

HARRY WHARTON—THE SCHOOLBOY SHEIK!

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The Magnet

LIBRARY

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EVERY SATURDAY.



PICKED FOR A LEADING PART!

For a long time it has been Harry Wharton's ambition to act for the films, but he never bargained on playing the star part which the Perfection Film Company has seen fit to give him! Read this week's fine schoolboy adventure story inside.



Come Into the Office, Boys!

Always glad to hear from you, chums, so drop me a line to the following address: The Editor, The "Magnet" Library, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

NOTE.—All Jokes and Limericks should be sent to c/o "Magnet," 5, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.4 (Comp.).

THRILLS OF THE DIRT-TRACK!

If I feel like patting myself on the back for once again having anticipated the wishes of MAGNET readers, you chaps must forgive me. During the past fortnight shoals of letters have reached me in praise of the fine serial yarn by George E. Rochester, and that praise is well deserved. In my opinion "The Black Hawk" is one of the finest stories ever presented to readers of the MAGNET. But what of its successor? "Can we have a dirt-track yarn" is, in effect, what my correspondents have asked. Ha, ha! I already have a topping story of the dirt-track in hand! Over a month ago, Mr. Carney Allan, who is an expert at writing this type of yarn, had a chat with me, and the outcome was that Carney Allan went home and began to write the serial story that will follow "The Black Hawk." He's completed the yarn—and, jingo, boys, it's a stunner! Thrill follows thrill as this new author to the MAGNET unwinds his narrative in a style that is both pleasing and holding. We get the atmosphere of the dirt-track; we can almost hear the booming note of the exhausts as these specially-tuned motor-bikes hurtle round the track at breakneck speed. Everything that goes to make a good, realistic story is present in

"SPEEDWAY PALS!"

By A. Carney Allan.

You'll find the opening chapters in next week's bumper issue, and, take it from me, you'll be impatient to read the second and subsequent instalments the moment you have sampled this new treat. Don't forget, boys, this new serial starts next week.

M.D., of Norwich, tells me he is seventeen, and asks how he can become a midshipman in the Navy. I am afraid, M.D., that you can't, because you are much too old. A midshipman must first of all begin as a cadet, to gain which position he must pass a very stiff entrance examination. Older boys are taken into the Royal Naval Reserve as midshipmen, but only if they have served at least two years as an apprentice or cadet in the Mercantile Marine.

Here is a question which has puzzled more than one person:

WHERE IS RURITANIA?

John Wake asks it. There's no such place, John. The name "Ruritania" was given by Anthony Hope to a fictitious country in one of his novels. But the word has now passed into common use, and we dub all "musical-comedy" nations as being "Ruritanian." Before the war Germany had many little "tin-pot" principalities attached to her, but they have nearly all been done away with now, although there are still a few countries in the Balkans which might be described as "Ruritanian."

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NOW FOR A LAUGH!

Here's a winning limerick from the pen of Tom King, Wayside, Wheelers Lane, King's Heath, Birmingham, for which he receives a useful leather pocket wallet.

A Greyfriars fellow named Wun Lung
Is a wonderful cook, although young.

He makes soup "velly nicee"

With cats, rats and "white micee."

And with doggy make nicee "ex-tongue."

Got the idea, chums? Good! Then send in your efforts to the address shown at the top of this page, and see if you can win these leather pocket wallets.

APRIL THE FIRST!

I must admit that I am as fond of a practical joke as anybody is, and if I could jape you "Magnetites," I would do so, seeing that this issue will be in your hands on the First of April! I remember that when I was at school, we had an amateur magazine of our own, and it happened that one issue was published on April 1st. The fellow who edited it told us what a wonderful number he had in readiness for us, and there was considerable excitement to get hold of it as soon as it was published. You can guess what we said when we opened it and discovered that all the pages were blank, except the last one, and on that was printed "April Fool!"

Well, I can't very well be as heartless as to perpetrate such a joke on you, so here is the MAGNET as usual. The only fellows who will be made April fools are those who haven't ordered their copies in advance, and who will be told by their newsagent that he is "sold out!" I hope that doesn't happen to you!

HAVE YOU HEARD THIS ONE?

At a local police court, "Bruiser" Bill, the terror of the neighbourhood, appeared for the fifth time in five weeks.

"What's the charge to-day?" asked the magistrate.

"Disorderly conduct, sir."

The magistrate rubbed his chin thoughtfully.

"You're a regular customer here," he said, "and always charged with disorderly conduct or fighting the police. If you're so fond of fighting, why don't you go for a soldier?"

"I did once," retorted the accused, "but he nearly killed me!"

A pocket-knife has been awarded to: J. Milgate, 5, Sixth Avenue, Blyth, Northland.

If you other chaps know of a good joke, send it in. I have plenty of pocket-knives in stock waiting to be won.

WHO INVENTED THE SUBMARINE?

asks G. T. Green, of Walthamstow. Several people had a shot at it, but the most successful one was built by an American named Bushnell, who tried it out in 1775. Previous to that, the idea of under-water navigation had interested many people, and in the early part of the

seventeenth century, a Dutchman named Cornelius Drebbell created something of a furore by navigating a boat manned by twelve rowers under water in the Thames. Nowadays, submarines have made tremendous strides, as you can see by the photographs of new craft of this type which appear from time to time in the Press.

Do you remember Jules Verne's story "Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea?" Verne was certainly something of a prophet, because, although his story was written "donkey's ages" ago, the submarine which he

described was remarkably similar to the British "K" class of submarine which only came into being during the last years of the war. Which just shows you how fiction very often forestalls fact!

Here is a selection of

THINGS WORTH KNOWING

in answer to queries which various readers have put to me. Jim Donnell wants to know the distance of the horizon. It all depends how high you are when you look at the horizon. If you are standing at sea level, Jim, your eyes will be about five feet above, and you will then see the horizon at 2½ miles distance. If your eye was 10 feet above sea level, you would see the horizon at four miles distance.

The greatest known depth of the ocean (this is in reply to H. T. of Chorlton) is 32,636 feet. This depth was recorded 154 miles South East of Tokio.

Bert Cook, of Bognor, wants to know if it would be possible to send

AN AIRSHIP TO THE SUN?

It wouldn't, Bert, for many reasons, the chief one, of course, being that it would be destroyed long before it reached there. But, even supposing that a non-combustible airship could be sent on such a journey, and it attained a regular speed of, say, fifty miles per hour, it would take it no less than 210 years to complete the journey!

"FLYING!"

A Manchester reader who signs himself "Flying" wants to know who won the aerial race for the King's Cup in 1925. Captain F. L. Barnard was the victor on that occasion and he flew a 395 h.p. Siskin V plane at the average speed of 151½ miles an hour. Yes, Sir Alan Cobham did win this famous race; that was in the year 1924, and his average speed was 106½ miles an hour. Glad to learn that you think our "flying" serial is the "goods," my Manchester chum, and you're quite right—the fellow who wrote "The Black Hawk" was a pilot in the Great War, and a good pilot, too!

And now, to finish up, let us see

WHAT THE BLACK BOOK SAYS

concerning next week's splendid issue. First of all there is the long, complete Greyfriars yarn: "Harry Wharton's Peril." All of you will enjoy this story, dealing with the further adventures of the Greyfriars chums during their stay in Hollywood. Then there's the opening instalment of Carney Allan's "dirt-track" story, entitled:

"SPEEDWAY PALS!"

which I strongly recommend you to read. No, I'm not forgetting Dick Nugent, for he supplies us with another long laugh in

"DR. BIRCHEMALL AND THE DRAGON!"

Our "chat" will be included as usual, and there will be more prize-winning jokes and Greyfriars limericks. Order early, boys—saves disappointment.

YOUR EDITOR.

GET BUSY ON THIS FIRST-CLASS SCHOOLBOY ADVENTURE YARN RIGHT AWAY, CHUMS!

THE SCHOOLBOY SHEIK!



A full-o'-pep story of the adventures of Harry Wharton & Co. of Greyfriars, in America!

By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Trouble!

"THUNDER!"
"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" murmured Bob Cherry.
"Something's up!"
"Gee-whiz!"

"The upfulness is terrific!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Carry me home to die!"
Evidently, something was "up."

Mr. Rigg Schootz, director of Perfection Picture Syndicate, not infrequently grew excited.

Since Harry Wharton & Co. had joined the movie company at Hollywood, they had often beheld Mr. Schootz in a volcanic state.

Hardly a scene could be "shot," without Mr. Schootz roaring through his megaphone like a Bull of Bashan once or twice, if not half a dozen times.

Mr. Schootz was not performing on the megaphone now. But, really, he might have been, to judge by the powerful volume of his voice.

In every corner of the old adobe ranch-house on the location Mr. Schootz's voice could be heard.

It rang from his office; it echoed across the patio; it reverberated up and down Jack-Rabbit Canyon.

Often as Mr. Schootz was in a passion, he excelled himself this time, and broke his own record.

"I guess Schootz is sure shooting off his mouth some," remarked Fisher T. Fish. "His mad's sure up! That gink Bunter been playing his dog-gone tricks again?"

"Oh, really, Fishy—"

"The dear man seems quite excited!" remarked Lord Mauleverer.

"He do, he does!" chuckled Johnny Bull.

"I'll tell a man!" came Mr. Schootz's reverberating voice. "I'll tell the world! Does the geek think I'll stand for it? What—what!"

Harry Wharton & Co. looked at one another, and smiled. They wondered what the row was, and who it was that had got Mr. Schootz's goat so emphatically that morning.

"Not little us this time!" grinned Bob.

Perfection Films pay Myron Polk a fabulous salary for posing before the camera. But when it comes to risking his neck, Myron Polk's a jibber. And that's how Harry Wharton, a mere schoolboy, gets the chance of his life, and emerges from a terrifying ordeal with the honours thick upon him!

Harry Wharton & Co. were loitering in the tree-shaded, flower-scented patio of the old rancho. That morning they were idle. The big school film was not in the programme that morning. A more important matter was on hand.

Myron Polk, the Perfection "star," was on the scene with the black Arab horse he rode in his character of the "sheik"—Ahmed Din, Lord of the Desert. When the Perfection star was on the scene, the Greyfriars fellows took second place.

Mr. Van Duck, the assistant director, had just come back to the rancho, the headquarters of the Perfection company, on location. He had gone into Mr. Schootz's office. Then the explosion occurred—or rather, the earthquake. Explosion was too mild a word for Mr. Schootz's outburst!

"Polk's been up to something!" said Frank Nugent sagely. "He's been putting on too many airs!"

"Shouldn't wonder," agreed Harry Wharton.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here comes jolly old Schootz!" murmured Bob Cherry.

The juniors respectfully ceased to smile, as the director came out of his office.

But Mr. Schootz did not glance at them.

He came out stamping, his fat face red with wrath, the bald top of his head shining in the sun.

Mr. Van Duck followed him out. The assistant director looked perturbed.

"Polk says—" he was saying as he followed Mr. Schootz.

"Dog-gone Polk!" hooted Mr. Schootz. "Does Polk think he's running Perfection Pictures? I'll say he isn't!"

And Mr. Schootz stamped away out of the arched adobe entrance of the rancho, the assistant director at his heels.

"I say, you fellows!" grinned Billy Bunter. "That beast Polk's for it this time! Serve him jolly well right!"

"Let's go and see the circus!" suggested the Bounder.

"Let's!" said Bob Cherry.

"Well, Mr. Schootz told us to turn up for the shot," said Harry Wharton. "He likes us to watch Polk at work, and pick up tips for movie-acting. I dare say he's right."

"There's one chap here who could act Polk's head off!" said Billy Bunter, with a sniff.

"You flatter me, old chap!" said Bob Cherry gravely.

"Eh? I don't mean you, you ass!" snapped Bunter. "If Schootz had the sense of a bunny-rabbit, he

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would kick Polk out of that sheik part, and give it to me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He's a dud!" said Bunter scornfully. "He can't see that I'm out out for a Valentino part!"

"Come on, you men!" said Bob. "No time for Bunter's funny turn now. We've got to see Polk."

The Greyfriars fellows followed in the wake of the director and assistant director.

There was a blaze of sunshine in Jack-Rabbit Canyon. Early as the season was, it was warm and sunny spring in the favoured climate of Southern California.

Mr. Schootz was striding up the canyon at a great rate, his fat legs fairly twinkling. Mr. Van Duck had to stretch his long legs to keep pace with the irate director.

After them went the Greyfriars juniors. They had been told to turn up for the "shot"; and it was time for the shot to be taken now. And it looked as if the scene would be rather more interesting than they had anticipated.

Myron Polk, as a rule, was treated with the greatest respect and consideration by all the Perfection company—from Mr. Schootz down to the smallest messenger. The thousands of dollars that Mr. Polk received for a picture were fabulous. All over Hollywood, producers were eager to get Polk. Polk was the goods.

Even the big school film, for which Mr. Hiram K. Fish had brought a crowd of Greyfriars fellows to Los Angeles, was small beer in comparison with the "Lord of the Desert" picture, featuring Myron Polk.

Although they cordially disliked the Perfection star, the juniors admitted that he was a first-class movie actor, and that the publicity agents were not far wrong in describing him as the "handsomest man in Hollywood." His airs and graces, which certainly irritated Mr. Schootz, were generally endured by that gentleman with fortitude. Polk was too valuable for the director to quarrel with him, if he could help it.

On the present occasion, however, the vials of Mr. Schootz's wrath seemed destined for the devoted head of the Perfection star. There was a limit to Mr. Schootz's patience; and the film star seemed to have reached that limit.

Mr. Schootz, like most movie producers, was an autocrat; and he allowed no man to encroach on his province—not even a star of the first magnitude. Apparently, the handsomest man in Hollywood had overstepped the line for once.

"Search me!" Mr. Schootz's excited voice rolled back to the juniors. "I'll say it's the biggest scene in the whole picture! You hear me, Van Duck? I'll say it's a daisy! I'll say it's the goods—what? And that geek won't stand for it—what?"

"He says—" murmured Van Duck.

"Thunder!"

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Mr. Schootz whisked on.

After him whisked Mr. Van Duck.

After Mr. Van Duck marched the Greyfriars fellows, and a dozen more members of the Perfection Company.

It was quite an army that arrived on the scene, at the upper end of Jack-Rabbit Canyon, where the handsomest man in Hollywood stood beside his black Arab horse, with a cigarette between his lips, and a sullen scowl on his face.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Mr. Polk is Not Taking Any!

MYRON POLK glanced at the excited Mr. Schootz, and his lip curved. He glanced past him at the juniors, and his eyes glinted. The spoiled darling of the film fans could never see Harry Wharton & Co. without betraying his bitter dislike in his looks.

What the trouble was, was a mystery to the juniors.

A scene had been fixed on the bank of the torrent that flowed down through the canyon from the Santa Monica Mountains. At a little distance from the stream was an Arab encampment, with realistic tents and palm-trees. By a realistic well, several movie-girls in Arab costume stood. Near by a number of movie-Arabs stood by their horses ready to take part in the scene planned by Mr. Schootz. The camera-men were in attendance, ready to shoot. Everything and everybody was ready, apparently, except Mr. Polk. The whole firmament was prepared for business, as it were, except the bright, particular star.

Polk, in his garb as Ahmed Din, Lord of the Desert, looked his handsomest. There was no doubt that he made a remarkably striking sheik, of the movie kind. Many of the movie-girls by the well were gazing at him with admiration, as he stood by the Arab horse, looking more like a spoiled boy, at the moment, than a man of twenty-five.

Mr. Schootz halted before him. It was a long walk up the canyon from the rancho, and Mr. Schootz had hurried. He was rather out of breath, and he spluttered.

"Say!" he gasped. "What's this, what?"

Polk shrugged his shoulders. "I've told Van Duck!" he answered.

"Polk says—" murmured the assistant director.

Mr. Schootz interrupted him. "What you got against this scene, Polk?"

"I guess I've got only one neck!" answered Polk sullenly. "I guess I want to keep it in one piece."

Snort, from Mr. Schootz.

"Cold feet?" he roared.

Polk flushed.

"I guess I'll do anything that's reasonable," he answered. "You've put more than one man in the Hollywood hospital, Mr. Schootz. You're not going to put me along with them."

Apparently the scene that Mr. Schootz had planned was considered too dangerous by the Perfection star.

It was quite possible that he was right. Mr. Schootz was one of those producers who are prepared to sacrifice anything to realism. Harry Wharton & Co. were aware that more than once, since they had joined the Perfection Company, there had been broken limbs as a result of Mr. Schootz's realistic scenes.

"I'll say it's the biggest scene in the whole picture!" hooted Mr. Schootz. "What's the matter with it? You can ride, I guess?"

"You've seen me ride!" said Polk sulkily.

"You claim to be the best rider in California."

"I guess there isn't any rider in California that has anything on me," answered Polk.

"Then what's the matter with this scene?" demanded Schootz. "You ride down to the water, and jump. Ain't you ever jumped on that cayuse before?"

Polk waved his hand towards the torrent.

"Look at the jump!" he said.

"I'll tell a man, it will make the film-fans rubber!" said Mr. Schootz emphatically.

Polk sneered.

"I'll say it will—when they see Myron Polk breaking his neck on the picture! I guess I'm not standing for that."

Billy Bunter chuckled.

"I say, you fellows, what a rotten funk!" he murmured.

"Shut up, Bunter!"

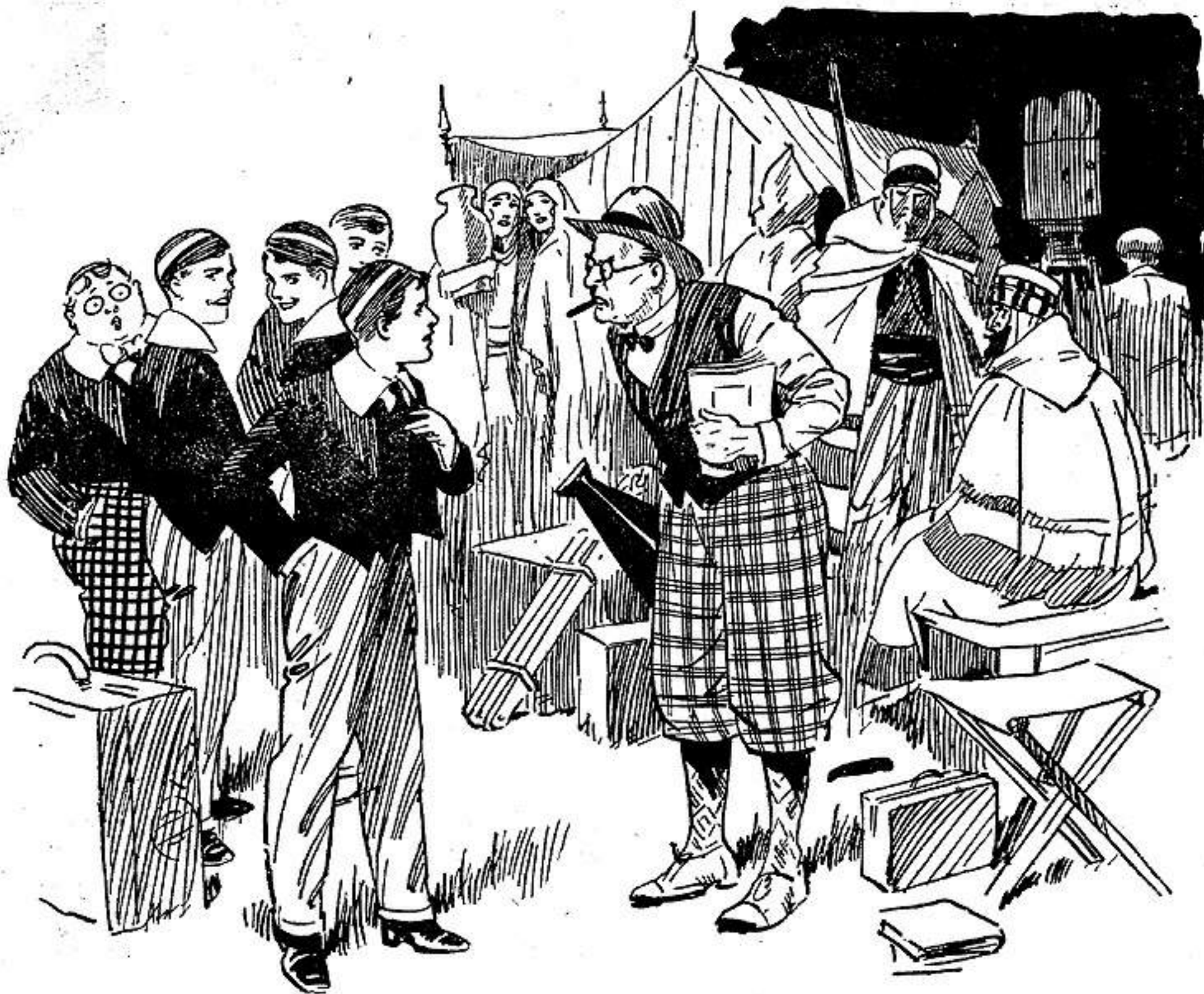
The juniors had seen Myron Polk perform many daring feats on the back of his black Arab. He was a splendid rider, and had always seemed a daring rider. But more than once they had suspected that there was a yellow streak in the handsomest man in Hollywood; and the yellow streak had come to the surface now.

Certainly, the task that had been set the film star, by the realistic Mr. Schootz, might have daunted many a man.

The bank of the torrent was rough and rocky. The torrent was wide and deep and swift. The opposite bank was higher, and of rugged rock, splashed by the foam of the stream, wet and slippery. Only a splendid horseman, and a daring and venturesome one, would have taken such a leap. Certainly, the picture of such a feat, on the screen, would have thrilled the film fans to ecstasy. But Myron Polk grudged his many admirers that thrill. That he could make the leap successfully, if his nerve was equal to it, was likely enough. But his nerve was not equal to it.

Mr. Schootz's ruthless realism had put too severe a strain on the film star's nerve.

Mr. Schootz strove to calm himself. He had spent much time and trouble on planning that thrilling scene. The Sheik Ahmed Din, chased by his foes, was to leap for his life across the torrent, leaving his enemies raging behind. Already, in his mind's eye, Mr. Schootz could see crowded houses rising to that thrilling scene. It was going to be the big punch of the "Lord of the Desert" film. He had



Harry Wharton stepped forward. His face was a little flushed, but he was quite cool. "Will you give me a chance to take the part Myron Polk has declined, Mr. Schootz?" he asked. "You!" Mr. Schootz stared. "Yes, little me," said Wharton. "I can ride, and I believe I could bring it off. I'm willing to try, anyhow!" (See Chapter 3.)

never dreamed that Myron Polk would "jib." Polk owed much of his popularity to his good looks, but much to his reputation as a fearless and reckless rider. No film fan in the United States would have believed that the Perfection sheik would shrink from any feat, howsoever dangerous. It was no wonder that Mr. Rigg Schootz was wrathful.

"Now, look here, Polk!" he said. "This scene is great! You can see that! It will do you as much good as it will do Perfection. Can't you see the film fans rubbering at it?"

"I can see myself in the Hollywood Hospital!" sneered Polk. "There's a limit, Schootz. You've got to it."

Mr. Schootz breathed hard. "I'll say the scene can't be cut!" he announced.

"I guess you'll have to get another guy to do it, then!" said Polk. "I tell you there's a limit. There's no man in California would make that jump, and you know it."

"I'll say that you're the only man to do it!" conceded Mr. Schootz. "I sure ain't asking any other guy. I'm asking you."

"Forget it!" answered Polk. "You can't back out like that!" shrieked Mr. Schootz. "I'll tell the

world you can't! You can't let me down that-a-way."

Polk shrugged his shoulders. "Chew on this!" gasped Mr. Schootz. "You let me down in this film, and—and—and—"

"If you want to cancel my contract, say the word!" answered Polk insolently. "I've got an offer from Magic Films in my pocket. Pandora will be glad to get me back. I guess I haven't got to beg up and down Hollywood Boulevard for an engagement."

Mr. Schootz snorted. "That scene goes!" he shouted. "I'm telling you, I will not cut that scene. If you won't play up, I'll get another man for it, if I have to search through California from the border to Mount Shasta."

"You've said it!" sneered Polk. "Get another guy as soon as you like. I'll lend my horse to any guy who's fool enough to jump that torrent on its back."

Mr. Schootz seemed to choke. His plump heart was set on that thrilling "shot." The backing-out of the Perfection star was quite unexpected. The film director really looked, for some moments, as if he would have an attack of apoplexy.

He turned from Polk at last. He

stared over the gathered Perfection company, as if in search of someone whom he could ask to take the star's place.

There was no encouragement in the faces he scanned. The feat was so deadly dangerous, that no man in the company was prepared to accept the offer, if Mr. Schootz made it. There were very few present who blamed Myron Polk for "jibbing." The general opinion was that the enterprising director was carrying his realism much too far. The movie Arabs standing by their horses avoided Mr. Schootz's glance. They all seemed unwilling to catch his eye.

Mr. Schootz fixed his eyes on the group of Greyfriars juniors. Bob Cherry gave Bunter a nudge.

"Now's your chance, fatty!" he whispered.

"Oh, really, Cherry—" "Go in and win, old fat man!" chuckled the Bounder.

"Yah!" Billy Bunter had "told the world" that he was born for sheik parts. But he seemed to feel no temptation to offer himself for the part Myron Polk had declined.

Harry Wharton drew a deep breath.

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His eyes were shining.

Frank Nugent read the expression on his face, and caught at his arm in alarm.

"Harry! Don't be an ass——"

The captain of the Remove shook off his chum's detaining hand and stepped forward. His face was a little flushed, but he was quite cool.

"Will you give me a chance, Mr. Schootz?" he asked.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Goods!

"YOU!"

Mr. Rigg Schootz stared.

"Little me," said Harry,

"I can ride, and I believe I could bring it off. I'm willing to try, anyhow."

"Great snakes!" said Mr. Schootz.

Myron Polk looked at the captain of the Greyfriars Remove, and his eyes burned. So far, he had felt that he had the support of all the Perfection company; he knew that no other man there would have ventured where he did not care to venture. But the offer of a schoolboy to take his place brought a flush of shame to his face. The bitter enmity he felt for the whole Greyfriars party, was intensified, at that moment, to boiling point.

"You—a kid!" said Mr. Schootz. "No, I reckon I couldn't stand for it, lad!"

But his eye was running critically over Wharton as he spoke.

Harry Wharton was a good-looking fellow, though he could not be considered so handsome as the "handsomest man in Hollywood." He was ten years younger than Polk; but he was a well-grown fellow, sturdy and athletic; and the difference in size could be concealed, with facility, by the flowing Arab garb. His features were not much like Polk's; but the art of the make-up man could work wonders. All these things were mere details, in Mr. Schootz's mind—if the schoolboy could perform the feat from which the Perfection star shrank.

Could he? Harry Wharton believed that he could. He had ridden since he was big enough to sit on a horse; and his uncle, Colonel Wharton, had been his instructor in horsemanship. As for courage, there was no lack of that. He was not only willing to undertake the feat, but he was eager for it. Many a time he had cast his eyes on that beautiful black Arab, and longed to ride him. There was no thought of "showing off" in Wharton's mind. He wanted to get Mr. Schootz out of a difficulty; and a desire to perform a distinguished feat was natural enough. As for Polk, Harry had almost forgotten him, in his keenness to ride the Arab steed in the big scene. If Polk did not want the part, there was no harm in another fellow offering to take it on, so far as Wharton could see.

"Give me a chance, Mr. Schootz!" he said eagerly. "Give me a chance, and let me try."

Mr. Schootz shook his head slowly.

"I couldn't stand for it," he said. "You're only a kid. You ain't old enough to understudy Myron Polk."

"Not in acting," said Harry; "in that line, I'm not in the same street with Mr. Polk, and I know it. I'm not an ass. But I can ride——"

"You sure couldn't make that jump."

"I believe I could."

"It ain't good enough," said Mr. Schootz very slowly. Still his eye was running over the captain of the Remove, as if he were scanning the points of a horse.

"Well, it's for you to say, sir!" said Harry, disappointed. "But I'd be glad to try, if you'd let me."

"May a fellow speak, sir?" said Lord Mauleverer.

Mr. Schootz glanced at him.

"Wharton can do it, sir!" said Mauleverer. "I've seen him ride, an' I know somethin' about ridin'. He can do it."

Mr. Schootz seemed to make up his mind.

"Look here, kid," he said. "If you can do it, you're going to do it. I ain't cutting out that scene, if I have to hang up the picture for a year while I find a man for it. But—get on that cayuse, and let me see how you ride him."

"Yes, rather."

Mr. Schootz turned to Myron Polk. He started a little, as he saw the white fury in the Perfection star's face.

"Say, Polk, you don't want to get your mad up," he exclaimed. "What's biting you? If you've changed your mind, I reckon I'll jump at it with both feet."

The Perfection star hesitated. He cast a glance towards the rocky torrent, and paused. But his heart failed him.

"I haven't changed my mind," he said hoarsely. "But you know as well as I do that a schoolboy——"

"I'm going to see him ride, first. Then I'll judge!"

"Not on my horse, then," said Polk savagely, "I'm not having this horse crooked by a foolhardy schoolboy."

Mr. Schootz knitted his brows.

"You've offered to lend that horse to any guy I can get to take on the job," he retorted. "You can't back out of that now, Myron Polk. If the critter's damaged, I'll stand for the loss."

"It will cost you five thousand dollars," said Polk suddenly.

"It's a cinch, then," said Mr. Schootz coolly. "Now hand that critter over to the kid, and let's see how he shapes."

"You know he can't do it!" hissed Polk.

"I guess he sure will break his neck, boss," said Mr. Van Duck anxiously.

"You directing this company?" asked Mr. Schootz, and the assistant director bit his lip and was silent.

Polk paused. Another thought had come into his mind. That Wharton could bring off the feat, he did not believe for a moment. And if he failed, it meant danger to life and

limb. Serious injury, probably death itself, would be the penalty of failure. At that moment, the film star hated Wharton so bitterly that he would have been glad to see him dashed to death on the rocks of the torrent. His well-cut lip curved in a hard and cruel smile. He threw the reins of the black Arab to Mr. Schootz.

"Take the horse, then," he said. "You're responsible. I wash my hands of it."

"Nobody's asking you to take responsibility," said Mr. Schootz. "You've been understudied before, when you've been too gol-darned lazy to turn up for a shot. You ain't got no kick coming, if you're understudied when you back out."

"I've said my say," sneered Polk, and he turned away, and walked off the scene.

He halted at a little distance, leaning against a tree. The expression on his face betrayed only too plainly the black and bitter thoughts in his mind.

Wharton did not heed him.

He arranged the stirrups to his liking and mounted the black Arab.

"Now let's see!" said Mr. Schootz.

"Right-ho!" said Harry cheerfully.

Mr. Schootz had already seen Wharton ride, during the stay of the Perfection Company at the location. But riding the mettlesome, high-spirited Arab was quite another matter.

Wharton understood that if his display of horsemanship satisfied Mr. Schootz he would be allowed to attempt the scene that the director was so anxious to shoot. And he was determined to do his best.

The spirited Arab reared and plunged, and Mr. Schootz jumped rather hastily away. But Wharton quickly had the steed in hand.

There was a clatter of hoofs as the Arab went down the canyon in a wild gallop. Every eye turned after the flying horseman.

"Great snakes! He can ride!" ejaculated Mr. Schootz.

"He sure can sit a cayuse!" agreed Mr. Van Duck.

The Greyfriars fellows watched Wharton eagerly. They were keen to see a Greyfriars man excel under the eyes of the whole Perfection company, and the bitter, malevolent stare of the Perfection star.

Polk's eyes followed the schoolboy rider, with a savage hope of seeing him thrown.

But Wharton was not likely to be thrown.

He sat in the saddle like a centaur; he was thoroughly enjoying that wild gallop down the canyon.

"Gee-whiz!" exclaimed Mr. Schootz.

Wharton was riding direct at a huge stack of packing-cases that had been delivered from a Los Angeles lorry, containing "properties" of the Perfection company. For a moment Polk, at least, thought and hoped that he had lost control of the spirited Arab, and that there was going to be a fearful crash. But the captain of the Remove knew what he was about. The Arab rose suddenly

to the leap and seemed to soar in the air as he cleared the stack.

He came down on the further side with a clatter of hoofs, and Wharton rode on.

"Bravo!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Good man!" chuckled the Bounder.

At the bottom of the canyon Harry Wharton wheeled the horse and rode back. He came up the canyon at a thundering gallop, his face bright and his eyes sparkling.

He arrived at the spot where the Perfection company were gathered, with a terrific clatter. For some moments it seemed as if the charging horseman would ride right into the group, and Mr. Schootz looked quite uneasy. But the Greyfriars junior pulled in the horse, halted, and jumped lightly down from the saddle, within a few feet of the director.

"How's that, umpire?" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Search me!" said Mr. Schootz.

He gave Wharton a smack on the shoulder. His fat face was glowing.

"Say, you can ride!" he exclaimed.

"It's you for the big scene! You hear me? Polk nothing! Where's the make-up man? Where's that galoot Harris? This sure is the elephant's hind leg! I've got the goods! I'll say that I've got the goods!"

Mr. Rigg Schootz rubbed his fat hands and beamed with satisfaction. He was satisfied now—he had got the goods.

Harry Wharton, in the hands of the make-up man, prepared for the big scene—to take the part of the sheik in the "big punch" of the "Lord of the Desert" film.

Polk, leaning on the tree at a little distance, set his teeth under lips that were white with fury. Nobody glanced at him now—not even the movie girls. For once the handsomest man in Hollywood was totally unnoticed.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Schoolboy Sheik!

"SOME sheik!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"The sheikfulness is terrific."

Harry Wharton smiled under his make-up.

Under the skilful hands of Harris, and the critical eyes of Mr. Schootz and Mr. Van Duck, the captain of the Greyfriars Remove was being metamorphosed into a sheik of the Sahara.

Burnose and turban of spotless white glittered with property jewels. The junior's clear, healthy English complexion was changed into the deep brown of the Arab, his eyes skilfully shaded to make them darker, his brows blackened, his mouth reddened to scarlet. In that guise his dearest chum or nearest relation would never have recognised him.

Undoubtedly he made a very handsome figure as an Arab.

He was taking a part supposed to be taken by Myron Polk, and when the picture was thrown on the screen the film fans were to believe that the

daring rider actually was Myron Polk. So it was necessary to make the junior look as like Polk as possible.

The make-up man easily made him look Polk's age, and added a few touches of resemblance. Mr. Schootz's genius came to the rescue, for the rest. A blood-stained bandage—property bloodstains, of course—was wound over part of the schoolboy actor's face. It was to be understood that the sheik had been wounded in the fight with his enemies, and so the bandage was accounted for. Its real object, of course, was to disguise the fact that the Arab sheik was not in reality Myron Polk.

When the make-up was completed Mr. Schootz stood rubbing his hands and grinning with satisfaction. The wrath that had awakened the echoes of the location that morning was quite gone now. Mr. Schootz was in high good humour.

Here's an amusing joke for which K. Towle, of 26, Pullman Road, Sneinton, Nottingham, has been awarded a useful rocket-knife.

A NON-STOPPER!

In search of a horse, a nervous Frenchman went to a horse dealer. "Yes, sir," said the horse dealer, "I have the very horse you want. He led his customer to a small-looking animal. "There you are, sir," he said, "a real beauty. Suitable for driving or riding. And it'll run for ten miles without stopping." "But," exclaimed the Frenchman, "he is no good. I live but eight miles from ze station and eef I buy him I will have to walk two miles in ze backward direction!"

Strike while the iron's hot, chums, and send in that latest side-splitter you've heard!

Not only had he found the "goods" to replace the actor who had let him down, but he was giving a much-needed lesson to the self-satisfied Perfection star.

Only Polk's great value to the movie company made Mr. Schootz tolerate his swank and his self-sufficiency. Often and often had Polk "got the goat" of the director, with his airs and graces, almost to breaking-point.

Now Myron Polk was shown that he was not the only pebble on the beach. He was not so indispensable as he had fancied.

That was sheer joy to Mr. Schootz, who had longed and yearned many a time to tell Myron Polk what he really thought of him.

Unnoticed in the general interest excited by Wharton, the Perfection star leaned on the tree and watched.

For once he was nobody. Even the movie girls were not looking at the handsomest man in Hollywood.

Polk had only one solace—his belief that Wharton never could bring off

the coup. He was standing there in the savage hope of seeing the junior dashed to death on the rocks.

Had he believed that Wharton would be successful Polk would have taken up his part again at any risk. Death itself would not have seemed so bitter to him as the triumph of the schoolboy where he had failed. He was not a brave man, but pride and passion would have supplied the place of courage.

But he did not believe for one moment that Wharton could succeed. He looked at the place where the leap was to be taken—it seemed impossible to him. Down from the Santa Monica Mountains came the brawling torrent, foaming and roaring. There was a sudden fall in the stream, over which the water dashed in a cascade to the lower bed. The leap was to be taken just below the fall.

The scene, undoubtedly, would be a wonderfully thrilling one—if it came off. Film fans would simply rise to it. But it would not come off—it could not come off! The venturesome schoolboy would be dashed on the rocks, or hurled into the torrent. Polk was certain of it—absolutely assured of it. It was a case of the wish being father to the thought, for in point of fact the leap, though difficult and dangerous, was by no means so impossible as the Perfection star supposed.

All was ready at last; and Harry Wharton looking like anything but a Greyfriars fellow now, mounted the black Arab for the act.

Mr. Schootz took his megaphone.

All was activity and bustle.

The movie Arabs mounted, and rode up the canyon. The movie girls clustered by the well. Harry Wharton knew what was to be done—his mind was quick and his memory retentive; and the scene, though thrilling, was simple enough in itself. There was little but daring horsemanship required.

But the whole scene, with the exception of the final thrilling leap, was carefully rehearsed, under the eyes and the megaphone of Mr. Schootz.

From the rugged rocks up the canyon, the sheik rode at a gallop, and halted by the well.

Then he checked his horse, to ask for a drink of water from the Arab maidens clustered under the palm-trees. Fleeing from fierce foes, the sheik stopped for a moment to quench his burning thirst from a pitcher of water handed him by an Arab girl.

The movie maiden who handed him the cool water from the well gave him a smile along with it. It was Leonora la Riviere, otherwise Jane Snookson; and Leonora's half-veiled face looked very charming.

"You sure are some sheik, kid!" she whispered as she handed up the pitcher to the turbaned horseman.

Wharton grinned.

He liked Leonora, as all the juniors did; though Lord Mauleverer was the only one of the party who fancied that he was in love with the

"Lovely Leonora," as the film papers called her.

There was a roar from Mr. Schootz.

"Say, bo!"

Wharton jumped, and almost spilled the water on Leonora's head.

"Eh?" he ejaculated.

"Gee! You think this is a comedy scene?" roared Mr. Schootz. "You want to grin like a pesky hyena? What?"

"Oh!" gasped Wharton.

"Register emotion!" roared Mr. Schootz. "Ain't you a dog-goned sheik with a gang of thugs after you for your dog-goned blood? You figure that that's a grinning matter? Say! You think this here is a circus?"

"Oh! Sorry, I forgot!" gasped Wharton.

"Forgot nothing!" roared Mr. Schootz. "You can ride, I allow, but you can't act for a continental red cent! Go back and begin again."

"Right-ho!"

Wharton handed the pitcher back to Leonora, and rode away up the canyon. Leonora took her place with the other Arab girls, in picturesque attitudes under the palms.

Mr. Schootz gave the signal again, and the sheik came thundering down from the rocky slopes. Again he halted by the well, and begged for a drink of cool water, and Leonora brought him the pitcher. This time Wharton was careful not to smile. His made-up, bandaged countenance "registered" the right emotion. Hurry was stamped in his face, and he glanced over his shoulder before he drank. He handed back the pitcher with the polished courtesy of a film sheik; and at the same moment there was a thunder of hoofs, and the gang of movie Arabs came thundering down in pursuit, waving spears and loosing off blank cartridges. The schoolboy sheik shook a clenched fist in defiance at the enemy, dashed the spurs to his horse's flanks, and galloped on to the torrent, where the terrible leap below the water-fall was to save him. As it was only a rehearsal, so far, he stopped on the bank, wheeled his horse, and rode back to Mr. Schootz.

"That's better," said the director, with a grunt. "Do that again."

"Oh, all right!"

Wharton would have preferred to "get on with the washing," as it were. But the director's word was law. Not till the last and least detail was perfect, would Mr. Schootz allow the "shooting" to begin. It was not uncommon for Mr. Schootz to order a scene to be played six or seven times over, before he gave the signal to the camera men.

Once more the scene was enacted, and this time even the punctilious Mr. Schootz admitted that it was perfect.

Then came the act!

For the last time, the schoolboy sheik thundered down from the rocky slopes at the upper end of the canyon, drew in his foaming horse at the well, and begged a drink from the Arab maidens. For the last time, Leonora brought him the

pitcher, and the hunted sheik drank. Then came the thundering hoofs of the pursuers, the brandishing of spears, the rattling of guns. The cameras were grinding now, and every detail was going down on the film. Wharton was scarcely conscious of that. He had thrown himself into his part, and it was almost real to him. He handed the pitcher back to the Arab girl, he turned in his saddle to shake a defiant fist at the ferocious pursuers, he spurred his horse on towards the torrent.

Mr. Schootz watched him with distended eyes. Mr. Van Duck breathed hard. It was coming now—the leap for life or death!

The Greyfriars fellows, grouped at a little distance, held their breath. Frank Nugent's face was almost white with tense anxiety.

Even Billy Bunter was silent.

Myron Polk watched, a look in his handsome eyes that was almost demoniac. A few more seconds, and the schoolboy sheik would be making the fearful leap from which the practised film actor had shrunk. And Polk had no doubt that he was going to disaster and perhaps death. Anyone who had looked at Polk at that moment would have seen the savage hope blazing in his eyes. But no one looked at Polk; the Perfection star was utterly forgotten. Every eye was fixed with breathless interest on Harry Wharton.

Clatter, clatter, clatter! Thud, thud, thud! Crack, crack, crack!

The cameras were grinding.

With a wild rush Harry Wharton came down to the rocky bank of the torrent.

Gallantly the black Arab rose to the leap.

There was a hiss of deep-drawn breath from the Perfection company. Only the camera men clicked on unmoved.

From the rocky bank the gallant horse soared—splashed by the descending foam of the waterfall.

For an instant horse and rider hung poised over the torrent, over foaming water where the teeth of cruel rocks showed amid the spray, and where disaster was death.

Clatter, clatter!

The black Arab horse came crashing down on the farther side. For a second the steed seemed to be slipping; but an iron hand was on the rein. A touch of the spur, and the gallant steed leaped forward and tore away in a frantic gallop.

"Bravo!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Hurrah!"

Myron Polk clenched his hands till the nails dug into the palms. The schoolboy had succeeded.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Polk Is Not Pleased!

HARRY WHARTON rode down the canyon, on the farther side of the torrent, to the wooden bridge that spanned it near the rancho. There he rode back across the stream. His face was bright under its make-up, his eyes sparkling, as he trotted up the canyon

to the "scene." He knew that he had done well, and that the "shot" had been a success. If he had doubted it, the ecstatic grin on Mr. Schootz's face would have reassured him. Mr. Schootz was fairly bubbling with satisfaction. Mr. Van Duck was beaming. Congratulations poured on the schoolboy sheik from all sides, as he dismounted from the black Arab. Bob Cherry thumped him on the back wildly.

"Some stunt!" chuckled Mr. Schootz. "Oh, some stunt! I'll tell the world! Oh, search me! Kid, you're the goods! I'm telling you that you're the goods—the genuine, gilt-edged goods! You hear me? What? Oh, this sure is the grasshopper's whiskers!"

"All right, then?" asked Harry rather breathlessly.

"All right? Search me! It's the elephant's hind leg!" chortled Mr. Schootz. "Sonny, you figure that you're going back to your little old island to school, what?"

"Yes," said Harry.

"Well," said Mr. Schootz emphatically, "you ain't! You are surely not! You're freezing on to Perfection, and Perfection is freezing on to you? You get me! Suffering cats and dogs! I ain't parting with you after this! No, sir! Not by long chalks."

Harry Wharton smiled.

He had no idea of "freezing" on to Perfection permanently; but the enthusiasm of the great Hollywood producer was very pleasing to his ears.

He had made a "hit"; and a big hit; and it was scarcely possible not to be elated.

The horse was led away; the "set" broken up. The "shot" had been a tremendous success. Harry Wharton had saved the situation. The great scene on which Mr. Schootz's heart had been set had been successfully filmed. In the midst of the general satisfaction, Myron Polk strode on the scene. The Perfection star had been so utterly forgotten, that Mr. Schootz gave quite a start at the sight of him.

"Oh! You!" he said.

Polk's eyes were blazing.

The success of his schoolboy rival had roused every evil passion in his nature. He was so enraged and mortified, that he had forgotten prudence, and even common-sense. His face, inflamed with rage, caused the Perfection men to grin and wink at one another, and elicited a giggle from the movie girls. But Polk was blind to the exhibition he was making of himself. Rage and wounded vanity had quite taken from him his self-control.

"You'll cut that out, Schootz!" he said, almost stuttering with rage.

Mr. Schootz stared at him.

"Cut what out?" he asked, not understanding for the moment.

"That scene!" hissed Polk.

"What?"

"I mean it! That scene's got to be cut! You get me?" snarled Polk. "I won't allow my part to be taken! Understand?"

"Gee-whiz!" said Mr. Schootz. "You dreaming, Polk? Didn't you

more scenes of that great work being filmed. Leonora had figured in the sets as the schoolmaster's pretty daughter—a part in which Miss la Riviere looked fully as fascinating as in that of an Arab maid by a well. Work being over for the day at an early hour, the juniors were variously engaged—Lord Mauleverer in heaving a deep sigh. He was standing near the bridge that spanned the torrent, low down the canyon, and his gaze was fixed on a graceful figure that tripped from the orange grove at a little distance. In that grove was the frame house of the movie girls at the location. Many were the movie girls, of all shades and complexions—mostly home-made, so to speak—but only one of them drew the eyes of Lord Mauleverer. That one was the "Lovely Leonora."

According to Fisher T. Fish, Mauly had "fallen" for Leonora's ginger hair. Leonora's hair was a beautiful auburn; and it was only necessary to whisper the word "ginger" in Mauly's hearing, to bring a gleam to his sleepy eyes, and completely banish his usual amiable smile.

Bob Cherry glanced at Mauly—and then glanced in the direction of his gaze—and grinned.

Bob liked Leonora, who was a cheery and wholesome young woman, with no nonsense in her composition. But he regarded the romantic Mauly as a howling ass. He did not make a secret of this opinion; he had told Mauly so at least a dozen times. He had advised him, in a friendly way, not to be a burbling chump.

But it was said of old, that wisdom cries out in the streets, and no man regards it. In spite of Bob's friendly advice, Mauly continued to be a burbling chump—indeed, according to Hurree Singh, his chumpfulness was terrific.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, old bean!" said Bob. "What's the jolly old trouble? Not enjoying life?"

Lord Mauleverer withdrew his gaze from Leonora slowly, as if it was glued there and hard to detach. He looked at Bob, and coloured faintly.

"Nothin'!" he said.

"Pain in the chest?" asked Bob.

"Eh? No!"

"I thought I heard you groaning."

"I wasn't groanin'!"

"Perhaps it was a sigh!" said Bob.

"If so, it was a four-point-seven sigh. A real corker."

"Fathead!" said Mauleverer.

"What about leapfrog?" asked Bob cheerily.

Mauly smiled rather bitterly. Leapfrog might be a healthy exercise, but it was no use for troubles of the heart.

"I—I say, Bob, old chap!" said Mauleverer. "I—I—I—"

He broke off, and sighed again.

"Go it!" said Bob encouragingly. "Tell your Uncle Robert all about it. Speak to me as you would to your great-grandfather."

Mauleverer grinned; but immediately became grave again. He was yearning to confide to somebody; and Bob, after all, was a good-natured fellow, even if he did not see a lot of

seriousness in a fellow of fifteen falling in love.

"She's engaged, Bob!" he said, in a low voice.

"Miss la Riviere?" asked Bob, with a stare.

"Yaas."

"Good!"

"Good?" repeated Mauly.

"Why, yes! She's only been an extra girl, so far; and it's a jolly good thing for her to get a regular engagement, I believe."

"You silly ass!" growled Mauleverer. "I don't mean she's been engaged by old Schootz. I mean she's engaged—engaged to a man named Peter, in Los Angeles. She told me so."

"Oh!" said Bob, trying to keep as serious as possible. "What a jolly old blow! What Fishy would call a regular sockdolager."

Mauleverer sighed. Bob noticed that he had a paper in his hand, which he had been resting on the parapet of the wooden bridge, and scribbling upon. Bob glanced at it.

"If the Lovely Leonora is engaged to a bloke named Peter, you can't write any billets-doux, Mauly, old man!" he said gravely.

"Tain't that!" said Mauly. "I—I've been writing some poetry."

"Great pip!"

"I shan't send it to her now," said Mauleverer sadly. "In fact, it's not finished. I haven't been able to finish it. Like to see it?" he added, in a burst of sentimental confidence.

"Like anything!" answered Bob.

Lord Mauleverer uncrumpled the folded paper. Bob looked at what was pencilled thereon.

"When stars are in the evening skies, I think of Leonora's eyes."

"Oh, my hat!" said Bob, repressing his emotions with great difficulty. "Is that the lot?"

"That's all, so far," said Mauleverer. "It doesn't seem to come easily, somehow."

"Let a pal help you!" said Bob. "I can suggest something to follow on."

Lord Mauleverer looked at him rather suspiciously. But Bob Cherry's face was quite grave.

"Fire away, then!" said Mauleverer.

Bob fired away.

"Whene'er the sunset crimson glows, I think of Leonora's nose!"

"What?" ejaculated Mauleverer.

"Rather good, what?" asked Bob cheerily. "And then—"

"When flames the fire, with ruddy glare,

I think of Leonora's hair!"

"Yarrah!" roared Bob Cherry, the next moment, as he received a sudden tap on the nose, which caused him to sit down unexpectedly.

Lord Mauleverer turned and walked away.

"My hat! I—I—I—I'll—"

gasped Bob. He jumped up, rubbing his damaged nose. He made a stride after Lord Mauleverer; and then he stopped, rubbed his nose again, and chuckled.

"Poor old Mauly!" he said. "Poor old silly ass!"

Mauleverer walked away down the

canyon, in the direction in which the Lovely Leonora had disappeared. Although Leonora had told him that she was engaged to Peter, and had to be regarded as the property of that unknown—and utterly obnoxious young man, Mauly was not to be cured of his delusion all of a sudden. At least he could worship her from afar.

"Mauly!" bawled Bob Cherry.

His lordship did not turn his head. He was fed up with the unromantic Bob.

"I say, Mauly, I've thought of some more for you!" roared Bob. "Lend me your ears, old bean!"

Mauleverer walked on. He heard, but he heeded not, the shout that followed him:

"With deep, deep sighs, and sounds of woe,

I think of Leonora's beau!"

Lord Mauleverer broke into a run. Poetic as he was that afternoon, he seemed to have had enough of Bob Cherry's poetry. And Bob, chuckling, strolled back to the rancho—still rubbing his nose occasionally.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Coming of Mr. Carter!

"YOU guys want to chew on this!" said Mr. Schootz.

Bob Cherry had just rejoined his comrades, in the patio of the ranch-house, when Mr. Schootz came out of his office, and rolled towards them. Mr. Schootz's face was very serious, and apparently he had some important communication to make.

So the chums of the Remove sat up and took notice; and prepared to "chew" on it, as Mr. Schootz recommended.

But it was not movie business of which the Perfection director had to speak.

"There's a geek called Carter coming up to the location from Hollywood this afternoon," said Mr. Schootz. "They got me on the phone this morning, and put me wise. He's coming to see you kids."

"Who's Carter?" asked Harry Wharton.

"A pesky cop!" growled Mr. Schootz.

"A which?" murmured Nugent.

"A Los Angeles detective. A young gink with his way to make in the world and aiming to make it by stirring up a lot of trouble!" grunted the Perfection director. Apparently the director had not a high opinion of detectives in general, and Mr. Carter in particular.

"Now," went on Mr. Schootz, "I ain't denying that there's something for the police to look into. That all-fired galoot Gomez has been making himself ornery around here, I allow. He seems to have got up a row with Coker—"

Coker of the Fifth broke in warmly.

"I was collared by Gomez and his gang, and made a prisoner!" he hooted. "They were going to shove me on a motor-boat, and carry me away goodness knows where. I think I—"

"Don't spill any more!" said Mr. Schootz. "I'm talking, young man! Then there was that fat geck Bunter—he had to horn into a row with them pesky thugs!"

"Oh, really, Mr. Schootz—" "Can it! From what Bunter's spilled, it seems that that bunch have been smuggling liquor, or something of the sort—boot-legging," said Mr. Schootz. "I guess Gomez is known to be mixed up in the hooch business, so I ain't surprised."

"I say, you fellows, I saw—" "That will do," said Mr. Schootz; "I'm talking! Now, them thugs can run rum till the cows come home, for anything that it matters to me. I guess they ain't the only galoots smuggling hooch in the Yew-nited States by some tens of thousands. But I allow it looks as if they've got a grouch against you kids, the way they've handled some of you."

Mr. Schootz made that admission grudgingly.

He was deeply annoyed and irritated by the trouble between the Greyfriars party and the gang of rum-runners who had their den in the Santa Monica Mountains.

It interfered with business. The Perfection Company were located in Jack-Rabbit Canyon on business. Anything that interfered with business naturally got Mr. Schootz's goat.

Still, even Mr. Schootz could not blame the juniors. He could not suppose that Coker had asked to be collared by the rum-runners, or that Bunter had begged to be kidnapped by them, or that Lord Mauleverer had beseeched them to attack him.

Obviously, the fault was on the other side. Still, the whole affair irritated Mr. Schootz.

"You kids got hold of that rustler Gomez," went on Mr. Schootz. "I allow it was dandy, the way you got him to rights. It was sure unlucky that he got away again."

The juniors made no reply to that. But Coker of the Fifth butted in, as usual.

"He never got away! He was let go—and it was that man Polk who did it."

"That's what I'm coming to," said Mr. Schootz, with a glare at Coker. "Gomez was here, and as Myron Polk was going back to Hollywood in his car, he offered to take the galoot and hand him over at the police station. Gomez got away—"

"I tell you—" snorted Coker.

"Can it!" roared Mr. Schootz. "Can't you hear me talking? Polk explained to me that he was attacked by Gomez's confederates, who released the rustler and left Polk to return home on foot, having punctured the tyres of his car."

"I don't believe a word of it," said Harry Wharton quietly. "As soon as you told us that Gomez had gone in Polk's car, we all knew that he would never get to the police station at Hollywood."

"You knew a whole heap, didn't you?" said Mr. Schootz unpleasantly.

"We knew that, anyhow," said the Bounder.

"Can it! Now, this is what I

want you to chew on," said Mr. Schootz impressively. "You've got a hunch that Myron Polk was hand-in-glove with them scallywags, Gomez and his gang."

"We all think so," said Harry. "Got any proof good enough for a court of law?" demanded Mr. Schootz.

"Of course not."

"Well, then, I'm warning you not to spill too much when that man Carter moseys in," said Mr. Schootz. "What you can't prove you better keep to yourselves. See? That's horse sense."

The Greyfriars fellows were silent. There was undoubtedly "horse sense" in the director's advice. To make accusations that could not be proved was scarcely advisable.

"Chew on that," said Mr. Schootz. "This galoot Carter is going to ask you questions. Tell him all you know about the rum-runners—and if he can cinch that gang, more power to his pesky elbow. I don't care a continental red cent whether he rounds them up or not. But leave Polk out of it."

"Look here, Mr. Schootz," said Harry Wharton quietly. "Those thugs, as you call them, have been trying to kidnap us, one after

The following letters have been jumbled together purposely. Put in their proper order, they spell the name of a well-known junior at Greyfriars.

LOJYNUBHNL

Who is it? The answer will appear in next week's MAGNET.

another. They got Coker and Bunter, and nearly got Mauleverer. It's plain enough that they're after the lot of us. They've got no reason whatever for meddling with us of their own accord. It's perfectly plain that they have been put up to it."

"The plainfulness is terrific, honoured sahib."

Mr. Schootz grunted.

"Mebbe," he said. "I allow it looks that way. But there ain't any proof that it was Myron Polk put them up to it. You jest want to leave Polk out of it. I ain't denying that he's got a grouch against you. You've sure rubbed him the wrong way. But I've got trouble enough with Polk already; he sure wants managing like an ornery cayuse. I don't want any more. See?"

"I quite see that," said Harry. "But—"

"Tell Carter all you know, and don't spill anything you don't know," said Mr. Schootz. "Any lawyer would tell you that what you suspect ain't evidence. Chew on that."

And Mr. Schootz rolled back to his office.

"I guess Schootz is right," said Fisher T. Fish. "Least said soonest mended. If Polk goes off on his ear, it means a loss to the Perfection Picture Syndicate. Money talks."

Fisher T. Fish evidently regarded

that as a clincher. If there was risk of loss of money, all lesser considerations, of course, had to be dismissed.

"My esteemed Fishy," murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, "the esteemed and execrable money is not the beginfulness and the endfulness of all things."

"Oh, guff!" snapped Fisher T. Fish. "Talk sense!"

A fellow who did not reckon that dollars came before all other earthly considerations was, in Fishy's opinion, an all-fired gink, if not plumb loco!

"I say, you fellows, I'm going to tell the detective the truth!" declared Billy Bunter.

"You are!" ejaculated Bob Cherry in astonishment.

"The age of miracles is not past," said Nugent.

"Beast! I'm going to tell the truth—"

"You couldn't, old fat bean," said Vernon-Smith, shaking his head. "Take care how you start breaking records."

"Yah! I jolly well know that Polk is hand-in-glove with that beast Gomez!" said Bunter. "Didn't I see that ruffian in hiding at Polk's bungalow at Hollywood?"

"You allow you did!" sneered Fisher T. Fish. "If it's the truth, I guess I want to know how you came to spill the truth for once."

"I'm going to tell him everything," said Bunter. "All about how I was taken prisoner by those beasts, and how I knocked them right and left and got away—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at. You'll make out next that I didn't rescue Coker!" hooted Bunter.

"Don't be a cheeky ass, Bunter!" said Coker of the Fifth, frowning.

"Shut up!"

"Talk about gratitude!" said Bunter bitterly. "As Shakespeare says, the winter wind isn't half so unkind as the thankless tooth of a serpent—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Ha, ha ha!"

There was the whir of a car in the canyon. Harry Wharton & Co. were still "chewing" on what Mr. Schootz had said to them when the detective from Los Angeles arrived.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

A Punch for Peter!

"BEGAD!" ejaculated Lord Mauleverer.

His lordship had left Jack-Rabbit Canyon behind him, and was strolling along the road above the terraced shore. The blue Pacific rolled in the sunshine, dotted with white sails. Across the bay Santa Monica was to be seen, with its crowds of bathers, and innumerable strolling figures on the dazzling beach. But Lord Mauleverer had no eyes for such things. His eyes were turned upon a graceful figure that had stopped by the roadside, under a pepper-tree, and was gazing in the direction of distant Hollywood.

It was Leonora, and she appeared to be watching a small car, with a single occupant, that was coming up the road for the film town.

The little car came up with a rush, and stopped, and a young man jumped out. Leaving the car, he walked quickly—in fact, almost ran—towards Leonora. And to Mauleverer's surprise, rage, and horror, he clasped the movie girl in his arms, and kissed her.

Lord Mauleverer's eyes flashed fire.

Often and often had Mauleverer dreamed of some deadly peril from which he would rescue Leonora. He did not exactly want Leonora to be attacked by bandits, but he would have rejoiced at the chance of rushing to the rescue had she been so attacked. Now, under his very eyes, a rank outsider had clasped Leonora, on the open road, and kissed her—some outrageous bounder from Los Angeles.

For an instant Lord Mauleverer stood rooted to the ground.

But only for an instant.

The next, he was rushing on the scene with the fleetness of a deer, and the rage of a lion.

Before either Leonora or her assailant knew that he was there, Mauleverer had hurled himself at the rank outsider.

He grasped the wretch's collar with both hands, and dragged him back by main strength.

The man from Los Angeles reeled in his grasp.

"Say!" he gasped

He wrenched himself loose, and turned on Mauleverer, in angry surprise.

Crash!

All Lord Mauleverer's beef was put into the blow he handed out to the outrageous bounder who had dared to touch the Lovely Leonora.

"Yooop!" roared the recipient thereof.

He went down on his back, roaring.

Lord Mauleverer stood over him, with clenched fists and flaming eyes. Never had his amiable lordship been excited to such a state of berserker rage.

"You scoundrel!" he gasped.

"Grooogh!"

"You rascal!" roared Mauleverer.

"Get up, and take a thrashin'! You unspeakable rotter! Begad! I'll thrash you within an inch of your life! Get up, you rotter!"

"Gee-whiz!"

Lord Mauleverer turned to Leonora.

"Don't be afraid, miss!" he gasped.

"I'll protect you! I'll—"

Mauleverer broke off.

He had expected, naturally, to see the Lovely Leonora crimson with anger, and alarm, and indignation. But she wasn't! She was laughing!

Mauleverer stared at her.

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Leonora.

"My! Oh, you sure are some kid! Ha, ha, ha! Gee!"

Mauleverer could only suppose that it was hysterics.

"Calm yourself!" he gasped.

"Please be calm, Miss La Riviere!"

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I'll take care of you! I can handle that brute!"

Leonora shrieked. Tears were streaming from her eyes; and even to the astonished Mauly they seemed to be tears of merriment.

The brute had scrambled to his feet. He really did not look a brute or a rank outsider. He was a fairly good-looking young man, with keen, searching eyes, a square jaw, and keen features. He was also, at the moment, a very angry young man. Which perhaps was not surprising, in the circumstances.

Lord Mauleverer faced him with his hands up, his eyes flashing over them.

"Come on, you cad!" he shouted.

"Search me!" gasped the young man from Los Angeles. "I'll sure come on, you pesky little gink, and if I leave a grease-spot of you, it will sure want looking for."

"Stop!" shrieked Leonora.

"Don't! Peter, stop!"

"Look here, Jane—"

"Stop!"

"You figure that I'm letting that little guy spread me all over the road, Jane?" hooted the young man from Los Angeles.

"It's Mauleverer—I've told you about him—"

"I guess I don't care a hoot who it is! I'm going to make shavings of the gink."

Leonora caught the angry and indignant young man by the arm.

"Peter, it's the plucky boy who got me out of the fire at the Perfection studio—"

Peter grunted. His hand was to his nose, and there was a trickle of crimson between his fingers.

Meanwhile, Lord Mauleverer was standing rooted to the ground. The name of Peter had enlightened him—horribly.

It was not a rank outsider, a sea-side bounder, after all; it was Peter, that young man of whom Mauly had lately heard, and to whom the movie girl was engaged. It dawned on Mauly that that was why Leonora was there! She was there to see Peter, and he had come up from Los Angeles to meet her! Being Leonora's "beau," it really was not surprising that he had kissed Leonora. Such greetings were not uncommon between engaged couples.

Mauleverer would have given his earldom for the earth to open and swallow him from sight.

But the earth, of course, did not. It remained solid under Mauly's feet; and he stood there, with a crimson face, looking as if all the blood in his body had been pumped into his cheeks.

He could not speak! He could only gasp.

Leonora turned to him. With great efforts she suppressed her merriment.

"It's Peter," she said, in a choking voice. "It's my beau I told you about, kid."

"Oh!" gasped Mauleverer.

"You're going to be friends," said Leonora.

"Are we?" grunted Peter, rubbing

his nose and dabbing it with his handkerchief.

"Oh, begad!" gasped Lord Mauleverer.

"Lord Mauleverer, meet Mr. Peter Carter," said the Lovely Leonora, with her most winning smile.

"I—I thought—" gasped Mauleverer.

"You pesky young gink!" said Mr. Peter Carter.

"I—I supposed—I—I thought—"

"Of course you did, and you are a dear brave kid," said Leonora. "Only it happens to be my beau, you see, and—" Just in time Leonora suppressed a shriek of merriment. "I'm sure that if any guy got too fresh when you was around, kid, you'd sure wade in and make him look as cheap as a ten-cent skate. But—"

Leonora broke off, struggling with another shriek.

Mr. Carter grinned. His nose felt rather painful, but the humour of the situation dawned on him.

It had dawned only too clearly on poor Mauleverer. He felt, at that dreadful moment, that he was the prize ass of the universe.

"Excuse me," he babbled, "I'm awf'ly sorry—I really— Oh, begad! I—I—I—"

Lord Mauleverer stuttered helplessly.

"Forget it, kid," said Peter, who seemed to be a good-tempered young man, on the whole. "I guess if you thought some guy was getting too fresh with my Jane, it was real handsome of you to horn in. Put it there, kid."

Mr. Carter held out his hand.

Lord Mauleverer took it. He did not like Peter—he could not like him. The Lovely Leonora liked him too much for Mauly to like him at all. But he shook hands with the young man from Los Angeles, mumbled something indistinctly, raised his hat to Leonora, and fled.

"Oh, gad!" groaned Mauleverer, as he retreated towards the location.

At a little distance he looked back. Leonora and Peter were standing beside the car, both rocking with laughter.

Mauly, with crimson cheeks, hurried on. He did not look back again.

He reached Jack-Rabbit Canyon, and hurried into the rancho.

There he hid his blushes in his own room. There was only one solace for the unhappy Mauly. He had punched Peter's nose! In the midst of his distress, it was a gleam of consolation to remember that he had punched it hard.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Mr. Carter Investigates!

"MR. CARTER?" asked Harry Wharton.

"You've said it."

All the Greyfriars fellows regarded Mr. Carter with interest. They were gathered in the patio, to meet the detective from Los Angeles, with the

exception of Lord Mauleverer, who was in his room.

Mr. Carter looked a very brisk, business-like, keen young man. His square jaw showed determination; his sharp eyes lost little or nothing. Keen as they were, there was a gleam of good-humour in those sharp eyes, and the juniors rather liked the looks of Mr. Carter.

Mr. Schootz differed. He frowned when the young man arrived, greeted him far from affably, and retired to his office like Achilles to his tent.

Mr. Schootz was determined to believe that Polk had had nothing to do with the attacks on the Greyfriars party. But at the bottom of his heart, it was probable that he suspected the Perfection star. Still, business was business, and a row with Polk would not buy him anything, as he would have expressed it.

"I guess Mr. Schootz has put you wise about me," said Mr. Carter. "I'm put on this case. I got to see if there's anything in it beside gas—excuse me. If there is, I'm digging it out—see?"

"I see," said Harry, with a smile.

The captain of the Remove introduced himself and his friends, at Mr. Carter's request. Mr. Carter's eye ran over them keenly. Coker and Potter and Greene, of the Fifth, remained at a little distance. It did not suit the lofty Coker to associate himself too closely with the Lower Fourth juniors. He might have been taken for a schoolboy himself! So Mr. Carter was left to the Removites. There was evidently a doubt in Mr. Carter's mind—whether anything had happened except a row between the schoolboys and a bunch of toughs. If that was all there was to it, Mr. Carter was not interested; though probably he had been glad to run up to the location that afternoon. As Mr. Carter, there might be nothing to reward him; but, as Leonora's Peter, he had had the pleasure of seeing the young lady whose "beau" he was.

"Now spill it," said Mr. Carter, seating himself, and lighting a cigarette.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"Shan't!" hooted Bunter.

Billy Bunter was bursting with importance. He was the fellow who had a tale to tell; and he was not going to leave the talking to the other fellows—not if Bunter knew it.

"Leave it to me," said Bunter. "You'd better listen to me, Mr. Carter. These fellows only know what I've told them."

"That so?" said Mr. Carter.

"Go ahead, fatty!" said Bob Cherry. "But, for goodness' sake, stick to the truth this time!"

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"The stickfulness to the preposterous truth is the proper caper, my esteemed fat Bunter," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Mr. Carter started a little. Like all who heard Hurree Jamset Ram Singh's remarkable flow of English for the first time, he was rather

struck by it. His keen eyes dwelt on the dusky nabob of Bhanipur for a moment and then turned on Bunter.

"Cough it up!" he said.

Billy Bunter proceeded to cough it up. It was a thrilling story that Bunter told. The wild adventures, the boundless pluck, the amazing presence of mind, of the Owl of the



Leaving the car, the young man walked quickly towards Leonora, and to Mauleverer's surprise and rage, clasped the movie girl in his arms and kissed her. Lord Mauleverer's eyes flashed fire, and he rushed on the scene with the fleetness of a deer, and the rage of a lion. (See Chapter 8.)

Remove were fully described. Mr. Carter listened without interruption, his face expressing little. But the juniors had the impression that Mr. Carter had taken Bunter's measure at a glance, and knew how to sift the wheat from the chaff. Probably he did not believe that William George Bunter had knocked hefty boot-leggers right and left.

"You sure are some lad, sir!" said Mr. Carter, when Bunter had finished. "I guess them hooch hounds was real sorry they ever laid a finger on you after you'd done with them."

"I fancy so," said Bunter complacently.

The other fellows grinned. They quite saw that Mr. Carter's remark was sarcastic. Sarcasm was wasted on Bunter, however.

"But the p'int," said Mr. Carter, "is this. If them scallywags are running hooch, I'm after their scalps. Now, you was a prisoner, according to your say-so, in a den they've got in these hills. Did you see any hooch?"

"Any what?"

"Hooch," said Mr. Carter. "Boot-leg liquor! Fire-water!"

"Yes, rather," answered Bunter. "Lots! Cases and kegs! And the beasts were drinking all the time!"

Mr. Carter's eyes glinted.

"That sounds like business!" he said. "But I don't seem to get to a cinch. If them thugs are running hooch, it's their game to lie as low as they can; and they seem to have come out hunting for trouble. It don't seem to fit together. You, Wharton, what you reckon they're gunning after you kids for?"

Wharton paused. Mr. Schootz's warning was fresh in his mind.

"We believe they've been put up to it by a man who's got a down on us," he answered.

"Who's the man?"

Another pause.

"I reckon," said Mr. Carter, glancing from face to face, "that you want to spill the whole heap. Put it through!"

"Well," said Harry slowly, "it's a matter of suspicion. We can't accuse a man without proof!"

"That's so. But you ain't accusing anybody now. I ain't a judge and jury!" said Mr. Carter. "I'm investigating. What you tell me won't go any farther, unless I find that there's something in it!"

"Well, we think the man is Myron Polk," said Harry.

Mr. Carter jumped.

"Not the Perfection star?"

"Yes."

"The handsomest guy in Hollywood!" ejaculated the detective.

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(Continued from page 13.)

"We suspect him," said Harry. "We believe that he's set that gang on us. They've no reason of their own for interfering with us!"

"What you done to Polk?"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Nothing! But he doesn't like us!"

"He's a conceited ass!" explained Bunter. "My opinion is that he's jealous of a chap's good looks!"

Mr. Carter jumped again.

"Jerusalem crickets!" he ejaculated.

Obviously, Mr. Carter did not believe that Myron Polk was jealous of Billy Bunter's good looks.

"You howling ass, Bunter!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"There's been trouble with Polk, one way and another; ever since we came to Hollywood, Mr. Carter," said Harry. "Coker rowed with him, and punched him. That was the beginning. Coker was attacked by that brute Gomez, who was arrested. He was bailed out, and cleared off. And Bunter says he saw him at Polk's bungalow in hiding."

"So I jolly well did!" hooted Bunter.

"I believe he did, too," said Harry. "But Bunter's such a frightful fibber, you never can tell!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

Mr. Carter smiled.

"Where's Coker?" he asked.

Wharton pointed out the great man of the Fifth, and Mr. Carter rose and walked across to Coker & Co.

He was occupied for some time listening to Coker's story; and then he came back to the juniors.

"Coker don't know a thing about the hooch," he said. "But he figures that they were going to put him on a steamer that comes along here at times. That looks like rum-running—smuggling of some sort, anyhow! Now, you, Bunter, you figure that you could guide me to the place where them hooch hounds had you cinched?"

"Well, it was somewhere in the mountains," said Bunter cautiously.

"Jest where?"

"I—I don't know."

"Got any idea?"

"Nunno!"

"You're a bright lad, you are," said Mr. Carter admiringly. "Jest the sort of lad I like to work with. Search me!"

"Oh, really, you know—"

"If everybody was as bright as you are, sir, this hyer earth would sure put the sun out," said Mr. Carter.

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"Look here—"

Mr. Carter snapped shut his pocket-book and rose to his feet.

"Much obliged, young gentlemen," he said. "I guess you want to stick to this location and not go wandering in the hills. I guess if there's anything in this you can leave it to me to worry it out. Sure!"

Mr. Carter walked away. He left the juniors in doubt as to whether he attached any importance at all to what they had told him. But no doubt, whatever he may have thought, the Los Angeles detective considered it wiser to keep his own counsel.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

O.K.!

"NOPE!"

Mr. Schootz spoke with emphasis, and Myron Polk scowled.

He was seated in Mr. Schootz's office at the rancho on the location. The fact that he was there showed the astute Mr. Schootz that the Perfection star had cooled down, as he expected. Myron Polk was not at all keen to break his contract with Perfection.

Having taken time to consider the matter Polk had realized that quite clearly. The "Lord of the Desert" film was a big thing. Polk was extremely unwilling to leave it unfinished.

Moreover, bitterly as he resented the scene in which Harry Wharton had replaced him as the sheik, he was well aware that it was a "big punch," as Mr. Schootz called it. Wharton had taken the risk, and Polk was to get the benefit. He hated the schoolboy who had outdone him, but he was not unwilling, on reflection, to profit by what Wharton had done.

"Nope!" repeated Mr. Schootz. "I ain't cutting that scene! Forget it, Polk! Can't be did!"

He eyed the Perfection star keenly. Mr. Schootz was determined not to yield that point, even if he had to break with the star. But he had a shrewd suspicion that Polk was not so keen as he affected to be on cutting the scene now that he had cooled down and thought it over.

"You get the kudos," went on the Perfection director. "Where's your grouch? What?"

Polk bit his lip.

"If that cheeky young scallywag brags all over Hollywood about having understudied me—"

"If that's the worry, forget it," said Mr. Schootz. "Wharton ain't the kid to brag and blow off his mouth. There ain't going to be a word said. All the film fans will reckon it's you in that scene. Nobody's going to put them wise."

"Then let the matter drop," said Polk, with a scowl. "I'm not hunting for trouble."

"Don't," said Mr. Schootz, in great relief. "I guess that's hoss-sense. Now there's another matter I'd better mention—I reckon you know them kids have been bothered a whole heap by a gang of thugs, with that galoot Gomez at their head—"

"I know nothing about it!" snarled Polk.

"Sure!" agreed Mr. Schootz amiably. "But they've got a hunch that you put the thugs on to them."

Polk shrugged his shoulders.

"I've told them it's all guff," said Mr. Schootz. "But I reckoned I'd mention it. A man in your position don't want to stir up a lot of trouble. You want to steer clear of a galoot like Gomez. It sure was unfortunate him getting away when you was taking him down to the police station in your car. Nothing in it, of course. But you want to watch out, Polk, and not stir up trouble. There's a detective here now talking to them kids."

Polk compressed his lips. Mr. Schootz declared his belief that there was "nothing in it." But the Perfection star understood quite well that the director was giving him a warning.

"Any story like that getting into the papers would sure do you a lot of harm, Polk," hinted Mr. Schootz.

"Oh, cut it out!" snapped Polk.

There was a tap at the door of the office.

"I guess that's Carter," said Mr. Schootz. "I told him to look in before he vamoosed. Come in!"

Mr. Carter entered the office.

Polk lounged to the window, with an air of disregarding the detective and anything he might have to say to the director. As a matter of fact, he was very keen to hear.

Mr. Carter's keen eye followed him for a second. Then he gave his attention to the director.

"Waal?" said Mr. Schootz.

"I guess I've talked to the boys," said Mr. Carter, with an air of disgust. "I ain't blaming you, Mr. Schootz, but I reckon I've wasted my time coming up here."

"That so?" smiled Mr. Schootz.

Mr. Carter gave a sniff.

"I guess they've been handing me out film stuff at secondhand," he snapped. "I dare say they mean well, but one of them at least is the biggest liar I've ever struck—and I've struck a heap. Say, you want to get that fat gink Bunter to write up your scenarios. He's sure got the imagination for it."

Mr. Schootz grinned.

"Ain't you got anything to go on, Carter?" he asked.

"Not a thing," said Mr. Carter discontentedly. "Next time that fat gink spins a yarn, Mr. Schootz, use it on the movies. I guess that's the place for it. I ain't blaming you any, but I guess I don't want to waste any more time listening to fairy tales."

And Mr. Carter took his leave, apparently in a very disgruntled state.

Myron Polk turned from the window, with a smile on his face, when the detective was gone.

"So that's that!" he remarked.

"I'm sure glad he takes it that way," said Mr. Schootz. "I don't want policemen horning in on this location, I'll tell a man. Thank goodness he's dropping it."

"You might have known there was

nothing in it except schoolboy imagination," said Polk contemptuously.

"Waal, if that's so, so much the better," said Mr. Schootz. "Anyhow, I'm plump glad the detective takes it that way."

And the subject was dismissed, and the director and the star settled down to talk "shop."

Meanwhile, Mr. Carter had walked back to his car and driven down the canyon to the road.

Under the trees by the roadside Leonora was waiting. Mr. Carter stopped his car and stepped out.

There was a cheery grin on Mr. Carter's face now, quite unlike the disgruntled look with which he had quitted Mr. Schootz's office.

"Jane, old thing," he said, in a low voice, "I'm sure on to it. This is going to be the place where your little boy hops in."

"You think so?" asked Leonora brightly.

"Sure," said Mr. Carter. "There's a gang of rum-runners in these hills, and if I cinch that gang, Jane, it means promotion for me, and a nice little shebang in Hollywood, and no more movies for little Jane—who, I guess, will be Mrs. Peter Carter if I bring this off."

Leonora beamed.

"Mum's the word!" said the astute Mr. Carter. "I guess I've known a long time that there's a gang of hooch hounds working this coast. They've been too wary for me—they sure have. But—"

Mr. Carter chuckled.

"I've got it good!" he went on. "That guy Polk's got a down on them school kids, and he's got in touch with Gomez and his gang to rope them in and keep them out of his way."

"He's some scallywag," said Leonora indignantly.

"He sure is," agreed Mr. Carter. "But I've made him feel good and easy about it—and I guess he will pass it on to Gomez that it's all O.K., and them guys will get going again."

The unscrupulous Mr. Carter chuckled again.

"Next time Mister Gomez horns in after one of them kids, he will find a little man about my size loafing around," he said. "So long as they kept to rum running, they never left trail enough for a hungry lobo wolf to follow. Kidnapping's a different stunt. You get me? That's what's going to land them where I want them—and that's with the bracelets on."

"I see," smiled Leonora.

"I guess I've made Polk think the coast's clear," said Mr. Carter. "I calculate he will pass the glad tidings on to Gomez. That galoot sure will horn in again—and—"

"But the boys will be in danger," said Leonora anxiously.

"Forget it," answered Mr. Carter. "Your beau will be around, horn-ing for a chance to see Mister Gomez. Jane, old thing, this is my big chance! This is where I make the grade! Only jest let that boob Polk

set his thugs on them kids once more—and I'll sure have them."

Mr. Carter was smiling cheerily, when he drove his car on to Hollywood. Leonora was smiling as she walked back to the location.

Myron Polk, too, was smiling, when he tooled the purple auto out of Jack-Rabbit Canyon an hour or two later, and whizzed away on the road to Los Angeles. What he had heard from the astute and not over-scrupulous Mr. Carter had quite reassured him. He lost no time in passing on to Jose Gomez the news that the coast was clear, and that there was nothing to be feared from the police—that it was, in fact, "O.K." He was to learn later that it was not quite O.K.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Up to Coker!

"FOOL!" said Coker.

Potter and Greene looked at him.

Coker was not talking to himself, as might have been supposed from his remark.

He was talking to Potter and Greene.

"Which?" asked Potter cheerfully.

"I don't mean you fellows," said Coker. "I'm speaking of that idiot—that booby—that fathead—the detective who came up here from Los Angeles yesterday."

"Oh! He's a fool, is he?" asked Greene.

"A born fool," said Coker of the Fifth. "He didn't seem in the slightest impressed by what I said to him. That shows what a fool he is. I offered to help him in laying those rogues by the heels. He didn't think my help would be of any value. That shows that he's a born idiot."

"I thought he was rather a keen sort of johnny," remarked Potter.

"You would," agreed Coker. "You've got no judgment, Potter. No gumption, you know."

"Oh!" said Potter.

"He thinks there's nothing in it," said Coker. "Schootz says so. He's glad, of course. He thinks only of shop. But I'm not satisfied."

"No?" yawned Potter.

"I've been collared by those brutes," said Coker. "I may be collared again. So may any of us. The police are no good. All duds, you know. Of course, I never expected anything of American police or detectives. I don't think much of Americans, any how. But that ass, Carter, is a prize idiot. The limit, in my opinion. He's gone back to Los Angeles, and chucked up the whole thing. Well, we've got to take it in hand ourselves."

"Oh, my hat!" said Greene.

"Schootz can say what he likes," resumed Coker. "Carter can think what he likes—if he's capable of thinking at all, which I doubt. We jolly well know that that gang have been set on us."

"Looks like it," admitted Potter.

"Well, then, we know what to do," said Coker.

"Yes, rather! Stick to the location, and not go wandering about outside, where those rotters can get at us," said Potter.

"Don't be a silly ass, Potter."

"I'm jolly well sticking to the location," said Greene. "I'm not looking for a chance of being kidnapped by those toughs."

"Don't be a fathead, Greene."

"Well, what's the big idea?" asked Potter patiently. A fellow had to be patient in dealing with Coker of the Fifth. A Job-like patience was indispensable to anybody who wanted to keep on friendly terms with the great Horace.

"We're taking the matter in hand ourselves," said Coker. "That is to say, I'm taking it in hand, and you men are going to help."

"Are we?" said Greene dubiously.

"You are!" said Coker. "Now, those thugs are keeping a watch on this location. That's proved, by the way they bagged Mauleverer when he went for a walk one day, and Bunter another day. I'm sure of it. If you fellows don't feel sure about it, never mind. Leave it to me."

Potter winked at Greene with the eye that was farthest from Coker. The great Horace went on.

"First man in this party who wanders outside the location, will get nabbed, same as happened before. But that's a game two can play at. My plan is this. One of you fellows clears off, in a casual sort of way, on a walk into the hills."

"Oh, crumbs! Right among those rotters, if they're watching for a chance, as you think," ejaculated Potter.

"Exactly."

Potter and Greene gazed at Coker.

"You can take it as certain, Potter, that when you go alone into the hills, you'll be collared—"

"When?" murmured Potter.

"Eh? What did you say?"

"Nothing, old bean," said Potter (Continued on the next page.)



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blandly. "Trickle on. This is jolly interesting."

"You'll be collared," resumed Coker. "They'll drag you off to that den of theirs in the hills, where they took me. But you needn't be afraid—I shall be on the track."

"You will?" murmured Potter.

"That's it! I suppose you've read," said Coker, "about the way they hunt the tiger in India. They tie up a kid to a stake in the jungle, and the bleating of the kid attracts the tiger. Then they bag the tiger, see? Well, in this case, you're the kid, Potter."

"But I'm not a kid," said Potter, wilfully misunderstanding. "I'm in the Fifth. Those Remove fags are kids."

"For goodness' sake, Potter, don't be so dense!" exclaimed Coker impatiently. "A kid is a young goat. I don't mean a kid in the slangy sense. I mean a young goat. You've got to play the goat."

"Isn't playing the goat rather below the dignity of the Fifth Form?" asked Greene, wilfully misunderstanding in his turn.

"You silly ass!" hooted Coker. "I don't mean playing the goat in that sense. I mean that Potter will act like the kid—that young goat—that is tied in the jungle to attract the tiger. See?"

Coker hoped that he had made it clear now, dense as his comrades were. But Potter and Greene were remarkably dense that day. It was impossible to argue with Coker. But it was possible to pull his leg.

"I see," said Potter. "But so far as I know, there aren't any tigers in California. I've never heard of any."

"In a menagerie, perhaps," suggested Greene.

Coker breathed hard.

"I'm speaking figuratively," he said. "I mean, we're going to trap those ruffians, in the same way as the tigers are trapped. Potter is going to walk right into their hands."

"I can see myself doing it!" remarked Potter.

"You will be in no danger, of course," said Coker. "I shall be on the watch. They will take you to their den. I shall follow. Once I've got the place located, the rest will be easy. I shall lead a party there, rescue you, and bag the whole gang. Easy as falling off a form."

"But suppose they spot you following on, and bag you, too?" asked Potter.

"They won't! I've got gumption," explained Coker.

Potter smiled.

"I'm to walk into their hands and rely on your gumption to see me safe?" he asked.

"Exactly."

Potter did not laugh. Horace Coker had no idea that there was anything comic in this, and it was no use trying to enlighten him.

"Now, I'll tell you exactly what you're to do," went on Coker, taking it for granted that he was to receive the hearty support of his chums

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in this masterly scheme. Coker often took a little too much for granted. "I shall go out first, Potter, and take up my position to keep watch. You remember that place where we picnicked one afternoon—there's a path up from the road to a sort of ravine—"

"I remember," assented Potter.

"I shall take cover there, in that clump of trees—you remember? Well, after I'm safe in cover, you come strolling by. You hang about—reading a book, or something. If they're keeping watch—and I know they are—they'll spot you sooner or later. You can be sure of that."

"Too jolly sure of it," said Potter.

"What?" hooted Coker.

"I mean—go on, old chap. Let's have the lot."

"Sooner or later they'll drop on you, bag you, and walk you off," said Coker. "That's what I want."

It was not what Potter wanted. But he did not say so. It saved trouble to give Horace his head.

"You understand?" asked Coker.

"Quite."

"You're rather dense, you know," said Coker doubtfully. "I'll explain the whole thing again, if you like."

"I've got it clear," said Potter—"clear as daylight. I chuck myself into the hands of a gang of boot-leggers, and trust to your gumption to get me out again! It sounds attractive."

"I'm glad you like the idea," said Coker unsuspectingly. "Well, I'll get off at once. You follow in ten minutes or so."

Horace Coker walked out of the rancho.

Potter and Greene looked at one another.

"I'm to play the goat!" murmured Potter. "Playing the goat isn't the name for it—I should call it playing the giddy lunatic."

Greene chuckled.

"The bleating of the jolly old kid attracts the tiger," said Potter. "Coker hasn't told me to bleat when I'm trying to attract the thugs. Still, they wouldn't hear me if I did bleat—as I'm not stirring out of this rancho."

Greene chortled.

"How long do you think Coker will stay in ambush, old chap?" asked Potter.

"Till dark, I should say," answered Greene. "Coker's a stickler."

Potter nodded.

"That's my idea," he agreed. "Let him. It will amuse him, and it won't hurt us so far as I can see. What about a game of chess? We can get a game now without that ass, butting in and advising each of us in turn to put the king in check, or make a knight's move with a bishop."

"Good!" said Greene.

Potter and Greene quite enjoyed that game of chess under the trees in the sunny patio. A rest from Horace Coker was good for their nervous systems. Whether Horace Coker enjoyed lying in ambush on the hill was another matter. Potter and Greene did not worry about that. In fact, they were so interested in their

game of chess that they actually forgot the existence of the great Horace.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER:

Coker's Capture!

"THE dummy!" breathed Coker. He breathed hard and deep.

"The chump!"

Coker was puzzled and irritated. He grew more and more irritated with every passing moment. And quite a lot of moments had passed since Horace Coker had taken up his ambush in the ravine above the road along the terraced coast.

Although it was only a few hundred yards from the road, the ravine was desolate and deserted, and looked as if it was seldom trod by human foot. Rugged rocks and stunted trees and bushes had the same wild aspect as in the old days, when savage Indians had lurked in the Santa Monica Mountains.

Coker had chosen the spot well. Hidden in a clump of trees, he was able to keep watch over quite an extensive space without revealing himself.

Had Potter come up the path and hung about for hours, it was much more likely than not that he would have been spotted by the thugs who were watching the location from the hills, and captured by them.

It was so likely, indeed, that Potter had sagaciously decided that it was altogether too likely.

Relying upon Coker's gumption to see him through seemed to Potter like leaning upon altogether too frail a reed. Indeed, he doubted whether Coker had any gumption. He had never, so far as his friends knew, shown any sign of it.

But Coker, naturally, was perplexed and irritated. His instructions to Potter had been clear and precise. Yet Potter did not appear.

Had the idiot made a mistake and gone in the wrong direction? Had the howling ass wandered off to parts unknown?

Coker could not tell. All he knew was, that Potter had not appeared in sight. Again and again Coker was on the point of leaving his ambush and going in search of Potter. On the other hand, the burbling chump might arrive any minute; and Coker, having got unobserved into his ambush, realised that it would be injudicious to leave it and display himself. He could only wait for the unspeakable fathead to arrive.

He waited.

Coker was feeling wrathier and wrathier every minute. Probably his wrath would have reached boiling-point had he been aware that George Potter had not left the rancho at all.

Fortunately, Coker did not know that.

He waited. It was warm and uncomfortable in ambush. Insects persisted in buzzing round Coker. They settled on his nose—they explored his hair—they slid down his back. Coker wriggled, and grunted, and grouched. It would not have been so bad if that born idiot Potter had been understudying the kid whose bleating



As Myron Polk cautiously glanced round, the swarthy man in the sombrero backed hurriedly into the clump of bushes where Coker was hidden. Then, as the film star turned and resumed his way, the Mexican peered out of the bushes before taking up the pursuit again. (See Chapter 12.)

attracted the tiger. The prospect of tracking the boot-leggers to their lair, and rounding up the whole gang by his masterly strategy, would have comforted Coker. Now he was suffering all these discomforts for nothing, hoping every minute to see Potter coming up the path, with the hope deferred that maketh the heart sick.

At last, to his immense relief, there was a footstep.

Coker peered from his screen of bushes.

But it was not Potter

To his astonishment, he recognised Myron Polk, the Perfection star.

"Polk!" breathed Coker.

Myron Polk evidently had no suspicion that anyone was hidden by the path up the ravine.

He strolled up the rugged path, smoking a cigarette, and passed within a few feet of Coker

In a couple of minutes he was out of sight, hidden by the rocks and boulders of the winding arroyo. His footsteps died away in the distance.

"Polk!" repeated Coker.

Coker's powerful brain did not work quickly. For some minutes he wondered what the Perfection star was doing there.

But though Coker's brain did not work quickly, it worked!

Gradually it dawned on Coker's intellect what the Perfection star was doing there, in that untrodden wilderness of hills. Polk was the man at the back of the proceedings of the gang of thugs. Coker knew that—at least, he was sure of it. The chances were about a thousand to one that the Perfection star was there to meet some member of the gang in the hills—Gomez, as likely as not. He had to keep in touch with the

ruffians he had hired to wreak his grudge against the Greyfriars party. And certainly he could not see them in Hollywood.

Coker's eyes gleamed.

"My hat! If I'd followed him—and shadowed him——"

Myron Polk had vanished up the arroyo, and was out of sight and hearing; owing to the laborious slowness with which Coker's mighty intellect performed its functions.

But another footstep, lower down the path, came to Coker's ears.

He peered out again. He supposed that it was Potter at last.

Still, it was not Potter.

A roughly-dressed man, with a swarthy face and black beard, half hidden by a big sombrero, was coming up the rocky path.

His footsteps were swift, but stealthy. His eyes watched on all sides, with the watchfulness of a hawk. Even Coker could see that the man was watchful, wary, tense.

"Another of 'em!" murmured Coker.

Coker knew that many members of the boot-legging gang were Mexicans. He had no doubt that this Mexican was one of them.

His eyes glinted.

He had lost the chance of shadowing Polk. But he was not going to lose the chance of shadowing this member of the gang.

He waited, with beating heart, for the swarthy man in the sombrero to pass the bush.

The man passed, quickly and quietly.

He stopped suddenly.

High up the arroyo, Myron Polk had stopped, and was looking back,

from a point where he could see the lower path.

The swarthy man in the sombrero backed hurriedly into the clump of bushes where Coker was hidden.

Coker suppressed a gasp.

He did not know that Polk, at the top of the ravine, was looking back. It never crossed his mind that the man in the sombrero was shadowing Polk. Coker's brain could not be expected to assimilate all that.

All Coker knew was, that the Mexican had backed hurriedly into the bushes, and taken cover there, breathing hard and fast; only a couple of feet from Coker.

As he had his back to Coker, he naturally did not see the great man of the Greyfriars Fifth.

Utterly unconscious of Coker's proximity, the man in the sombrero peered out of the bushes, up the arroyo

Polk, after that cautious glance down, turned and resumed his way. He had seen nothing.

The man in the sombrero was about to quit his cover, to take up the pursuit of the Perfection star again, when he became conscious that he was not alone there. Coker's excited breathing just behind him made him aware of that fact.

With a suppressed exclamation, he spun round.

Coker was ready for him.

This time Coker acted promptly. The man knew he was there, now, and Coker fully expected him to draw a knife if given time, or to yell to his associates for help. Coker did not give him time. As the startled man faced round towards him, Coker

let out his right, with a crash like a battering-ram.

The man in the sombrero went down as if he had been shot.

In an instant Coker was on him.

That terrific drive had half-stunned the unfortunate man. He lay gasping helplessly under Coker.

Coker's knee was planted on his waistcoat, squashing out of him what little breath he had left.

He gasped spasmodically.

"Gurrrrrggh!"

The next instant Coker's handkerchief was jammed into his gasping mouth. The hapless man choked wildly.

Coker drove it in, hard. He was not standing on ceremony with a villain who might bring a whole gang of thugs on him with a single yell.

"No, you don't!" said Coker grimly.

"Urrrgg!" came feebly through the handkerchief stuffed into the wretched man's mouth.

"Quiet, you villain!" hissed Coker.

"Yoooooggh!"

"You'll get hurt if you resist, you scoundrel."

The man was struggling now, frantically. But he had simply no chance.

Coker had him down, and was keeping him down.

Horace Coker was not, perhaps, highly gifted in the matter of brains. But Nature, who always compensates in one way or another, had made it up to Coker in brawn. Coker was hefty and heavy; and he was fully a match for his adversary, on equal terms. And the terms were by no means equal now, with the wretched man on his back, and Coker's sinewy knee grinding into the pit of his stomach.

Coker had it all his own way.

His victim's struggles were fierce, but feeble. All the wind was driven out of him.

In the struggle, the black beard came off his chin. Obviously, it was a false beard.

Coker was not surprised. Scoundrels of this kidney were likely enough to be in disguise. Where the beard had been attached, the man's chin—now revealed to view—was of a lighter shade than his dark and swarthy cheeks. He was not a Mexican! His swarthy complexion was as artificial as his black beard! Coker could hardly have needed any more proof that the man was a desperate character.

The man was making frantic attempts to speak. Several times he nearly ejected the gag from his mouth. Each time Coker's fist drove it back again.

Coker was not taking chances of having the whole gang brought down on him. Not if Coker knew it! He had this scoundrel at his mercy; and that was where he meant to keep him.

Coker jerked a whip-cord from his pocket. In spite of the fallen man's resistance, he looped one end round a wrist and knotted it there.

Grimly and ruthlessly, Coker dragged the man's wrists together.

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He passed the whip-cord round the other's wrist, and tied it. Now the man's hands were bound.

Coker had him where he wanted him, now. He was bound, and could resist no more; he was gagged, and could not give the alarm to the rest of the gang.

Coker dragged him to his feet.

He gurgled horribly, making maddened efforts to get rid of the gag. Coker found a length of twine in his pocket, and bound it round his prisoner's head, fastening the gag in place.

The man's eyes rolled and glared. But his fury did not daunt Coker. Coker grinned cheerfully.

He took a grip on the back of his prisoner's collar.

"Now march!" he said.

Convulsive movements passed through the prisoner. He really looked as if he would explode with fury.

"I'm taking you to Jack-Rabbit," said Coker coolly. "Those kids got Gomez the other day; and he got away. Don't you fancy you'll get away like that, my man! I ain't trusting you into Polk's hands to take to the police station." Coker chuckled. "Not much! I've got you, you scoundrel, and I'm keeping you! Get a move on!"

Coker peered out of the bushes up the ravine. Myron Polk was long out of sight and hearing; and there was no sign of any member of the bootlegging gang. The coast was clear for Coker to get his prisoner away.

He jerked him out of the trees, and jerked him along the path down the ravine towards the road.

Once more the man made a frantic effort to speak.

"Goooooh!"

That was all he could utter. Coker grinned cheerily.

"Think I'm letting you call that gang down on me?" he asked derisively. "Not much! Too fly for that, my man! Now get on—sharp's the word!"

And the prisoner, gurgling horribly, and glaring wildly, was led out of the ravine, down the path into the road; and Horace Coker, in a mood of triumphant elation, started towards the location with him.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Carter in the Cart!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"

"Coker!"

"What the thump—"

"My only hat!"

Harry Wharton & Co. stared blankly.

Work on the pictures was over for the day, and the Famous Five were taking a stroll along the road that ran above the sea.

Mr. Schootz had cautioned them not to wander into the hills; and they had promised obedience. They kept to the road, strolling along in the direction of Santa Monica.

They were near the spot where the path ran up the hill, into the ravine, when an extraordinary sight met their gaze.

From the path on the hill, Horace Coker emerged into the road. He was not alone.

A man who looked like a Mexican was with him. The man's hands were tied together behind him, and something was stuffed in his mouth. Coker had a grip on his arm, and was leading him along.

The juniors gazed at the scene, spellbound.

"What the jolly old thump—" gasped Bob Cherry.

"The thumpfulness is terrific."

The Famous Five hurried on. Coker gave them a lofty glance as they came up. As a matter of fact, Coker was not displeased by the meeting. He was glad to show these juniors that they were not the only fellows who could capture thugs and bootleggers.

"I've got him!" he remarked carelessly.

"I can see you've got him!" gasped Wharton. "Who is he?"

"One of that gang!"

"But how—" ejaculated Johnny Bull.

Coker condescended to explain. The prisoner was making frantic signs to the juniors to take the gag from his mouth.

"He was in disguise!" added Coker. "His beard came off in the struggle. He had a beard."

"But are you sure he's one of that gang?" asked Wharton, doubtfully.

"Do you think I'm likely to make a mistake?"

"Hem!"

"The likeness is terrific, my esteemed Coker."

"I don't want any cheek," said Coker, frowning. "I've got him! I was going to shadow him to the hiding-place of the gang, but he ran right into me, so I made him a prisoner. I didn't give him a chance to call his friends, you can bet."

"But," gasped Wharton, "suppose you—"

"Suppose what, you young ass?"

"Suppose you've got the wrong man? I can't see that you've got any proof that he's one of Gomez's gang."

"That's because you're a young ass," said Coker. "He was in disguise, for one thing. He was creeping along surreptitiously, for another. He was going after Polk—and I'm pretty certain that Polk was going to meet some of the gang. It's perfectly clear."

"The clearfulness does not seem to be terrific!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"You can shut up!" said Coker disdainfully. "I'm taking him to the location; and I can jolly well tell you that I shan't let him get away as you did Gomez the other day."

"But look here—" gasped Wharton.

"Cheese it!"

"Let's hear what he's got to say!"

"Rubbish! Hands off my prisoner!" roared Coker wrathfully. "I don't want any fags meddling."

And Horace Coker marched his prisoner onward, the juniors staring after him blankly.

"Well, my hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "If Coker has collared some

harmless and necessary citizen of Los Angeles, there will be a row about this, my infants."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Famous Five followed behind Coker and his prisoner. So far as they could see, Horace Coker had taken a lot for granted. Coker turned into Jack-Rabbit Canyon, giving his prisoner a hefty jerk whenever he lagged.

Needless to say, Coker attracted a lot of attention as he marched his prisoner into the location.

There were a number of movie-men about, and they all stared at Coker with wide-open eyes; indeed, with wide-open mouths. Coker did not mind. In fact he rather liked it. He was in the limelight now; and Coker liked the limelight. He was not sorry that all the Perfection company should witness his triumph.

Lord Mauleverer met them near the rancho, and stopped to blink at the remarkable sight.

"Oh, gad!" ejaculated Mauleverer. "Who's that?"

"One of the bootlegging gang!" answered Coker. "I captured him in the hills, kid."

Coker spoke with studied carelessness. His manner implied that it was quite a usual sort of proceeding on his part, to walk out into the hills and capture a desperado.

Mauleverer stared hard at the prisoner.

The man had been disguised as a Mexican; but so much of his disguise had been rubbed off in his struggle with Coker, that it was plain at a glance that he was not of that race. It seemed to Mauleverer that there was something familiar in the features of the prisoner.

"Begad! I've seen that johnny before!" he said.

"Good!" said Coker. "You'll be able to identify him, then. I dare say he was one of the rotters who collared you the other day, kid."

"Nunno!" gasped Mauly.

He stared harder at the man. It seemed to him that that square chin, no longer hidden by a false beard, was familiar—very familiar.

"Hold on a minute!" gasped Mauleverer. "Let's have another look at him!"

"Identify him, if you can!" said Coker. "Your evidence will come in useful when I give him in charge."

"You—you're giving that man in charge!" stuttered Mauleverer.

"Of course."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at, you young ass?" demanded Coker, in angry surprise.

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Mauleverer. He had recognised the man now.

"Look here!" roared Coker.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What do you mean?" hooted Coker angrily.

But Lord Mauleverer could not explain what he meant. He was doubled up with merriment.

Coker gave him a glare, and marched his prisoner on towards the rancho, with an angry snort.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Mauleverer.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's the jolly old joke?" demanded Bob Cherry.

The Famous Five stopped.

Mauleverer was almost weeping.

"You think Coker's made a mistake?" asked Harry.

"Ha, ha, ha! Yaas! Ha, ha, ha!"

Lord Mauleverer leaned against a tree, and gasped. He wiped his eyes and chuckled spasmodically.

"You know the man Coker's got hold of?" demanded Nugent.

"Oh, dear! Yaas."

"I thought there was something familiar in his face," remarked Johnny Bull. "I've seen him before somewhere, I think."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Cut the cackle, and get to the hosses!" said Bob. "If you know the man, Mauly, who is he?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Mauleverer. "He—he—he's— Ha, ha, ha!"

"Who?" roared all the juniors together.

"Ha, ha! The detective—"

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In a moment of wrath Bunter said:

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Made him nearly fall down,
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nothings" instead.

A leather wallet has been awarded to: Norman Thornton, 5, Ceylon Street, Marfleet, Hull, Yorkshire. Now let me have your attempt, chum!

"What?" yelled the Famous Five. Mauleverer gurgled.

"Carter?"

"Carter!" howled Bob Cherry.

"Yaas!"

"Oh, my hat!"

The Famous Five looked at Mauly, and looked at one another. They stared after Coker. Then they burst into an irresistible roar.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

That merry roar rang in the ears of the triumphant Horace as he marched his prisoner into the rancho.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Not Pleasant for Peter!

"THUNDER!"

Mr. Schootz spoke with emphasis.

He was smoking his cigar in the patio and talking movie "shop" with Mr. Van Duck, when Coker arrived. Triumphant, elated, Horace Coker marched his prisoner under the arched entrance and arrived in the patio and came to a halt before the Madeira chair in which Mr. Schootz's ample figure reposed.

"Thunder!" repeated Mr. Schootz.

"Gee!" said Mr. Van Duck.

Both of them frowned.

"I've got him!" said Coker triumphantly.

"And who is he? And what have you got him for? And what do you mean, anyhow, you gink?" demanded Mr. Schootz.

Coker snorted.

This was not the enthusiastic reception he had expected.

"It's one of the bootlegging gang!" he snapped.

"And if he is, what do you want with him?" demanded Mr. Schootz. "Can't you keep from horning into trouble, you geck?"

"I've captured him," explained Coker. "I'm going to hand him over to the police. You can jolly well say what you jolly well like, Mr. Schootz. But that gang kidnapped me once, and I'm jolly well going to make them sit up—see? This is a beginning!"

Mr. Schootz granted.

"I guess we're on this location to make pictures, not to scare up a rookus with a gang of bootleggers!" he growled. "Besides, that detective galoot Carter allowed that it was all guff!"

"Carter's a fool," answered Coker—"a born fool! I only wish he was here now, to see for himself! This scoundrel was in disguise—got up like a Mexican—but you can see for yourselves he's an American. I want you to telephone for the police!"

Potter and Greene left their chess. Coker had returned earlier than they had expected. Still more unexpectedly, he had brought a prisoner with him. Potter and Greene wondered who it was. That Coker had succeeded in capturing one of the bootlegging gang seemed improbable to them. They wondered what harmless member of the great American public Coker had captured.

"What you got the guy fixed up like that for?" asked Mr. Van Duck.

Coker grinned complacently.

"I gagged him," he explained. "He would have brought the rest of the gang down on me. Polk wasn't far away."

"Polk!" repeated Mr. Schootz.

"Yes, Polk—and the rest of the gang, very likely!" said Coker. "I got this scoundrel soon after I saw Polk. He was following Polk up into the hills."

"What the thunder was he following Polk for?"

"I fancy Polk was there to meet the gang," said Coker. "This villain was a little way behind!"

"Aw, can it!" snarled Mr. Schootz. "I'm fed-up with your guff about Polk. This galoot is very likely some thug who was following Polk to get his roll."

Coker started a little. It came into his mind that the disguised man's movements, when he had spotted him, were rather like those of a man who was shadowing Polk, than of a man who was going to join him.

"Oh, rot!" said Coker uneasily.

"You can see that he was in disguise—got up as a Mexican."

"Let the guy speak for himself!" grunted Mr. Schootz. "I s'pose you ain't afraid that he'll yell to the gang here, are you?"

Coker proceeded to untie the twine with which he had secured the gag in the prisoner's mouth. It was rather a slow process, and the man gurgled hideously while Coker was busy.

"I've sure seen the guy before somewhere!" said Mr. Schootz, scanning the face of the prisoner. "He seems sort of familiar. If he's some thug who was after Polk for his roll, I guess Polk ought to be obliged to you some!"

"Rot!" said Coker.

"What?" hooted the Perfection director.

"Rot!" repeated Coker undauntedly. "He's one of that gang—and I've got him! I'm jolly well going to get the rest of them, too! I'm going to show that fool Carter how to do his job!"

He jerked the handkerchief out of the wretched man's mouth at last. A gurgling gasp followed it.

"Grrrrroooooogh!"

The man struggled with the bonds on his wrists.

"You're not getting loose, my man!" grinned Coker. "I'm keeping you safe till you get the handcuffs on!"

The man spluttered.

"Let me loose! I'll sure break you up into little pieces for this!" he gasped. "I'll run you in, sure! I'll get you a year in the pen for this, you locoed gink!"

"Who are you, anyhow?" demanded Mr. Schootz. "I sorter seem to know your toot, and your face, too!"

"Can't you see who I am?" roared the prisoner. "Tell that locoed geck to let me loose! I'm going to smash him! I'm going to put him under arrest!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" came a yell. Harry Wharton & Co. had arrived on the scene now. "Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker stared at his prisoner. Even Coker thought it remarkable for a captured thug to threaten to put him under arrest. The man spun round towards the yelling juniors.

"Here, you, let me loose!" he raved.

"Certainly, Mr. Carter!" answered Harry.

Coker jumped almost clear of the ground.

"Carter!" he stuttered.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Potter.

"Coker's bagged the detective!"

"He's bagged Carter!" stuttered Greene. "Oh crumbs!"

"Carter!" repeated Horace Coker, like a fellow in a dream. "You young idiot, Wharton, this isn't Carter! This is one of the bootleggers!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Let my prisoner alone!" roared Coker, as the captain of the Remove came up to release the infuriated detective.

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"I tell you he's Carter!" gasped Wharton.

"I tell you he's nothing of the sort!" roared Coker. "I tell you he's——"

"Carter!" said Mr. Schootz. "Oh, carry me home to die! This is the grasshopper's whiskers!"

Mr. Van Duck said nothing. He couldn't! He was doubled up with merriment.

"I'm Carter," the prisoner was shrieking. "I'm Peter Carter! Don't you know me, you ginks? I'm going to run that geck in for assaulting an officer of the law! I'm Carter! Get me loose! Get me loose instant, so that I can wipe up the earth with that gink!"

"Oh crikey!" gasped Coker.

Even Coker realised the dreadful truth at last. It was clear even to Coker's intellect that he had bagged the wrong man. It was borne in upon his dazed mind that the detective had been shadowing Polk in disguise, and that Coker's intervention had prevented him from tracking the Perfection star to the hiding-place of the bootleggers.

"But—but—but," stuttered Coker, "if—if it's Carter—he doesn't look like Carter. Oh, my hat!"

Harry Wharton was unfastening the Los Angeles detective's hands now. Coker no longer attempted to stop him. Coker's brain was in a whirl. But he realised that this was Peter Carter. And he did not, of course, think of handing over a policeman to the police!

"Oh, search me!" gurgled Mr. Schootz. "This is the elephant's hind leg! You, Carter, you allowed that there was nothing in it, and you let on that you was going back to L. A. and dropping the whole thing. And then you fixed yourself up as a Greaser and started shadowing Polk! You calculated that that would buy you something! Oh, gee-whiz!"

Mr. Carter made no reply to that.

His little scheme—which he had laid with such deep cunning—had been completely knocked on the head by Coker!

Having entirely reassured the Perfection star, by affecting to pooh-pooh the whole matter, he had set himself to watch Myron Polk—"keeping tabs" on him, as he would have expressed it.

He had shadowed the film star into the hills. Polk, watchful as he was, had never known that he was being followed—and had he caught a glimpse of the shadower, he would only have taken him for some Mexican.

Success had been fairly within Peter Carter's grasp! He was assured that Polk was going into the hills to meet some of his lawless associates there. All he had to do was to shadow Polk, unseen, to pick up the track of Gomez's gang, and locate the hidden den of the rum-runners. Success had smiled on him—when Coker intervened! He had not reckoned on the great Horace.

His scheme was blown to the winds now. All the location would know

that he had been shadowing Polk in disguise.

After that, the film star was not likely to be lulled into false security, and taken off his guard.

Mr. Carter was grinding his teeth, while Wharton unfastened his hands. Really, it was no wonder that the Los Angeles detective was wrathful.

His eyes dwelt on Coker almost wolfishly.

Coker gazed at him. For once, the wind was quite taken out of Coker's sails. He was flabbergasted.

He did not quite realise how he had wrecked and ruined the plans laid with so much cunning by the Los Angeles detective! But he did realise that he had put his foot in it.

Carter's hands were loose at last.

He proceeded to make immediate use of them.

He flew at Coker like a bird of prey.

"Here, hold on——" gasped Wharton.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Peter Carter did not heed, and did not hold on. He hurled himself on Horace Coker, hitting out right and left.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Hand to Hand!

"Y AROOOOH!" roared Coker.

Bang, bang! Thump, thump!

"Oh, my hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Thump! Bang, bang!

Crash!

Horace Coker went headlong, under a rain of blows. He landed on Mr. Van Duck, hurling that gentleman, and his chair, backwards into a bed of flowers. Chair and flowers and Van Duck and Coker were mixed in an almost inextricable heap.

"Oh, crumbs!" gasped Bob Cherry, weeping with mirth. "Oh, dear! Hold me, somebody."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gerroff!" shrieked Mr. Van Duck, struggling wildly under the sprawling Coker. "Gerroff! Help!"

"Ow! Wow!" gasped Coker.

"Oooch! My hat!"

Mr. Carter brandished his fists, almost foaming with rage.

"Come out of that, you geck!" he roared. "I guess I'm going to beat you up a few! I'm going to break you into small pieces."

"Gerroff!" moaned Van Duck.

Coker sat up dizzily. He did not know, in the confusion of the moment, what he sat on.

Mr. Van Duck knew! Nobody could have the heavy and hefty Horace sitting on his face without being aware of it.

"Woooooch!" came in a gurgle from the assistant director.

"Oh, search me!" gasped Mr. Schootz, helpless with merriment. "Oh, take me home to Jane! Oh, gee-whiz! I'll tell a man!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker sat dazed and dizzy. How long he would have sat on Mr. Van Duck's features cannot be said. All of a sudden he leaped to his feet with a fiendish yell.



"You let my prisoner alone!" roared Coker, as Harry Wharton approached the infuriated detective. "I tell you he's Carter!" gasped Wharton. "I tell you he's nothing of the sort!" roared Coker. "I tell you—" "Oh, carry me home to die!" cried Mr. Schootz, doubled up with merriment. "This is the grasshopper's whiskers!" (See Chapter 14.)

"Yaroooh! I'm bitten! Yarooooop!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Wow!" roared Coker.

Horace Coker remained on his feet about a second. Mr. Carter, still thirsting for vengeance, rushed on him again and smote him hip and thigh.

Coker flew! Mr. Van Duck squirmed out of the way in time; and Coker landed in the flower-bed, roaring.

"Here, hold on!" gasped Wharton. "Chuck it!" stuttered Bob Cherry. "Enough's as good as a feast, you know."

"You're not allowed to kill Coker!" gurgled the Bounder.

"The enoughfulness is terrific, my esteemed and ridiculous Carter," chortled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Mr. Carter did not heed. A volcano in the process of eruption would have been as likely to heed remonstrance. The sleuth from Los Angeles wanted vengeance, and he wanted it bad.

Coker struggled up.

This time, as Mr. Carter swooped on him, Horace Coker met him with left and right. They closed in deadly combat.

Thump, thump! Crash! Bang! Thump!

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Go it!" roared the Bounder. "Go it, Coker! Go it, Carter! Ha, ha, ha!"

They were going it! Neither gave much heed to defence. Both concentrated on attack. The outcome was that both received rather severe punishment.

"Stop them!" gurgled Mr. Schootz. "Ha, ha, ha! Separate them pesky boobs! Oh, search me! Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors rushed to intervene. They collared Mr. Carter, as one man. Potter and Greene collared Coker.

Coker was dragged back by his chums. The Famous Five wrenched Mr. Carter away from his victim by main force.

"Chuck it, Carter!" gasped Bob. "The chuckfulness is the proper caper!"

"Leggo, you ginks!" yelled Mr. Carter. "Ain't I told you I'm going to beat him up? Leggo!"

"Leggo, you dummies!" roared Coker. "Lemme gerrat him!"

"Chuck it, you ass!" breathed Potter. "He's a bobby—"

"I don't care! I'll bobby him!" roared Coker. "I'll give him bobby! Lemme gerrat him!"

But Potter and Greene exerted themselves to hold Coker back. Harry Wharton & Co. did as much for the enraged detective.

Mr. Schootz wiped his streaming eyes.

"Say, you, Carter!" he gurgled. "Say, you get tired of your detective job, you mosey along to my studio, and I'll sure give you a new one! I'm horning to put you on the pictures in that act! I'll sure pay you high to do that scene over again before the camera!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The patio was crowded with Perfection people; movie men and movie girls, shrieking with laughter. The uproar had attracted nearly everybody on the location to the spot.

"Will you let up, you ginks?" roared Mr. Carter, struggling to break loose from the Famous Five.

"No fear!" answered Wharton. "Keep cool!"

"The no-fearfulness is terrific, my preposterous Carter!" chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Hold him!" gasped Johnny Bull.

Mr. Carter, with a terrific effort, wrenched himself loose. The next

moment he would have hurled himself headlong at Horace Coker. But at that moment came an interruption.

"Peter!"
Mr. Carter jumped. He spun round. "Hallo! You—Jane!" he stammered.

"Oh, begad! It's Leonora!" murmured Lord Mauleverer.

Leonora, like the rest of the Perfection company, had been drawn to the spot by the terrific uproar. She gazed at her Peter blankly.

Mr. Carter dropped his hands, and unclenched them. The crimson countenance of Horace Coker had had a narrow escape.

"Peter!" gasped Leonora.

Mr. Carter's face was already red. Now it assumed the rich hue of a beetroot.

"I—I guess—" he stammered. "I—I guess that gink got my goat, Jane! I—I guess—"

"I'll smash him!" roared Coker.

"Shut up!" hissed Greene.

"Here, you Leonora!" gurgled Mr. Schootz. "You take your beau away! He sure wants a wash! He's been making up as a movie detective!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Peter!" murmured Leonora.

She led the hapless Mr. Carter away. Fifty or sixty people, in the patio, were left rocking with laughter, as the unfortunate sleuth disappeared from sight.

Only Coker did not laugh. He did not see anything to laugh at. Besides, he was busy attending to the numerous damages on his rugged countenance.

Bob Cherry wiped his eyes.

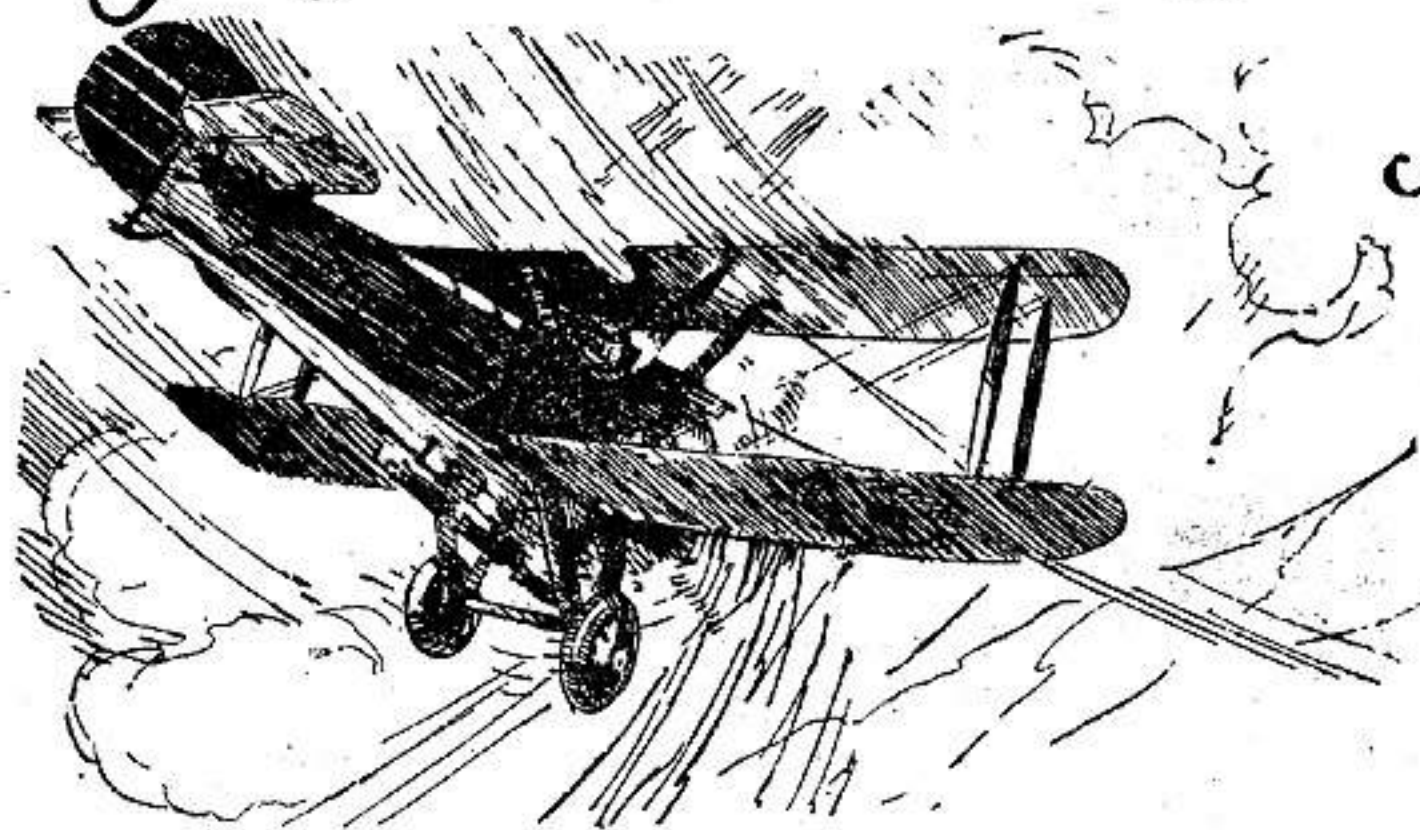
"Coker will be the death of me, one of these days," he sobbed; "I

(Continued on page 27.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,103.

The Black Hawk

by Geo. E. Rochester



TO BE SHOT AT DAWN!

With a soldier on either side of him, two in front and two behind, escape seems impossible for Derek Moncrieff until—

A Bid for Freedom!

THE streets of Strasbourg were almost deserted save for an occasional patrol of military police as the two cars containing Derek and his escort purred along them en route for the fort which stood on the western bank of the canal.

The boy's handcuffs had been removed, and, to counter-balance that, four soldiers with fixed bayonets travelled in the tonneau with him. Escape was impossible. And with the dawn Derek Moncrieff would pass out.

But the young pilot's thoughts were not of that. He was thinking of Scaife. Scaife, the traitor; the cowardly blackguard who would carry on in his treacherous role, betraying British plans to Germany. If only Derek could get word across the line, nothing else would matter. But that was impossible.

The cars came to a sudden grinding halt by the side of the canal.

"We will take the tow-path!" growled the sergeant. "You"—to the driver of the first car—"wait here for me. I do not intend to walk back to the barracks!"

With a soldier on either side of him, two in front and two behind, Derek was marched along the tow-path towards the iron gates of the fort, half a kilometre distant. The sergeant strode by the side of the escort, silent save for some occasional grunted observation.

Derek walked with head bent and shoulders slumped. But his hands were clenched, and more than once he glanced covertly towards the night-shrouded waters of the canal, only a few feet on his right. Dead despair in his heart had given place to tingling excitement.

Then, without warning, he acted. Literally hurling himself against the soldier on his right, he swept

him off his balance. Taken entirely unawares, the man staggered wildly with a shout of alarm which terminated in a gurgle and heavy splash as he went backwards into the canal with Derek on top of him.

With such startling swiftness had Derek acted, that, for a moment, the soldiers were seemingly bereft of their wits.

"Fire, curse you, you fools!" roared the sergeant, and his automatic blazed into life, the bullets zip-zipping into the swirling water.

"Our comrade will be hit!" shouted one of the soldiers warningly.

In one terse and comprehensive oath the sergeant consigned the comrade to perdition.

"Fire, will you, you pigs!" he screamed. "If the Englander escapes every one of you will be shot!"

A ragged volley crashed out, bullets spattering into the water. The face of a swimming man, a grey blur in the water below them, brought a sudden cessation of the firing. The man splashed in towards the bank and raised a groping hand. Fingers clutched at him and hauled him out. It was the soldier, half-drowned, spluttering, and minus rifle and forage cap.

The sergeant kicked at him savagely.

"Where is the Englander, you fool?" he shouted. "Where is he?"

A grey-clad figure came running madly along the tow-path. It was the driver of the car, and he had been attracted by the noise.

The sergeant, bellowing frantic orders to spread out and guard each bank, did not see him for a moment. But he did when the driver grabbed him by the arm.

"What has happened?" he jabbered. "What is the matter?"

The sergeant wheeled, with an oath.

"You?" he bellowed. "Get back to your car, you fool! The Englander has escaped!"

The driver turned and sprinted back the way he had come, drawing his gun as he went. But already a dripping figure had clambered from out of the waters of the canal and was running desperately towards the car. The driver saw the silhouette of the running figure, ahead on the tow-path.

"The Englander!" he shouted, and his gun spat lurid flame.

A bullet whistled past Derek's head, and he spurted madly. The driver was too excited to take steady and careful aim, and the soldiers behind him could not fire for the moment in case they riddled him instead of Derek.

Another bullet from the driver's gun whined harmlessly past the boy's head.

Reaching the car, Derek leapt for the driving seat. Then his foot pressed on the self-starter, and, as the warm engine whirled into life, he slipped in the clutch.

The powerful car shot forward with a jerk. A crash of musketry followed it, but already Derek was roaring along the deserted street.

Swinging off the main thoroughfare, Derek traversed the side streets which he knew would take him out on the southern outskirts of the town. He knew where he was going. He was going to his machine.

Ten minutes later Derek was clear of the town, and roaring through the night along the lonely and deserted road which led to the farmstead. There was neither town nor village of any size or importance between him and his goal, only scattered and sleeping hamlets.

The boy airman had no headlights, but the winding roadway stretched before him like a grey ribbon beneath the glimmering stars. He

drove like a madman, and the swirling rush of the clear night air acted on him like a tonic. He would win through now. He would get his machine, fly to Ouchy, see Colonel Milvain, and tell him of what had occurred that night. It would be his word against Colonel Scaife's. But he would make Colonel Milvain believe.

It was easy to see how Scaife had worked it. He had doubtlessly left Le Courban under cover of night, professing to be on an aerial light-house survey, or some such similar mission. Instead of that he had flown over the line into Germany. The German anti-aircraft batteries would have their orders to refrain from shelling a British machine passing over at a certain hour with, perhaps, port navigation light aglow, or some such distinguishing feature. Scaife would change into khaki uniform, of course, before returning.

Yes, it was easy for Scaife to get away with a game of that sort, provided he did not indulge in it too often. Well, he had done it once too often now.

Time and again, as his thoughts ran on, Derek glanced behind him for signs of pursuit. He knew that somewhere along the road behind cars would be roaring in pursuit, provided, of course, that the Boche had the mentality to conclude that the fugitive would make for his machine. There was a guard over the machine. What was the guard's name? Karl! Yes, that was what the sergeant had called him.

On and on through the night thundered the automobile. Derek was very sure of his road. He knew the location of the farmstead too well to make any mistake. He throttled down as the road became rougher and more narrow. Then, ahead, rearing their stark bulk against the sky, he saw the outline of the farmstead buildings.

Slowly the great car slid to a halt, and Derek leapt out on to the road. He had already decided upon his course of action, for he knew that he would be able to approach within feet of the guard before the man recognised him.

Clearing the low hedge of the field, he commenced running towards his machine.

"Karl!" he shouted. "Karl!" The startled Karl came lumbering towards him through the darkness. No thought of harm coming to himself was in the mind of the bovine Karl. Someone who knew him was running towards him, calling his name. He was wanted. True, he did not recognise the voice, but what of that?

"Karl!" shouted Derek. "Karl!" "Yes. What?" demanded Karl, as the running figure loomed up.

"Just hold that!" panted Derek. As the boy spoke, his clenched fist took Karl full on the point. Every atom of Derek's strength, and power bred by dire necessity, was in the blow. Karl went backwards, full length to the turf. His rifle fell from his nerveless hand.

Pouncing on it, Derek hurled it far away into the darkness, then dashed for his machine.

Karl rose dazedly to his feet, tenderly massaging his jaw as he glared around him in the darkness. His brain worked slowly at the best of times. Now it was sorely bemused. From far along the road came the hum of automobile engines growing rapidly in volume. But the sound of them was suddenly lost in the shattering roar of an aero engine, close at hand.

Karl understood now. With a shout, he dashed forward, halting in sudden dismay as he discovered that he had not got his rifle. But there

was no time to search for it. He started forward again. From the hedge which bordered the roadway came a sudden spurting line of flame. It was rifle fire. With a sob, Karl spun round and pitched face foremost to the ground.

And low over the road, where soldiers were pouring from four powerful cars, which had arrived too late, roared the machine of the Black Hawk. Even as the ragged, futile volley of shots from the roadway cracked out, it circled widely, climbing on the turn, then thundered away westwards into the night towards the line.

(Continued on the next page.)

WONDERFUL NEW SERIAL!



Next week you'll meet Jimmy Berresford, notable for a cheerful, smiling countenance, and a strong,

athletic figure; notable also for his passionate interest in all things relating to speed in motor-cycling. And this very passion for the dirt-track leads to a serious turning-point in Jimmy's career. Jimmy's got a pal, too—Ron Connolly, of a rather more serious disposition than himself, but likewise interested in speed and motor-cycling. Ron's a mechanic, and his pet ambition to launch a new engine on the motor-cycle market is well within his compass for he is of an inventive turn of mind.

Between them, Jimmy and Ron are going to supply you with thousands of thrills.

START WITH THRILL NUMBER ONE IN NEXT WEEK'S OPENING INSTALMENT OF THIS AMAZING DIRT-TRACK SERIAL!

**SPEEDWAY
PALS!**
A. CARNEY ALLAN



Literally hurling himself against the soldier on his right Derek swept him off his balance. Taken utterly unawares, the man gave a shout of alarm which terminated in a gurgle as he went splashing backwards into the canal with Derek on top of him! (See page 24.)

Second to None!

THE machines of Squadron 108 had long been housed for the night, and the canvas hangars of Ouchy Aerodrome loomed grey and ghostly in the darkness.

In the flight office, Colonel Milvain and the adjutant were seated conversing in low and earnest tones.

"He could not save him, you say?" said the adjutant quietly.

Colonel Milvain shook his head.

"It was impossible!" he replied. "And to have attempted it would probably have meant the divulging of his identity. That, of course, had to be avoided at any cost. Even at the cost of this gallant life!"

Then came a sudden, dramatic interruption, as the door of the flight office crashed open. On the threshold stood Derek Moncrieff.

"You?" cried Colonel Milvain.

"Yes, me!" replied Derek harshly.

Kicking the door shut behind him, the boy advanced.

"You've got to listen to me, sir!" he went on, his voice shaking.

"Colonel Scaife—"

"Never mind Colonel Scaife!" cut in the C.O., stepping quickly forward and taking Derek by the arm.

"Where have you come from, lad?"

"From Strasbourg!" replied Derek, wondering at the colonel's kindly and anxious tone. "And I can prove that Colonel Scaife was the man who—"

"Colonel Scaife landed at Le Courban half an hour ago, and was immediately put under close arrest!" cut in Colonel Milvain. "We know the whole truth now, lad. We know

how shamefully you have been wronged, and how gallantly you have carried on in the very heart of enemy country. Colonel Scaife condemned himself out of his own mouth at Strasbourg to-night, when you were sentenced to be shot."

"But—but how do you— How can you possibly know what happened at Strasbourg to-night, sir?" exclaimed Derek, in amazement.

Colonel Milvain smiled grimly.

"Moncrieff," he said, "the world will never know just what our Secret Service is doing, and has done. It is second to none. And, by tragic force of circumstance, one of your fellow-countrymen sat in judgment on you to-night. Prior to the War, and during the War, the man to whom I refer has carried his life in his hands. Immediately after your trial to-night and the divulging of your identity, he sent a message through in Morse code to British G.H.Q."

"But who is this man, sir?" demanded Derek.

"He is Major Beverley, of the British Intelligence Service," replied Colonel Milvain quietly. "But he is known in Germany as the Count Eberhard von Ergstrom!"

Sir Gerald Moncrieff, white of hair, and—to his unutterable disgust—too old to fight, was sitting in his favourite armchair at his club.

"Jones!" he barked suddenly.

Jones, a meek-looking little man with pincenez, looked up from his paper.

"Yes?" he inquired.

"Read that!" said Sir Gerald, almost fiercely, thrusting a copy of the "London Gazette" towards him. Jones took it, and read the paragraph indicated.

"Moncrieff—Major Derek, D.F.C., A.F.C., R.A.F.—For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty, the Victoria Cross."

"My word!" bleated Jones. "That's good!"

"Good!" snorted Sir Gerald. "Allow me to tell you, sir, that it's fine—dashed fine, confound it! I—I'm proud of my boy, Jones. I wonder when he'll get leave!"

But it was not for many a long day that Major Derek Moncrieff, V.C., D.F.C., A.F.C., was destined to return home on leave. And sometimes, when flying on offensive patrol into Germany, he thought of that German uniform and German Secret Service Badge which lay buried in the barn at the lonely farm, and wondered, grimly, if the day would ever come when he would need them.

THE END.

(And so the curtain rings down on one of the most powerful War serials ever written. But don't be disconsolate, chums, all good things come to an end sooner or later. That your old favourite, the MAGNET, wants some beating where first-class serials are concerned, you'll all agree. And let me tell you this, that "SPEEDWAY PALS!" our grand dirt-track serial, which commences in next week's issue, is going to beat all records. Make sure you read the opening instalment by getting your newsagent to reserve you a copy.—ED.)

"THE LUCK of Mr. LICKHAM!"

(Continued from page 15.)

Mr. Clevercove quietly. "Mr. Lickham here, by any chance?"

"At your serviss, sir!" said Mr. Lickham, very glad of the sudden interruption.

"Are you the owner of that eggstraordinary old spessimen of a motor-bus that stands near the porter's lodge?" asked Mr. Clevercove eagerly.

"Yes, worse luck!" groaned Mr. Lickham.

"Good egg! I am most anxious to secure it for my museum of anteek motor veehicles. I wonder if you will sell it to me for thirty quid?"

"Take it with plezzure, sir," said Mr. Lickham. "And I'll have the cash now!"

"Half a minnit!" broke in Dr. Birchermall hastily. "You stand back, Lickham. The bus is mine, as a matter of fact. I'll take the munny."

So saying, Dr. Birchermall eggstended a bony hand towards Mr. Clevercove.

Sir Frederick Funguss stared.

"I thought you told me the bus belonged to Lickham?" he cried angrily.

"Ha, ha! That was only my joke!" eggsplained the Head, feebly.

"Ratts! You gave it to me this morning!" said Mr. Lickham.

Sir Frederick fixed a pennytrating look on Dr. Birchermall.

"I think I understand now," he said.

"It strikes me, Birchermall, that you're a bigger old scoundrell than I thought you were. I shall refuse to let you take the munny. Lickham shall have the thirty quid and hand me over twenty-five for the repairs, leaving him a fiver prophct. Will that suit you, Lickham?"

"Oh, rather!" grinned Mr. Lickham.

And so it was arranged. There and

then the munny changed hands, and Mr. Lickham walked blithely out of the study with a crisp fiver reposing in his trowsis pocket.

As for Dr. Birchermall, he was left nashing his teeth and tearing his beard with rage. And for weeks afterwards, to send him on the verge of an apollojetick fit, it was only necessary to whisper the words: "Birchermall's Bus!"

THE END.

(Now look out for another St. Sam's yarn, entitled: "DR. BIRCHERMALL AND THE DRAGON!" which will appear in next week's MAGNET.)

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THE SCHOOLBOY SHEIK!

(Continued from page 23.)

know he will! Fancy capturing a detective—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Running in a policeman, to hand him over to the police!" gasped Nugent. "Oh, dear!"

"Begad! I hope he won't run Coker in!" said Lord Mauleverer.

"Oh, crumbs!"

Fortunately, Mr. Carter did not proceed to that extremity. No doubt Leonora pacified him. Mr. Carter quitted Jack-Rabbit Canyon promptly; probably anxious to get out of sight.

Coker's fate, that evening, presented a highly-decorative colour scheme. It also wore a deep frown. Wherever Coker moved, there were sounds of merriment. It irritated Coker. He could see absolutely no reason for it. He admitted that he had made a mistake—a mistake that any fellow might have made. That was no reason why every silly ass in Jack-Rabbit Canyon should chortle at the sight of him.

But they did!

Coker's remarkable capture continued to be a topic at the Perfection location, long after Coker was tired of it.

(Whatever you do, chums, don't miss the next yarn in this magnificent series, entitled: "HARRY WHARTON'S PERIL!" You'll vote it the tit-bit of the week. The wise "Magnetite" will order his copy WELL IN ADVANCE!)



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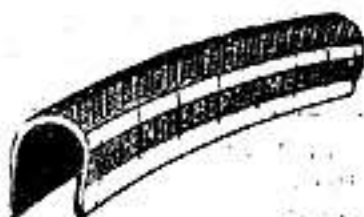
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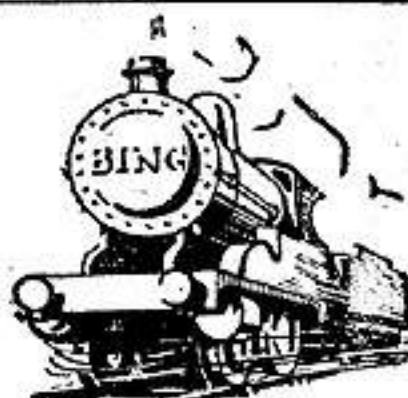
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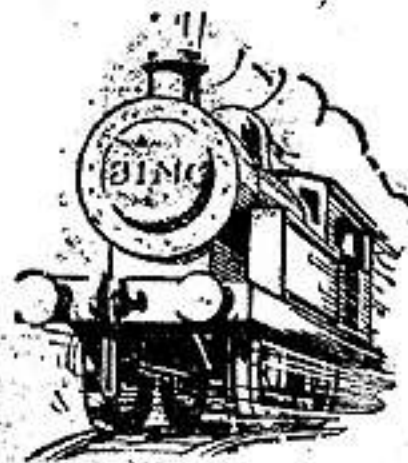
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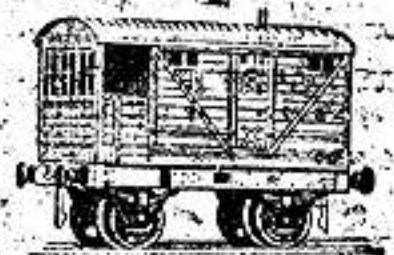
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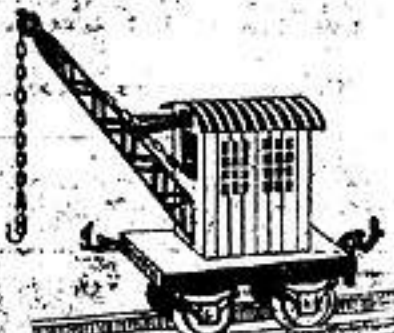
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Made of strong sheet-iron, stamped to represent timber construction, painted grey. Contains six sacks of produce under detachable tarpaulin.

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ALL N.B.G.

"Dear Birchmell,
I understand that a motor-bus has crashed into the front door of the School House, severely damaging it. I shall pop over tomorrow (Saturday) and inquire into this extraordinary mishap. Needless to add, if I find that you are responsible, I shall expect you to cough up the cost of repairing the damage."
Yours truly,
Frederick Fungus
(Chairman of the Governors)."

R. BIRCHEMELL, the rosy and majestic headmaster of St. Sam's, gave a hollow groan as he read the missive over his breakfast of sossidges and mash. As the owner of the bus that had recently created havoc in the doorway of the School House, he was undoubtedly responsible for the damage, and he thought that he might be expected to settle the bill of costs sent a cold shiver down his spine.

"This is ruff, and no mistake!" he muttered, jabbing a fork viciously into a salskulant sossidge, and taking a savage bite. "Fossil, the porter, says it will cost twenty-five quid to put the doorway right again. Mite as well make it twenty-five thousand so far as I'm concerned!"

Dr. Birchmell larfed a bitter larf and lapsed into gloomy reflections about what might happen when Sir Frederick Fungus found that he couldn't pay up. In his mind's eye, the Head saw himself thrown out of St. Sam's on his neck, and passing the rest of his life selling matches in the gutter. The thought made him shudder, and he demolished another sossidge and tried to think of a way out.

Soon a bright whizz occurred to Dr. Birchmell, and he began to grin faintly. It was an unscrupulous wheeze, but as the Head was an unscrupulous person, that didn't matter. He thought it well over, and came to the conclusion that it was sound. By the time he got up from his breaker, he was whistling blithely as though his troubles were already over.

"And now to work the merry oracle!" he muttered, as he trotted out of his study, where he had been having his late breakfast, and made his way towards the Fourth Form room. "Lickham is a simple sort of ass, and he'll be delighted when I make him a present of the bus, little dreaming that it makes him responsible for the damage!"

Dr. Birchmell chuckled into his beard at the thought of his treacherous steen to shift the blame on to the innocent master of the Fourth.

Reaching the Fourth Form room, he kicked open the door and stroled in.

"Good-morning, Lickham!" he said cheerily. "Good-morning, boys!"

"Good-morning, sir!" shouted the Fourth.

"Lickham, old fellow," said the Head jocularly, "I have some pleasant news for you."

Mr. Lickham started violently, and wondered whether he had heard aright, for it was the first time in history that the Head had ever called him "Old fellow."

"Indeed, sir!" he murmured respectively.

"Yes, indeed, Lickham! For a long time, old chap, I have thought of making you a present as a token of my esteem. You know, of course, what a jammous natcher I've got, don't you?"

"Well, I can't say I do, sir," commented the Master Librarian—No. 1,103.

The Luck of Mr. LICKHAM!

by Dicky Nugent.



For real craftiness Dr. Birchmell of St. Sam's fairly takes the biscuit. But there are occasions when his cunning recoils upon his own head.

lost Mr. Lickham reluctantly. "I've always thought you were the meanest old skunk that ever lived, to be quite frank, sir!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Fourth.

"The Head frowned feebly.

"Silence! Well, Lickham, you're jolly well mistaken, anyway, and I'm going to prove it to you now. To get down to brass tax, I've decided to present you, free, gratis, and for nothing, with my magnificent motor-bus. There! How's that?"

"Many giddy aunt!" gasped Mr. Lickham.

The master of the Fourth was knocked all of a heap by the Head's astounding announcement.

"Well, what do you think of that for benevolence, eh?" asked Dr. Birchmell, grinning all over his face.

"I—I hardly know what to say, sir," stammered Mr. Lickham. "Such uneggsampled generosity simply takes my breath away. Why, the bus must be worth at least thirty shillings!"

"It's worth more than that," said the Head triumphantly. "Several dealers have offered me a couple of quid for it. Now what do you think of me?"

"I feel there must be a catch in it," replied Mr. Lickham, with a catch in his voice. "But I must admit I can't see where it is, so I'll accept your gift with pleasure and gratitude. Boys, just to show what you think of the

Head's benevolence to your Form masters, kindly give three rousing cheers! Hip, hip, huray!"

But the Fourth had never got on very well with the Head, and their only response was a chorus of catcalls and hisses.

Dr. Birchmell scowled savagely at them, then slunk out of the Form-room. Outside, he gleefully danced a horn-pipe at the success of his unscrupulous wheeze.

"Pah! The idiot fell for it like a lamb!" he muttered sulkily, as he proceeded to the Sixth Form-room to take the seniors in loggery.

Fortunally for Mr. Lickham, however, he had some good friends in the Fourth who were already feeling very suspicious regarding the Head's generosity. Jack Jolly & Co. were by no means content to believe that the Head had suddenly changed his spots, so to speak. And they made up their minds to have a confab about it after class.

They discussed the matter at midday in Jack Jolly's study. The kaptein of the Fourth presided, and Merry and Bright and Fearless were there, of course. The only other chap present apart from these four stalwart chums, was Clarence Cleverove, the inventor of the Fourth. He was a brawny sort of fellow, and Jack Jolly had anticipated that he might come in useful. As it turned out, he proved very useful indeed.

"The problem is, what's the Head's game in presenting Lickham with this rotten old bus?" said Jack Jolly, when they were all assembled. "We know he hasn't done it out of kindness of heart."

"Ha, ha!" chorussed the assembly.

"Especially as he's been making munny galore out of it, it's a bit of a mystery that he should give the old crock away," continued the junior kaptein of St. Sam's. "Can anyone suggest an answer to the riddle?"

"I can!" said Frank Fearless. "All eyes were turned on the handsome young Fourth-Former."

"Coff it up, old sport!" said Jack Jolly encouragingly.

"My idea is that the Head wants to make Lickham responsible for the damage to the door of the Skool House," said Frank Fearless deliberately. "It stands to reason that the governors will expect the owner of the bus to fork out. Well, if the Head manhandles to make Lickham the owner, instead of himself, the governors will swoop down on poor old Lickham for the cash, and kick him out as soon as they know he can't pay up. See?"

"That's it, right enuff!"

"Just the sneaky kind of thing the old villain would think of," said Jack Jolly, his eyes gleaming eggstidly. "Now I wonder what we can do to frustrate his nashy trick?"

"That was just where Cleverove stepped in."

"I've got it!" he cried triumphantly. "Suppose Lickham has to pay the bill for repairing the door and sells the bus to do it."

"No good, old scout!" interrupted Jack Jolly. "The bus wouldn't fetch more than a quid or two as scrap-iron, and the door will cost a lot more than that to repair."

"But you haven't heard what I was going to say, yet," said Cleverove. "You see, my patter is setting up a museum of quaint old motor vehicles, out-of-date models, et cetera, et cetera. And though this bus mite not be worth much as scrap-iron, I'm sure it would be worth a lot as a museum eggbit."

"Quite possibly the patter would offer Lickham a big sum for it."

"Great pip!" That would be a lark and no mistake!" grinned Jack Jolly. "Can't you imagine the Head's fazz when he finds out that Lickham has prophesied out of the deal?"

"Yes, rather!" chuckled the juniors. "It's a first-class wheeze, and I suggest we wire your patter, immediately, just we wire your patter, immediately, and that was what they did."

II.

"GOOD AFTERNOON, Sir Frederick!" said Dr. Birchmell, bowing down with his usual fawning, grovelling attentions.

Sir Frederick Fungus replied to the Head's greeting with an angry snort. "Don't 'good-afternoon' me, Birchmell!" he cried sternly. "I haven't come to waste politeness on you, I can assure you. What I want to know is, who's going to pay for repairing that damaged door?"

And to emphasise his words, Sir Frederick seized the Head by the lapels of his jacket and shook him as a terrier shakes a rat.

Dr. Birchmell turned red in the face as he went through this undignified ordeal.

"Yow-ow-wow! L-I-l-l-e-g-g-o, y-o-u b-b-beast!" he stammered furiously. "I wasn't my fault!"

Sir Frederick Fungus released the Head of St. Sam's in surprise.

"But I thought you were the owner of the motor-bus that did the damage, Birchmell!" he cried.

"Certainly not. The owner, as a matter of fact, is Mr. Lickham, the master of the Fourth," replied the Head, ruefully rubbing his injured parts. "Ask him yourself, if you don't believe me, Sir Frederick."

"Just me! That's strange!" mused the chairman of the governors. "I thought my information came from a trustworthy source, too! However, fare's fare, and I don't want to convict an innocent man. Send for this Lickham at once, Birchmell!"

"Right-ho, Sir Frederick!"

The Head pressed the bell-push on his desk, and a few seconds later, Binding, the page, poked his head round the doorway.

"Send Mr. Lickham along at once, Binding!" ordered the Head harshly.

"Yesir!" said Binding, and vanished. "Have a bit of loffy, Sir Frederick?" asked the Head humbly, extracting a sticky-looking bag from his trowis pocket, while they waited.

Sir Frederick's stern features relaxed a little at that gracious invitation, and he helped himself liberally—so liberally, that he emptied the bag altogether.

By that time Mr. Lickham had entered the room. He eyed the chairman of the governors rather nervously and wondered what the dickens was the matter.

He soon knew, however.

"Lickham!" thundered Sir Frederick. "I understand that you are the owner of the motor-bus that stands near the porter's lodge?"

"That's so, sir!" nodded Mr. Lickham innocently. "Owing to the generosity of—"

The Head savagely stamped on the Fourth Form master's toes at that moment, just in time to prevent any awkward disclosures being made.

"Hah! So you're the giddy owner, are you?" roared the baronet, cramming his mouth full of his host's toffy.

"In that case, Lickham, perhaps you'll fork out twenty-five quid for the repair of the front door of the Skool House!"

"Twenty-five quid!" echoed Mr. Lickham, aghast. "Grate pip, sir! You must be joking!"

"Far from it! You're going to trot out twenty-five of the best, or leave St. Sam's for good, on your neck!"

hissed Sir Frederick.

"But it wasn't my fault—" began Mr. Lickham desperately.

"That duzzent matter. As the bus is yours, you are responsible for the damage. Now, what are you going to do—pay up and look pleasant, or suffer the consequences?"

"But I haven't twenty-five pence, let alone twenty-five quid!" gasped the dismayed master of the Fourth.

"Good enuff!" growled Sir Frederick grimly. "Then you'll leave this collidge on your neck!"

So saying, the infuriated chairman jumped to his feet and prepared to lay violent hands on the unfortunate Mr. Lickham.

Before he could do so, however, there came a dramatic interruption. The door of the study was flung open, and in walked a distinguished-looking gentleman, followed by five grinning juniors. It was Cleverove's patter, the sally-brated inventor and engineer!

"Good-afternoon, gentlemen!" said

(Continued on page 27.)

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