestion; he had the digestive powers of an ostrich. But for once Billy Bunter had overdone things.

After waiting in growing surprise and wrath for fully an hour at the boat-house on the Sark that afternoon for the Famous Five—who never came—Billy Bunter had returned to Greyfriars, furious and hungry.

He had proceeded at once to Study No. 1, intending to tell the Famous Five a few home-truths—or what were to Bunter home-truths! He had found that famous study empty and at his mercy.

On entering the study Bunter had found there a particularly well-stocked cupboard; on leaving it he had left behind a cupboard particularly ill-stocked. He had practically cleared the cupboard to the last crumb of cake and the last sardine.

As yet the Famous Five had not found it out; at least, they had not mentioned the matter to him. Bunter was rather surprised at that. And he had gone to bed that evening congratulating himself upon the fact.

But he was suffering for his wickedness now—not at the hands of the Famous Five, but at the hands, as it were, of his abused digestive organs. And Billy Bunter had just arrived at the stage of wishing from the bottom of his heart that he had not been quite so greedy, when something had happened to make him forget his troubles in a violent start of surprise.

Up to that moment Billy Bunter had believed that, save for his unlucky self, the whole dormitory had been deep in slumber; he had envied his sleeping schoolfellows. He had heard no sound, nor seen any movement.

And then quite suddenly he had heard a soft whisper, and had seen five dim figures sit up in bed and slip softly on to the floor and begin to dress.

In the dim moonlight from the tall windows, Billy Bunter fairly blinked at them.

He could not recognise the forms, but he knew from the beds that they were Harry Wharton, Bob Cherry, Frank Nugent, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Singh. In silence they dressed like ghosts, and then Bunter heard something that made him more wide-awake than ever.

"Quiet!" whispered Harry Wharton. "Better shove on all the clothes you can; you fellows—we'll want 'em. Wait for me at the box-room, and I'll slip along to the study for the grub and things."

Grub!

Something more than intense curiosity was aroused in Bunter now. Strangely enough, he felt no pangs of indigestion; more strange still, the very word "grub" had actually made him feel hungry again.

"So—so it's a feed!" breathed Bunter.

He watched motionless as the five ghostly forms finished dressing, and, without a sound, filed out of the room. Then he slid out of bed and began to dress with frantic haste. He remembered Wharton's warning concerning clothes, and pulled his suit on over his pyjamas.

Then he left the dormitory, his spectacles jammed on his fat little nose, his eyes blinking through them determinedly. He made his way along the silent passages at last, outside the lower box-room door.

From within the room came the murmur of voices, and suddenly remembering Wharton's task he stepped in the shelter of a doorway opposite.

He had scarcely done so when the dim figure of Wharton came along and passed into the room. There came a sound of a window opening, followed by silence.

Bunter hurried into the room and shoved on his boots at top speed, and a couple of minutes later he was out in the moonlit quad, with the night breeze blowing chill on his fat face.

Then Bunter got the first of many surprises that night. He had naturally supposed that the "feed" was to take place in the precincts of the school—in the woodshed probably! That the trail

would lead down to the seashore he had never dreamed.

But it did. And ten minutes after leaving Greyfriars the Paul Pry of Greyfriars found himself crouching behind a boulder on the beach. A few yards away, dimly visible in the moonlight, the Famous Five were busying themselves round one of the school boats.

Bunter's eyes were gleaming now. He was burning with curiosity. He knew that something big was "on." When something big was "on," Billy Bunter usually contrived to be "in it." He was determined to be in it now.

His chance came swiftly.

The discovery that there were no oars in the boat sent Hurree Singh and Nugent racing away along to the next boat to "bag" a pair. And Wharton, Cherry and Bull were standing by the stern with their backs to him!

Bunter saw the chance—and took it.

He was across the intervening space in a flash, his footsteps drowned by the ceaseless splash of the waves. The boat was on its side, and, scrambling into the sloping prow, Bunter snuggled down under a jumbled heap of sail. It was a roomy boat, and Bunter chuckled softly as he made himself comfortable. Once afloat he did not fear discovery. They could scarcely turn him out, and they would not dare to turn nasty—so Bunter thought!

But discovery did not come. He heard the two juniors come back with the oars, and he grinned as he heard the



Billy Bunter remained for a brief moment staring in at the scene. Even as he stood there something happened within the hut. Without warning a whole section of the hut boarding on the opposite wall began to swing outwards. And from the aperture it left came a warm glow of light. Framed in this was the figure of a man. He advanced stealthily and stopped by the side of the sleeping man, his eyes glittering strangely. (See Chapter 7.)

five straining and gasping as they strove to launch the craft.

But they succeeded at last. The boat went dancing out on the moonlit waves, and while Cherry and Bull took the oars, Wharton took the tiller, and they started—little dreaming that they had an unwanted passenger aboard.

It was not a far cry to the caves. And Cherry and Bull put their backs into the task. Like the rest of their chums, they were anxious to get the task done, and to get back to their beds.

They pulled in silence, and scarcely a word was spoken until the keel of the boat grounded on the sandy beach at last. Then Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry sprang out on to the sands.

"Wait, and keep quiet, you fellows," muttered Harry Wharton, glancing quickly up at the frowning cliffs. "We sha'n't be a sec."

With Bob at his heels he ran across the sands to the foot of the cliffs. They felt thankful for the moonlight now; it certainly added to the risk of being seen, but it made their task easier in other ways.

Both juniors knew the caves well enough. They soon found the narrow cleft in the rock that gave access to them, and a moment later were treading a narrow, low tunnel, the light from Harry's torch casting grotesque shadows on the rocky walls.

They emerged abruptly into a large, lofty cavern at last—Black Rock Cavern. And as Harry cast the rays of his light about there came a sudden, startled exclamation in the gloom.

"That—that you, Wally?"

The words were spoken hoarsely—half-expectantly and half-suspiciously. At the same moment a figure appeared in the beam of light. It was Dick Grahame. His face was white and strained. He blinked for a moment helplessly in the dazzling light. Then he seemed to recognise the juniors, and he started violently.

"What—what—" he began.

"It's all right, Grahame," said Harry Wharton swiftly. "We've come in place of your brother. You can trust us—"

"But my brother—where is he?" panted the fugitive.

"He couldn't come—he hurt his ankle when he fell this evening," said Harry, looking about him quickly. "There's no time to explain fully now, Grahame. We took him home, and promised to see you right. We've come to take you to Shark's Tooth."

"To Shark's Tooth—you?" breathed Dick Grahame. "Why should you do this for me? You—you know what you're risking?"

"We know—but we're doing it," said Harry grimly. "You'd better bring these things you've got here—we may not be able to see you for a time. If you're ready, come along!"

The fugitive stared, his lips trembling. He was evidently moved at the thought that the juniors—practically strangers to him—should risk so much for him. Now the juniors saw his face clearly any doubts they had as to his honour went. It was a frank, open face—certainly not the face of a thief!

But it was no time for discussing the matter; the fugitive realised that, and without further words he started to collect his few things together. There were a couple of blankets and a parcel of foodstuffs—the things Walter Grahame had apparently brought him that evening.

Dick Grahame took the parcel, and with the juniors carrying the blankets

they started back along the tunnel. To their relief nothing had happened on the beach, and reaching the waiting boat they tumbled aboard, and Johnny Bull pushed off without a second's delay.

"You'd better let me steer," said Grahame grimly. "It's ticklish work round here, and I know every rock round Shark's Tooth."

He took the tiller from Harry Wharton's hand, and the boat leaped forward towards the dim, ghostly outline of the haunted island.

"You—you're not afraid?" said Harry quietly. "You know what they say—that the island's haunted?"

"I know," said the fugitive grimly. "I know, but I'm not afraid of ghosts. I'm not expecting to meet spooks there; I'm expecting to meet something more solid than spooks, youngster."

His teeth snapped together, and in the moonlight Harry saw his eyes glittering.

No further word was spoken until the little jetty on Shark's Tooth was reached. As the boat touched and grounded they stepped out, and the juniors looked about them with involuntary shivers.

They had half-expected to see a light in the window of the hut against the rocks. But the hut was in darkness—all was still as death, and in the moonlight the place looked more ghostly and forbidding than ever.

Harry Wharton's first thought was of the little channel where the dinghy had lain that afternoon; but a glance showed him that it was not there now.

"Oh, good!" breathed Harry. "Then that brute Pengelly can't be on the island, Grahame."

"I didn't expect him to be," said Grahame. "His home's in Pegg—but—but it may mean that I'm too late—that Hunt and he have risked the moonlight and crossed to-night. Anyway, you fellows had better go back now. I can't tell you kids how grateful I am for what you've done. You've risked trouble enough."

"We're seeing you safe first," said Harry quietly.

"Yes, rather?"

"But—but—"

"We're coming," said Harry crisply. "Better keep in the shadows, and when we get close make a rush for it. Ready?"

Without waiting for further protests Harry started off; and, seeing the juniors were determined, Grahame nodded and followed, his face deeply troubled. They had already taken the parcels the "Co." had brought, and the fugitive's own belongings, from the boat, and a moment later they were working their way cautiously up the path, keeping well in the shadows.

They had scarcely vanished from sight when from the heap of sail in the prow of the craft there emerged the head and shoulders of Billy Bunter.

He blinked about him dazedly for a moment, and then he scrambled ashore, his heart thumping violently against his fat ribs. He was bewildered—utterly at a loss. The few muttered words that had been spoken in the boat had not been grasped by him, but he had recognised a strange voice, and he was staggered.

He hadn't the faintest idea where he was, until he stood on the little staging and looked about him. And then he jumped.

Only once had the fat junior got a good look at the Shark's Tooth, and that was from a boat at a safe distance. But he had heard about it more than once. And as he looked about him now, saw the haunted hut against the rocky wall,

vague and ghostly in the wan moonlight, his hair almost stood on end with sheer fright.

"Oh dear!" he whispered, fairly shaking in every limb.

For an instant he stood still, his fat face white as chalk, and then, terrified at the thought of being left alone in such a spot, he ran, stumbling drunkenly, after the others.

He could not see them, but he could hear the faint ring of their footsteps on the rocks, and he ran on, heedless of discovery now.

And then it happened with startling abruptness. At the best of times the eyesight of the Owl of the Remove was none too good. But in the hazy moonlight, on unknown ground, with pitfalls at every step, it was no wonder he came to grief.

Barely had he run twenty yards when his stumbling feet caught a projecting ridge of rock, and he plunged headlong, with a strangled yelp of alarm—a yelp which was cut short abruptly as his head struck something with stunning force.

He lay where he had fallen, in a little gully, on his back, and a stray shaft of white moonlight fell on his white, still face and closed eyes. He was unconscious.

Ahead of where he lay, Harry Wharton & Co. and Dick Grahame still went on towards the hut. They had not heard that strangled yelp. They would have been more startled had they heard it. They reached to within a few yards of the hut, and then Harry gave the word, and they dashed across the patch of moonlit ground.

But Dick Grahame reached it first. With the others at his heels, he kicked open the door, and as they crowded in Harry shone the light of his torch around the wretched shanty.

It was empty. It looked exactly the same as when they had left the place that afternoon.

"Nothing doing," whispered Bob Cherry. "If that chap Hunt's been here he's gone now."

"I'm afraid we're too late," muttered Dick Grahame, with a note of bitter disappointment in his voice. "Anyway, you fellows had better get back to school now. I shall be comfy enough here—better than in the cave, anyway."

"Your brother spoke about a secret hiding-place here," said Harry Wharton. "Supposing—"

"I've heard there is one; I don't know," said Dick Grahame, with a harsh laugh. "But you've no need to worry about me. If anyone should turn up, I can take care of myself. I shall watch out, you may be sure. I'd much rather you fellows cleared out now, and left me to it."

Harry Wharton hesitated uneasily. In his own mind he felt convinced that the island was untenanted save for themselves. They had thoroughly searched the place that afternoon, and he could not imagine where there could be any hiding-place. And yet he did not like the idea of leaving Dick Grahame alone on the desolate island, well able to take care of himself as he obviously was.

But there seemed nothing else for it, and he nodded at last.

"Very well, Grahame," he muttered. "We'll go now, and we wish you luck. If we can, we'll visit you again to-morrow night. It won't be safe in daylight, of course."

The fugitive thanked the juniors huskily, and they left him, though with many misgivings, and many uneasy glances behind them as they started down to the waiting boat. They passed within

(Continued on page 17.)



Supplement No. 173.

Week Ending May 3rd, 1924.



A Sportsman's Diary!

EXTRACTS from the Chronicles
of
ALONZO TODD.

MONDAY.

Feeling in need of recreation, I went for a gentle walk in the Close. I ambled at a leisurely pace from the School House steps to the tuckshop without feeling unduly fatigued. A glass of lemonade acted as a powerful restorative, and I was able to walk all the way back again! I stayed out-of-doors for quite ten minutes, and would have stayed longer, but a sudden gust of wind blew me into the House.

TUESDAY.

After my strenuous walk of yesterday I took my recreation indoors to-day. I played chess with my cousin Peter, and defeated him by six pawns to nothing. I then played ludo with Bunter, and beat him, despite the fact that he cheated all the way through the game. I then played draughts with Dutton, and utterly demoralised him. I said to him afterwards: "Really, my dear Dutton, you are a shocking player!" Being deaf, however, he thought I said a "topping" player, and fairly purred with pleasure. I was too tired to repeat my remark. After three exhausting games, I considered I had taken my fill of recreation for one day!

WEDNESDAY.

My Uncle Benjamin having informed me that fishing was a splendid recreation for the young, I borrowed a fishing-rod and wended my way to the silvery Sark. Having baited my hook with a plump worm, I cast my line and awaited developments. There weren't any! I could see plenty of fish when I peeped down into the clear water, and they all seemed to be laughing at me. I drew up my line, and behold, the worm had vanished! By some trick, known only to themselves, the fish had eaten the worm without becoming impaled on the hook. So I had to start all over again, and find another worm, and cast my line afresh. For hours and hours I sat and waited, but nothing happened. At last, when I was beginning to despair, I felt a sharp tug,

and the rod was nearly jerked out of my grasp. "A bite!" I cried excitedly, scrambling to my feet. And then a portion of the bank gave way—the very portion on which I was standing—and I was precipitated into the water! On rising to the surface I gave a bubbling cry for help, but none was at hand. I eventually succeeded in scrambling ashore, feeling like a semi-asphyxiated rodent—or, as the vulgar would say, "a half-drowned rat." I squelched my way back to Greyfriars, and resolved never to go fishing again. For once, I am compelled to disagree with my estimable uncle, who declares that fishing is a splendid recreation for the young. It is not; and neither is swimming in clothes!

THURSDAY.

After my harrowing experiences of yesterday, it was only natural that I should refrain from recreation to-day. My immersion in the water having given me a bad cold, I spent my time in swallowing pills and potions, in order to ward off the threatened attacks of influenza, bronchial-pneumonia, and pleurisy!

FRIDAY.

This afternoon my cousin Peter persuaded me to play football. I did so—against my better judgment. After being pushed and charged and hustled and jostled until I was a total wreck I crawled off the battlefield—I can call it by no other name—and I am more convinced than ever that football is the most ruffianly recreation ever invented!

SATURDAY.

I am spending the day on my study sofa, recovering from the terrible injuries I sustained yesterday. I have an abrasion on my shin, and another on my elbow. I have also sprained my kneecap and damaged both my ankles. To-morrow, if it is a nice sunny day, I shall request Peter to hire a bathchair and wheel me up and down the Close. That is the only recreation my feeble frame is able to endure at present!

EDITORIAL!

By HARRY WHARTON.

RECREATION is as necessary as eating and drinking—though I don't suppose Billy Bunter would uphold this view!

By recreation, I do not necessarily mean kicking a football about, or knocking spots off the ball with a cricket-bat. Broadly speaking, recreation means a change of occupation. The brain worker takes his recreation in the form of outdoor exercise. The manual worker reclines on the sofa and buries himself in a book, or perhaps plays chess, or "listens-in" to the latest wireless concerts.

There is lots of recreation to be had at Greyfriars. The fellow who complains of the dullness of public school life has only himself to blame. It is just as dull as he allows it to be. There is always "something doing" in the way of games, concerts, and japes—all of which come under the heading of recreation. Even the constructing of "booby-traps" is a recreation—and a rather exciting one, too!

We recently organised a big ballot at Greyfriars, in order to decide which were the most popular recreations. You may not agree with the result, but this is how it worked out: 1, football; 2, cricket; 3, boxing; 4, swimming; 5, rowing; 6, cycling; 7, tennis; 8, cross-country running; 9, reading; 10, photography; 11, chess; 12, gymnastics.

Quite a healthy-looking list, which shows that the two great national games—football and cricket—are still as popular as ever.

Some of the ballot papers sent in were very amusing. Billy Bunter's, for instance. Bunter's "first six" were as follows: 1, eating; 2, drinking; 3, sleeping; 4, listening-in at study keyholes; 5, cooking; 6, ventriloquism.

We congratulate Billy Bunter upon having told the truth for once! He certainly rates eating and drinking far above football and cricket; and he always enjoys a good sleep more than any fellow in the Form, with the solitary exception of his languid lordship, Mauleverer.

The subject of recreation is a very pleasant one, and our contributors have dealt with it in their usual cheery, not to say boisterous, manner. The football fanatics air their views; also the ludo lovers, and the marbles maniacs, and others whose recreation takes a strange and unusual form.

May this number lighten and brighten your hours of recreation!

HARRY WHARTON.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 847.



Sporting Giants of Greyfriars!

By
GEORGE WINGATE

EVER since the days of "Good Queen, Bess"—and that is going back a good many generations—Greyfriars has been renowned for its sports and sportsmen. In those stirring days cricket was unknown. But a somewhat similar game—known as "stool-ball"—was played. Presumably the wicket consisted of a stool, and it was defended with a stout club. An effort was made a few years ago to revive the ancient game of stool-ball, and a match was actually played on a famous cricket-ground; but neither the players nor the spectators could recapture the old enthusiasm for the game, and I do not think it will ever be revived in earnest.

FOOTBALL, too, was unknown in the days of Raleigh and Drake. But "push-ball" was a very popular pastime. Rival villages used to play against each other, and the entire population would turn out to take part in the match. A huge ball had to be pushed from one village to the other, and a good many players used to get hurt in the process! Fatal injuries were not uncommon; and the ambulance-men—or their equivalent in those days—must have had a busy time. Push-ball was no gentle recreation, such as would have delighted the heart of Alonzo Todd. It was a fearsome and ferocious business—more like a pitched battle than anything else. No wonder one of the Kings of England protested against the game being played, and made it illegal!

GOLF—which is called "the Royal and ancient game"—can boast a long history. So can bowls. The latter game was being played by Sir Francis Drake at the time that the Spanish Armada was sighted. Sir Francis insisted on finishing his game before sailing forth to "finish" the Armada!

It is difficult to picture a Greyfriars without cricket and football; but the scholars of those days found excellent substitutes for these two popular games. History does not tell us who was the champion stool ball player of the period, or who was the finest "push-baller." But we know that Dr. MacAndrew, one of our earliest headmasters, was "hot-stuff" at bowls. The old bowling-green still exists, but it is now the headmaster's lawn. Its surface is no longer level enough to permit of bowls being played. And, anyway, the present Head is no lover of bowls.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 347.

CRICKET was first played at Greyfriars in 1812. The school had the honour of winning its first match against the village. Clubs were used instead of bats, and the teams played in their Sunday best! This must have been a great handicap, but it did not prevent Jack Forbes, the Greyfriars skipper, from scoring a hundred "notches," or runs, as we should call them now. One of the masters also had the distinction of making a century, and the school ran up a tremendous total. The villagers, fagged out by many hours' fielding in the broiling sun, made a sorry show when they went in to bat, and were skittled out for a paltry 32. Greyfriars thus gained a handsome victory.

MY RECREATION!

By Lord Mauleverer.

Breathes there a man with soul so dead,
Who never to himself has said,
"This is a comfy little bed!
See how it sinks!"
Breathes there a man—or boy, or miss,
Who will not bear me out in this:
There's not a greater, grander bliss
Than forty winks!

When Wingate comes to see "lights out,"
Some fellows always frown and pout.
They wish that bedtime came, no doubt,
A few hours later.
But I am always glad to go
Into the land of dreams, you know.
I was born tired, I think; and so
Was my dear pater.

My comrades lie awake and chat;
I've really got no use for that!
I go to bed, I tell you flat,
To snooze and snore.
I'm always drowsy—Yaw-aw-aw!
The drowsiest chap you ever saw!
It's too much fag to lie and jaw
Till half-past four.

I'd love to lie in bed all day
And dream the golden hours away;
And never be compelled to play
Such games as cricket.
These sports, begad, are very tiring,
I'm always panting and perspiring.
I feel like swooning and expiring—
Simply can't stick it!

Call me a slacker, if you choose;
I simply love to lie and snooze,
While other chappies air their views
With animation.
Softly the shades of night come creeping,
The early stars commence their peeping;
My fancy lightly turns to sleeping—
My recreation!

THE annual cricket duel between school and village were tremendous attractions, and Friardale won a fair share of the games. But they came a dreadful cropper in 1899, when the Greyfriars First Eleven compiled the highest score in the school records—640 for five wickets (declared). How I should like to have seen that match! A good many records were established that day, for H. V. Clifton, a Greyfriars player, made the colossal score of 244 not out—a record for the First Eleven. Old Boys still talk of Clifton's fine achievement. They say that he batted like a fellow inspired, and banged ball after ball to the boundary. Pity the poor fieldsmen!

IN the gallery of Greyfriars giants one must include R. B. Standish, the tallest fellow the school has ever had. He stood six feet two inches in his socks, and had to bend down in order to enter his study! A Goliath, indeed! In addition to his height, he had the strength of a Samson, and was a mighty hitter on the cricket-field. The wonderful feat he performed in 1906 of hitting a ball clean over the roof of the gymnasium, has never been equalled.

MANY famous football feats have been accomplished at Greyfriars. In the 1911-1912 season, when the Honourable Jimmy Maxwell was captain of the First Eleven, it went right through the season without a defeat. And the goalkeeper, Dick Chester—subsequently killed in the Great War—kept his citadel intact in every match, and did not concede a single goal. This sounds well-nigh incredible. But it is a fact, as the school records show.

THE Friardale folk have cause to remember their visits to Greyfriars, for in 1913 their football eleven was utterly routed to the tune of 14 goals to 0! Had not the Greyfriars forwards eased off in the second half, so as not to "rub it in" too much, the score against the villagers would have been even heavier. The Friardale people have never really recovered from that crushing defeat, for they rarely send their team to Greyfriars nowadays, having come to the conclusion that village football is not of the high standard of the public school game. I do not write this in a conceited spirit. It is only natural that the Greyfriars fellows, who practise every day, should be superior to a team of working-men who are only able to practise once a week.

BUNTER of the Remove has just looked into my study. He wishes me to include his uncle, Portleigh of the Sixth, in my gallery of giants. He declares that Portleigh, in the summer of 1895, made 500 not out on the cricket-field, and also created a record for the hundred yards by completing the distance in seven seconds dead. He would indeed have been "dead" on completing such a performance, for it is not humanly possible to run a hundred yards in that time! I can find no trace of Bunter's famous uncle in the school records, so I can only conclude that he is a fictitious character. You must excuse me while I chase Bunter out of my study with a cricket-stump!

[Supplement ii.]



First Man Home!

THE STORY OF AN AMAZING MARATHON RACE
BY DICKY NUGENT.

"**H**A, ha, ha!" Jack Jolly, of the Fourth Form at St. Sam's, laughed so heartily that he split his sides, and his two study-mates, Merry and Bright, had to sew him up again.

"What's the joke, Jack?" asked Merry. Jack Jolly gurgled and giggled as if he had a fit of compulsions.

"Ha, ha, ha! He, he, he! Ho, ho, ho! That fellow Poore will be the death of me!" "Poore?" queried Bright.

"Yes. That shabby, down-at-heel pawper in the end study. It's rather rich! He's actually entered for the Marathon Race!"

"Grate Scott!" When they heard this, Merry and Bright promptly went into hysterics. The mere thought of Cyril Poore, the pawper of St. Sam's, taking part in a Marathon race was too comical for words.

Poore was anything but an athlete. He was a skinny, scraggy, skellington of a fellow, with legs like matchsticks. He couldn't run—not even if there was a mad bull or a jumping-cracker behind him. His legs were too feeble to support his body. He was always falling down, just like a year-old baby learning to toddle. One day he fell from the top of the stairs to the bottom, and broke his neck in five places, and had to have it put in plaster of paris for six months. He had never quite recovered from that accident—a broken neck takes a long time to heal—and he could hardly walk, much less run. Yet he had actually entered for the Marathon! Poor Poore! He must have been clean off his rocker.

Jack Jolly & Co. were laughing as if they would bust. They had thrown themselves into their chairs, which were rocking two and fro like ships in a rough sea.

Suddenly the door opened, and who should look into the study but Cyril Poore. He stared in surprise at the hilarious juniors.

"Would you mind telling a bloke the joke?" he asked.

"You're the joke!" gurgled Jack Jolly. "Fancy a feeble freak like you taking part in the Marathon! Ha, ha, ha!"

Poore scowled.

"You'll pipe to another tune presently," he said. "I'm not only going to take part in the Marathon, but I'm going to win it! I've been training for it night and day, and I can run the whole length of the Fourth Form passageway without having to stop more than six times to get my breath!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The winner of the Marathon will receive five pounds," said Poore, "and that sum will be corn in Egypt to me. I'm stony."

"You always are," said Merry, "and you'll still be stony when the race is over. Why, you chump, you haven't the ghost of a chance of winning! If you finish at all, you'll finish last! But, personally, I reckon you'll lie down and expire by the wayside."

"We shall see," said Poore grimly; and he turned and staggered away, with the mocking laughter of Jack Jolly & Co. ringing in his ears.

The day of the Marathon dawned shortly afterwards, and Poore turned out with the rest of the runners. He looked a feeble, frail, forlorn figger as he towed the line.

Mr. Lickham, who was the starter, blew a shrill blast on his pistol, and the runners were off like the wind, with the exception of Poore. That wretched weekling soon found himself far behind. He was out of breath

before he had run a dozen yards. But he plodded on gamely.

"By fare means or fowl, I must win this race!" he muttered.

As soon as he was out of sight of the school gates a motor-lorry came along. The unhappy Poore, floundering helplessly along the road, shouted to the driver.

"I say, give me a lift, there's a good fellow!"

"Certainly!" said the good-natured driver. "Hop in!"

Poore clambered up into the lorry, and stowed himself away among the lumber that was on board. From his hiding-place he was able to peep down into the road without being seen himself.

The lorry tore along at a terrific pace—something like a hundred miles an hour. And presently Poore espied a number of white-clad figgers, flogging their way painfully along the road. They were Jack Jolly & Co., of St. Sam's. The lorry shot past them in a flash, and Poore chuckled.

"You'll have a shock when you get to St. Sam's, and find that I've finished first!" he muttered.

The route that the runners were taking was a circular one, beginning and ending at St. Sam's. The lorry also took a circular route, so Poore was in luck.

"I want you to put me down about a couple of miles from St. Sam's," he said to the driver.

The man had no choice in the matter, for he ran out of petrol, and was obliged to stop. Poore jumped down into the roadway.

"Thanks very much!" he said. "I can walk the rest."

"Half a mo!" said the driver. "Wot about a tip?"

Poore turned his pockets inside-out. They were full of emptiness.

"Alas," he said, "I have no munny! My name is Poore, and my people are poor, so you stand a poor chance of getting a tip, my poor fellow!"

The driver scowled fiercely.

"If I had known that before I'd 'ave given you a lift under the jaw, instead of a lift in the lorry!" he said. "If you've got no munny, I don't mind takin' your gold watch!"

"It's in pawn," explained Poore. And then, not wishing to continue the discussion, he left the stranded lorry, and set off at an easy pace for St. Sam's.

"I can truly say that I have completed the course," he murmured. "True, I haven't completed it on foot; but I needn't go into details."

When the school gates came in sight, Poore broke into a trot. Scores of fellows were perched on the school wall, waiting to see the finish of the great race, and they had the shock of their lives when they recognised the first man home.

"My only aunt!"

"It's Poore!"

"Wonders will never cease!"

Of course, Poore pretended that he was at the end of his tether. He stumbled and

staggered towards the school gates, with the inspiration pouring down his cheeks, and his tongue lolling out of his mouth.

"The plucky lad is eggshattered!" cried Mr. Lickham. "I doubt if he will manage to reach the tape."

But Poore did reach it, and then he collapsed in a huddled heap in the gateway, while cheer after cheer rent the air. Caps went whirling in the air, and the fellows shouted themselves hoarse. Nobody had the slightest suspicion that there had been any wangling.

"Run to the tuckshop, one of you, and fetch a bag of brandy-balls!" said Mr. Lickham. "The poor lad has fainted."

The brandy-balls were brought, and one of them was forced down Poore's throat. He revived instantly, and sat up.

"Have—have I won?" he stammered faintly.

"Yes, my dear boy—won gloriously!" said Mr. Lickham. "Everybody thought that Jolly would win the Marathon, but you have confounded the critterka. Let me assist you to your feet, my gallant lad!"

It was a proud moment for Poore, as he stood there, leaning heavily on his Form master's arm.

After a long interval Jack Jolly arrived at the school gates, flushed and breathless. He thought he was the first man home, and he nearly had a fit when his schoolfellows told him Poore had won.

"But—but I never saw Poore pass me on the road!" panted Jack Jolly.

"I went past you like a streak of lightning, and you never had time to recognise me," said Poore.

It was a bitter blow to Jack Jolly, and he crawled away to a quiet corner, in order to have a good blub. For he had set his heart on winning that five.

Shortly afterwards the whole school assembled in Big Hall for the presentation of the prize.

The Head stood on the platform, beaming all over his dial.

"I have pleasure in calling upon the winner of the Marathon race to come and receive the merry five at my hands," said the Head. "Cyril Poore, come fourth!"

Poore was making his way down the gangway, amid thunders of applause, when suddenly the door of Big Hall was thrown open, and a big, berly man rushed in without ceremony.

"Stop!" he shouted. "I am just in time to prevent an injustice being done! That kid never won by fare means. He had a lift of five miles in my lorry!"

There was a buzz from the crowded assembly. Poore darted a look of fierce hatred at the lorry-driver.

"Oh, you rotter!" he cried. "You've been and shown me up! And just because I couldn't afford to tip you!"

"Silence, wretched boy!" rumbled the Head. "You have endeavored to secure the sum of five pounds by false pretences! I hereby disqualify you, and declare Jack Jolly to be the winner!"

Amid storms and hurricanes and tempests of cheers, Jack Jolly went forward to receive the five.

As for the wretched Poore, he was hoisted on to the porter's shoulders, and the Head chastised him until the birch broke. The screams of the victim could have been heard a mile off; but nobody had any sympathy to waste upon the sly, sneaky, scoundrelly pawper of St. Sam's!

THE END.

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JUNGLE JINKS

Out on Thursday—Price 2d

MY FAVOURITE RECREATION!

A collection of confessions from Greyfriars Celebrities.

BILLY BUNTER:

My favorite recreation? Gorging! Or, as Quelchy would put it, "the mastication and consumption of sticky and indigestible compounds." Eating is the finest recreation ever invented. Watch a fellow pitching into a four-course dinner, and note his beaming face! Watch a cheery crowd in the tuckshop, and you'll never see a dismal dial among them! Eating is the favorite recreation of a good many fellows, only they haven't the curridge to admit it. They don't like to be thought gluttons and foodoggs; consequently, they pretend that cricket, football, and so fourth, are their favorite recreations. Why don't they tell the trooth, like George Washington and me?

DICK PENFOLD:

What is my favourite recreation? Cricket, of course—but botheration! The sad and melancholy fact is, I never find the time to practise. You see, I have to sit and write throughout the day, and half the night. Poetic labours keep me busy, until I'm absolutely dizzy! Says Wharton, in his haughty manner, "Write me some verses for a tanner! And if they make our readers sob, I'll raise the payment to a bob! If they win wonderful renown, I'll promptly pay you half-a-crown!" And so for hours I sit and think, expending pints and pints of ink, and struggling hard for inspiration, instead of taking recreation!

DICKY NUGENT:

my favorite recreation is fishing for Tadpoles. i caught a duzzen of the little beggers yesterday, in friardale pond. i'm not going to tell you how i do it, bekawse it's a trade secret. if any of the other fags got to know, the pond would be emptied of Tadpoles in no time! last term i landed the biggest Tadpole on record. they stuffed it and put it in the School Mewseum. there's only one drawback to catching Tadpoles. you can't eat 'em!

TOM BROWN:

Give me the joys of a cycling tour—whizzing along the King's highway with a glorious feeling of freedom! Cricket and footer are top-hole, and I've nothing against them, but a cycling tour has a charm of its own. I'm a bit of a speed-merchant on a bike, and once I get going, you can't see me for dust!

(We are shocked to find, Browney, that you are as big a gorgier as Bunter. You delight in "eating up the miles"! —Ed.)

LORD MAULEVERER:

No need to ask me my favourite recreation. I'm just goin' to indulge in it. "Forty winks" on my study sofa, begad! An' if that energetic hustler, Bob Cherry, comes along with the idea of routin' me out, he'll find the door locked! Yaw-aw-aw! I'm just beginnin' to glide away into the Land of Dreams.

MARK LINLEY:

A certain famous man, when asked by the proprietors of "WHO'S WHO" to state his favourite recreation, replied

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tersely, "Hard work!" I am inclined to agree with him. I never look upon work as a drudgery, but as an enjoyable recreation.

(Lucky chap, to be able to see things in that light! Quelchy's just given me an impot. of five hundred lines, but I'm dashed if I can regard it as an enjoyable recreation!—Ed.)

ALONZO TODD:

Like Bunter, my favourite recreation is digesting and devouring—not food, however, but the sage counsels of my esteemed Uncle Benjamin. He writes me a twelve-page letter of advice and instruction every day; and nothing gives me greater pleasure than to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest his words of wisdom.

(Good old Uncle Ben! King Solomon, with all his wisdom, wasn't in the same street with Lonzy's uncle.—Ed.)

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

"Stony Broke" (Streatham).—"I often envy Lord Mauleverer, who was born with a silver spoon in his mouth."—And some people often envy Billy Bunter, who is reported to have been born with a jam-tart in his mouth!

"Teddy" (Gloucester).—"I consider it is high time that Dicky Nugent took a few lessens in speling. He needs them; don't you think so?"—Yes; and he isn't the only one!

SPORTING SNAPS!

By H. Vernon-Smith.



AT a special meeting of the Remove cricket club Harry Wharton was re-elected president, also captain of the eleven. It was rather a stormy meeting, and three candidates put up in opposition to Wharton, but he came through with flying colours.

* * *

I hear we are in need of a new roller for the cricket-pitch, the old one having broken down. For economy's sake, why not use Billy Bunter? Our tame porpoise would make an excellent roller!

* * *

MR. PROUT, in order to prove that a man is not too old at fifty, has stated his intention of taking up cricket this coming season. We shall be careful to keep at a respectful distance when Mr. Prout starts bowling! He is likely to be just as erratic with a cricket-ball as with his Winchester repeater!

"Curious" (Clacton-on-Sea).—"How many Dicks are there in the remove Form-room?"—Four. Dick Penfold, Dick Russell, and Dick Rake—and we sometimes have a lesson called Dick-tation!

R. H. B. (Birmingham).—"How would Billy Bunter get on if he had to have all his teeth out?"—It would be an awkward situation, by gum!

"Rhymer" (Chester).—"I am sending you an ode to spring."—And we have fed it to the flames. Consider yourself a barred bard!

Owen D. (Mumbles).—"My school-master is always calling me over the coals for not speaking distinctly."—How can he possibly expect you to do so, when you live at "Mumbles"?

"Critical" (Manchester).—"The 'Greyfriars Herald' would be quite all right if it wasn't for your Editorial!"—And my morning post-bag would be quite all right if it wasn't for your cheeky letter!

"Straight Left" (Aldershot).—"Bob Cherry is a brilliant boxer, but do you think he could beat Jack Dempsey?"—There's no knowing. David put it across Goliath, didn't he?

"Fag" (Godalming).—"Does the mighty Coker always take your japes lying down?"—Not always. We sometimes make him "sit up"!

ANOTHER new recruit to the ranks of cricket enthusiasts is Alonzo Todd. But the guileless Duffer of the Remove knows so little about the game that he has actually ordered "plus fours" from his tailors. Cricket in plus fours! Oh, my sainted aunt!

* * *

TOM REDWING, the sailor's son, is taking up deep-sea fishing in real earnest. He is living in hopes of harpooning a whale off the jetty at Pegg. But that's a tall order—in fact, a "Mighty Deep" proposition!

* * *

DICKY NUGENT claims to have caught the largest tadpole on record. It has been stuffed, and exhibited in the school museum. Alonzo Todd is "shocked and disgusted," and considers that tadpole-fishing is a barbarous sport. He has threatened to write to the Society for the Protection of Residents in Slimy Ponds.

* * *

IT is rumoured that Gosling, the porter, intends to become a professional weight-lifter. We saw him staggering across the Close the other day, balancing a portmanteau on his shoulders, and half a dozen hat-boxes on top of that!

* * *

A correspondent suggests that a suitable recreation for Rake would be gardening; and for Skinner, stripping the fur off rabbits! And what about Hurree Singh taking up singing, and Bob Cherry fruit-growing?

* * *

TROTTER, the page, has entered for the hundred yards' race, at the Friardale Athletic Meeting. But he will have to be something more than a mere "trotter," if he hopes to win!

[Supplement to.

The Secret of Shark's Tooth!*(Continued from page 12.)*

a few feet of the little gully in which Bunter had fallen, but they did not glance that way; they did not dream of looking.

They tumbled aboard the boat in silence. Despite their courage, the deathly stillness of the island had subdued them unconsciously, and they did not speak until they were well clear of the gloomy place.

Then Harry Wharton gave vent to a deep sigh of relief.

"It went off better than I had expected," he said grimly. "I'm jolly glad it's done, though. I—I only hope poor old Grahame will be all right, you fellows. I don't think I'm a funk, but I rather fancy I'd prefer a prison-cell to staying alone on that beastly island all night, spooks or no spooks! And now for home and bed."

"What about the sail?" asked Bob Cherry. "Might as well make use of the breeze, Harry."

"Good wheeze!"

The sail was hoisted, and a minute later the boat was racing over the moonlit waves, homeward bound. It seemed to the tired juniors no time before the school landing-place came in sight, and as the boat grounded on the beach Harry Wharton sprang ashore with a grunt of satisfaction.

"It's been an exciting day, you fellows!" he exclaimed grimly. "But I, for one, am jolly glad it's over. Jové! I'm tired! We'll be in bed and asleep in ten minutes, you fellows. Buck up!"

But Harry had spoken too soon there, had he only known it. For the night's adventures were not yet over for the Famous Five.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.**What Bunter Saw!**

BILLY BUNTER struggled up to a sitting posture with a groan.

His head throbbed wildly, his limbs were stiff and aching, and he was chilled to the bone. Where he was and what had happened he hadn't the faintest idea for some bewildering moments, as he blinked around him dazedly, wonderingly. His head seemed to be spinning, and his mind buzzing with confused emotions.

Almost mechanically he groped about him for his spectacles, and quite by chance his fingers happened to close upon them. They were uninjured, and Billy Bunter jammed them on his fat little nose, and once more he blinked about.

Then quite suddenly he understood, and it all came back to him—the landing on the island, his frantic flight after the others, and then that unexpected fall, and the ensuing oblivion.

The sudden remembrance brought the junior's scattered wits back with a rush, and he fairly leaped to his feet, heedless of his aches and pains.

His first impulse was to rush in the direction in which his schoolfellows had vanished; but another terrifying thought made him turn and glance apprehensively back towards the little jetty.

Then he jumped. The jetty and the sea beyond it was bare. The boat had indeed gone! In that moment of shock Billy Bunter stood transfixed—as though suddenly turned to stone. His fat face shook with stark fear; he had never been

so utterly terrified and horrified in his life.

Harry Wharton & Co. had gone. He was stranded—stranded alone on a haunted island, and it was—must be—close on midnight!

For an age the hapless junior seemed to stand there helplessly. Not a sail showed on the gleaming, tossing waters—not a movement rewarded his apprehensive glance across the island. All was still, and the ceaseless splash of waves on the rocky shore only intensified the nerve-racking silence.

And then Bunter suddenly remembered something that brought a gleam of hope into his terrified eyes.

He remembered quite suddenly the few words that had been spoken when the juniors had landed on the island. The mysterious stranger—the owner of the deep, quiet voice—had told the juniors to go back "now," and Wharton had replied, saying that they would see him safe first!

What did that mean? Was it possible that, though Wharton & Co. had left the island, the stranger was still there? And—and was the "grub" for him?

Bunter was not a very bright youth—far from it; but it did not take the fat junior long to come to the decision that this was, indeed, the case. It must be!

So convinced was he that this was the case, that almost before he knew it he found himself hurrying up the rocky path towards the hut. The man—whatever he was—was there; he must be there. He was a friend of the Famous Five; and that being the case, there was nothing to fear from him.

Better far to share a haunted hut with him than to be alone outside in the ghostly moonlight. With this thought in his mind Billy Bunter summoned all his nerve and courage, and approached the silent hut.

He reached the door, and his fingers were nervously reaching for the rusty latch, when something—an instinctive feeling of caution—bade him pause.

He hesitated a moment, trembling with mingled fear and hope, and then he stepped softly to the little, grimy window of the hut.

He could see little through the grime for a moment, but as his eyes grew accustomed to the shadowy interior he saw something that sent a feeling of joy and thankfulness surging through him.

The room was tenanted! Stretched out on the floor, in the far corner of the hut, was a form—the form of a tall, hefty-looking young man. He lay there wrapped in a blanket, while a second blanket was rolled up under his head. Bunter saw at a glance that he was fast asleep.

"Oh, thank goodness!" panted Billy Bunter.

He remained a brief moment, staring in at the scene—and it was well for Bunter, perhaps, that he did so. For even as he stood there something happened within the hut—something so entirely unexpected and terrifying that it left the fat junior petrified with amazement and fright.

Without warning a whole section of the hut boarding on the opposite wall began to swing outwards, slowly, noiselessly. From the aperture it left came a warm glow of light, and framed in this was the dim, vague figure of a man.

He stood motionless for a brief instant of time, and then he stepped softly, cautiously, towards the sleeping form in the corner.

A cold beam of moonlight shone on face and figure now, and Bunter saw him clearly. A long ulster covered him from

head to foot, a cap was drawn well-down over his forehead.

But Bunter saw his face clearly. It was a hard face, sharp cut, and cruel. A curious feeling came over the junior that he had seen the face before somewhere—yes, in Courtfield!

Then Bunter saw something else—the ugly glint of a weapon in the man's hand. He stopped by the side of the sleeping form, and stared down at it with glittering eyes. Then, abruptly, the man turned to the door.

Only just in time did Bunter move. He slipped round the corner of the hut, and flattened himself against the wall, his heart thumping tumultuously against his ribs. Then he heard the man step softly through the door on to the rocky ground outside.

Hardly daring to breathe, Bunter stood there in the deep shadows, motionless. He knew the man was still there—he heard his soft breathing, and though scared nearly out of his wits the fat junior found himself wondering dimly what the man could be waiting for.

He knew after a few minutes of waiting. From the rocky pathway leading from the jetty came the sound of heavy footsteps on the rock, and a man came in sight—a burly figure wearing a fisherman's jersey.

It was Charlie Pengelly—though Bunter did not know that. He caught one glimpse of the coarse, evil features, and then he pressed his fat form against the wall, thankful from the bottom of his heart for the deep shadow that hid him.

What took place next Bunter did not see; but he heard. He heard the waiting man greet the fisherman eagerly—the low mutter of voices that followed. Then came the rasp of a rusty hinge as they passed inside the hut.

He heard nothing more for fully a minute. What was taking place in that gloomy hovel he did not know—he felt an overwhelming desire to know! He wanted to bolt for his life—to flee from the horrible, sinister place. But his curiosity—always a besetting sin of Bunter's—over-mastered his fears.

He stepped tremblingly round the corner of the hut, and peered fearfully through the dirt-encrusted glass of the window. Then he caught his breath.

The young man still lay in the corner; but he was wide awake now, and lying in a curiously rigid attitude. Then Bunter saw with an alarmed thrill that he was bound hand and foot. And his clean-cut features were ablaze with rage and helpless mortification as he glared up at the two rascals who were stooping over him.

"M-my hat!" groaned Bunter. "Oh dear!"

He was getting used to surprises by this, and he stared at the curious scene, too amazed to move. The man in the ulster was speaking, and the junior heard the words clearly.

"You young fool!" he was hissing through clenched teeth. "You thought you'd tracked me down, did you? You didn't know that I heard every word that passed between you and those confounded kids! Does anyone else besides them know about this, Grahame, hang you?"

"I'll tell you nothing, you scoundrel!" muttered Dick Grahame savagely. "Oh, if only I had my hands loose!"

"But you haven't," said the man, grinning evilly. "The police didn't arrest you then, Grahame? I rather expected they would."

"You—you utter scoundrel, Hunt!" hissed Dick Grahame. "You—you left me to stand—"

"It was your own look-out!" snapped

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Hunt, his face darkening. "I asked you to come in—we'd have been safe enough then. As it is—those interfering young hounds—"

He broke off and turned on the burly fisherman, his thin lips set hard.

"We'll have to get out of this—quick, Pengelly," he muttered. "We'll put this fool safe, and then you'd better go back for your boat—we'll have to risk the crossing to-night, hang it!"

"I'm not doing it, mister!" vowed Pengelly, his ugly face scowling. "Crossing in this 'ere moonlight'll be askin' for trouble. That ain't all. What am I to do when I've landed you over there? I can't come back now them kids knows I'm in it. What about me—eh?"

"Yea—you fool! We've got to do it. We can't risk those kids—"

"If they comes agen they'll find nothin'!" snarled Charlie Pengelly. "We can hold on here till a chance comes—"

"We daren't, you fool!" said Hunt savagely. "Can't you see! Those kids won't find anything; but they'll talk. You're mad, man!"

Pengelly muttered an imprecation, and then a greedy, ugly gleam came into his eyes.

"You got the stuff safe, mister?" he asked, with a sudden change of tone. "Where is it—in the cave?"

Hunt gave his accomplice a sharp look of distrust, and his fingers tightened on the weapon he held.

"Never mind the stuff, Pengelly," he said in a low, menacing voice. "I've got it all right, and I'm not letting go of it, my man—remember that! You'll get your share—unless you start any games. Don't be a fool! Now, get this young fool put away, and then I'll snatch a wink of sleep while you're fetching your boat."

"It'll take a couple of hours an' more to get the old boat ready, I tell you, mister."

"That'll do—as long as we get clear before daylight," said the man in the ulster curtly. "Get on with it, man!"

The rascally fisherman gave one glance at the weapon in Hunt's hand, and then his glance fell and he started to drag the helpless Grahame towards the secret door in the wall.

Up to that time the backs of the men had been towards Bunter; but now he suddenly realised the risk he was running, and he withdrew his head and slipped round the hut into the shadows again, his mind in a whirl.

What was the meaning of it all? Billy Bunter was utterly at a loss. He could make neither head nor tail of the extraordinary affair. In his bewilderment and burning curiosity he had almost forgotten his own hapless position.

He stood motionless, listening to the mutter of voices within the hut. He heard Pengelly grumbling, and he guessed they were still quarrelling about the question of leaving the island. But apparently Hunt won the day, for presently Bunter heard the clatter of Pengelly's feet on the rocky path as he went stumbling towards his waiting dinghy.

Then followed the distant splash of oars, and Billy Bunter was about to move, when he caught his breath sharp.

Hunt was also leaving the hut. Bunter heard his soft step, and next moment the man in the ulster moved out into the moonlight. He stood still for a moment, staring in the direction Pengelly had gone. Then suddenly Bunter's heart almost stood still.

The man turned and came towards him, glancing about him quickly as he did so.

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Bunter fairly quaked with dread. But fortunately the rascal did not once glance in his direction. He passed within a few yards of the fat youth, and Bunter saw now that he carried a bulky bag in his hand.

He stopped at last close to the rocky wall, and, stooping, began to fumble among a pile of rocks. And when he stood up again his hands were empty.

"That's in case you come back too soon, and try any monkey-tricks, Pengelly!" Bunter heard the fellow mutter aloud. "I don't trust you, my friend. And now for some sleep!"

Bunter quaked again for one breathless moment as the man strode past his hiding-place, and not until he heard the hut door close did the fat junior breathe freely.

But he did not move for fully five minutes after that. A deep stillness had fallen upon the haunted hut by that time, and Billy Bunter realised that Hunt had indeed turned in. A curious feeling of courage took possession of the fat junior then. He had passed through so many breathless, trying moments that night that he was feeling reckless. He hardly cared what happened.

Burning with a feeling of intense curiosity, Bunter suddenly left his hiding-place and ran across to the pile of rocks. He fumbled a moment, and then drew out into the moonlight a bulky black bag.

It was surprisingly heavy, and, in addition to two strong clasps, a heavy leather strap was round it. Bunter slipped the strap, and then his heart leaped, as he had found that the bag was unlocked.

In a flash he had slipped the clasps, and the bag opened, to reveal on the top a heap of elastic-bound bundles of paper—paper that rustled as he touched it. Underneath these were neatly-packed little paper packages.

Even at the feel of them Bunter knew what they were; but he tore one open feverishly, and as he did so the moonlight glistened on silver coins.

"My hat!" panted the fat junior. "Treasury notes and money! What on earth—"

He blinked at his find for a full minute, and then his eyes gleamed behind his spectacles, and he sprang to his feet and glanced quickly about him.

He saw then what he had not seen before—the little lean-to shanty against the rock—and, grabbing the heavy bag up in his arms, the fat junior went stumbling across to it.

At the broken doorway he hesitated a moment. And then he stooped and went in, his heart thumping with excitement. It was pitch dark inside, but Bunter soon found the heap of rotten netting, and in a moment he had emptied the contents of the bag on the floor. Then, dragging the netting over it, he left the hut with the empty bag.

He reached the pile of rocks again, and after a moment's thought he filled it with small rocks; and hurriedly closing the bag and slipping the catches, he strapped it up again. This done, he placed the bag as he had found it and slipped back to the hut.

He was amazed at his own daring now; and at the doorway of the shanty he stopped, beads of perspiration on his brow.

What should he do now? What should he do? There was nowhere to hide—and Pengelly was coming back! The fat junior groaned as the misery of his position dawned in upon him. He was dog-tired, and his limbs ached with fatigue.

"I'll have to risk being collared! I've got to rest!" muttered the fat youth

miserably. "Anyway, I've done that brute one. I'll just lie down for a bit in here. I mustn't go to sleep, though."

And, entering the dingy little shanty, Bunter lay down on the soft netting to rest his tired limbs. There was little else he could do! He lay there blinking into the darkness, and then, despite his intentions, his eyes closed, and Billy Bunter slept!

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

On Bunter's Trail!

WHEN the boat grounded at the school landing-place the Famous Five lost no time in hauling the boat high and dry. And it was just as they had finished doing this that Bob Cherry made a discovery which gave Harry Wharton the first hint that the night's adventures were not over yet.

As the boat fell over on its side on the sands Bob heard the rattle of something rolling down the footboards, and at the same moment he caught the glint of metal.

He reached down and picked the article up, to find to his utter amazement that it was a watch—a huge, old-fashioned silver watch with a dingy leather guard attached.

"G-g-great pip!" he ejaculated. "How on earth did that get here, you fellows?"

He held out the watch and chain, and the juniors blinked at it in astonishment.

"Why, that's Bunter's old turnip!" exclaimed Harry Wharton blankly, peering down at it. "That's queer—jolly queer! I saw Bunter wearing that only this afternoon—the guard, at all events! How on earth—"

He blinked at the watch in astonishment. Everybody in the Remove at Greyfriars was familiar with Bunter's famous old "turnip"; there was no mistaking it!

"Must have been down here larking since teatime," suggested Johnny Bull. "It isn't like Billy Bunter, but it's possible."

"It's possible—yes," said Harry slowly. "But it's hardly likely. I wonder now—"

"Oh, blow Bunter and his blessed watch!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Let's get to bed, for goodness' sake! I expect you were mistaken this afternoon, Harry."

Harry Wharton nodded slowly, but his face was more than thoughtful as they hurried schoolwards. He was certain he had seen that leather guard across Bunter's fat waistcoat that afternoon, and he wondered. It wasn't like Bunter to trouble to go down to the sea after tea for a walk—or to lark there.

And by the time the juniors had reached the Remove dormitory a strange suspicion was forming in Wharton's mind, so that he was almost prepared for the alarming discovery they made when they got there.

As the juniors crept into the silent dormitory a dim figure sat up in one of the beds, and the voice of Peter Todd greeted them.

"Hallo! You silly asses have landed back, then? Where's that fat frog, Bunter?"

"Bunter?"

The juniors echoed the name in a whisper, and glanced towards Billy Bunter's bed. In the dim light even it was easy to see that the bed was empty. They eyed each other in sudden alarm, the same suspicion crossing their minds.

"B-B-Bunter?" stuttered Bob Cherry. "We didn't know the fat chump was out, Toddy! Has—has he been gone long?"

"He went out just after you giddy night-birds," grinned Toddy. "Trust Bunter to miss anything! I spotted him going, though I didn't know you chaps

were out until I saw your beds. He followed you, I expect!"

"Great pip!"

"I went after him, but I was too late," explained Peter Todd, his grin fading as he noted the juniors' alarmed looks. "I was just in time to spot him sneaking across the quad after you chaps. I wasn't dressed, or I'd have gone after him. But look here, you fellows, what's the merry old game?"

"Never mind that," said Harry Wharton soberly. "You—you're sure he followed us, Toddy?"

"Absolutely," declared Peter Todd. "I saw the glitter in his optics. But—but haven't you chaps seen the ass?"

"No, we haven't, Toddy," breathed Harry Wharton, giving his chums a scared look. "We—we'd better go and look for the burbling ass, you chaps!"

"Oh, my hat!"

Bob Cherry and the others groaned aloud at that. They were dog-tired, and the thought of going out yet again filled them with dismay.

But they nodded their agreement, for all that. They hadn't the slightest doubt now that Bunter had been in the boat. And if he had, then there was only one possible theory to account for his absence.

He could not possibly have left the boat before reaching the Shark's Tooth without their seeing him. He must be on the island still!

It was an alarming thought, and it sent all ideas of bed from the juniors' minds. Harry turned a scared face to the surprised and curious Peter Todd.

"We'll go after the chump, Toddy," he said swiftly. "You've no need to worry, though. We'll find Bunter all serene. Mum's the word, though!"

"Silly asses!" was Toddy's comment. "But, I say, you——"

But Harry Wharton did not wait for any awkward questioning. He nodded to his chums, and they stole out of the dormitory on tiptoe.

Once through the box-room window they dropped all caution and raced across the quad, and were soon making at top speed for the beach. They had lost their feeling of tiredness now—or they did not notice it in their alarm and apprehension.

They knew to what lengths Billy Bunter's overmastering curiosity could drive him, and they felt more than alarmed on his behalf.

"Come on, you chaps!" gasped Harry, as they ran. "I'm absolutely certain about it now. I believe I saw Bunter on the island."

"What?"

"I remembered it in the dorm," said Harry. "But I couldn't tell you before Toddy. When we were scouting towards that beastly hut, I happened to look back, and I imagined I saw something—a form on the jetty. But I didn't tell you chaps—I was afraid you'd tell me I was seeing things—spooks."

"Phew!"

That settled the matter for Harry's chums, and though Bob and Johnny Bull made dark threats as to what they would do to Billy Bunter when they found him, they put their beef into the task before them, unpleasant as it was.

They soon launched the boat again, and though all had had their fill of rowing, they pulled away lustily for all that. They pulled in silence for the most part; none of them felt in the mood for talking.

But as the sinister mass of Shark's Tooth came into sight at last, Frank Nugent, who happened to be steering,



In a flash Billy Bunter had slipped the clasps of the bag and opened it. It revealed on the top a heap of elastic bound bundles of paper—paper that rustled as he touched it. Underneath these were neatly packed little paper packages that evidently contained coins. "My hat!" panted the fat junior. "Treasury notes and silver! What on earth——" (See Chapter 7.)

gave a sharp exclamation, and pointed ahead.

"A boat, you fellows!" he exclaimed tensely. "Look—just by that end mass of rocks!"

The juniors ceased rowing and stared hard across the shadowy sea. Only Harry Wharton nodded, however.

"I thought I spotted something moving," he said hesitatingly. "You're sure, Frank——"

"Certain! A boat with a single oarsman!" said Frank flatly. "He seemed to be turning round, and then he vanished."

"Better look out, then!" snapped Harry grimly. "It may be that brute, Pengelly. Keep your eyes peeled!"

But they saw nothing else suspicious—until they landed at the little jetty; and then Harry found what his first thought on landing made him look for.

It was the dinghy, riding in the little sheltered channel. He stepped into it at once, and felt the handles of the oars. They were quite warm!

"That settles it—you were right, Frank!" he muttered, glancing about him quickly. "He's here. He must have spotted us coming and turned back. I—I don't like it. But, come on carefully, for goodness' sake. Let's hope nothing's happened to Grahame."

Keeping their eyes and ears open, the juniors started up the little rise, stealing from one shadowy mass of rocks to another like ghosts.

They saw nothing at all suspicious; the ghostly hut looked exactly the same,

and not a sound broke the deathly stillness of the place.

They reached to within twenty yards of the hut, and then, as before, they made a rush for the hut, running on tiptoe. They reached it, and Wharton held up a warning hand as he peered through the grimy window.

The room appeared to be empty—shadowy and ghostly. Then Harry stepped to the door, opened it, and the juniors followed him in. Harry shone the light of his torch around him, and then stood as if stunned.

The room was indeed empty. They had left Dick Grahame safe and comparatively comfortable on the dusty floor scarcely an hour before. But he was gone now! The blankets were still there, as was the paper that had covered the foodstuffs.

"Well, this beats the band, you fellows!" said Harry, in a whisper. "It's mystery on mystery!"

The others said nothing. They were frankly scared. The whole affair was beginning to get on their nerves badly.

"We—we'd better shout!" suggested Bob Cherry, his usually ruddy face quite pale.

"Better not!" whispered Harry Wharton, with an uneasy glance towards the doorway. "It's certain that brute Pen——"

He got no farther. There came a sudden clatter of heavy feet outside, and as they jumped round in alarm, a burly form lurched into the hut.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Victory!

IT was Charlie Pengelly. He stood eyeing the juniors, an ugly scowl distorting his face. The startled juniors returned the glance for one brief instant, and then Harry Wharton gave a gasp!

"Go for the brute—down him, you chaps!" he hissed.

As he spoke, Harry Wharton set his teeth and flung himself bodily at the man. He neatly avoided a vicious swing of the rascal's massive fist, and his own took the fellow on his bristly chin. By this time the others had recovered themselves, and the next instant they were all over him.

Like terriers they clung to him, and the man lurched drunkenly, and then went down with a crash. Over and over on the dusty floor they rolled in a struggling mass. They were still fighting and struggling desperately, when there came a cool, harsh voice from the doorway behind them.

"When you've quite finished, my lads," it said, "I'd like you to put your hands up!"

The sheer unexpectedness of the voice made the juniors cease fighting. They had forgotten the possibility of Hunt's being on the island. They swung round, and as he saw the glinting weapon in the man's hand, Harry Wharton gritted his teeth.

What fools they were! They had known that Pengelly was on the island—they had walked blindly into a trap for all their care and watchfulness.

But there was no disobeying that ugly, pointing weapon, and one by one they stood up and obeyed.

Hunt—they did not doubt it was him—laughed softly. Pengelly scrambled to his feet, with a stream of unpleasant imprecations.

"Truss these young gentlemen up, Pengelly," said Hunt pleasantly, "and don't look so thunderingly black, man. This is the best of luck! These kids can't have blabbed yet, or we'd have known it. They won't get the chance to blab now for a bit. Put 'em with Grahame, and we'll clear! I don't think I'll wait for you to fetch your old tub. I'll come with you to Pegg for it."

The juniors were staggered as well as dismayed. Was this the same Hunt—the cashier from Bentley's Engineering Works—the sober and respectable clerk they now remembered having seen about the streets of Courtfield?

It almost seemed like a dream to them; yet it was true enough, and one by one they submitted to be tied hand and foot by the sulky fisherman.

It was done at last, and then came the surprise of that eventful night for the juniors.

What exactly happened they hardly saw in the dim, ghostly hut. But as Pengelly stepped up to the wall of match-boarding, they suddenly became aware that something strange was happening—something which Billy Bunter had already seen happen that night.

With a slight creaking of hinges, a section of the boarding swung away from the wall, revealing a lantern-lit hollow in the rocky wall—a dimly-lit cavern!

The secret of Shark's Tooth was revealed to them at last. In that thrilling moment the juniors understood many things that had bewildered them.

But they had little time to ponder the matter. For even as the secret door swung open, something else happened—something as unexpected and disastrous

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to Hunt and his accomplice as it was unlooked for and fortunate for the juniors.

Without warning a lithe, active form came rushing from the cavern like a human whirlwind. It was Dick Grahame—and free!

At the moment the rascally Hunt had his revolver lowered—he had dropped his arm on seeing the juniors helplessly trussed—and long before he could raise it again Grahame was upon him.

His fist took the startled scoundrel clean under the chin. It smacked home with terrific force, and Hunt simply crumpled up without a whisper and dropped flat and still.

And then, long before the dull-witted Pengelly had recovered from the shock of that lightning onslaught, Dick Grahame had snatched up Hunt's weapon and turned it upon him.

"My turn now, Pengelly!" snapped the sandy-haired young man, his eyes blazing dangerously. "The game's up, my pippin! Release those youngsters, you hound! Quick!"

Pengelly snarled out a savage oath. But after a single glance at Grahame's steely eyes he quailed and jumped to obey. The game was up, and he knew it.

His clasp-knife slashed viciously at the rope round the boys' ankles and wrists, and they stood up at last, free and thankful.

"Now, give him the same medicine, lads!" snapped Grahame, nodding at the scowling fisherman. "And while you're about the job you'd better rope the other brute before he comes round."

It was the juniors' turn to jump to obey—and they did the job thoroughly. It was done at last.

"Oh, thank Heaven!" panted Harry Wharton, staring at Grahame in wonder. "But—but how on earth—"

Dick Grahame laid down the revolver then, and bared his wrists, with a wince of pain.

"I did it like that," he said quietly, as he exposed a pair of blackened and bruised wrists. "I heard what was happening out here, and I knew I'd got to do something. I—I held my wrists across the lantern flame and burnt the rope through. I just waited then for the door to open. That's all. It was lucky—"

He paused on seeing that Hunt's eyes were open and glaring at him with savage hate.

"Yes, the game's up, Hunt!" he snapped. "Where's the money, you precious rotter?"

"It's where you'll never find it, hang you!" snarled the baffled rascal fiercely. "Nor anyone else either—but me!"

"He, he, he!"

The unmusical cachinnation came from the open doorway, and the juniors and Grahame swung round in a flash. Then they stared.

It was Billy Bunter. He stood in the doorway, his huge spectacles glimmering. His fat face was grimy, but it wore a broad grin, nevertheless.

"You—you fat idiot—"

"Oh, really, Cherry! I say, you fellows, I can tell you where the plunder is," he grinned.

"You—you what?"

"Come on—follow me," grinned Bunter.

It was a triumph for William George Bunter. They followed him wonderingly—on Grahame's part, hopefully. He stopped at last by the heap of rocks against the wall of the pinnacle, and after rummaging about for a moment, hauled into view a bag. Grahame snatched it,

and tore away the strap. Then he slipped the catches, and wrenched open the bag.

As he revealed the contents his eager, glowing features abruptly whitened, and he groaned.

"He's done us—that William Hunt's done us, after all!" he said bitterly, emptying the pieces of rock on the ground.

"He, he, he!"

Grahame turned in a fury on the cackling fat youth. Bunter jumped back in alarm.

"I say, it's all right!" he gasped hurriedly. "That's only the bag. I'll soon show you the plunder."

And he did. A moment or so later Dick Grahame was packing the stolen money back into the bag, with a thankful heart. Then Bunter got a chance to tell his story, and he told it. And for once the juniors listened respectfully enough.

"Well, my only hat!" breathed Harry Wharton, when he had done. "You were a fat villain, Bunter, to follow us, but—but—well, perhaps it's as well you did. You've been useful, after all!"

And Bunter grinned a fat grin of satisfaction at that.

In the early hours of the morning the school boat, with the Famous Five, Bunter, and Dick Grahame, happy enough now, aboard, stole across the glimmering water, leaving the Shark's Tooth—no longer an island of mystery—to fade away into the haze behind; leaving behind also the rascally Hunt and Pengelly—to be called for later! The boat stopped at the jetty at Pegg, and there, after promising to keep their names out of the affair, Dick Grahame parted from the juniors, carrying his precious bag, which he intended taking to Courtfield without delay. He was afraid of a prison-cell no longer.

Bunter was wildly indignant at the promise; he had anticipated glory and fame, he had expected to "bag" a whacking reward for his part in the affair. But long before Greyfriars was reached Harry Wharton had succeeded in pointing out the unwisdom of seeking glory, fame, and rewards in the circumstances. They had broken bounds, they had broken the law, and they had taken unheard-of risks. And Bunter agreed quickly enough to "keep mum" when these facts were made plain to him. And—for a wonder—Billy Bunter did "keep mum"! Neither Greyfriars nor the general public ever heard the full story of what took place.

Dawn was stealing in at the dormitory windows when the Famous Five got to sleep that morning, and they were like wet rags the next day. But for all that they walked over to Pegg to hear the latest—and the latest was good. Hunt and Pengelly were both under lock and key, and Dick Grahame's honour was cleared.

And from their Council School chum the juniors heard something else a few days later—that Dick Grahame was back with his old firm, and that he had been given the job vacated by the scoundrelly Hunt! And the Famous Five felt thankful indeed that they had done what they had, and that they had solved the Secret of Shark's Tooth!

THE END.

(There is another magnificent school story of Harry Wharton & Co. in next Monday's bumper issue of the MAGNET, entitled: "The Barring of Bunter!" Be sure and read it!)

Begin This Powerful Series of Complete Detective Stories To-day, Boys!

The QUEST of the PURPLE SANDALS



No. 2—THE MISSING FORMULA!

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Commissioned by the State.

IN the wee small hours of the morning a lean, grey motor-car flashed out of that select thoroughfare of the medical profession—Harley Street—and sped on its way towards Whitehall.

Beyond a few belated taxicabs, the policemen, and street-cleaners, the darkened roads of London were deserted. Yet, despite the speed at which they could travel, the two occupants of the car were able to carry on a sharp, earnest conversation.

The passenger with the soft hat and his coat-collar turned up about his ears, who was seated next to the driver, was none other than the world-famous private detective, Ferrers Locke. The driver was the sleuth's astute young assistant, Jack Drake.

"In ten minutes, my boy," said the detective, "we shall know whether we have been hoaxed or not. Anyway, we are adopting the quickest way of finding out—by going to the Home Office direct."

"I made no mistake in the message, sir," responded Jack Drake. "I am positive the voice over the telephone said that it was the Home Secretary himself who wanted to see you. Besides, who would want to play a silly joke at one o'clock in the morning?"

"I have not second vision, my boy," said Ferrers Locke, with a smile. "There is just as much likelihood of someone playing a prank at one o'clock in the morning as for the Home Secretary himself to wish to see me. However, we need not bother our minds about a matter which can be so speedily settled. When I left you at Logan Lodge, did you make a thorough search for the articles mentioned by the butler?"

"The purple sandals? Yes, sir. They were not in the house, as far as I could see. Most of the smaller curios collected by Professor Erskine during his travels are kept in glass cases in the drawing-

room. The sandals were not among them."

Ferrers Locke gave a grunt, and his brow furrowed in perplexity.

"At this stage the Dulwich murder presents one of the most baffling mysteries I have bumped up against," he murmured. "At eight o'clock last night you and I dined with young Derrick Erskine, and we and the head waiter of the club heard him threaten to kill his uncle. Before eleven o'clock his uncle—Professor Arnold Erskine—had been shot dead at Logan Lodge, Surrey, and young Erskine was under arrest."

"Meantime, our old friend, Inspector Pycroft, of Scotland Yard, claims it to be the simplest case of his career," Drake reminded his chief. "Derrick Erskine and the professor had had many bitter quarrels over some money which the former considered was due to him. He had threatened the old man's life, and every other scrap of evidence seems to point to him as having committed the deed. As Pycroft remarked, only Erskine had any motive for seeing the professor dead."

"That's so," admitted Locke sadly. He had known young Derrick Erskine a long time, and was loth to regard him as a murderer. "Nevertheless, Drake, my boy, there are features about this case that are curious. In the first place, it was the butler who telephoned for us to visit Logan Lodge after the professor had been shot. He did this at Derrick Erskine's request. Strange that a fellow who had committed a crime, even though already under arrest, should summon a private detective to investigate the case. That is curious point number one."

He paused as Drake swung the car swiftly round the "Cupid" statue in Piccadilly Circus and down into Haymarket. Then he resumed:

"The second curious point arises in the manner in which the murder was committed. A rope was slung out of the window of Derrick Erskine's bed-room, and Pycroft showed us how easily the shooting could have been accomplished by a man clinging to this rope and firing

through the open window of the library below. Yet it seems an extraordinary thing that young Erskine, living in the same house with his uncle, should see fit to go about his deadly work in that way."

"Doubtless he thought to have time to haul up the rope, and thus leave no clue behind him," remarked Drake. "Had he fired from the garden by standing on the ground below the library window, he would have left incriminating foot-prints."

"As it was, he merely dropped his revolver as he climbed the rope back to his room, according to the theory of the esteemed Pycroft. Then, thirdly," continued Ferrers Locke, "comes the curious fact of those last words spoken by the dying man. According to the butler the professor said, 'Don't break open the sandals,' or it might have been 'sandal.' That was an amazing remark for a man to make who had been shot. And Dr. Kruse, the Harley Street specialist and old-time friend of the professor, who was in the room at the time, failed to hear the remark at all. I went home with Dr. Kruse, especially to subject him to some questions on the point of that pair of purple sandals, which the professor was known to have possessed. But he denied all knowledge of them."

Jack Drake gave a perplexed grunt.

"H'm! We know that Professor Erskine bought the sandals on his last visit to India," he said. "Dr. Kruse was with him during that trip to the East. It is strange that he should not have known of the existence of them."

"Kruse claims that the professor bought so many curios that he was not aware of half that were acquired by the old man," said Locke quietly. "That be as it may, we are still in the dark even as to whether the sandals have anything to do with the case or not. Pycroft may be right. The last words spoken by the professor may have been but the mere inconsequent raving of a stricken man. There were four men at Logan Lodge at the time the crime was

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committed—Derrick Erskine, Jennings the butler, Dr. Harvey Kruse, and Torgau, the doctor's chauffeur. One of these four men shot Professor Erskine, of that I have not the slightest doubt. But here we are in Whitehall."

With the skill born of long practice, Jack Drake swung the Hawk towards the kerb, and stopped dead before the door of that grim, massive edifice, the Home Office. Locke was out of the car and making his way across the pavement almost before it had stopped.

"Come with me, Drake!" he said.

A policeman saluted, recognising the great private sleuth, whose aid had been sought so often by the Yard. Inside the building a night commissioner was expecting the visitor. With incredible speed, considering it was a Government office, Locke and Drake found themselves turned over to the charge of a small, alert assistant secretary, and escorted to an imposing mahogany door on the first floor of the building. The secretary knocked and entered, then stood aside for the visitors to pass in. Hardly had they done so than their escort glided out and closed the door noiselessly behind him.

The room in which Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake found themselves was a sumptuously-furnished office. In the centre was a large flat desk, laden with papers and documents, above which hung a pendant electric light. At the desk facing them was a middle-aged man with broad, intelligent features surmounted by a shock of iron-grey hair, whose portrait was familiar to every man and woman in the kingdom. It was Newman Hall, the Home Secretary.

The great man rose from his desk and gestured towards an armchair. His keen, grey eyes appraised Drake coldly.

Locke noted the look and hastened to introduce his assistant.

"This is Jack Drake, sir, who helps me in my work. If you have sent for me in my professional capacity, I can assure you you may safely speak before him."

The Cabinet Minister bowed stiffly, and motioned Drake to a chair. Then he seated himself and turned towards the sleuth.

"On behalf of the British Government I wish to engage your services, Mr. Locke, on a case of the very greatest delicacy and importance. I will briefly explain the situation, and I am sure that your patriotism will cause you to drop any other case you may have on your hands at present and devote your whole time to the matter about which I have sent for you."

Ferrers Locke looked exceedingly grave. He knew that nothing save a matter of the greatest urgency would cause the Home Secretary to demand his presence at that unearthly hour of the day. On the other hand he felt in honour bound to look into the Dulwich murder mystery on behalf of Derrick Erskine, despite the fact that it looked as though his own client were the guilty party. He explained his difficulty to the Cabinet Minister.

"Well, listen to what I have to say, Mr. Locke," said Newman Hall. "Afterwards, in the light of your fresh knowledge you can decide upon how to act. Of course, I knew you were concerned in that Dulwich case, for when I rang up your number your Chinese servant informed me you were at Logan Lodge."

Picking up a sheet of typescript he adjusted his glasses and fingered the paper nervously.

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"You are a man of extensive knowledge, Mr. Locke," he said, looking up. "Therefore, it will occasion you no surprise when I mention that through the ages one of the greatest of unsolved problems has been how base metal might be converted into pure gold by chemical or other such processes."

Both Locke and Drake opened their eyes a trifle wider. For a moment they imagined that this august gentleman ensconced in his leathern chair might be pulling their legs. Perhaps he would next suggest commissioning them to discover the process which had baffled the alchemists and scientists of all the ages.

The Home Secretary was cognisant of their surprise; but, with a light cough, he resumed as calmly as though chatting about the weather or the price of Australian wool.

"Ahem! The process of converting base metal into gold has been the Golden Fleece which has lured the scientists before even the Pharaohs ruled in Egypt. But gold is the foundation of our modern financial systems. If such a method of making gold artificially were found, it would create a panic throughout the whole of the civilised world to-day. The consequences no man could foretell. At the best it would result in the greatest financial panic and social upheaval ever known. At the worst it would bring about the complete break-up of civilisation and the disintegration of our British Empire."

As he spoke the hands of the Cabinet Minister clenched and unclenched, as though he were labouring under some repressed inward stress or emotion. He paused to glance at the typewritten paper, which had slipped from his fingers and was lying on the desk before him. The two visitors watched him intently, wondering what on earth was coming next.

"Three months ago," went on Newman Hall, "a report came through from Berlin that a combined body of German scientists and chemists had succeeded where individual efforts had failed. It was reported that by a secret process they had evolved gold out of a composition of base metals, and that the process was comparatively cheap and easy. It was reported, too, that the German Government threatened that unless France released her from all obligations in respect to reparations this amazing discovery would be broadcast to the world. You may have seen the newspaper comments upon all this, Mr. Locke?"

"I have, sir. Fortunately, both reports were untrue."

"They were untrue," said the Home Secretary. "But for some hours after the news came through from Berlin there were sharp downward movements of all securities in our Stock Exchange and on the Bourses of the European capitals. Nevertheless, the great secret of how to convert base metal into gold has been unearthed."

The calmly spoken words fell on the ears of the two listeners like the bursting of a bomb. The detective gripped the arms of his chair and started forward in utter amazement.

"Would—would you mind repeating that last sentence, sir?" he said. "I—I'm not sure that I quite heard you."

A faint smile flickered across the serious face of the Home Secretary.

"I do not think your ears were at fault, Mr. Locke," he remarked. "But I can well understand your hesitancy to credit your own hearing. I repeat in all seriousness that I know that a workable method of converting base metal into gold has been discovered."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed the sleuth.

"And who else knows of this world-shattering discovery?"

The answer of the Home Secretary was as amazing as his original statement.

"No one," he replied.

"No one!" echoed Locke. "Then, at that rate, sir, either you yourself made the discovery or the discoverer is dead."

"Your second surmise is, of course, the correct one," answered Newman Hall calmly. "The discoverer of this great secret of the ages is dead. He died last night."

"Ah! And his name is—"

"Professor Arnold Erskine."

The Home Secretary in his quiet manner but spoke the name that had sprung to the forefront of Ferrers Locke's mind.

For a few moments after this naught could be heard in that sumptuously furnished room of the famous Government building save the monotonous ticking of a clock above the oaken mantelpiece. The Home Secretary, his face lined with care, gazed down upon the typescript on his desk.

But his eyes held a far-away look, as though he were lost in the contemplation of a tragedy of national importance. Jack Drake, silent and motionless as the sphinx, remained bolt-upright in his chair facing the Cabinet Minister. Ferrers Locke, on his part, sank back in his seat, his eyes rolling ceilingwards as the full import of the astounding news sank into his consciousness.

Suddenly the great detective shot upright in his seat. No longer was he the dreamer, weaving theories in that colossal mind of his; he was the astute man of action, his whole being vibrant with determination and enthusiasm.

"Tell me, sir," he said crisply, "if you are the only man in existence who knows of the professor's discovery, why did you send for me? Is there a possibility of its becoming known elsewhere?"

The member of the Government ran his powerful fingers through his iron-grey hair.

"There is, Mr. Locke—that is just the point. I myself do not know the professor's secret method of converting base metal into gold. But before he—er—died, he called upon me with ample proof that he had indeed solved the problem of the ages."

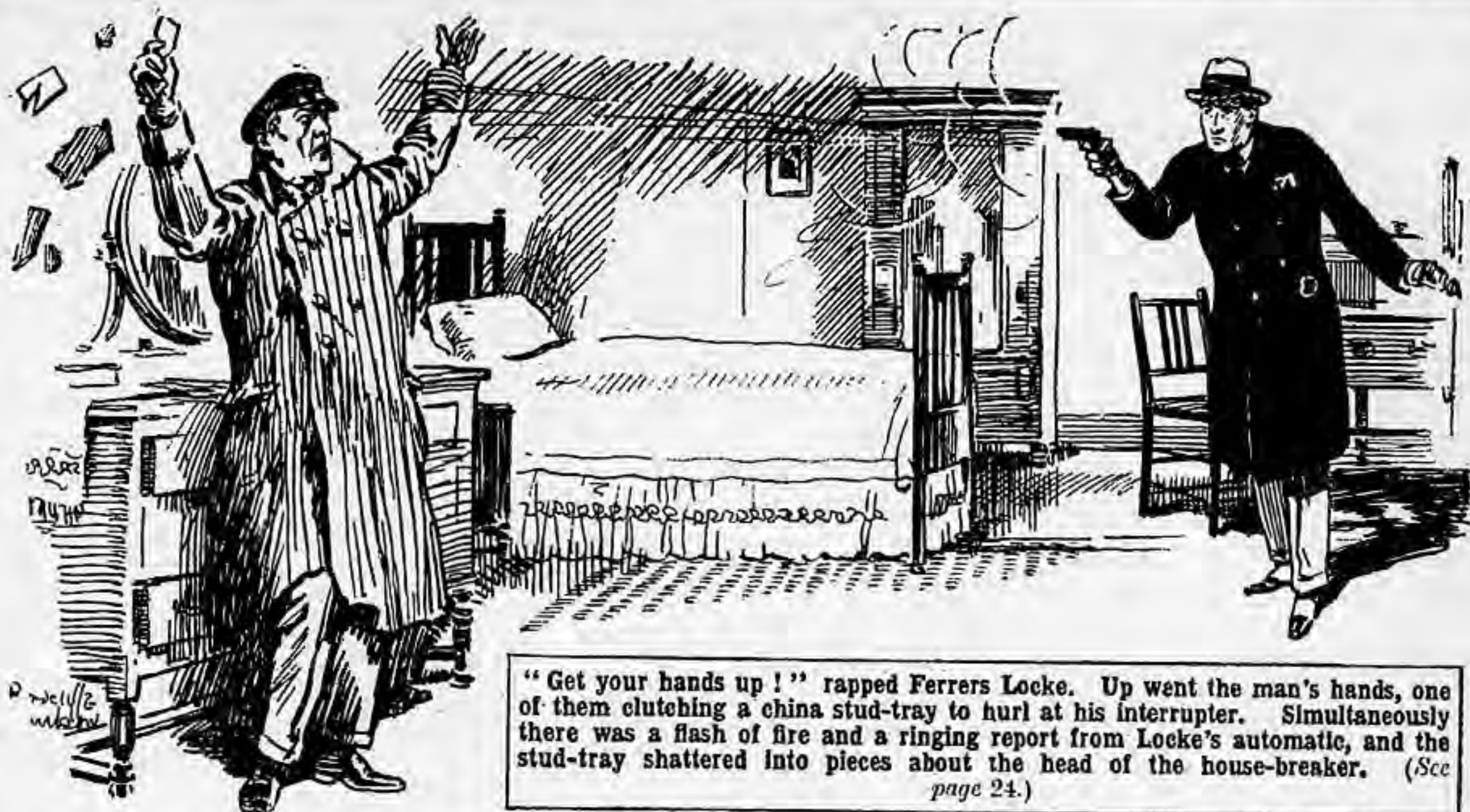
"I will not waste time with a description of the full proof that convinced me of this. I will content myself with saying merely that I actually saw quartz which had been treated by the electrical and chemical methods he adopted and which were in various stages of the transformation."

"Government analytical experts also saw these pieces of quartz and were convinced that the gold was produced artificially and by no process of nature."

"Did the experts know that Professor Erskine had submitted the samples?" asked Locke sharply.

"No; as far as I am aware, until I told you and your assistant this morning, I was the only living man who held that knowledge. Professor Erskine realised the danger of his discovery. He was a patriotic man, and he brought the matter directly to my notice in a strictly private interview in this very room. On his solemn oath he swore he had not told anyone else and would never divulge his secret to another soul without first having consultation with me. But Professor Erskine had set out his methods on a sheet of paper, the hiding-place of which he refused to tell me."

"He stated that before he died he



"Get your hands up!" rapped Ferrers Locke. Up went the man's hands, one of them clutching a china stud-tray to hurl at his interrupter. Simultaneously there was a flash of fire and a ringing report from Locke's automatic, and the stud-tray shattered into pieces about the head of the house-breaker. (See page 24.)

would destroy that paper; but last night he was foully murdered. Therefore, we must assume that he did not get the chance to destroy the secret paper, and that it is still in existence."

Ferrers Locke rose from his seat, hat in hand.

"And it is that paper you wish me to find, sir?" he asked quietly.

The Home Secretary brought his fist down on his desk with a thud.

"Find it, Mr. Locke—and destroy it! The mere existence of that paper containing, as it does, the secret of making gold chemically, is a danger to our country and the civilised world at large. Do you undertake this commission?"

"I do," said Locke.

The hands of the sleuth and of Britain's Home Secretary met in a firm hand-grip.

"Good!" said the Cabinet Minister. "Now listen; you need spare neither time nor money in the search for the missing paper. The Treasury will pay all the expenses you may incur. If the paper is found it is to be brought to me personally for destruction in my presence. If that should prove impossible, I rely on you to destroy it yourself."

At Ferrers Locke's request he wrote orders giving the sleuth free access to Logan Lodge where the professor was killed, and to the mortuary where the body had been taken. He mentioned that a police-officer had been set as guard in the library of the Lodge. Then he gave a farewell handshake to the sleuth and Drake, wished them luck, and touched a button on his desk for the official to show them out.

"And, remember, Mr. Locke," he emphasised in conclusion. "you have absolute carte blanche in this case, and the Treasury will meet your expenses whatever they may be. Papers will be sent by special messenger to your Baker Street address before breakfast authorising you to call upon the services of the police or any other public servants should you think fit. At a word, you may command a squadron of aeroplanes or a fleet of submarines. But the formula of Professor Erskine must be found—and destroyed!"

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Startling Developments!

BIG BEN was tolling the eerie hour of three as Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake left the Home Office and stepped into their car. Neither, of course, had had any sleep, and both were feeling a trifle jaded.

Driving down towards Westminster, they halted by the Houses of Parliament and partook of coffee at a stall in the middle of the roadway. Re-entering the car, Locke ordered Drake to drive with all speed to Logan Lodge.

Free from delays by other traffic, the swift motor-car speedily accomplished the journey. Little was said by either the sleuth or his assistant. But both realised well that the Home Secretary's revelation might provide a fresh link in unravelling the murder mystery.

With all the circumstantial evidence strong against Derrick Erskine, who had spent the night in a police-cell, there had been a damning factor of motive. As Pycroft had said, only Derrick Erskine had any motive for accomplishing the professor's death. But in the light of what Locke and Drake had learnt, there was the possibility of the professor's secret discovery being responsible for his death in some mysterious way.

Slowing down, Drake took the Hawk noiselessly up the drive of Logan Lodge, Dulwich, and stopped before the front porch. No light was to be seen in the front of the house, but this was not surprising.

"The butler has gone to bed," said Ferrers Locke. "The policeman will be in the library which is at the back of the house. Instead of knocking and rousing the butler, we will walk round the house, whistle to the constable, and get in by the library window."

With that the sleuth led the way along the drive and across the soft ground of the garden to the rear of the house. Here a dim light shone through the window of that fatal room where Professor Erskine had met his death by a revolver bullet.

Halting a couple of yards from the window, Locke whistled softly. No one

appeared at the half-open window in response.

The sleuth, followed by his assistant, crept up to the window. The body of the slain professor had been removed to the mortuary. Locke had expected to find that accomplished, but he was unprepared to find the library deserted by the policeman.

"My giddy aunt!" muttered Drake. "That bobby told off for duty by Pycroft must have gone to bed—and with his boots on, I expect. Shall I nip in, chief?"

"Do so, my boy; I'll follow."

With a light spring, Jack Drake reached the sill of the wide library window. Then his body suddenly stiffened and his eyes gazed downwards in a fixed stare, dilated with horror.

"Go on, my boy!" said Locke. "Why are you waiting?"

"Gov'nor," muttered the boy hoarsely, "the policeman isn't in bed—he's here!"

"The policeman in the library!"

Locke drew himself up and followed the direction of Drake's gaze to the library floor. And there, close under the window, lay a burly blue form, inert and terribly grim.

Next instant both Locke and Drake were on their knees by the motionless form of the unlucky policeman.

"Sandbagged!" muttered the sleuth. "He's had a bad crack on the back of the head, but he'll live. Evidently he was induced to look out of that window, and then, before he could withdraw, he was struck with the sandbag. Rendered unconscious, he slipped to the floor. See! Here are particles of sand which obviously escaped through a small tear in the bag when the blow was struck."

He stopped abruptly, and, raising his hand, listened intently.

"Drake, my boy, this poor chap won't hurt for a few minutes. Dip your handkerchief in that water carafe and bind it about his brow. Directly you have done that return swiftly and silently to the car. Hide near it and keep your revolver handy. If anyone attempts to pass you, hold him up till I come."

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"And you, chief?"

"In my opinion," whispered Locke, "the person responsible for this fresh outrage is in this house at this moment. I am going to find him."

Leaving the boy to follow the instructions which had been given him, Ferrers Locke crossed the library. As he moved, stealthily as a panther, he drew from his hip-pocket a grim-looking automatic pistol fully loaded.

The sleuth glided through the half-open library door into the gloomy hall. By the broad oaken staircase he paused and listened. From above there came to his ears a soft jingling sound, followed by a less metallic creaking.

With amazing speed Ferrers Locke mounted the stairs, keeping to the soft carpet with which they were laid. On the first landing he paused and strained his ears to listen. Again he distinctly heard the faint jingling noise. It came from a room on the first floor, the door of which was ajar.

There was no doubt in the mind of the detective that the man he wanted was in that room. Whether it was Jennings, the butler, or a total stranger, he could not surmise. He was startlingly aware, though, of the fact that the room with the half-open door was that of the bed-room formerly occupied by Derrick Erskine, the accused murderer of the old professor.

As he glided across the landing, revolver in hand, the impression obtained at first by the sleuth was that the room was in total darkness. But he quickly became aware that the person inside was using an electric torch, probably with a handkerchief tied over it to dull the glare.

Inch by inch Locke inserted himself through the door. At the dressing-table in the bed-room was a man, fully dressed even to his cap. The back of the intruder was towards the detective. The jingling sound which he had heard had been caused evidently by the movement of a small circular brass handle which dangled from an open drawer of the dressing-table. In this drawer the sinister visitor was searching.

So engrossed was he in his task that he did not hear the detective. In the dim reflection from the fellow's torch, the sleuth could just make out the electric-light switch by the door. His hand wandered quietly up to it and remained there, while his eyes reverted to the man.

Then with a sharp movement Locke turned on the electric switch and flooded the bed-room with light.

The man gave a startled gulp and half swung round. Sharp as the crack of a whip Locke's voice rang out.

"Get your hands up!"

Up went the man's hands, one of them clutching a china stud-tray to hurl at his interrupter. Simultaneously there was a flash of fire and a ringing report from Locke's automatic, and the stud-tray shattered into pieces about the head of the housebreaker.

A savage snarl left the lips of the man as he gazed into Locke's steady eyes, his trembling hands aloft. Recognition was mutual. It was George Forgan, the chauffeur of Dr. Harvey Kruse!

"Well, Forgan," murmured the sleuth smoothly. "I seem to have interrupted you in a little game of Hunt the Thing; or shoul' I say 'Hunt the Sandal'?"

"I don't know what you're drivellin' about," snarled Forgan. "You've caught me red-handed, and I'll go my stretch without whinin'."

Ferrers Locke eyed his captive through

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eyes narrowed to mere slits. Then he rapped out a question in the hope of taking the man off his guard.

"How much did Dr. Kruse pay you to come here to-night, Forgan?"

The chance shot went home, for the chauffeur turned pale and averted his gaze. A moment later the colour returned to his cheeks, and he replied with a voice ringing with anger:

"Dr. Kruse didn't send me here at all. I came on my own accord to find——" He stopped short and then blurted out: "Yah, you blamed nark! I'm not goin' to help you in your dirty work! Find out for yourself."

Just then shuffling footsteps were heard approaching the room. Forgan watched the sleuth like a lynx, hoping the latter would glance round. But Ferrers Locke was too old a bird at the game to do anything so foolish. Curtly he ordered the chauffeur to a position where he could watch not only the man but anyone who might enter the room.

Baffled in his hope of turning the tables, Forgan stood sullen and silent, while Jennings, the stout butler of the late professor, poked his pasty face round the door.

At the sight which met him he made as though to effect a very speedy withdrawal. But Locke sharply ordered him to enter.

"Jennings," said the detective, "the policeman who was left on as a guard over this house is lying unconscious in the library. Go and attend to him; but before you do so proceed to the front door and call to my assistant who is outside to come in to me."

The butler, clad only in pink-and-white pyjamas, trembled like a jelly.

"Oh, this is terrible—horrible!" he moaned. "What with murders and burglars and what-not, I won't sleep another night in this house! Oh dear, I——"

"Go, you old idiot!" snapped Locke impatiently. "Put a dressing-gown on, or you'll catch your death of cold. Then do as I told you."

Locke himself made Forgan march ahead of him down to the library, where the policeman still lay inert on the floor. He switched on more light and ran through the pockets of the chauffeur, bringing to light a revolver and a small, deadly-looking sandbag. But although he placed every article taken from the man upon the table, there was

nothing among them that did not obviously belong to the chauffeur himself.

When Drake entered, followed by the cringing butler, there was little explanation needed to put the boy wise to what had occurred. Only when at Locke's behest the youngster telephoned for the police did Forgan show signs of fear.

"You—you don't think I did in the old 'un last night, guv'nor?" he whined. "I was out by the doctor's car all the time. I swear I was! As like as not this here butler knows somethin' more about it than what he cares to say."

The butler made choking noises in his throat, and vehemently denied the allegation.

"Hold this revolver, Drake," said the detective. "I'm just going to slip upstairs for a minute."

It was five minutes ere he returned. His hands were behind him as he took up his position before Forgan. Then suddenly he whipped a crumpled pocket-handkerchief from behind his back and held it before the eyes of the prisoner.

"See, Forgan!" he said. "Is that what you came here for?"

The chauffeur gazed goggle-eyed. If ever guilt was written on the face of any human being it was on his at that instant.

"I see that at least part of my deductions are correct," went on Locke. "If the rest are right, Derrick Erskine did not kill his uncle, as he himself averred. The owner of this handkerchief killed Professor Erskine."

"Great pip!" exclaimed Jack Drake. "How do you figure that out, sir?"

"This is how I conceive the crime was committed, my boy. The assassin entered that room upstairs just before Derrick Erskine returned home last night. He fastened the rope to the washstand and hung it out of the window. Then he removed the revolver which Erskine kept in the dressing-table drawer. That done, he took a handkerchief from Erskine's drawer to wipe away any finger-prints which might have been left on the polished satinwood of the dressing-table. Apparently he turned away to adjust the rope, or something of that sort, and absent-mindedly slipped the handkerchief into his own pocket. Then, remembering himself, he went back to replace the handkerchief in the drawer. In his anxiety to get out of the place, he withdrew his own handkerchief, which was probably in the same pocket. This is the handkerchief, slightly scented with musk. Not till after he left this house did the murderer discover that he had put his own handkerchief back into the drawer, and by that means had left a piece of damning evidence against himself. Of course, by this time he has destroyed Erskine's handkerchief which he took by mistake."

Jack Drake gazed at the accused with horror.

"Then it was Forgan who killed the professor!" he muttered.

The chauffeur clawed the air with his upheld hands in a frenzy.

"It wasn't me! It wasn't me, guv'nor!"

Keeping his eye on the man, Locke inclined his head towards Drake's ear.

"He is speaking the truth," said the sleuth. "He was sent here to-night for that handkerchief. The shot that killed the old scientist was fired not from outside the library, but from inside, and the revolver dropped through the open window. The hand that slew Professor Erskine was that of his old-time friend, Dr. Harvey Kruse!"



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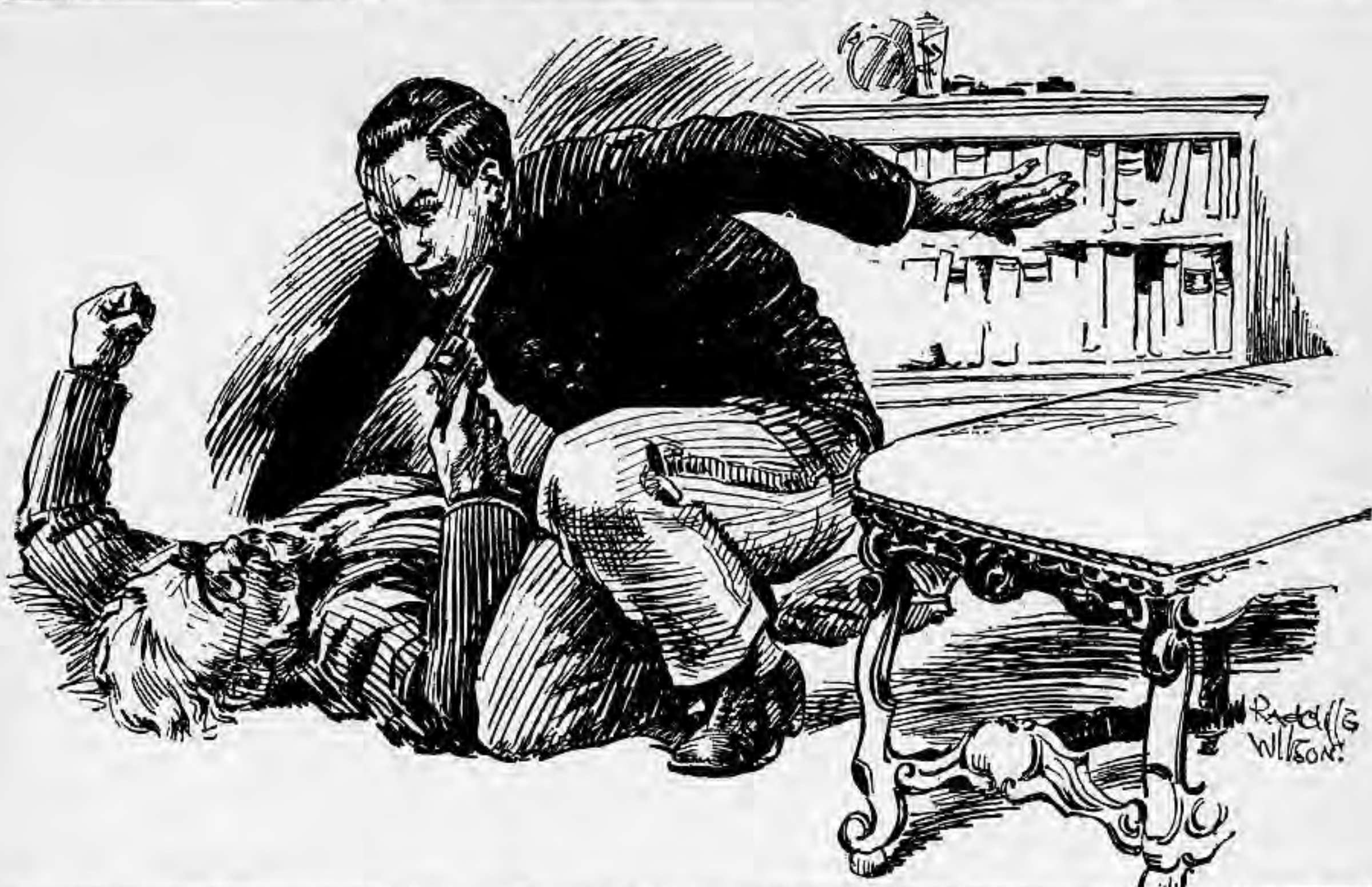
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"Poor beggar," muttered Locke, taken off his guard. "He's an epileptic!" The sleuth laid aside his revolver and stooped over the man, thinking of what he had read about the treatment of a fit of this kind. Almost immediately one of the clutching hands of the criminal rose with the discarded revolver tightly clenched in it, and the muzzle of the weapon was pressed against the detective's throat. The wild contortions of the doctor ceased abruptly and his voice came sharp as a knife. "Get up, Locke, or you're a dead man!" (See page 26.)

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Clue of the Handkerchief!

A LOUD toot on a motor-horn announced the arrival of the local police, who had lost amazingly little time in answering the telephone summons. By the time the butler brought in a sergeant and two constables, the other policeman who had been struck with the sand-bag had recovered somewhat.

Locke merely charged the chauffeur with house-breaking and assaulting the constable, and went into no explanations for reasons of his own. Then Forgan was marched out, and one of the other policemen left in the house in place of the injured man.

No sooner had the chauffeur been taken away, than Ferrers Locke requested Drake and the butler to accompany him to the drawing-room. The policeman remained in the library.

Firstly, he took his assistant to one side.

"Unless I am greatly mistaken, Forgan came back here this morning in the doctor's car. He must have left the motor in that small blind turning just before you reach Logan Lodge. Go and see if you can find it, my boy. If you can, drive it back to the doctor's garage, keeping your cap well over your eyes."

Then he went on to give his assistant long, detailed instructions as to how to act subsequently, arranging to meet the boy at eight o'clock at the upper end of Harley Street.

Directly Drake had hurried away on his errand, Locke turned his attention to the butler.

"Now, Jennings," he said, "you stated yesterday that you heard Professor Erskine in his dying breath refer

to some sandals. It is absolutely necessary that I should find those sandals, and as speedily as possible. Where are they?"

"I—I don't know, sir," whined the butler. "I told you that yesterday."

Finding he could get nothing more out of the butler, Locke made the man conduct him about the house. He examined the curios about the place, he peered into every cupboard and nook and cranny, and even searched the laboratory, but without success.

"The sandals were in this house," said Locke severely, after this waste of time. "They were here only two days ago, by your own admission. Their loss may implicate you in the very serious crime that was committed here last night. I solemnly warn you of that."

The lips of the pasty-faced butler quivered with fear. Then he broke down. In broken accents he confessed to having stolen the purple Indian sandals, a carved box of Eastern make, an ebony idol, and a pair of ivory Chinese chopsticks from the professor's collection. He had sold the lot for three pounds to Hawthorne, the curio-dealer in the Waterloo Road.

With a few lashing words of contempt for the man, the great detective secured his hat and strode straight from the ill-fated house. Entering the Hawk, he drove rapidly through the suburbs towards the city.

It was half-past seven in the morning when he drew up outside the shop of the curio dealer. The shop was not open, and Hawthorne himself appeared none too pleased to see a customer when he opened the door in response to Locke's persistent hammering.

"I understand that you purchased a pair of purple sandals the other day,

Mr. Hawthorne," said Ferrers Locke politely. "I am anxious to secure them, and am prepared to pay you cash down five times the price you gave for them."

The old curio-dealer, though his eyes were alight with greed, made a gesture of despair.

"But I haven't got 'em," he said regretfully. "They were bought by a customer yesterday."

By no outward sign did Locke reveal the bitterness of his heart at the news.

"To whom did you sell them?" he asked. "What did the customer look like?"

The old man shook his whitened head.

"Dunno," he said shortly. "My assistant sold the things, and he won't be here at the shop for another hour yet. Call again if you like."

Thanking the man, Locke entered his car, reflecting sadly that the lot of the professional investigator is very far from being a bed of roses.

Barely had he time now to keep his appointment with Jack Drake. Driving across Waterloo Bridge, he was lucky to get into no serious traffic blocks. Purposely he avoided passing through Harley Street, making instead a slight detour to bring him to the upper end. Here he found his assistant already waiting.

Directly he drew up by the kerb, Drake slipped a small white object into the sleuth's hand.

"Here you are, chief—a handkerchief belonging to Dr. Kruse!"

"Excellent, my boy!" said Locke approvingly. "How did you manage to get it?"

"I quietly borrowed it from his pocket during a chat I had with him at his

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garage, sir. Things were easier than I expected. I hadn't to break into his house at all. When I took the car to the doctor's garage it was still pretty dark. As I drove in, Kruse himself came out of a side door of his residence. 'Did you get it, Forgan?' he asked. I switched off the lights of the car, and imitating the chauffeur's voice, replied that I hadn't. 'Then that confounded detective, Locke, must have found the handkerchief!' said Kruse. 'He won't know it's mine, but it's too dangerous a piece of evidence to leave in his hands.'

'He guessed rightly there!' chuckled Locke. 'If this handkerchief you obtained, my boy, is of the similar texture to the one I found in the drawer at Logan Lodge, and is similarly scented, it will be the means of putting a rope round the neck of Dr. Kruse. Is there anything else?'

'I asked him what he intended to do,' said Drake. 'From his answer I gathered he intended to visit you this morning at Baker Street. He will probably come in disguise.'

'Most likely,' said Locke. 'I shall now return home and subject these handkerchiefs we have obtained to some careful tests beneath my microscopes. Meantime, you go and have your breakfast, and then proceed to the shop of Hawthorne, the curio-dealer in the Waterloo Road. Find out from his assistant all you can about the customer who purchased from him a pair of purple sandals.'

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Man in the Blue Spectacles!

THE clocks of the neighbourhood were striking the hour of ten that morning when a very elderly-looking gentleman with a close-clipped, white beard, halted before the door of Ferrers Locke's residence in Baker Street. For a moment or two he gazed at the door uncertainly through the blue spectacles he was wearing. After this brief survey he staggered to the door, leaning heavily on his stick, and gave a sharp rat-tat.

There was a short interval, and the door was opened by a blue-clad figure, yellow of face, and with the high cheek bones of the true Mongolian.

'Is Mr. Locke in?' inquired the old gentleman in a wheezy voice. 'I am Mr. Crawford, a director of the Scaw Fisheries Company, and I wish to see him on a matter of important business.'

'Missa Locke no in,' replied the yellow man. 'Missa Locke go out for walkee—plenty soon come back—fifteen minutes perlaps. You likee come in and wait?'

'Indeed I would!' said the old gentleman gratefully. 'You are Sing Sing, his Chinese servant, are you not? I have heard of you. And is there not a youth named Rake or Bake who is employed by your master?'

'You allee same mean Missa Drake,' said the Chinaman, as he took the visitor's hat. 'He is out, too. You likee leave that nicee cloak on hall-stand, Missa Crawford?'

'Er, no, I thank you, my man. Show me to your master's consulting-room.'

The Chinaman led the way upstairs and saw the visitor settled in a chair in the consulting-room with a magazine to read. Then, with the stealthy tread of a cat, he quietly withdrew.

Hardly had the servant left the room when a remarkable change came over the bent, infirm old gentleman. Almost leaping out of his chair he discarded his blue glasses, and began making a rapid search of the detective's desk and other articles of furniture in the room. Suddenly his roving eyes lighted on a square of cambric by a powerful microscope near the window of the room. He stooped, and sniffing at the handkerchief, detected the faint odour of musk, a scent he used in minute quantity. A gloating cry of triumph left his lips.

'The handkerchief!'

Quickly he took a box of matches from his pocket, and, tossing the handkerchief into the empty firegrate, lighted it and watched it burn. That done, he rubbed his hands together in an ecstasy of glee, and adjusting his blue glasses, made for the door. He opened the door, and was about to step out of the room when he found himself confronted by the Chinese who had ushered him upstairs.

'Oh, Sing Sing,' remarked the old man, in his wheezy voice, 'I do not think I shall wait longer, I—'

He stopped short and started back in

alarm. For the old gentleman in the blue spectacles had become aware that the Chinaman held an automatic pistol in his hand, and that the muzzle of the weapon was pointing directly at his body!

For but a second the visitor was staggered. Then his hands made a swift movement as though to plunge under his black cloak. Immediately, the blue-clad figure barked out an abrupt order. 'Put your hands up, or I'll drill you—Dr. Harvey Kruse!'

And the voice was that of Ferrers Locke.

At the muzzle of the pistol, the disguised detective forced the other back into the consulting-room. A grim smile lighted the made-up face of the great detective as he glanced towards the microscope by the window.

'So you fell into my trap completely, doctor,' he murmured. 'No; I was not so careless as to leave your handkerchief about for you to destroy. That one you burnt in the grate was one of my own—scented especially for your benefit. The handkerchief you left at Logan Lodge when you visited the room of Derrick Erskine last night, and the one that my assistant, Jack Drake, picked from your pocket this morning, are at present on their way to the home of Inspector Pyecroft of Scotland Yard. I have sent Sing Sing, my servant, with them, and a message requesting Pyecroft to come here as soon as he likes. Knowing you were likely to call this morning, I adopted this disguise. By means of it I was able to get wise to you without your being aware of my presence.'

The captured man gave a great shudder.

'Egad, you're smarter by far than I gave you credit for being, Mr. Locke,' he said. 'I know when I'm beaten, but—but I never thought to finish my life on the scaffold.'

The whole massive frame of the man shook with the intensity of his emotion. The face of Ferrers Locke, though, was as inflexible as steel.

'Yet you could send your old friend, Professor Erskine, to his doom with a murderous bullet,' he said sternly. 'And you could stand by and see an innocent man suffer for your crime.' As he spoke, his left hand wandered beneath the black cloak the doctor was wearing, and produced a revolver, which he tossed aside. 'There is one thing, Dr. Kruse,' he went on, 'that puzzled me at first in the elucidation of this mystery. It was what motive anyone but Derrick Erskine might have for doing away with the professor. Now I know. By some means you discovered that the old scientist had made a remarkable discovery—nothing less, in fact, than the conversion of base metal into gold. With your old friend out of the way you thought you would be able to acquire the secret of that process. Not, however, till you heard the last words of the stricken man were you able to judge of the hiding-place of the paper containing that secret.'

'Your knowledge is positively uncanny, Locke,' said the doctor, with an evil smile. 'But the purple sandals have disappeared, and even you will have your work cut out to find them. There are—some things—that—'

His words grew strangely halting, and his hands clawed wildly above his head, while his face worked as though some disease had stricken the man. Then,

(Continued on next page.)

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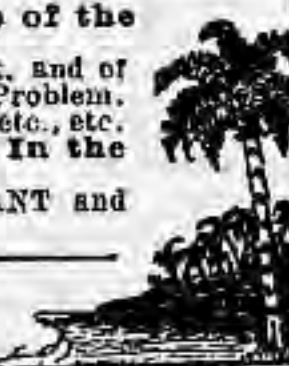
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BUCCANEERS The MAIN! THE CHART OF DEATH!

(Continued from page 2.)

hastened on their journey not one of them bore himself more steadily than Noel Hart, although he believed that each day brought him nearer to death. He was ready to meet his fate, if he could only save his comrades first.

But Dampier and his men were loaded with the silver, and, in spite of all they could do, they could not shake off the dons, who followed them relentlessly.

As they struggled through the dense forests and the trackless wilds they could never be sure that their foes would not suddenly overtake them, and overwhelm them by sheer weight of numbers.

They dared not halt at night until they had found a hiding-place in some fast thicket or secret cave, and they never slept without leaving one of their number to keep watch.

It was on the second night after they had left the dead Indian behind them, and they were hopeful that the sea was not far away.

Dampier would not have halted at all, but his men were so utterly spent that they could not have reeled on, even had the Spaniards been in sight.

So they sought for a hidden cave in the side of a mountain on the verge of the forest, and sank down in it.

So cunning had Mark Fangs been that none of the buccaneers suspected that he was a traitor, and as it was his turn to mount guard he was left to keep watch while his companions slumbered.

But in the middle of the night Noel Hart started up, warned by a strange sensation that evil was in the air. There was a suspicious rustling in the forest near the mouth of the cave, and he caught a glimpse of a man stealing away.

Swiftly and noiselessly he darted after the fugitive, with a foreboding that if he did not overtake him disaster would fall on the buccaneers.

He was deep in the heart of the forest before he overtook the man. He sprang on him just as he was stopping to raise a cry, and the sound was choked on the traitor's lips.

He writhed round like a tiger, snatched out a dagger, and stabbed at Noel. But the lad's strong fingers encircled his wrist and forced round his blade, which pierced his own black heart.

A ray of moonlight slanted through the foliage to reveal to Noel the ghastly, dead face of Mark Fangs; and then there was a flash of steel, and he was surrounded by a powerful band of Spaniards.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

'Twixt Life and Death!

"SURRENDER, or die!"

The command of the dons sounded ominously, but the British lad's reply to it was to set his back against a huge tree, and prepare to sell his life as dearly as he could.

"Old England for ever, and confusion to the King of Spain!" was his defiant shout as his sword clashed against the blades of the Spaniards.

It was a bold fight, but a hopeless one, for numbers were terribly against him. He was captured at last, but not until he had accounted for more than one of his enemies. Then the most terrible ordeal of his life began.

Mark Fangs had plotted to meet the Spaniards and guide them to the hidden cave, where they would have surprised the buccaneers; and they did not kill Noel at once, because they hoped to make him lead them to the hiding-place of his companions.

They threatened him with torture and death if he did not obey them, but he had only one reply:

"It is easier to die than be a traitor!"

He hoped to conceal the chart of living death from his captors, but his rags would not cover it. Most of them were perplexed and baffled by the crimson band, which was now inflamed and swollen like a mortifying wound.

There was, however, among the dons a

chirurgian, or doctor, who had mixed so much among the Indians that he had learned many of their darkest secrets; and he knew what the brand signified, and also he knew that old Alacor had been mistaken in supposing that there was no antidote for the poison.

He drew from under his cloak a small phial full of a colourless liquor, which he held up before the English lad.

"Hearken to me, youth!" he said. "The poison of the brand is working at last, and you will be dead to-morrow unless you drink the antidote in this phial. Tell me where Dampier and his band are hidden, and you shall have it!"

Noel set his teeth.

"Never!"

He persisted in his refusal, in spite of all the efforts of the enraged dons to force him to give in. All through the remainder of that night the Spaniards sought for Dampier and his men, but the buccaneers had chosen their hiding-place well, and they were not discovered.

When the next day dawned the search was still carried on, but Noel was left behind in the Spanish camp, guarded by the chirurgian and some of the men.

The sleep of death was stealing on him. The poison was doing its fell work.

In vain he tried to rouse himself. As the day crept on the stupor grew more heavy, until a dull grey mist floated before his eyes, and he could scarcely raise his head.

And at intervals the chirurgian kept holding up the phial, and saying:

"Tell me where Dampier and the dogs who follow him are hidden, and you shall live!"

Noel understood, but made no reply until the night was closing in again. Then, as the Spaniard once more made his proposal, it was as if the fire of life flared up in the lad's veins for the last time.

With a supreme effort he staggered to his feet and leaped at the chirurgian's throat.

"Help, comrades—help!"

The cry burst from him involuntarily, and he never expected that it would be answered, but it was.

Captain Dampier and his crew had quitted the cave, and, unaware that their foes were so near, were searching in the forest for Noel and Mark Fangs.

At the very moment when the lad was struggling with the chirurgian, and while the other Spaniards in the camp were hastening to the man's help, Dampier himself burst through the undergrowth and rushed into the camp, with the buccaneers at his heels.

"Death to the dons!"

A fierce cry and a shot, and the chirurgian dropped. Noel staggered into the arms of his captain, but managed to gasp a word about the precious antidote.

The phial was snatched from the dead Spaniard, and then the buccaneers swept aside the foes who would have stopped them, and, plunging into the forest, were far away before the main body of the dons could arrive on the scene.

The antidote saved Noel from death by a second's space, and the buccaneers, following the branded chart, hastened on, threw off the pursuing Spaniards, and gained the coast of Yucatan, where their ship was waiting to receive them and their silver treasure.

THE END.

(Be sure and read the second story in this powerful series, boys, appearing next Monday, entitled: "Captain Kidd's Treasure!")

4

LONG, COMPLETE SCHOOL TALES

IN THE

POPULAR

EVERY WEEK.

THE QUEST OF THE PURPLE SANDALS!

No. 2.—The Missing Formula!

(Continued from previous page.)

with a gurgling cry, he fell crashing back upon the floor. His hands groped wildly round, tugging at his clothes and clawing at his mouth as he writhed on the carpet.

Ferrers Locke gazed down upon him like a tiger watching an injured bullock. At first he suspected a trick, but he saw splashes of yellow froth at the man's lips, and at once dropped on his knees by the side of the man.

"Poor beggar!" he muttered. "He's an epileptic."

He laid his revolver aside, and stooped over the man, thinking of what he had read about the treatment of a fit of this kind. Almost immediately one of the clutching hands of the criminal rose with the discarded revolver tightly clenched in it, and the muzzle of the weapon was pressed against the detective's throat. The wild contortions of the doctor ceased as though by magic, and his voice came as sharp as a knife.

"Get up, Locke, or you're a dead man!"

Ferrers Locke scrambled to his feet, amazed beyond words and crestfallen as he had never been in his life before.

Again the doctor spoke.

"Very realistic fit, was it not? I brought a small piece of shaving-soap to slip into my mouth in case of need. One never knows when a fit with frothing at the mouth may prove useful. Now get into that corner and turn your back. For my own sake I've no wish to shoot unless you compel me. I don't want to attract attention. But I'm a desperate man. Give me your word that you will not make any move to apprehend me for five minutes, and I'll give you your life. Yes or no?"

And Locke, smarting under his defeat, half turned and shouted a defiant "No!"

Next instant the butt of the revolver descended with a sickening crash on the back of the sleuth's skull, and Ferrers Locke rolled in an unconscious heap upon the floor.

When he recovered consciousness, the detective found himself surrounded by people. Mr. B was present, and Inspector Pyecroft, Sing Sing, and two police constables. But the man he most wanted to see of anyone in the world had vanished.

It was not often Locke had to confess to a mistake, but he now realised only too well that he had made one. Quietly and without attempting to justify himself, he told how he had been tricked.

"I'd ha' done the same as you did, Mr. Locke," admitted Pyecroft generously. "After all, you have done one mighty good thing—obtained enough evidence to save young Erskine from the gallows."

"Yes, I suppose I must feel contented with that for the present," said Ferrers Locke, with a wan smile. Then his face grew stern and set again as he added: "But by heavens, I'll bring that foul assassin, Kruse, to justice if I have to hunt him through the five Continents!"

THE END.

(Now order next Monday's MAGNET, which contains another thrilling episode in the Quest of the Purple Sandals, entitled: "The Canadian Mail-Boat Mystery!")

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 247.

Next Monday's Programme!

"THE BARRING OF BUNTER!"

By Frank Richards.

Next Monday's "Magnet" will be noteworthy for several extremely interesting reasons. The chief feature is a record bill in this really big, and thoroughly characteristic yarn of Greyfriars. Mr. Frank Richards takes Bunter by the hand, as it were, and leads the humorous and chatty fatling away into the wilderness. No need to imagine that the Owl goes seeking adventures in distant lands where no man does him know. There is a wilderness close at hand, and it is a particularly dreary one, namely, the wilderness of silence! Bunter is dumped into Coventry for his misdeeds, and he hates the doleful experience.

BY ORDER OF THE REMOVE!

Talk, and the world talks to you, or it may condescend to chat a bit if it is in a good temper. But to be condemned to silence means a lot of loneliness. This sort of thing is entirely foreign to the character of Bunter. He likes to converse, but no fellow can keep up bright and lively sallies if there are no replies to his smart things. But mum's the word. Bunter has overstepped the mark at last, and the Remove east him out. Not a word is said to him. The whole affair is horrible to Bunter. He must have someone to talk to. The story hums with brisk actuality, and there may be some sympathy for the outcast, for the

world is inclined to be sloppily sentimental. But Bunter is the limit, and it is not really surprising that at long last he gets barred.

"CAPTAIN KIDD'S TREASURE!"

You will like the second yarn in our great pirate series. Who has not heard of the famous, or infamous Captain Kidd? The exploits of this celebrated buccaneer simply ring down through the years. Next week's tale has a proper punch in it, and plenty of romance—not romance of the high-flown, rose-water order, but something deeper, which gives one an impression of the drama of the sea and the pitilessness of the pirate's code. They did not play with life, nor quibble over ways and means in the old days of the Jolly Roger, which have faded out now behind a thousand sunsets. The coming yarn is a brilliant affair altogether, and you will revel in the mystery surrounding a certain ancient black book, between whose covers is hidden, as often enough happens, a secret for which men are prepared to sell their lives. Keep your eye on this series, and make a special note of the treat for Monday next. I can promise you a yarn full of the right atmosphere, something which gets right down to the realities and the fascination of the always welcome history of the sea, and of the men who were the masters of the sea.

"THE CANADIAN MAIL-BOAT MYSTERY!"

This is the third complete story in our notable series of detective tales, "The Quest of the Purple Sandals." I will say out of hand it is the finest yet, which is admitting a good deal, for these Purple

Sandal yarns have gone with a flourish, and they are real stayers. Never for a single second does the interest waver. Have you ever met Ferrers Locke under more amazing conditions? I doubt it. I was asked the other day by a fervid admirer of the great sleuth whether he was going to continue to figure weekly in the "Magnet." I should say so. While there is the present steady demand for his presence Locke will be on the spot. By the way, I might mention while I am about it that this series was run into our programme in response to innumerable requests. "Magnet" readers have but to ask for what they want. They are sure to get it.

A HEALTH AND STRENGTH
SUPPLEMENT!

Now that the jolly old summer is hovering round at the door, so to speak, asking its cheery self whether it shall manipulate the knocker and make its genial presence felt, it was right and proper to introduce such a supplement as you will find in the next issue of the "Magnet." For, be it remembered, you cannot really enjoy the summer unless you are healthy and strong. That is a point to be pinned into one's hat lest it is forgotten. There is another consideration, too. After the furious winter everybody has "enjoyed" it is likely enough you are feeling a touch jaded. The flu leaves its mark. Therefore, be early on the move in quest of the advice tendered in the new supplement. Greyfriars heralds the summer in topping style.

Your Editor.

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