A Tale of the Greyfriars Home Guards.

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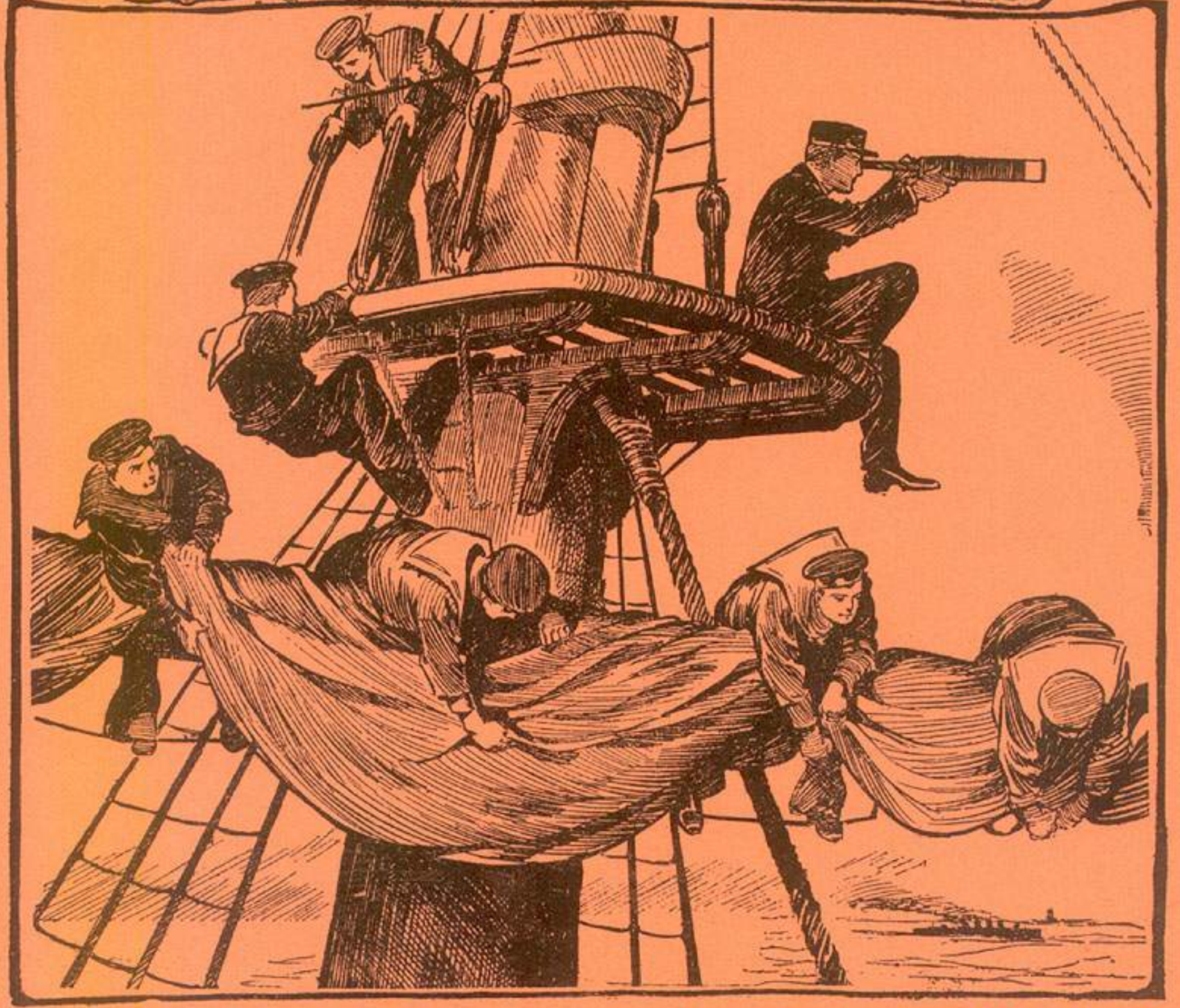
No 56. LIBRARY Vol. 2.

COMPLETE STORY FOR ALL

HARRY WHARTON'S RECRUITS.

By FRANK RICHARDS



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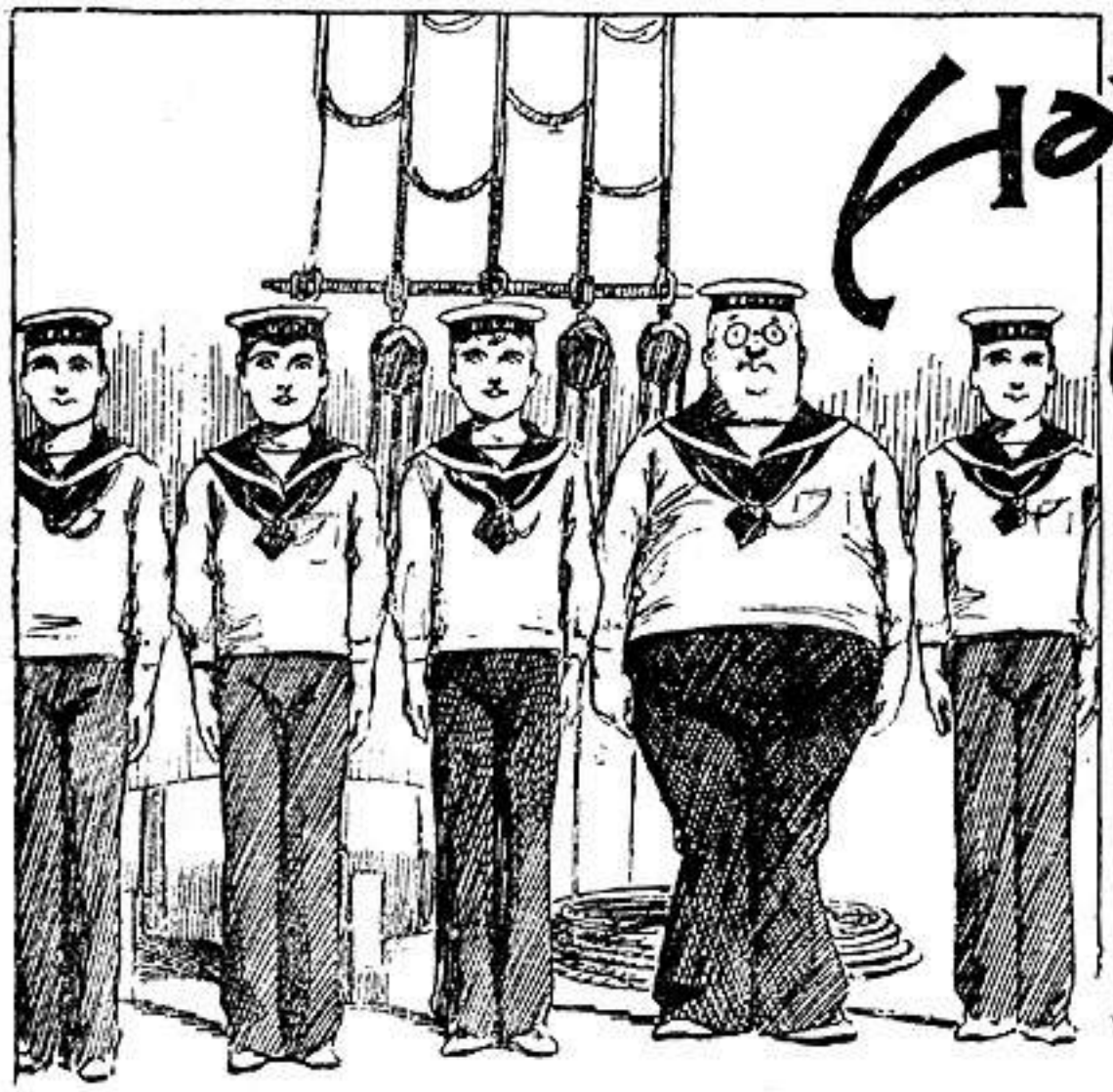

Harry Wharton's Recruits

A splendid long, complete School Tale of the Boys of Greyfriars.

By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.
Early Risers.

BUZ-Z!

It was a sudden alarming sound in the Remove dormitory at Greyfriars.

The early rays of the March sun were stealing in at the high windows, but none of the boys had yet awakened.

Rising-bell was not due for a good half-hour yet, and the Removites were not wont to wake before its unmelodious clang rent the morning air.

In the long row of white beds, a long row of boys lay sleeping the sleep of the just when the silence was broken by the sudden outbreak of buzzing near Bob Cherry's bed.

Buz-z-z-z-z-z!

Ting-ing-ing-ing-ing!

Z-z-z-z-z-z-z.

Harry Wharton sat up in bed, and rubbed his eyes. He looked up and down the long dormitory in alarm.

"What on earth's that?"

"It—it sounds like an infernal machine," gasped Frank Nugent. "Some—some giddy anarchist is trying to blow up the school."

There was a yell of terror from Billy Bunter, and he dived under the bedclothes.

"Ow! Keep it off!"

Harry Wharton sprang out of bed.

The din had awakened the whole dormitory, and there were angry inquiries from all quarters as to what it meant.

Buz-z-z-z-z-z!

It seemed to come from Bob Cherry's washstand, and Harry Wharton ran towards it. He did not think it was an infernal machine, though he couldn't imagine what it really was. A small article wrapped in a handkerchief lay on the washstand, and from it the mysterious noise proceeded.

"Don't touch it," exclaimed Nugent. "It may go off, you know."

"Ow! I say, you fellows, keep it off!"

Harry Wharton laughed. He guessed now what the infernal machine was. He tore open the handkerchief, and a cheap German alarm-clock crashed to the floor. The corner of the handkerchief had been wrapped round the striker to muffle the noise when the alarm went off, hence the mysterious buzzing. The clock, freed from the handkerchief, rang loudly and raucously on the floor. Bob Cherry started up in bed. He was a sound sleeper, and he had only just awakened.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! That's the alarm-clock!"

"You—you ass!" exclaimed Nugent. "What do you mean by setting the confounded thing at all? Stop it now."

"We wanted to be woke early——"

"Ow! stop the fearful thing! It will bust my ear-drums."

The clock seemed to be exhaustless. It was ringing away merrily, with a noise that was like the jarring together of innumerable tins. Wharton stooped and picked it up. But there was no way that he could see of stopping the clock.

"Bob! How do you stop the fearful thing?"

"You can't stop it," said Bob Cherry, cheerfully. "There isn't any stopper. It's a cheap one. You have to let it run down."

Wharton dropped the clock again and fled. The clock bumped on the floor, and rang on with renewed energy. The fellows stuffed the pillows over their ears, or yelled to Bob Cherry, who sat up in bed grinning.

"It's all right," he exclaimed. "It's time to get up. That's a jolly good clock. No chance of going to sleep again when it's once started."

"Stop it!"

"Can't be did!"

"Well, I'll jolly soon stop it," exclaimed Bulstrode angrily, and he jumped out of bed, seized a cricket-bat, and rushed at the offending alarm-clock.

"Here, hold on," shouted Bob Cherry. "That clock cost me eleven-pence-ha'penny, and I'm not going to have it busted."

But Bulstrode did not heed.

The cricket bat whirled aloft, and came down with a terrific crash upon the clock. One last agonized buzz, and the German clock was silent. A beautiful stillness fell upon the dormitory.

"You—you beast!" exclaimed Bob. "You owe me eleven-pence-ha'penny now."

"I've a jolly good mind to give you a biff, too," growled Bulstrode. "What do you mean by waking us all up hours before rising-bell?"

"We've got to be up early. Have you forgotten it's a whole holiday to-day."

"I'm not going to begin a whole holiday by getting up in the middle of the night, dummy," grunted Bulstrode, and he plunged into bed again.

"Slacker!" said Bob Cherry. "Up with you, you chaps! You ought to be thankful to me for calling you early. Get up, you lazy bounders."

"I don't think I can get up just yet," said Billy Bunter. "I am rather delicate, and my system requires a certain amount of sleep. I never really get enough sleep. If you fellows are quiet I can get to sleep again. Don't make a row."

Bob Cherry took the sponge off his washstand, and dipped it into the jug of cold water.

"I'm an obliging fellow," he remarked. "I've gone to the expense of eleven-pence ha'penny for the sake of getting you all up early, but I don't mind taking a little more trouble. Will you have it down the neck, Bunty?"

"Ow! Keep away!"

"Or under the chin?"

"Ow! Goorooh! Gr-r-r-r."

"Are you going to get out—by Jove, he's out already."

"You beast——"

"That's right—nothing like early rising! Aren't you grateful?"

"You horrid rotter."

"Any of you fellows want helping to rise?" asked Bob Cherry. "Every chap who is coming down to the Bay to-day has got to get up early. We're going to have the schooner out and make a day of it, and the earlier we begin the better. We're going to get our own breakfast downstairs, and buzz off before the school's awake. Now, then, who wants cold water down his neck?"

"Look here," said Hazeldene, "that's all very well——"

"Of course it is! Get up."

"I think we might as well leave it all till after breakfast at the usual time."

"You'll think differently when you're out of bed. Here goes."

"Ow! ow! Take that sponge away from me."

"You take yourself away from the sponge."

Hazeldene did so, rolling out of bed streaming with cold water. Bob Cherry moved towards Nugent's bed, and Nugent was up in a twinkling. In fact, every bed that Bob Cherry drew near was immediately vacated by its occupant, and in a very short space of time the Greyfriars sailors were all up.

Once up, in the fresh clear morning, they were contented enough, and washing and dressing went on cheerfully. Only Bulstrode and his friends, the slackers of the Remove, remained in bed, as well as a few fellows who, for various reasons, had not taken up the "sailor wheeze."

It had been Wharton's idea to form a kind of cadet corps of sailors among the Greyfriars juniors, who should train for a seafaring life. The proximity of Greyfriars to the sea aided him in carrying out the idea, and through the generosity of his uncle, Colonel Wharton, he had obtained possession of an old schooner, which had been wrecked in the bay, but was now patched up into really good condition.

The whole holiday was a rare chance for the Greyfriars sailors to have a day out, and they had been preparing for it for some time.

It was Bob Cherry's idea to get up extra early, and make the day longer by starting it sooner. The alarm-clock had been a success, and now, still half-an-hour before the rest of Greyfriars was astir, the juniors were ready for business.

Billy Bunter, having finished the infinitesimal wash which satisfied him of a morning, jammed his spectacles upon his fat little nose. He was looking anxious, and a very important matter was evidently weighing upon his mind.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Now, we're ready," said Harry Wharton. "March!"

"I say, you fellows, what about brekker? We can't go out hungry—at least, I can't! It might have a most serious effect upon my constitution."

"That's all right," said Bob Cherry. "We're going to have a feed before we start. There must be some grub downstairs, somewhere, and the maids will be pleased, when they get up, to find that we've got our breakfast ourselves, and saved them a lot of trouble."

The Removites chuckled. It did not seem likely that the cook and her satellites would be pleased—but there was clearly nothing else to be done. And the crowd of juniors swarmed downstairs in search of provendor.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.
Breakfast Below Stairs.

GREYFRIARS was very still!

No one seemed to be stirring. Below stairs all was gloomy and quiet! The juniors trod on tiptoe as they descended into the lower regions, where the housekeeper was monarch of all she surveyed. In spite of Bob Cherry's optimistic opinion that she would be pleased, the juniors expected a wrathful reception if they were found in the kitchen.

There was no one in the kitchen. The room was still warm and close from the fire of yesterday. Wharton crossed to the window and threw it open to let in a breath of fresh air, and Bob Cherry lighted the gas.

"Now, we've got to get a fire going and make some tea," Bob Cherry remarked, "and I suppose there's some grub somewhere."

"The larder's locked," exclaimed several disappointed voices.

"Well, you didn't expect it to be open, did you? We shall have to open it ourselves."

"I say, you can't bust a lock——"

"No bustee," said a soft silky voice, "me pickee lockee."

It was Wun Lung, the Chinese junior.

Wun Lung could do almost anything in a mechanical way, and his skill came in very useful just now. Bob Cherry gave him a slap on the back that made him stagger.

"Go it, heathen."

"Velly good," gasped Wun Lung. "Not so luff—bleakee bonee."

"Oh, rats! Get the larder open."

How the Chinee did it the juniors didn't know: but the door was open in a few seconds. The stores of the careful housekeeper were exposed to the raid of the Removites.

And the raid was soon carried out.

Breakfast at Greyfriars was usually a substantial meal of eggs and bacon and marmalade, in addition to an unlimited supply of bread and butter. But on the present occasion breakfast was more plentiful. There would very likely be a row about it, and if there was to be a row, there was no reason why the juniors shouldn't have a really good feed while they were about it.

"Of course," Bunter remarked, "if there's a row, Bob Cherry will own up to being the ringleader, so it will be all right. We may as well have a good tuck in while we've got the chance."

"Oh, it will be all right, will it?" grunted Bob Cherry.

"Of course, I shall be sincerely sorry if you get a licking,

Cherry, but that needn't worry us now. Where's the frying-pan?"

"Here you are."

"I'll grease it with fresh butter. That's nicer, you know, and the expense doesn't matter now. Hand over the sausages. How many shall I cook?"

"The lot."

"Good! what we can't eat we can take with us. It will cost something getting our grub out of doors to-day, and we may as well take all we can."

The fire was roaring up the chimney. Plenty of wood had been used, and it had not taken long to light it. Bunter addressed himself to the task of cooking bacon and sausages, and he turned them out in his masterly style. Bunter, with all his faults, was an excellent cook. He could fry sausages with a finish that was not to be found anywhere else.

A savoury smell of cooking filled the great kitchen. The roaring fire was very cheerful in the chill March morning.

The juniors industriously dragged out plates and dishes, knives and forks, and the largest table was laid for the feast.

There was a sound of a footstep on the stairs as Bunter dished up the bacon, and Nugent uttered an exclamation of alarm.

"It's Cooky!"

The juniors acted promptly. Two or three of them rushed to the door and slammed it, and the key was turned in the lock.

The next moment there was a thump on the door.

"Who's in here?"

It was the voice of the cook.

"Don't answer," whispered Wharton. "We'd better be deaf for a bit. Buckle to and get the grub."

The Removites fell to with a will. Bacon and eggs and sausages disappeared at an alarming rate, in a way that would have brought fearful visitations of dyspepsia to any but schoolboys. There was plenty to be had, and the juniors passed up their plates again and again, and feasted right merrily.

Meanwhile, the thumping and shrieking at the door was growing hysterical. There was no reply to the frantic inquiries and commands of the enraged cook, and at last the noise ceased.

"She's gone," chuckled Bob Cherry. "Pass the eggs, Bunter."

"The gonefulness is great," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, the Nabob of Bhanipur; "but the returnfulness will be terrific."

The dusky junior was right. Five minutes later there was a sharper knock at the door. The voice of Mrs. Kebble, the housekeeper, was heard through the keyhole.

"Boys, please open the door!"

Harry Wharton looked up and down the table. The inroads of the juniors had pretty well cleared up the provisions, and breakfast was nearly over.

"Can't refuse a lady when she makes a request," said Bob Cherry. "Open the door, somebody."

Harry threw open the door. Mrs. Kebble, with the wrathful cook behind her, looked into the kitchen. At the sight of the well-spread table, the roaring fire, and the feasting juniors, the housekeeper looked as if she would faint.

"Dear me! dear me! whatever are you doing?"

"My grate!" gasped the cook. "Look at it! Heggs is spilt all hover my 'obs! Look at the young gluttons! Bacon! Sausages! Heggs! Jams! Preserves! My goodness!"

"Don't be excited," said Wharton soothingly. "We've been trying to save you a lot of trouble."

"Wh-what does it mean?" gasped the housekeeper.

"We were up extra early this morning," said Wharton. "There's the rising-bell going now, by Jove! We thought we'd save you all the trouble of getting breakfast for us."

"Young himps!" murmured the cook. "Look at the 'obs!"

"We've done," went on Wharton. "You can have the kitchen now."

"I—I must report this," murmured Mrs. Kebble. "You—you——"

"Oh, nonsense!" said Wharton. "Sit down and have breakfast with us. The cooking is ripping, and I can recommend the grub. You must!"

"My dear boy——"

"Oh, come, you must," said Harry, and passing an arm round Mrs. Kebble's ample waist, he led her to a chair. "Bunter, serve Mrs. Kebble."

"Certainly, Wharton. Do you like 'em well done, ma'am?"

"Really!" gasped Mrs. Kebble, scarcely knowing whether she was dreaming or not, "boys—really!"

"Fresh tea for Mrs. Kebble!" said Wharton.

"Right ho!" said Bob Cherry, jumping up.

Mrs. Kebble broke into a smile. She was a good-hearted soul, and Harry Wharton had a winning way with him. The good dame had not breakfasted, and, as a matter of fact, the cooking was very good, the scent appetising. Mrs. Kebble allowed herself to be helped, and the wrathful cook retreated, to confide her indignation to Mary Jane, the housemaid.

"Oh, you deep scamp!" murmured Bob Cherry, digging Harry in the ribs. "I should never have hit on anything of the sort."

The breakfast was a success. The juniors, laughing and merry, pressed round the housekeeper, filling her plate and her

teacup as fast as room was made for fresh helpings, until at last Mrs. Kebble laughingly pleaded for mercy.

And then, breakfast over, and the housekeeper in an excellent temper, the juniors took their departure from the sacred regions below stairs.

"You are a set of young rascals," said Mrs. Kebble, shaking a forefinger at them warningly, "and I ought to report you to the Head to be caned. But I won't; only, if you ever—ever do it again——"

And so the Removites retreated unscathed.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.
Off to Sea!

THE other Forms were coming downstairs as the Removites well fed and contented, left the precincts of the kitchen. Temple, Dabney & Co., of the Upper Fourth, stared at the Remove as at a startling vision.

"My hat!" said Temple. "Here are these youngsters up and washed already! Who was it said the age of miracles is past?"

"And we've had breakfast, too, and a jolly good one, while you slackers were in bed," said Bob Cherry. "Now we're going out for a life on the ocean wave. Sorry you can't come! Good-bye!"

"Hold on!" exclaimed Temple. "If you like to wait till after breakfast, we can come. I know a lot about sailing. I've sailed a yacht, you know, at home in the holidays. I can take command, and you kids can be the crew. Dab and Fry can be the mates, and I'll be captain."

"Oh, I say, Temple, you're too kind. You'll bust something."

"I don't mind. I'll——"

"But we do," said Wharton promptly. "We're not looking out for any commanders. I'm captain of the Marjorie."

"You? Rats!"

"Bob Cherry is first mate, and Nugent second mate."

"Bosh!"

"And these are my crew. We haven't any vacancies for able seamen, but we'll take you chaps on as cleaners and stokers, if you like."

Temple, Dabney & Co. looked daggers at the grinning Removites.

"Look here——" began Temple.

"That's the offer," said Wharton. "You can take it or leave it."

"I rather think we'll leave it," said Temple. "Mind, I've offered to run the show for you, and make the cruise a success."

"Thank you for nothing."

"If anything happens, don't blame me. And I rather think something will happen!"

"We'll be ready for you if you come along," said Wharton, laughing. And Temple, Dabney & Co. walked on to the dining-room, frowning.

"Cheeky young beggars!" said Temple. "They want putting in their place. Since Wharton got up this wheeze about sailoring, the Remove have been altogether too cocky."

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"They want a lesson," said Fry. "It's a good idea to give 'em one. We've got to fill up the holiday somehow. If they are going to start in life as sailors, I don't see why we shouldn't begin as pirates."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My hat, that's a ripping idea!" exclaimed Temple eagerly. "If their craft is captured by pirates this afternoon, they've only got themselves to thank. We'll jaw it over with the fellows."

And the Upper Fourth, always ready for a row with the Remove, were soon eagerly discussing the project.

Meanwhile, the Remove sailormen were leaving the school to go down to the bay. They had donned their sailor garb—Wharton, Nugent, Cherry, and Hurree Singh officers' garb, with peaked caps, and the rest ordinary bluejacket attire. They looked a fine set of youngsters, too, in their seafaring garb, and all eyes were turned upon them as they marched out into the Close.

Dr. Locke glanced out of his study window, and smiled. The Greyfriars Remove was a lively and restive Form, and gave more trouble to the authorities than any other Form at Greyfriars. But the latest scheme was not only harmless, it was one of which the Head could heartily approve. Anything that fostered in the boys a love of the sea and sailoring was beneficial, and the training they were getting in the form of amusement could only do them good.

Wharton formed his men up in order, four abreast, and gave the signal to march. The Remove marched.

After them came a crowd of "infants" belonging to the Third Form and the Lower Third, yelling and grimacing and cat-calling, evidently very much amused by the sailor garb and the orderly march.

Some of the Removites were greatly inclined to break ranks in order to chase the cheeky "infants," and inflict condign punishment upon them, but Wharton's voice rang out sternly, and the Removites, kept in order by their captain, marched on with crimson faces to the gates.

Wingate, the captain of Greyfriars, met them in the Close, but he did not grin, as the juniors expected. A grin from Wingate of the Sixth, the popular school captain, would have done more harm to Harry Wharton's scheme than all the jeers of the Lower Form boys, and the opposition of the Upper Fourth.

But the big Sixth Former did not grin. He looked up and down the ranks of the Removites, and nodded his head with approval.

"You'll do!" he exclaimed. "Mind you don't get drowned, that's all. Remember, Wharton, only the fellows who can swim are allowed to sail the schooner."

"Right-ho!" said Harry.

"You've sunk her once," smiled the captain of Greyfriars "If you had had any who couldn't swim to the shore with you, it might have been serious."

"We sha'n't sink her again, Wingate."

"No; but keep on the safe side. Head's orders, you know."

"Right you are!"

And the Removites marched on. Various village lads who saw them going down the road to the bay hurled ribald remarks at them, but the Removites preserved an aspect of lordly dignity, and took no notice.

They marched on round the hill, where the road wound by the rugged lower slopes of the Black Pike, and the sea burst upon their sight. It was a glorious view: the wide bay, shut in to the north by the towering rocks of the Shoulder—the stretch of blue water fading away into the boundless German Ocean—the brown sand glimmering in the sun, and the fishing village nestling among the rocks at the head of the bay.

The road sloped down ruggedly towards the hamlet of Pegg. The juniors had just reached the border of the village, when there was a sudden shout, and a line of bronzed-faced youths drew up across the road.

"Halt!"

———

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.
Afloat Again

HARRY WHARTON halted, and the juniors followed his example. There were six sturdy fellows drawn up as if to oppose their passage, and Harry recognised them as belonging to the fishing village. Their attire, and their soldierly manners, showed that they were a patrol of Boy Scouts. The day was a holiday at the village school, as well as at Greyfriars, and the Boy Scouts of Pegg were evidently improving the occasion to get in a little training.

"Hallo, kids!" said Wharton. "What's the row?"

The scout leader frowned. He was a boy of Wharton's own age, named Trumper, the son of a fisherman, and many a time he had been out in his father's boat into deep water, and the rough-and-ready life had made a man of him before he was fifteen. He evidently did not like being addressed as a "kid," and he pushed his wide hat back on his head and fixed his eyes on Wharton.

"Not so much jaw," he remarked. "We're scouts, and we're out for training!"

"Oh, I thought perhaps you were out looking for trouble!" said Bob Cherry. "If so, you've alighted on exactly the right spot."

"You've got to give an account of yourselves," said Trumper loftily. "When we come into contact with suspicious characters we——"

"Well, of all the cheek! You know jolly well who we are."

"Clear out of the road," said Nugent. "You'll get bowled over if we charge."

"The chargefulness will be terrific."

"Rats! You halt till we give the word!"

"Catch us!" said Harry Wharton warmly. "Now, we give you chaps a chance to get out of the way."

"Rats!"

Wharton waved his hand.

"Charge!"

"Hurrah!"

And the Removites charged.

The scouts had no chance against the weight of numbers. They were knocked right and left, and the juniors, yelling with laughter, rushed on, leaving Trumper and his comrades sitting in the lane.

"My—my word!" gasped Trumper.

"Well, you are an ass, Trumpy!" said one of the seafaring youths. "If you'd had a bit more sense we might have had a cruise in their schooner to-day."

"Oh, you dry up, Dicky Brown!"

"Rats to you," said Dicky Brown, indignantly. "I've a jolly good mind to make it up with them on my own, and have a cruise this afternoon."

"That you won't," said Trumper. "You're a member of this patrol, and we're out for training."

"Yes, but——"

"Any kid disobeying orders gets a thick ear on the spot," said Trumper warningly. "That isn't in the code; I made that rule myself, and it's a jolly good one."

"I don't see why I shouldn't go."

"Well, I do. It would be desertion."

"Yes, but——"

"Shut up! Form up, there! March!"

And the Boy Scout patrol marched, Dicky Brown, however, looking considerably dissatisfied. The prospect of sailing on the bay in a real ship was an attractive one to Dicky Brown, and better than spending the day ashore. But his scout leader thought differently.

Meanwhile, the victorious Removites marched down to the shore. The Marjorie—so named after Hazeldene's sister—was at anchor there, a short distance from the sands, and an old, weatherbeaten seaman was leaning over her rail and smoking a short black pipe.

"There's Captain Stump!" said Bob Cherry. "Hallo! hallo! hallo! Schooner ahoy!"

Captain Stump looked up.

"Ahoy!" he shouted back.

"Come and fetch us aboard."

"Ay, ay, sir."

"I say, you fellows——"

"Here he comes. Now, you chaps who can't swim have to stand out," said Wharton. "I'm sorry, but it's Head's orders."

"Oh, blow the Head's orders!" said Snoop. "He won't know."

Wharton's eyes glinted for a moment.

"I've given my word," he said. "If the Head couldn't trust us, he wouldn't let us free for a whole day like this. Those who can't swim stand out."

"Good!" said Bob Cherry. "Separate the sheep from the goats, old chap. I——"

"I say, you fellows!"

"Did you speak, Bunter?"

"You jolly well know I did, Cherry," said the fat junior indignantly. "Look here, what are we going to do about grub on board? We can't go hungry."

"That's all right," said Wharton. "Captain Stump has had his orders. You'll find plenty of grub in the cook's galley."

Billy Bunter looked mollified.

"Well, that's all right," he said. "I'd rather have selected the grub myself. You might have left it in my hands, Wharton."

"Such a jolly lot of it would have remained in your hands, you see."

"Oh, really, Wharton!"

"Here's the boat—ready there!"

A boat had been moored to the schooner, and the old sailorman had stumped into it and pulled ashore. "Captain" Stump, as he called himself, was a regular old seadog. His complexion was weatherbeaten almost to the hue of mahogany. He had a wooden leg, one of his limbs having been lost during his voyages in remote quarters of the world; but exactly where no one knew. Perhaps the old sailorman did not remember himself; or, perhaps, his weakness for relating marvellous stories had rendered him a little uncertain about it at last. But certainly he had given at least half a dozen different accounts of the loss of his leg; and if he was to be believed, he had left a leg in Australia, another in the jaws of a shark in the Indian Ocean, one frozen in the ice of Greenland, and still another among the cannibals of the African coast. Which, as Bob Cherry remarked, was really impossible, unless the old seaman had started in life as a kind of centipede.

"'Ere you are, sir," said Captain Stump, touching his forelock. "'Ere you are, sir. You'll find the good ship safe and sound, sir, and all ataunto."

"All a-whicho?" asked Bob Cherry.

"All ataunto, sir. Which I've looked arter it as if it was the happle of my heye," said the old sailorman. "Every 'ole caulked now, and every leak stopped, by gum."

"My hat! Gum isn't a very strong stuff to caulk leaks with, surely!"

"Eh! I says——"

"Oh, don't be funny, Bob!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Out oars, there! Pull away!"

The boat was pretty full, and there were four oars. Wharton, Cherry, Nugent, and Mark Linley took the oars. The boat glided through the water, and bumped against the side of the schooner.

The juniors clambered aboard. The schooner was certainly looking shipshape. The necessary repairs had been carried out, and she was seaworthy once more—at least, sufficiently seaworthy for a sail on the bay in fine weather.

But, as far as paint and appearance generally went, there was a great deal to be desired. But Captain Stump pointed out the supplies of paint that had been laid in ready.

"Which it only wants laying on, sir," he said.

"Right-ho," exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Bunter can do that."

"Oh, really, Cherry!"

"Now, you know you're a jolly good painter, Bunty. You've been mucking up everything in No. 1 Study lately, painting picture postcards."

"Yes; but that's different. I'm painting picture postcards as remunerative home work for the Patriotic Home Work Association, and I expect shortly to be receiving three pounds a week for them."

"Well, you can keep your hand in practice by painting the ship. First thing, though, is to get the anchor up. Anybody got any idea how to disanchor a ship—if that's the correct term."

"Ass! You weigh the anchor," said Trevor.

"Good! Bring up the scales!"

"Oh, don't be funny! You have to man the capstan."

"Good, again. I don't know what you mean, but I'm ready. Stand by to cap the maustan——"

"Ass! It's man the capstan."

"My mistake. I'm ready."

"I say, you fellows, before we weigh anchor we'd better make sure there's plenty of grub on board."

"You can go and make sure, Billy, while we weigh anchor," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Now then, hands to the capstan."

"Hallo! hallo! hallo! What's that? Look!"

A running figure had appeared on the shore. It was making directly for the schooner, and behind, at a distance, were five other figures, running their hardest.

"It's Dicky Brown!" exclaimed Nugent.

"He's bunking from the others."

"Been a row, I expect."

Dicky Brown ran breathlessly down the sand, and halted gasping by the water's edge, with the waves washing over his boots.

"Ahoy, the schooner!" he roared.

"Ahoy, Dicky Brown! What cheer!"

"Will you take me aboard?"

"Where do you want it taken?"

"What! Eh?"

"Where do you want the board taken?" asked Bob Cherry, innocently. "You said you wanted us to take you a board."

"I—I mean, I want to come on the schooner. I'm a good pilot, and I'll guide you anywhere you like, and—and keep you off the rocks."

"By Jove!" exclaimed Wharton, "that's a ripping idea. We want a pilot—in fact, it's exactly what we need. We'll take him."

"Can I come aboard?"

"Yes, rather."

There was a shout from the distance. The other scouts were racing down to the shore. Dicky Brown looked back nervously over his shoulder.

"Quick with the boat!" he gasped.

Wharton and Cherry jumped into the boat.

With a few strokes of the oars they brought the bow bumping into the sand, and Dicky Brown sprang in.

"Shove off!" he cried excitedly.

They did not stop to ask questions. It was a time for actions, not words. Wharton shoved off, the oars dipped again, and the boat shot away from the shore just as Trumper and his comrades came tearing down to the water's edge.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.
The Deserter!

"HOLD on there!"

"Stop!"

"Come back!"

The youthful scouts shouted at the top of their voices as they came racing down to the shore. But the Greyfriars' sailors took no notice. They pulled away steadily for the schooner, the side of which was lined with the faces of the Removites, watching eagerly.

Trumper halted, with the waves and wet sand swishing over his boots, and waved his arms frantically in the air.

"Come back! Stop! Halt!"

But the boat bumped against the hull of the schooner, and the boys clambered aboard. A stretch of blue water separated Dicky Brown from his comrades and pursuers. The Removites did not quite understand yet what was the matter, but they were content to know that it was "up against" the scouts of Pegg.

Harry Wharton looked back at the shore, and laughed as he saw Trumper's excited gesticulations.

"Ahoy there!" he called out.

"Ahoy, you college rotter!" yelled Trumper. "Send that man back."

"What man? Do you mean this kid?"

"He's a scout—and he's deserted!"

"Rats! He's a pilot, and he's sailing with us to-day."

"He's a deserter!"

"We're protecting him."

"Send him back, I tell you!"

"More rats!"

Trumper stamped his feet and brandished his fists. His authority as scout leader was defied, and the Greyfriars fellows were roaring with laughter instead of taking the matter seriously. It was enough to make any earnest scout tear his hair. And he could not get at the deserter or his protectors—that was the worst of it.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "Go it, Trumpy! Gentlemen, this is a new thing in clog-dances, and there is no charge for admission."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it, Trumpy!"

"Keep it up!"

Trumper realised that he was not adding to his dignity as scout leader, and he calmed down somewhat. He shook his fist at the schooner, and held a hurried consultation with his comrades.

The Greyfriars juniors watched them, grinning. The row with the Pegg scouts seemed likely to add liveliness to the day's outing, and they welcomed it. It was Trumper who had started the rivalry, by stopping the juniors in the lane, and the Greyfriars fellows were inclined to keep it up for the fun of the thing.

And, anyway, they could not give up Dicky Brown. Deserter or not, he had taken refuge with them and claimed their protection, and that was enough.

Dicky evidently did not realise the seriousness of desertion from a military corps, for he was grinning all over his plump, ruddy face, and when he caught Trumper's eye he made a sign to him that was far from respectful—by placing his thumb against his nose, and extending his fingers—a salute that made Trumper look inclined to dance again.

"Weigh anchor, kids," said Trevor.

"Oh, hold on," said Bob Cherry. "They'll think we're running away. Let's see the end of this."

"Good!" said Wharton.

And they waited. The consultation of the Boy Scouts did not seem to be very profitable. They talked and argued, and some of their words floated to the juniors on the schooner.

"Don't be a silly duffer, Trumper!"

"If you don't speak more respectfully to your leader, Jim Spriggs, you'll get a thick ear—and sharp!"

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"They'll begin to fight soon," he remarked. "This is as good as a circus!"

A crowd was gathering on the sands to watch—fisher-folk, and visitors to the village, and Greyfriars boys. Wharton's recruits who could not swim had been left ashore, and they had dispersed up and down the bay, but the row was gathering them to the scene again.

Trumper finished the argument by giving an order in a sharp tone.

Jim Spriggs started off for the village, and the other scouts dragged down a boat from the sand, and rushed it into the water.

"My hat! They're going to board the schooner!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Let them come!"

"Right-ho; let 'em all come!"

"They won't find it very easy to get aboard," laughed Harry. "Get those mops together, kids, and wet 'em! Stand by to repel boarders."

"Ay, ay, sir!"

Wharton gave his orders quickly, and they were as quickly carried out. He had not trained his recruits for nothing. The dozen juniors who formed the crew of the schooner lined up to receive the boarders. They were armed with wet mops, very effective weapons in repelling a rush, and they were grinning in anticipation.

Spriggs came running back from the village with five or six sturdy lads at his heels. Trumper had sent for reinforcements, and the fisher lads were ready to back him up. Nearly a dozen sturdy young fellows tumbled into the boat that had been launched, and pushed off from the shore.

Trumper stood up in the bows, with a very determined expression upon his sunburnt face.

"Ahoy, there!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"Are you going to surrender that deserter?"

"Not much!"

"Then we'll take him by force."

"Ha, ha, ha! Come on!"

"Mops to the fore!"

"Repel boarders!"

And the boat came swinging on, and bumped against the schooner, and the scouts clambered up fiercely to the attack.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.
Repelling Boarders.

THE Boy Scouts of Pegg were all sailor lads, more at home upon the water than upon the land, as a matter of fact; and they could swim like cats. They came up the side of the Marjorie like so many cats; and the attack was so swift and sudden that the juniors were almost taken by surprise, though they were ready at their posts.

The first thrusts of the mops were clumsy, or easily eluded, and in a few seconds Trumper had a leg over the rail, and Spriggs was clinging to it, and the rest had more or less of a footing.

But the Greyfriars sailors recovered themselves in a moment, and rallied under Wharton's inspiriting shout.

"Buck up, Greyfriars!"

Wharton's mop caught Trumper full on the chest, and he went down from the rail faster than he had come up. Bob Cherry gave Spriggs a lift under the chin, and he dropped into the water with a splash and a yell.

"Go it!" roared Bob Cherry.

The juniors leaned over the side, poking and thrusting at the boarders, dislodging them one after another.

The scouts dropped back into the boat, or into the water, baffled, and yelling with excitement.

Trumper clambered out of the water into the boat, and dashed the drops from his eyes.

"Come on!" he yelled.

And he went up the side again like a madman.

Disheartened a little as they were, the scouts followed him pluckily.

Trumper eluded the thrust Frank Nugent made at him, and hurled himself bodily over the rail, coming down with a bump on deck.

He was on his feet again in a moment, but then he was grasped, and rolled over again in the clutches of Bob Cherry and Mark Linley.

"Collar him!" roared Bob.

"I've got him!"

"Ow, you beasts!"

"Sit on his head!"

"Here, Bunter, you sit on his head!"

"Oh, really, Linley——"

"Come on! You're a heavy weight."

And Bunter, seeing that Trumper was secure and that there was no fighting to be done, assented. Meanwhile, the scouts had been repulsed again. The mops were too much for them. They were dislodged one after another, and they crowded savagely in the boat, defeated—and their leader a prisoner.

"Sheer off!" shouted Harry Wharton.

"Yah!"

"Sheer off, or we'll fire into you."

"Yah!"

"Soda-water forward, there! Present!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! Help! Murder! Fire!"

It was a fiendish yell from Billy Bunter.

He had sat on Trumper's head as directed, to keep the truculent scout leader still; but Trumper, if he could not use his hands, had his teeth left to use.

And he used them!

Billy Bunter jumped into the air, and hopped along the deck with the contortions of a dancing dervish.

"Ow! I'm bitten! Jump on the beast! Ow!"

"Shut up, Bunty——"

"Ow! I'm hurt! Ow! Oooooh!"

"Oh, ring off! Can't you be hurt quietly?" exclaimed Wharton. "Soda-water there! Forward! Line up! Present!"

There were soda syphons among the liberal supplies on board the schooner, and the juniors were not long in arming themselves.

Syphons in hand, they lined the rail, and presented—and fired!

"Fire!"

Siz-z-z-z-z-z-z-z-z.

There was a roar from the boat alongside.

The scouts received the sizzing streams in their faces, in their ears, down their necks; and in a few seconds the boat was rocking away on the waves.

Yells of laughter followed it from the schooner. At a safe distance from the syphons the scouts stopped, to yell back and brandish their fists.

"Licked, by Jove!" exclaimed Russell. "And we've got a prisoner!"

"The lickfulness is terrific."

Harry Wharton put his cap straight, and assumed the stern and determined air of a captain, victor in a stubborn fight.

"Bring forward the prisoner!"

The prisoner was brought forward.

He looked very savage, as Bob Cherry and Linley led him forward with a grip on either arm.

Wharton eyed him with becoming sternness, while the juniors gathered round, with excited looks. The spirit of the thing was entering into their blood, and they almost fancied themselves real sailors by this time, with a real prisoner to be strung up to the yard-arm.

"Prisoner——" began Wharton, in a deep voice.

"Oh, cheese it!" said the prisoner.

"Prisoner!" repeated Wharton, in a still deeper bass. "You have been captured in a flagrant attempt at piracy on the high seas!"

"Hear, hear!" said Bob Cherry, the irrepressible.

And a general chuckle followed.

Wharton turned a stern glance upon his first mate.

"Silence! Cease these ribald remarks! This is a serious matter! Piracy must be put down, or what becomes of the Union Jack and British prestige?"

"Ay, ay!"

"The Union Jack is great, and the prestige is terrific."

"Prisoner, have you anything to say before you walk the plank?"

"My hat," murmured Nugent, "that's coming it strong!" But Wharton's face was quite serious and stern.

"Oh, cheese it!" said Trumper.

"Have you anything to say before you walk the plank?" repeated Wharton.

"Yes, ass."

"Say it—I mean, say on!"

"You can go and eat coke!"

"Anything else to say?"

"Yes; you're a set of silly land-lubbers."

"Anything more?"

"Yes; I'll jolly well give you a thick ear each for this, when I get a chance," said Trumper. "As for Dicky Brown, I'll snatch him bald-headed to-morrow."

"Yah!" said Dicky Brown.

"Silence! The prisoner has no excuse to offer for his piratical conduct! As members of a glorious Navy upon which the sun never sets," said Wharton, getting slightly mixed, "we are bound to put down piracy. The prisoner is condemned to walk the plank."

"Oh, don't be a duffer, you know!"

"Two minutes' grace is allowed while the plank is preparing," said the captain of the Marjorie sternly. "Then prepare to meet your—I mean thy doom."

"Of all the silly chumps——"

"Silence, prisoner! Prepare the plank!"

And they prepared it.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.
Trumper Walks the Plank—Under Sail.

THERE was no doubt that the Greyfriars sailors were in earnest. The piratical Boy Scout was doomed to walk the plank. As he would fall into shallow water, and was a good swimmer, there wasn't much danger in walking the plank, but it fulfilled the juniors' notion of what was right and fit to be done. Indeed, Billy Bunter proposed to hang him at the yard arm, but Billy was still smarting from Trumper's bite, and he was naturally exasperated.

"Bring out the plank!"

A plank was brought. Captain Stump, who was grinning from one side of his mahogany face to the other, lent a hand. The plank was tilted across the rail, with a third part of it over the water.

The scouts in the boat watched these proceedings curiously. As it dawned upon them what was intended, they made a movement as if to rush to the attack again, but mops and syphons were ready, and they thought better of it. They lay by, watching, and ready to pick Trumper up as soon as he splashed into the water.

Trumper was looking half-savage and half-grinning.

As he had already been in the water twice, he couldn't get much wetter than he was, but he wasn't inclined to be executed as a pirate if he could help it.

"Prisoner——"

"Silly ass!" said the prisoner.

"The plank is prepared—go to thy doom!"

"Look here, you chump——"

"Walk the plank!"

"Rats!"

Wharton's hand rose sternly to point to the plank.

"Pirate dog——"

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

"Silence! Pirate dog, go to thy doom!"

"Blessed if I will," said the pirate dog. "I'll jolly well give you a thick ear!"

Wharton waved his hand.

"Take him away!"

"I'll——"

"Enough! Take him away!"

"Come on, you piratical bow-wow," said Bob Cherry, yanking

the prisoner towards the plank. "Put your pretty feet there! Now march!"

"Sha'n't!"

Trumper struggled as Bob Cherry and Linley dragged him upon the plank.

"It's all right," exclaimed Billy Bunter, "I'll make him walk! I've got a needle here!"

"You young beast!" roared Trumper. "I——"

"Walk, then!"

"Ow!"

Trumper gave a roar as Bunter applied the needle. There was no resisting that, and he walked forward. He halted at the spot where the plank was tilted over the rail, the juniors having now let go.

There he turned, to make some remarks to the Greyfriars sailors.

"You lop-sided lubbers, you think you are sailors! You're a set of lubberly, fat-headed—ow, wow!"

Bunter had put the needle in the end of a stick, and a jab in Trumper's calf interrupted his harangue.

The scout leader jerked away, the plank tilted, and he went with a splash into the water.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Trumper's head came up out of the water. He struck out for the boat, and was pulled in in a moment.

There he stood up to finish his remarks to the Greyfriars sailors. The remarks were not complimentary. He gave his opinion of their sailoring, of their personal looks, and of their mental capacities. He gave it at full length, at the top of his voice. But he did not hurt their feelings. They were roaring with laughter, too loudly to hear a word he said.

And at last, in utter disgust at being able to make no impression upon them, the scouts pulled away, and went ashore. The boarding party had failed, and Dicky Brown was still on board the schooner.

The Greyfriars sailors waved their caps and yelled. It was a victory, and they rejoiced accordingly.

"Well, I think we've given a jolly good account of ourselves," chuckled Bob Cherry. "We sha'n't be boarded by pirates again in a hurry."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And now I fancy the proper caper is to weigh the anchor."

"Ay, ay, sir!"

"Right," said Wharton. "Man the capstan!"

"Ay, ay, sir!"

And the Greyfriars sailors obeyed.

Billy Bunter retreated to the galley. He was hungry, and it was his duty to prepare meals, and he meant to have a snack or two en passant. Wun Lung the Chinee followed him. Billy Bunter had been appointed cook by the captain—and Wun Lung had been appointed cook's mate by himself—but as the galley was small there was likely to be friction there.

The anchor was weighed quite safely, and stowed away, and under the experienced direction of Captain Stump, the schooner glided away from the shore under her main and topsail.

It was exhilarating to the juniors to feel the vessel moving under their feet.

They felt like real sailors at last, with a vessel in their hands to manage, and the wide blue sea before them.

And their ambitions began to rise! Instead of a sail round the bay, some of the more daring spirits suggested a run out into the German Ocean, while Micky Desmond even went so far as proposing a run across to the Continent.

But Wharton was captain, and he had too much cool sense to allow himself to be persuaded into real recklessness.

The schooner was very well for a sail on the bay, but she was by no means in a state to brave the German Ocean, nor were her crew as yet sufficiently trained to handle her there.

A sudden squall would have meant destruction to the schooner and all her crew; and a squall was quite within the bounds of probability.

"We'll stick to the bay," said Wharton, though if he had consulted his inclinations he would gladly have turned the schooner seaward to the illimitable blue. "It's big enough for us, in all conscience. We shall have a jolly sail, and we can anchor somewhere for lunch."

"Good wheeze!" said Bob Cherry. "I've heard that there are all sorts of little coves and nooks in the Shoulder, where the smugglers used to land their contraband."

"And where they land it still, sometimes, if the tales we hear in Friardale are to be believed," Nugent remarked.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Well, we sha'n't meet any smugglers in the daylight, anyway," he said. "It would be a good idea to explore the cove over yonder, and Dicky Brown can pilot us."

"What-ho!" said Dicky Brown. "I've been round and round the Shoulder in the boats since I was six years old, and I know every foot of it. I can pilot you all right. You won't sink this time."

The schooner was gliding gaily along, with a brisk breeze filling out the sails. Bob Cherry was steering, and Dicky Brown stood beside him. Wharton was giving directions for the ship to be made what old Stumpy called "all ataunto"—and there was a great deal to be done in that line. In the

midst of the general busy animation, voices were heard in fierce dispute from the cook's quarters.

"Hallo, rowing already!" said Nugent. "Stop that row there!"

"I say, you fellows——"

"Shut up!"

"Oh, really, Nugent——"

"Silence! You have to say 'sir' in addressing an officer."

"I'm sincerely sorry, but——"

"Well, don't jaw."

"But I say, you fellows"—Bunter's face, red and excited, was projected into view. He was blinking indignantly through his spectacles—"I say, I'm cook on this craft, ain't I? Then yank this heathen out."

"What's the matter with Wun Lung?"

"The heathen rotter is interfering with the cooking. There's no room for two cooks here. Yank him out!"

"Hold on! What have you got for lunch?"

"Irish stew," said Bunter, with a fat look of satisfaction. "And it's going to be ripping."

"Have you got it on the stove?"

"Yes, it's all right now—it only wants watching."

"Then Wun Lung can watch it, and you can come and do that painting."

"Oh, really, Nugent——"

"Order! You say 'sir' in addressing an officer."

"Oh, really, sir——"

"Don't jaw! Come on deck!"

"Yes, but I say——"

"Tumble up, there!" roared Nugent. "No back talk! Who's mate of this ship, I'd like to know? Do you want me to talk to you with a belaying pin, you lazy lubberly, slab-sided son of a sea-cook. Tumble up, there!"

"But I say, you fellows——"

"Tumble up! You idling swab, do you want to be keel-hauled? Do you want to be married to the gunner's daughter? I'll teach you! I'll make you squirm! Tumble up!"

And Billy Bunter tumbled up, as Nugent seized a rope and rushed towards him. Nugent was soon falling into the way of it. He had a flow of language already that would have done credit to any mate in the merchant service.

"I say, Wharton," began Billy, in a last despairing appeal.

"Obey orders!" said Wharton severely.

And the fat junior had to obey.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Bunter the Painter.

BILLY BUNTER blinked round in search of the paint Micky Desmond had been mixing it, and there was a bucket half full ready. Nugent thrust a big brush into it, and took Bunter by the back of the neck to guide him to the spot. He pushed down the spectacled face of the fat junior to within an inch of the bucket, and Billy gasped as he received the full benefit of the strong smell.

"Ow! gr-r-r-r-r!"

"Now, get to work, my lad."

"Look here, Nugent——"

"Sir!"

"I mean sir; I'm not going——"

"Trice him up to the main-brace and give him three dozen," roared Nugent.

The crew did not know what the main-brace was, so they did not obey; but there was no need, as Bunter hastened to carry out his orders. He picked up the bucket of paint in one hand, and the brush in the other.

"Where am I to paint?" he asked feebly.

"The outside of the bulwarks, of course."

"But I can't lean over far enough."

"Try, ass."

"But—but if I lean over my spectacles will very likely fall off, and—and if they get lost you'll have to pay for them, you know."

"You sling a wooden step over the side to paint from," said Russell. "Then it's easy enough. Go it, Billy, and we'll all take our turn. Of course, we want the great picture postcard artist to show us a good example."

"I—I'd rather you started, Russell."

"I'm busy splicing the main-brace."

"The—the what?"

"Are you going to start that painting, my man?" bawled Nugent.

"Ye-es, I'm just going to, Nugent. Don't be impatient."

"Tumble up, then, you sea-cook."

The sling was quickly made and put over the side, and Billy Bunter was lodged safely upon it, with the bucket and the brush. A rope was tied round his ample waist to secure him.

"Now, paint away!" roared Nugent.

"Look here, Nugent——"

"I'm looking, and I'll come down with a rope's end if you don't buckle to."

Bunter dipped the brush deep in the paint, and loaded it, and drew it out with a sweep of the arm.

Nugent gave a roar.

Whether intentionally or not, Bunter had sent a shower of drops of paint over him, and his face and his smart cap were smothered.

"Oh!" gasped Nugent. "I'll—I'll pulverise him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at, you dummies! There's nothing funny in being smothered with paint by a howling maniac."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, shut up! Cackling like a lot of old hens in a farmyard. Silence fore and aft, or I'll be among you with a belaying pin," shouted Nugent, remembering that he was second mate.

Billy Bunter, a little comforted by smothering his tormentor, painted away industriously at the grimy wood.

The ship was gliding smoothly enough along on calm waters, propelled by a soft breeze, very soft and mild for the time of year.

Bunter painted and slashed away, getting very nearly as much paint on himself as on the woodwork, and the sling was shifted along from above as he finished one spot, and started on another.

"I say, I'm getting to the end of this paint," sang out Bunter, presently. "I suppose somebody else had better begin with the next lot."

"Let's see how much you've done first," said Nugent. He had cleaned off the paint, and looked fresh and rosy from a wash, as he leaned over the rail. "I don't suppose you've done your little bit yet. Why, you lazy swab, you've done hardly anything."

"I've used up nearly all this bucket."

"Yes, but it wasn't half-full, and you've been wasting it! What do you mean by wasting valuable paint on your own clothes."

"I—I couldn't help it."

"That's all very well. I've a jolly good mind to have you put in irons for surreptitiously making away with the ship's stores," said Nugent severely.

"Oh, really, Nugent——"

"Just you finish that bucket, and then you can begin on another."

"Look here——"

"Oh, buckle too, or I'll have you triced up to the main arm—I mean the yard brace—that is to say——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If you cackle at your officer, Micky Desmond, I'll stop your grog for a week, you swab. Get on wth the painting, Bunter. Let's see how much you've got left."

Nugent leaned over the side; and, at the same moment, Bunter raised the full brush—and brush and face met!

Nugent gave a throttled yell.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bunter. "That was an accident, you know."

"Ow! It's in my mouth! Gr-r-r-r! It's in my nose! I'm suffocated! I'm poisoned! Yah! Ow! Gr-r-r-r! Help!"

The crew of the schooner roared with laughter.

Nugent, blinded and choked, danced wildly about the deck, and the Greyfriars sailors simply yelled.

But Desmond, for one, left off laughing when Nugent seized him, and rubbed the paint off against his chest.

"Arrah, and phwat are yez afther intirely?" yelled Micky, struggling in the grasp of his superior officer.

"I'm—groo—I'm rubbing off—gr-r-r-r—paint," gurgled Nugent. "Keep still, you mutinous rotter—gr-r-r-r-there, that's better."

"Ye hateful scoundrel! Ye've ruined me beautiful blue jacket intirely."

"Serve you jolly well right, for cackling at your officer."

"Sure and I——"

"Order there!" shouted Wharton, as Micky danced up to the second mate with brandished fists. "No mutiny aboard this craft."

"Faith, and he's spoiled me illigant jacket."

"I'll spoil your illigant features if you mutiny."

"I say, you fellows, I've finished this paint," sang out Billy Bunter.

"Right-ho!" said Nugent, with a vengeful gleam in his eyes. "I'll give you another lot."

There was a second lot ready, and Nugent yanked it to the side.

It was a large pot, and it was full of paint, thinned down to the proper consisteney for use. Bunter looked up expectantly as Nugent brought it up over the rail—and the next moment there was a terrific gasp like escaping steam.

Nugent had given him the pot of paint—but he had inverted it—and the pot settled over Billy Bunter's head like a very large hat.

The paint rolled down his cheeks—and the crew of the Marjorie shrieked with laughter.

"There you are!" shouted Nugent. "That's what you've asked for."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter was shrieking, too, but he was not laughing. He reeled away and sat down in the blue water, his hair and face streaming with paint. In a moment a couple of juniors had jumped in and were supporting him.

"Br-r-r-r! Gr-r-r-r-r-r!"

That was all Bunter said.

The yelling crew dragged the unhappy painter and his rescuers aboard. Bunter sat on the deck, streaming with water and paint. Nugent and Trevor had gone in for him, and they were dripping, too; but roaring with laughter as well. Bunter did not feel inclined to laugh. He sat and gasped and panted, and panted and gasped, and mumbled. He could not see, for his eyes were full of paint and water, and his spectacles opaque with paint.

"You—you beasts! Yah! I—I'm sincerely sorry I consented to be cook on this rotten craft! Yah! Gr-r-r-r!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Nugent, you're a rotten beast! I——"

"My word!" said Nugent. "I suppose you call that gratitude, Bunter. After I've dived in at the risk of losing my cap, to save your life."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast! Yah! Gr-r-r-r-r!"

"Oh, go below and clean yourself," said Nugent. "I don't expect gratitude, but——"

"Br-r-r-r-r!"

And Billy Bunter staggered below to clean himself, and was not seen again till lunch time.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The Black Flag.

BANG!

Bang!

Bang!

The crew of the Marjorie jumped; and no wonder. Every able seaman stopped his work—Bob Cherry let go the wheel—and the painter who was in Bunter's place dropped his brush into the sea.

Bang!

Bang!

"What on earth is it?" shouted Wharton.

"It's an explosion in the galley."

"Something gone wrong with the stove."

Bang!

Bang!

There was a rush towards the cook's quarters. Wharton was in the lead, and he burst in excitedly, prepared to find Wun Lung in a desperate state—but the little Chinee was sitting calmly on a box, with an iron bar in his hand, which he was crashing upon an iron saucepan.

Bang!

Bang!

"Stop that," shouted Wharton. "What the dickens are you making that horrid row for?"

"Belay it," yelled Nugent. "Avast there!"

The little Chinee grinned agreeably.

"Me stlikee gong," he said. "Stlikee gong to callee to dinnee."

And he banged again.

"Ow! Hold that fearful row! Your beastly gong can be heard as far as Friardale," exclaimed Wharton. "Why couldn't you call us?"

"Stlikee gong, plopel way."

"Well, you've struck it enough now; dry up."

And the little Celestial somewhat unwillingly relinquished the bar. He had an Eastern relish for barbaric noises. But the scent of the stew was enough to put the crew of the schooner into a good humour again.

It was a splendid stew, and Bunter had put into it nearly everything eatable on board the Marjorie; and Wun Lung had watched over it with fatherly care and cooked it to perfection.

The keen sea breezes had made the juniors very hungry, and they were quite ready for a solid meal.

The paint rolled down Billy Bunter's cheeks, and the crew of the Marjorie shrieked with laughter. "There you are!" shouted Nugent. "That's what you asked for." "Br-r-r-r! Gr-r-r-r-r-r-r!" spluttered the fat boy of Greyfriars.

"Bring it on deck," said Wharton, and he rapped out orders.

The crew was learning to obey smartly. Some of the hands carried up plates, others dishes, and dinner was laid on the deck. Billy Bunter came up with a sour expression upon his newly-washed face. His hair was still sticky with the paint he had been unable to remove.

But he forgot everything at the sight of a huge tureen full of rich stew. His little round eyes glistened behind his spectacles.

"I say, you fellows, this is ripping! I think I'm about the hungriest, so you may as well serve me first."

And Billy Bunter was soon busy.

"Here, some of you come and relieve me at the wheel!" called out Bob Cherry.

But they were all too busy.

"It's all right!" called out Dicky Brown. "We're in deep water, and you can lash the wheel for a bit."

And Bob Cherry did so, and joined the feasters.

The schooner was out in the midst of the wide, sweeping bay, with the blue water curling round her bows, and the shore was dim and distant. The cabins of the fishing village had disappeared among the grey old rocks. Huger, clearer, the great Shoulder loomed into view, with the sea-gulls flying round the summit. But the cove, which the amateur sailors intended to explore, would not be reached till after ample time for dinner. The juniors gave all their attention to the feast, and they enjoyed it.

There was enough and to spare, and in the enjoyment of it even Billy Bunter forgot the bonneting with the paint-pot, and a fat and greasy smile came over his face, with an effect that was quite curious along with the streaks and smudges of paint that remained there.

The feast over, the crew of the Marjorie felt much more satisfied with themselves and with things generally.

They lay about the schooner, in deck-chairs, on the planks, in various attitudes of easy comfort, and chatted together cheerily.

Harry Wharton rose from the meal with his usual activity, and was inclined to recommence sailor training at once.

But he found himself in a minority of one, even the two mates not being very enthusiastic about the training just at the moment.

"No slacking!" said Harry briskly. "Come on! Tumble up, and lay hold of the ropes! You don't know how to 'bout ship yet."

"I don't believe you do, either," grunted Trevor.

"I'm learning—Captain Stump is teaching us, isn't he?" said the youthful skipper of the Marjorie mildly. "Training tells, you know."

"Well, give us a rest first."

"No slacking, lads."

"Oh, I believe you go by clockwork, Wharton," yawned Russell, who had his head resting against a cask, and his legs outstretched in an attitude that was very comfortable, but could hardly be considered elegant. "Give us a chance! We're only common or garden mortals, you know."

"Faith, and ye're right! It was a beautiful stew intirely, and it makes a gossoon inclined to take things aisy for a bit, ye know."

"Oh, get up! Work!"

"Bless the work!"

"Come on, Cherry and Nugent!" exclaimed Harry. "Set an example to the crew, and if they don't follow it we'll touch them up with a rope's end."

Bob Cherry yawned.

"Just a few minutes, Harry!"

"What! You slacking, too!"

"Not exactly slacking, but I've been steering for hours, you know—and that was a jolly good dinner!"

"I say, Nugent——"

"Don't speak to me for an hour or two," murmured Nugent, who was lying on his back with his hands under his head. "I'm comfy."

"What about an example to the crew?"

"Blow the crew!"

"But the example——"

"Blow the example!"

"Here, Captain Stump, you get up and make a start."

"Bust my topsails!" said Captain Stump. "I've got a touch of the rheumatiz come back, and if you'll 'skuse me——"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Oh, you're a set of slackers! Take a rest, if you like. I'll steer."

"Good!" said Bob Cherry. "You'll be happy so long as you're working at something. Keep her head larboard and starboard, and——"

"Oh, cheese it!"

And Wharton went to the wheel. Billy Bunter, who had eaten enough for six or seven Dragoons, was already snoring. The crew of the schooner enjoyed a rest in the spring sunshine, while Wharton stood solitary at the wheel.

It was a glorious spring day, with a soft southerly wind, and a bright warm sun. The sea rolled crisply and calmly, and the sailing on the bay was enjoyable. The Greyfriars sailors felt that the "wheeze" was more a success than ever.

The great rocky Shoulder was looming up closer ahead.

Wharton swept the sea with his glance occasionally. Out on the blue waters showed up white sail after sail, and further out to sea he could discern the blur of smoke left by a steamer.

But the bay was clear of craft, the fishing vessels being out of sight, and the pleasure boats near the shore lost to view against the high rocks.

But suddenly Wharton gave a start.

Round the rocks of the Shoulder a sail came into view—a big brown sail, evidently belonging to a fishing craft.

It was a broad, deep boat of a heavy build, but it ran lightly enough through the curling water, with that single huge sail drawing in the breeze.

But it was not the light gliding of the big boat, or the bellying brown sail, that attracted Wharton's glance. He had a passing thought that the boat was well handled. But what caught his attention was the ensign that streamed from the peak.

He looked, and he looked again! Then he rubbed his eyes, and again he looked.

There was no mistake about it.

It was no ensign known to the Royal Navy or to the Merchant Marine. It was the black flag!

The black flag!

There it flew gaily in the breeze—the black ensign, with the white skull and crossbones upon it, plain for all to see!

The emblem of piracy—the flag that the British Navy had abolished from most seas—there it was, fluttering freely in Pegg Bay!

And Wharton, almost letting go the wheel in his amazement, stared at it spellbound.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.
Boarded by Pirates.

WHARTON stared at the black flag for a full minute before he spoke. So far he could see nothing of the strange craft but the heavy bows, the big brown sail, and the piratical flag fluttering from the peak. Of the crew of the stranger he could not get a glimpse.

He found his voice at last.

"Tumble up, there! All hands on deck!"

There was a general yawning, and a snore from Billy Bunter. Some of the crew of the schooner looked lazily round at the excited steersman.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's the matter?"

"The black flag!"

"The black which?"

"Pirates!"

"Oh, don't be funny!"

"I tell you it's the black flag! Tumble up!"

They tumbled up then in earnest!

Even Billy Bunter woke and sat up, and groped for his spectacles. The rest of the juniors sprang to their feet.

The strange craft was making to cross the bows of the schooner, and drawing rapidly nearer.

She was in full sight of all, and the black flag fluttering in the breeze was not to be mistaken.

"The black flag!"

"Pirates!"

"My only hat!"

"It's some joke," said Mark Linley. "A jape to scare us."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Well, I don't suppose they're real pirates. I suppose it's a boat-load of practical jokers. Curious we can't see them, though."

"They're keeping down out of sight."

"That's it," said Russell. "Hiding below the gunwale! I don't quite catch on to this. It can't be those scouts again, can it?"

"It might be."

"Or—or—surely it can't be—be——"

"Real pirates?"

"Well, we've got watches, you know, and a tidy sum of money between us, and there's no help to be had," said Russell slowly. "A set of ruffians might easily get a fishing boat and run us down here to rob us, come to think of it."

"Phew!" said Trevor.

"Faith, and it's right ye are! They ain't pirates, but they might easily be a lot of longshore thieves from the port up the coast."

Harry Wharton looked serious. It was possible, though the hoisting of the black flag looked more like a "jape" than anything else.

"We'll jolly soon see!" he exclaimed. "I can make them out from the maintop with a telescope."

"Good wheeze!"

Two or three juniors promptly climbed to the maintop, Wharton first. Harry disdained the use of the "lubber's hole," and clambered manfully over the edge of the top, and dragged up the telescope with him.

There he swept the sea with the glass.

With the schooner pitching a good deal beneath him, and the strange sail gliding along at a great rate, it was not very easy for him to get his focus.

But he aimed the telescope correctly at last, and the black-flagged boat rushed large upon his field of vision.

From his perch he could see into the boat, where the big brown sail did not obstruct the view.

He started as he saw the interior. For there were a dozen or more figures in the boat, crouching in the cover of the gunwale, and each of them had a black mask upon his face.

Masked men—in a boat flying the emblem of piracy!

Wharton descended to the deck, his face serious. The crew of the strange boat had observed him, and they gave up further attempt at concealment. They sprang into view, showing over the gunwale, and there was a general gasp from the deck of the Marjorie as the row of masked faces came into sight.

"Masked!"

"They—they can't be real pirates!"

The juniors watched the strange craft with beating hearts. It was almost certain that it was a "jape," and Wharton was too proud to fly, even if there had been real danger. The schooner forged on slowly, and the stranger drew rapidly nearer.

"I say, suppose we buzz off," said Hazeldene. "No harm in giving them a run."

"That craft's quite as swift as ours," said Bob Cherry, "and they're handling it well."

"Still we could——"

Harry Wharton shook his head decidedly.

"We're not going to run," he said. "It's pretty clear that they mean to come aboard us—if they can. Hands to repel boarders!"

The crew of the schooner armed themselves with the mops, but half-heartedly. They were too mystified to put the same spirit into the thing they had shown when attacked by the scouts of Pegg Bay.

The strangers, beside the black masks on their faces, wore black cloaks which almost concealed their figures from head to foot.

They evidently wanted to be disguised, and their disguise was a success, and something very much like alarm grew on board the schooner as they came nearer.

A figure stood up in the bows of the craft, and a black-gloved hand was waved at the Marjorie.

"Ahoy there!"

"Ahoy!" shouted back Wharton.

"Lay to!"

"Rats!"

"We're coming on board!"

"You'll get a warm reception, if you do!"

"Beware!" The pirate's voice was harsh and stern, as if he were purposely disguising it, yet there seemed a tone in it familiar to Harry's ears. "If you resist us we shall send every mother's son of you to feed the fishes!"

"Rats!"

"Will you haul down your colours?"

Harry Wharton looked up at the Union Jack that flew from the masthead—the brave old colours streaming out in the breeze.

"No! That flag never goes down to an enemy!"

"Bravo!" shouted Bob Cherry. "Hear, hear!"

"I fancy you are a set of duffers on a jape," went on Harry Wharton. "But if you were Captain Kidd come to life again, that flag wouldn't go down. Go and eat coke!"

"Once more——!"

"Oh, ring off!"

"Then prepare for death! Load!"

There was a rattle of firearms. Most of the Removites turned pale. They were real firearms that glinted in the sun, in the hands of the masked, cloaked crew of the mysterious boat.

Wharton's teeth came together hard.

If the "pirates" were jokers, they were playing the part with a grim earnestness that looked very like the real thing.

Was it possible that——?

The boy's brain swam for a moment at the thought.

Pirates in the twentieth century—in the calm waters of an English bay—seemed too absurd a dream to be possible.

Yet—Harry remembered—not so long ago people would have said that a Wild West outrage—bank-robbing, reckless shooting, murder and suicide—were an impossibility in a quiet London suburb. The capture of an electric-car by reckless desperadoes—a wild chase and fierce shooting—who would have thought that possible in Tottenham—before it happened? Yet it had happened! And now, what if this, too, were a real—a possible happening? Suppose these masked wretches were to shoot, as the wretches had shot at Tottenham?

It was impossible; yet, after all, was it not possible?

Even Bob Cherry had changed colour. Most of the Removites were white. Bunter had dived into the galley. Captain Stump was staring wide-eyed at the masked faces, spell-bound. Wharton looked round him.

"Present!"

The firearms came up to a level. It looked terribly business-like. Hazeldene clutched Wharton by the shoulder.

"For Heaven's sake, Wharton, don't be a fool—give in!"

"But——"

"They may murder us! Remember what happened the other day at Tottenham! this may be some of the same gang!"

"I'd risk it——"

"Think of us then! Surrender!"

"Better let them come aboard!" muttered Trevor.

Wharton gritted his teeth.

"Very well—let them come! But mind—whatever and whoever they are, that flag does not come down!"

Hazeldene waved his hands frantically to the boat.

"Stop! It's all right—you can come aboard."

"Don't fire, men!"

The guns were lowered.

The boat surged up alongside the schooner, and the leader of the mysterious crew clambered aboard, followed by his men. He pointed to the forecastle.

"That's your place!" he said, gruffly. "Get in there!"

Wharton did not move. Bob Cherry and Nugent and Mark Linley drew up round him, with Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. But the others went forward, slowly, amazedly, hardly knowing whether they were awake or dreaming. The masked boarders watched them go. Wharton's mind was in a conflict. The masks and the cloaks so effectually concealed the invaders, that he could not see anything of them, hardly their eyes—yet few of them were tall enough to be taken for men—unless, as was possible—they were under-sized foreigners.

One of the masked men followed the crew, to close the scuttle upon them when they were in the forecastle. The chief pointed sternly.

"Follow them!"

But, as he raised his arm, the wind caught his black cloak, and blew it up—and an Eton jacket was revealed underneath.

Harry Wharton gave a shout of relief and rage.

"It's a jape! Line up, there!"

And he rushed upon the leader of the boarding-party.

"Stand back, or——!"

"Rats!"

"Rescue, Remove!" roared Bob Cherry.

But most of the crew were in the forecastle. The door was jammed upon them by a prompt "pirate," and secured. They raved and thumped from within in vain.

Five juniors were still on deck: Wharton, Cherry, Nugent, Hurree Singh, and Mark Linley. In a moment they were engaged in a wild and whirling combat with a dozen or more foes.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.
In the Hands of the Foe!

WHARTON fought like a hero, and his comrades backed him up well, but the odds were too great. They had no chance from the beginning. But they gave a good account of themselves.

In the wild struggle masks and cloaks were torn aside, and trampled under foot, and the familiar garments and familiar faces of the Upper Fourth fellows were revealed.

Temple, Dabney & Co., and nearly a dozen more of the Upper Fourth Form at Greyfriars, were the wicked pirates!

They were gasping with laughter now, but they fought hard all the same, and the odds on their side rendered the result a foregone conclusion from the beginning.

Harry Wharton was soon down, with Temple and Dabney sitting on him, and Bob Cherry was sat upon by Fry and Harvey.

The nabob was captured next, and then Nugent—and Mark Linley was rolled on the deck and tied up with a length of rope.

The fight was over; and the pirates were in possession of the good ship Marjorie. From the prisoners in the forecastle came an endless din of yelling and thumping. But the victors took no notice of it. They rested from their labours, sitting on their prisoners and yelling with laughter.

"Oh, my only hat!" gasped Temple. "What a howling jape!"

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ho, ho, ho!"

"A sixpennyworth of black crepe for the masks——"

"A dozen black cloaks hired of the costumier in Friardale—"

"A dozen old guns out of the gym. at Greyfriars, that these very asses themselves have used a dozen times for musketry drill——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And behold the pirates bold!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the Upper Fourth fellows shrieked again. The Removites did not laugh. The situation was comical enough, but it did not appeal to the heroes of the Remove. They were only thinking of the way they had been fooled—of the yells of laughter that would go up when the story became known at Greyfriars School.

The Removites listened with red faces to the laughter of the Upper Fourth "pirates."

There was no doubt that the Remove, for once, had been absolutely "done."

They had triumphed over the Upper Fourth more than once, but on the present occasion they had to confess themselves "licked to the wide."

The five prisoners on deck, with rope-ends knotted round their limbs, lay helpless prisoners, glaring at one another and at the "pirates," and the latter, every few moments, burst into fresh roars of laughter.

Yet Harry Wharton could not blame himself.

Temple, Dabney and Co. had played their part so well that there had been a dreadful possibility that the masked invaders were really desperadoes in search of booty, and for the sake of the others, Harry had given in.

But now he was keenly conscious of the absurdity of the whole affair. The black cloaks and masks cast aside, the grinning faces of the Upper Fourth fellows and their Eton jackets made the scene inexpressibly ridiculous. The guns, too, at close quarters, could be recognised as the old specimens the juniors used for drill practice in the gym. They had not been loaded for many years, and would probably have burst if used as firearms.

The Upper Fourth were gloating, the prisoners on deck glaring, and in the forecastle the rest of the Removites hammered and yelled.

But they could not get out.

Dabney and Fry had secured the door fast, and seven Removites were packed in there, unable to come to the aid of their leader.

Wharton gritted his teeth.

The laugh was fairly against the Remove, and the Upper Fourth fellows, taking their own boat in tow, were already trimming the sails to run ashore.

They intended to take the Remove sailors back to Pegg as prisoners. The fishing village was crowded with Greyfriars fellows that fine afternoon, and Wharton and his recruits would be held up to utter ridicule. It would be a blow the Remove would be a long time in recovering from.

Wharton turned over in his mind desperate projects for escape. But he was bound fast, and there was no chance.

Temple looked down at him with a grin.

"Comfy?" he asked.

"Confound you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, stop your cackling," said Bob Cherry. "It's bad enough, without you going off like a cheap American alarm clock."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, rather!" gasped Dabney. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"We're going ashore," grinned Temple. "We're thinking of exhibiting you chaps on the beach as captured lunatics and charging a penny admission."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Upper Fourth.

And the Removites could only look at one another with sickly smiles.

"Put the prisoners below," said Temple loftily. "They're in the way here. There's some good grub around; let's finish it off for them."

"Good idea!"

The bound Removites were dragged down the little companion and dumped in the cabin. The Upper Fourth fellows remained in possession of the deck. The schooner was speeding on her new course. Captain Stump was placed at the wheel The wooden-legged sailorman had been of no use in the scuffle, as he had been too bewildered to know much of what was going on, and a push had sent him rolling at the start.

Temple & Co. did not believe in doing more work than they could help, and the old sailorman was put at the wheel, under dire threats of being hung at the yard-arm if he didn't steer straight for Pegg. And the juniors watched him to see that he didn't make any attempt to release Wharton & Co.

In the cabin the Remove prisoners were gloomy enough.

"What a precious lot of giddy asses we shall look!" grunted Bob Cherry. "Fancy being taken in by a set of kids done up in black masks."

"Oh, it's too rotten!" growled Wharton.

"If we could only get loose!"

"What would be the good?" said Linley. "We couldn't fight a dozen of them. And there's no way of getting the others out of the fo'c's'le."

"I suppose not. It's rotten!"

"We shall be at the village in half an hour, and Greyfriars will never finish laughing at the black flag—and us!"

"It's rotten!"

"The rottenfulness is terrific."

And the Removites relapsed into glum silence.

From the deck came the sounds of the Upper Fourth feasting on the ample remains of the lunch, and amid the clink of knives and plates rang the bursts of laughter.

In the cabin there was silence. But the silence was broken all at once, and Harry Wharton rolled over, his face flushed, listening intently. A sound had come to his ears, a sound from below, in the hold of the schooner.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Turning the Tables.

WUN LUNG, the Chinee, had not joined in the furious hammering and shouting in the forecastle. While his companions were exhausting themselves in vain din, the little Chinee was thinking. His quaint little face was screwed up into an expression of intense reflection.

"We can't get out!" exclaimed Hazeldene, at last, throwing himself upon a bunk. "We've been utterly done, and we may as well own up."

"They've changed the course," Trevor remarked.

"Yes; I suppose they're going back to Pegg, to give us a showing up as a set of confounded jacknasses."

"And the grub!" groaned Billy Bunter. "I can hear them wolfing it. There wasn't more than enough left for another meal, and now they're scoffing it."

"Oh, blow the grub!"

"That's all very well, Vaseline, but we shall be hungry."

"If we could only get out we could rush the rotters!" growled Russell. "Can't you suggest something, somebody?"

"We shall have to wait till they open the door," said Dicky Brown. "Then——"

"Faith, and then we shall have all Pegg grinning at us intirely."

"That's so! What are you screwing up your chivvy like a Chinese idol for, Wun Lung? Have you got a wheeze?"

"Me tinkee."

"Well, have you tunkee of anything we can do?"

"Me savvy."

"Oh, rats!" growled Trevor. "I suppose a heathen Chinee won't be able to get us out of the fix. We're done."

"Me savvy."

"Let him speak," said Hazeldene. "He has good ideas sometimes. Go ahead, kid!"

Wun Lung grinned.

"We no get outee of folecastle," he said. "No openee; but suppose we gettee thlough into hold?"

And he tapped the bulkhead which divided the forecastle from the hold. The juniors stared at him.

"My hat!" said Hazeldene. "I never thought of that."

"But the hatch is closed down," said Trevor. "We couldn't get on deck, even if we got through into the hold."

"Lazalette hatch in cabin."

"What on earth does he mean by a lazelette?"

"I know!" shouted Hazeldene. "The lazarette! Don't you remember noticing there's a hatch in the cabin that opens into the hold. If we could get along there we could get out through the cabin. Those rotters don't know the craft, and they won't have noticed the lazarette hatch."

The juniors looked excited.

They only wanted a chance of getting out, and getting at close quarters with the enemy. They were satisfied that they could do the rest.

"But how are we to get through this bulkhead?" growled Trevor. "It won't be easy."

"Oh, I don't know! The inside of this schooner is pretty mouldy everywhere. The hull has been patched up, but the bulkheads are in a pretty rotten state. I think we could bump through somehow. There's an axe here, and if you fellows will stand out of the way——"

"Look out, ass; don't brain us!"

"Well, give a fellow room."

"Me tinkee——"

"That's all right, Wun Lung; you've tunkee enough. Get out of the way!"

"Me tinkee bang on dool again, and then the lottels no heal us bleak thlough bulkhead."

"Good idea! Hammer again, you chaps, while I use the hatchet."

"Right you are."

The hammering in the forecastle recommenced. In the din thus created the blows of the hatchet on the bulkhead were not noticed above the rest. The woodwork, was as Hazeldene said, in a more or less rotten state. A few doughty blows crashed an opening through. A few blows more, and the opening was large enough for the juniors to crawl through into the hold.

"Look out!" muttered Trevor. "It's jolly dark! Ow! I've barked my shin."

"Well, don't bark so jolly loud, or they'll hear you."

"Look here——"

"Oh, come on! Bunter, you can stay there and kick up a row, so that they won't suspect! You wouldn't be any use in a row."

"Oh, really, Vaseline!"

"Kick up a row! Hammer on the scuttle. Sing! Anything will do, so long as it's a fearful row. Come on, you chaps!"

And the Removites and Dicky Brown went on their way. Bunter, not sorry to be left out of the coming scrimmage, hammered away in the forecastle and made noise enough to convince the Upper Fourth fellows, if that were needed, that the prisoners were still safe in their quarters.

Meanwhile, the juniors were creeping aft through darkness, barking their shins, treading on one another's feet, and growling and grunting in chorus. It was Wun Lung, who seemed to possess a cat-like faculty of seeing in the dark, who reached the little cabin hatch first, and crept up the stairs leading to it. He listened there, but not a sound came from the cuddy above.

The little Chinee felt over the hatch and slowly raised it. He peeped out into the cabin, and a smile glimmered over his face as he saw the Remove prisoners there and no one else. Harry Wharton's eyes met his.

"My hat!" muttered the captain of the Remove.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" murmured Bob Cherry. "The Chinee!"

Wun Lung grinned and crept silently out into the cabin. In a couple of minutes he had cut loose the prisoners, and while he was doing so the rest of the Removites came up and joined them. They looked somewhat flushed and dusty, but in good form for a fight, and very eager. Wharton stretched his cramped limbs.

"By Jove, this is too good!" he exclaimed, in a subdued voice. "Whose idea was it to get at us in that way?"

"Wun Lung's."

"By jove, you're a little genius, Wun Lung! The Upper Fourth chaps are making for Pegg, and I expect we shall be there in a quarter of an hour. There's going to be rather a change of circumstances on board before we get there, though."

"Yes, rather."

"The ratherfulness is terrific."

"Come on, and quiet!"

Harry Wharton stole silently up the companion steps. Bob Cherry, Nugent, Hurree Singh, and Hazeldene followed close behind, and then the rest of the Removites, silent and eager.

The companion hatch was open, and the blue sky shone above. Wharton put his head out cautiously on deck.

The Upper Fourth were feasting and making right merry. It never crossed their minds for a moment that their prisoners could get loose, after the careful way in which they had secured them, and they were utterly off their guard. Wharton whispered back to his followers:

"Come on, as fast as you can, and hit your hardest."

"What ho!"

And Harry Wharton sprang out on the deck. There was a gasp of amazement from Temple, Dabney & Co. Most of the Upper Fourth sprang to their feet. Wharton rushed right at them. If the pirates could have closed the companion hatch they might have bottled up the Remove yet, and dealt with Wharton singly. Harry's idea was to keep them too busy for that, and he succeeded. He rushed into the midst of the

Upper Fourth, hitting right and left, and his chums were after him in a few seconds.

Then the rest of the Removites poured out, and the melee became general. A terrific combat raged on the deck of the Marjorie. Fellows rolled over and over again, and still jumped up to renew the conflict. Desperate couples reeled to and fro in hand-grips, and breathless victors sat gasping on the chests of fallen foes.

The odds were slightly in favour of the Remove, and when Captain Stump secured the wheel and came to their aid, they had decidedly the advantage. The wooden-legged sailorman took care not to be upset this time, and he accounted for the burliest of the pirates, holding him fast in a loving embrace.

By this time, too, Bunter had crawled through the hold and emerged from the companion, and though he was not of much use as a fighting man, he plumped his weight upon Fry, who had been brought to the deck by Bob Cherry and held him secure while Bob rushed on into the fray again.

And so the tide of battle turned in favour of the Remove. But the fight was hard and black eyes and swollen noses were distributed with great liberality on both sides.

But one by one the Upper Fourth pirates were dragged down and secured, and ropes fastened wrists and ankles.

After ten minutes of terrific scrimmaging, Temple, Dabney & Co. were prisoners, and lay red and panting at the feet of their conquerors.

And then the Remove cheered.

"Hurrah! Hip, hip, hurrah!"

The cheering rang over the wide bay, and reached the fellows in Pegg, and brought general attention upon the schooner as it glided towards the shore.

"My hat!" gasped Wharton, mopping a trickle of red from his nose, "that was warm while it lasted. We've done them!"

"Get those masks and things, and shove 'em on the rotters," said Nugent. "We'll take 'em in as a crew of captured pirates."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Upper Fourth fellows wriggled and expostulated, but that did not matter to the Remove. The pirates were masked once more, sorely against their will, and the black flag was rolled round Temple in addition.

The crew of the schooner had somewhat recovered their breath by the time the vessel drew into the shore. The Marjorie was brought to anchor smartly enough—the Greyfriars sailors were already falling into the ways of sailormen.

A crowd was on the sands watching them curiously. Greyfriars fellows of all Forms were there, as well as fisher-folk, young and old. The Removites assumed a gravity suitable to the occasion. The masked pirates were hoisted into their own boat, and the juniors pulled ashore. Trumper and his scouts were among the crowd, and they pushed forward with somewhat warlike looks. But at the sight of the masked and bound

prisoners and the black flag artistically draped round Temple, they stopped, and stared.

"What the——" gasped Trumper.

Wharton took off his cap to the wondering crowd.

"Gentlemen, we have captured a crew of pirates, and brought them ashore. You can hang them if you like, or make them walk the plank. Shove them ashore!" And the Upper Fourth pirates were shoved ashore.

They were greeted with roars of laughter. The Removites released their feet, but left their hands bound, so that they were quite helpless till friends in the crowd began to untie them.

Trumper and his scouts were yelling with laughter, as well as the rest, and had for the moment forgotten their hostile intentions. The Upper Fourth pirates stumbled away with faces the colour of beetroots, followed by yells of laughter.

Then, as the Removites were about to push off again, Trumper made a rush for the boat, followed by the Boy Scouts.

"Hold on!" exclaimed Wharton, standing up, boat-hook in hand. "I say, make it pax for the day, you chaps, and all of you come for a sail in the schooner! We've got plenty of grub aboard, and you'll have a jolly time."

Trumper paused. The offer was too good to be refused, and it was more attractive than a fight against such odds for the recapture of the deserter, Dicky Brown.

"Right you are!" said Trumper at last. "We'll do it."

"Good! Tumble in!"

And the scouts were taken on board. Once more the schooner spread her white wings for a sail round the bay, the Boy Scouts of Pegg and the Removites of Greyfriars fraternising cordially enough. Indeed, the college lads found that they could learn a great deal of practical sailoring from the fisher-boys, and they were keen enough to learn all they could. As for Dicky Brown, he was forgiven by the rest of the patrol, reprisals being hardly possible under the circumstances.

And while the crew of the schooner enjoyed their sail, the Upper Fourth pirates crept disconsolately back to the school to hide their diminished heads. Fellows who had seen them put ashore spread the tale, and all Greyfriars laughed over their adventure. And Harry Wharton and his recruits found them still laughing when, at dusk, they returned to school after one of the most eventful outings of their lives. The Upper Fourth had nothing to say. Temple, Dabney & Co. sang small—very small—and the honours of the day rested with the Greyfriars sailors.

THE END.

GRAND TALE OF ARMY LIFE.

READ THIS FIRST.

On the death of his father, Jack Dashwood finds to his astonishment that he has been practically disinherited in favour of his Uncle Dominic and Cousin Leonard. He consequently enlists in the 25th Hussars, under the name of Tom Howard, and soon becomes a corporal. Dominic Dashwood's death occurs just as the 25th are sailing for India. On their arrival there, Leonard joins the Ploughshires. A frontier war breaks out, and the 25th receive orders to mobilise for the front. A trooper named Sligo is bribed by Dashwood to drug Tom Howard one night while the young corporal is on picket duty. Tom falls asleep at his post and is told that in due time he will be court-martialled. One day Sligo has a letter from his wife, describing how, while cleaning out a certain set of offices in Lincoln's Inn Fields, she discovered a dusty document under a safe, relating to Tom Howard's affairs, and that Sergeant Hogan, a former servant of Colonel Dashwood's, with whom Mrs. Sligo was acquainted, had joyfully affirmed that it established Jack Dashwood's claim to the Colonel's estates. This letter Sligo maliciously shows to Leonard Dashwood, who manages to destroy it, together with one from Sergeant Hogan to Tom Howard, who has been promoted to sergeant. An I O U for £95, which Dashwood had given to Sligo as hush-money, falls into Colonel Greville's hands.

A general advance is now ordered, and the column moves into the difficult Mahmund country. Sir Ponsonby Smithers, with three squadrons of the 25th Hussars and four companies of the Ploughshires, while pursuing Ali Khan with a small band of tribesmen, is surprised in the rear by the Mullah himself with a large force. The Ploughshires, by a gallant bayonet charge, succeed in dislodging Ali Khan's party, and Leonard Dashwood feels something of the old fighting spirit of his family burn in his face, as a bullet carries away his shoulder-strap.

(Now go on with the story.)

The General's Story.

Leonard Dashwood it was who, in pursuit of some flying tribesmen, discovered an ancient road, practicable for cavalry; and when the repeated bugle-calls to halt were at last heeded, he pointed it out to Montgomery, who sent a sergeant down into the valley again to inform the general, for Montgomery's professional eye, when he had time to look back, saw that the Mahmunds on the other side of the valley were in great force, and he realised that they would have to push on in the wake of the men they had just routed.

Sir Ponsonby Smithers heard what the sergeant had to report, and, after questioning him closely, made his plans on the instant.

"Go back to Captain Montgomery, sergeant," he said, "and tell him I want a company of his regiment to fall back and take over the rearguard. We will advance by that road at once"

And even before the sergeant had rejoined his officer and delivered the message, the general was withdrawing the Hussars, leaving only a screen of them, under Sergeant Howard, to keep the enemy in his place.

It was late afternoon now; but, judging from what he saw, that the enemy were in great force on the road that led back to the valley, Sir Ponsonby abandoned all idea of attempting to rush it. The only thing he could do was to trust to luck that the ancient causeway would lead somewhere, and that he could make a detour and reach the main body before nightfall.

The advance guard of the Ploughshires strode up that ancient Buddhist causeway, their rifles on their shoulders, and their eyes very wide open. The road mounted a neck between two high mountains, and then plunged into a well-timbered gorge on the other side, with a stream at the bottom of it, and another hill to ascend beyond the trees. Men who had compasses took them out, and were relieved to find that the road seemed to be leading them in the direction of the Third Brigade. Alas for their calculations, however, about a mile further on—which mile they accomplished without seeing anything of the enemy—the road swung away to the left, and the scenery became wilder.

Far away behind them they could hear the shots of the rearguard replying at intervals to the Mahmunds, who were now moving in pursuit, and they knew that the company of the Ploughshires were having a warm time, now holding an angle in the road until their comrades got well ahead, then doubling after them until they reached the next cover, and so on, yard by yard, the sky gleaming crimson now, and the darkness very close at hand. Once or twice, away up in the hill above them, they saw other prowling bands of natives, but these did not venture to attack, and it was only when they came to a valley broader than the rest, in which some grass was growing, which would find food for the horses, that the general determined to halt where he was for the night, rather than run the risk of being surprised among these difficult passes.

At one end of the valley was a hillock, its face plentifully strewn with boulders and large stones. Some deodars grew at intervals along its slope, and under the shade of the trees Sir Ponsonby ordered the horses to be picketed, a breastwork thrown up round the base of the hill, and pickets to be set in a circle about the camp ground.

There was a hollow near the hill-top—a hollow, flanked on one side by a natural parapet of basaltic rock, and there the general ordered a fire to be lit, and proceeded to bivouac in the open. The horses, having been watered at the stream, were led back into the grove of trees, their girths slackened, and each man was ordered to lie down by his mount.

The Ploughshires took first watch, and Leonard Dashwood was in command of the advanced picket in the direction of the enemy, who, however, did not show any signs of their whereabouts.

Saddle-bags and haversacks were ransacked, and the little force munched its rations, which were now running low, a hum of conversation being heard on all sides as the men discussed the doings of the day. The Hussars who had been with Mr. Blennerhassett had a stirring story to tell, and you may be sure it lost nothing in the telling—Tom Howard's name being frequently heard.

Tom had seated himself with his back against a tree beside his horse, and it was so close to the spot where the general and his officers sat, chatting in the firelight, that he found himself listening to their conversation, a good deal of which drove him back on his own thoughts. He had done his duty, and more than his duty, and Dick's words about a commission set him pondering. The two hundred pounds a year that he enjoyed under his mother's will was ample to keep him in an infantry regiment; but the sergeant was a cavalryman, heart and soul. All the Dashwoods had served in the horse, from the time when Sir Allen Dashwood had led his cuirassiers against Cromwell's Ironsides, and, indeed, further back than that. Then there was Alf Sligo and his curious communication. The thought occurred to him that he had seen nothing of Sligo that day, and he wondered whether the fellow was skulking.

"By Jove, I will have it out of him when we get back to camp!" muttered the young sergeant. "He and Leonard

are hand and glove, and for no good either, and the colonel has tumbled to the fact. Heigh-ho! it's a funny world!"

And, lighting a cigarette which the Hon. Algy had given him when they were on top of the tower, and which he had not yet had time to smoke, Tom buried his elbow in the sandy soil, and looked at the handsome profile of the general, who had just come back from a personal visit to the outposts.

The general had already written out his report of the day's proceedings in his notebook, and the conversation ceased for a moment, when he took a seat, out of deference to the rank and the high esteem in which everybody held him.

He drew a cigar-case from his breast pocket, and accepted a light from Mr. Blennerhassett.

"Your adventure of last night, sir," said the general, his voice remarkably clear and distinct, "has set me thinking of something that occurred to me during the Indian Mutiny, a little incident in which a very dear friend of mine was concerned—your late colonel, by the way, Blennerhassett—Sir Harry Dashwood!"

The sergeant under the deodar let the cigarette fall from his lips, and he pulled his helmet down over his nose, a feeling like an electric shock quivering through his sturdy frame.

"It was in 1858, when the back of the rebellion had been broken, and we were chasing that wily old rebel, Tantia Topee. We had been through the whole business, and had months of jungle fighting, for Tantia turned and twisted like a snake, and we had been marching night and day after him. We had no khaki campaigning kit in the 25th then, and went through the whole business in our European clothing. Almost despairing of getting up with Tantia, and worn down to a very fine point, our squadrons halted at a place called Kaluta to rest the horses. While we were there, Dashwood, who was our senior major at the time, got wind from some of the natives that a party of rebels were encamped at a temple about twenty miles from Kaluta, and he came to me with the news.

"'I am going to look into this, Smithers,' he said. 'The horses are done up, and the men want rest badly. We have been all over the place on fools' errands for the last three months. What do you say to coming out with me, and verifying the truth of this report? It might prove to be Tantia Topee himself for all we know, or it may be a mare's nest after all. If you don't care about it I will go alone.'

"I was young in those days, gentlemen," said the general, with a smile, "and as keen as mustard on a job of that kind, and in half an hour we had saddled up, and were away into the jungle with a native guide, whom Dashwood had bribed to show us the path. We had our swords and a brace of those new Colt revolvers, which were just becoming popular at that time, and directly we had left Kaluta behind us, we knew we were in for an exciting adventure. Both Dashwood and I were lucky in having excellent mounts; mine, I remember, was a bay Herat horse, which had never turned a hair at the longest march. And, riding warily we reached a place called Mirapur at sunset. As we entered the village, we were surprised to find ourselves challenged by a sowar of Bangalore Light Cavalry—a gaily-dressed irregular force, officered, of course, by Englishmen, and wearing bright, grass-green tunics and gorgeous turbans of scarlet and gold. They had two officers with them—a captain named Dalrymple and a young Irish lieutenant, Paddy O'Brien. The latter was the better of the two. They were just sitting down to mess when we rode in, and welcomed us warmly, and handing over our horses to the charge of one of the men, we fed, and afterwards sat out on the verandah of the bungalow over our coffee and cigars.

"It was no good pushing on until the moon rose, our guide assured us, so we spent the next hour very comfortably, Paddy O'Brien amusing us with some droll stories, and Dalrymple sitting rather silent, and drinking a good deal.

"Suddenly, away in the darkness, we heard the sentries challenge, and then there was the sound of two men approaching, and a duffardar entered the verandah with scant ceremony, supporting an exhausted man, who had been badly wounded, and who had travelled with his hurts half-dressed.

"We were all on our feet in a moment, gave the poor fellow a stiff dose of brandy, and waited anxiously until he could speak, which was not for several minutes, as he was almost at the last gasp. His news was bad enough in all conscience, and I can see Harry Dashwood's nostrils dilating, and his face growing marvellously stern, as he listened to the disjointed words of the dying man. He told us that two companies of Bengal native infantry, belonging to a regiment whose loyalty had long been suspected, had mutinied openly at last, and were marching to join Tantia Topee. They had reached the town of Tung, seventy miles due south of Mirapur, and instantly proceeded to slaughter the handful of Europeans there.

"The poor fellow was a telegraph operator, and had struggled through the jungle for two days in a terrible condition, falling in with roving bands of rebels several times, until, at last, when he had almost given up hope, he stumbled upon Mirapur by the merest chance.

"When he had learned this much, Dashwood looked at Dalrymple without speaking, and I saw Dalrymple's face change colour. His hand trembled violently, as he reached for the decanter, and I realised that his nerve was completely gone through excessive drinking.

"'Well, Captain Dalrymple,' said Harry Dashwood, after a pause, 'what is to be done?'

"Dalrymple signed to the duffardar to withdraw, bent over the table, and whispered in a tremulous voice:

"'My men are not to be trusted. For the last fortnight I have expected them to mutiny every moment, and, now, when they hear of this business, may I lose my commission if they don't join the rebels before sunrise!'

"Dashwood looked at him, his eyes glaring like burning coals, and his mouth curling with a scornful smile.

"'Mr. O'Brien,' he said, in a low voice, 'what is this about your fellows?'

"And he made a slight inclination of his head towards the drunken captain, to which the young Irishman replied with a suggestive shrug of his shoulders.

"'Some of them have been a bit shaky, I admit,' said the lieutenant; 'but I believe if they had the right man to lead them, they would go anywhere!'

"I knew what was in Dashwood's mind, as he looked across at me, and we both laughed simultaneously.

"'Captain Dalrymple,' he said, 'I am senior officer here, and I take command. You can stay or go just as you please. I am afraid you will lose your commission in any case. We march in ten minutes to the relief of Tung. Mr. O'Brien will you be good enough to parade your men?'

"And, by gad, gentlemen, in ten minutes we were off, leaving Dalrymple staring at the candles in the verandah, shivering like a leaf. The messenger had died while Dashwood had been speaking!"

Tom Howard, his mouth quivering, and his eyes, too, blazing not unlike Sir Harry's had done, wormed himself a little nearer to the group, and lay motionless, listening greedily.

"Before we started," continued the general, "Harry Dashwood turned his horse, and faced the native troopers, who had answered the summons to mount with alacrity.

"'Men,' he said, in Hindustani, remembering the ancient feud that had existed since the days of Clive between the Bangalore Light Cavalry and the regiment that had just mutinied, 'know you anything good of the 90th Bengal Infantry?'

"A loud shout of derision burst forth from the mounted men, and the same duffardar, who had brought the wounded man into the verandah, said:

"'Sahib, they are dogs, and their fathers were dogs before them!'

"'You say well, duffardar," said Sir Harry. 'And dogs that do wrong must be beaten. There are mem-sahibs and little ones in peril of their lives at this moment, and you are going to follow me to Tung to-night. Be true to your salt, and the great White Queen shall hear how well you fought, and I will tell my own men when I get back, and they will call you brothers. March!'

"And the sowars gave a yell of delight as we started off in the moonlight. And then, by gad, I shall never forget the journey. The rains were commencing, and we had eight swollen rivers to cross, to say nothing of deep nullahs, already half full of water, besides which, part of our road lay across muddy fields, which made very heavy going in spite of the moon.

"Dashwood said very little as we marched, his sole anxiety being to push on, and I knew, by the way in which he paced backwards and forwards, how he grudged the two brief halts we made to breathe the horses.

"Seventy miles in twenty-two hours, gentlemen, is not a bad record. The sun was setting as we left our last halting-place, and in less than a quarter of an hour our guide told us that we should be in the little town of Tung. Through a gap in the jungle, which surrounded it to the northward, he pointed out the roof of the British cantonment, and we examined our revolvers as we rode on with great caution. We had seen that every carbine was loaded, and, though not a little weary with their long ride, our men were in high spirits, casting angry glances at the sun, no doubt wishing that, like Joshua, they could stay its course.

"'What are we going to do, Harry?' said I, for we had discussed several plans on the way down.

"'I want you to take twenty men and ride straight for the cantonment,' he said, 'as soon as we get in sight, and I will take the other thirty and gallop straight on to the

pagah. They will suspect nothing, and the gate, no doubt, will be open. If you hear us cheer, you will know that we have got inside. You know what those pagahs are, just a high mud wall, with towers at the corners. Our folks, if they are still alive, will be in one of the towers, unless I am much mistaken, and the rebels will have taken possession of the rest of the fort.'

"He held his hand up as he spoke, and we slackened from a trot into a walk. I can smell the reek of the sweating horses, and hear the creak of the stirrup leathers even now, as we passed through the banyan grove, which brought us suddenly into full view of the town. The mutineers were still there, some of them strolling about in their red coats, ornamented with white lace, in the compound of the cantonment, and there was a sentry at the gate of the pagah, whose high wall showed dark against the sunset.

"The sound of laughter was in the air, but not a clue had we as to the whereabouts of the Europeans, whom we all feared must be dead by that time. The moment we had shown ourselves the sentry had fired his musket, and as the startled mutineers came flocking out of the houses and down the street to rush to their arms, an English shout rose from the top of one of the towers of the pagah, and there was a flutter of white handkerchiefs, which I candidly admit made my heart flutter in response."

"Dashwood pointed in the direction of the cantonment, and spurred straight for the fort, followed by Paddy O'Brien and thirty men of the Bangalore Light Cavalry, while I wheeled to the right with my score of sowars, and tried to rush the gate of the compound before they closed it. I saw their arms stacked up under the verandah, and knew that if we could capture them, a lot of trouble would be saved; and, as luck would have it—the wall of the compound being broken down in one place—we leapt it and intercepted a band of the villains who had come in by the gate."

The general drew a deep sigh of recollection, and his white moustache seemed to bristle.

"They did not get those arms, gentlemen," he said, tossing the stump of his cigar into the fire, "and my men fought like fiends, for there is nothing like a blood feud between two regiments, if you can only work it properly; and, by George, we must have killed forty of them between the verandah and the compound gates.

"Dashwood was not so fortunate. A high door of teak closed the entrance to the pagah, and before he could reach it sixty or seventy of the red-coated mutineers rushed inside and barred it in his face. I didn't see it myself, but Paddy O'Brien told me afterwards that Dashwood's pace was so terrific that he could not rein in in time, and his horse, meeting the door full tilt, fell dead as a nail with his master under him. They all thought he was killed: but when he sprang up, badly bruised, but with no bones broken, the Bangalore fellows cheered like mad; and, thinking it was the signal agreed upon, I called my sowars off and rode to the pagah, to find that if we meant to get in, we should have to take it by storm.

"The rest of the mutineers had vanished like smoke. We didn't know then that there was another gate on the opposite side of the fort, but the rascals had got in that way, and were now yelling with derision. The pagah was a large parallelogram of mud and stone. The walls a good thirty feet high, and the corner tower in which the Europeans had barricaded themselves, hung over a deep nullah, with ten feet of water at the bottom of it.

"Dashwood was furious at the loss of his horse, which had carried him through the whole campaign, and, I remember, he could hardly speak for passion, as we went to the foot of the tower and called up to the besieged who crowded the parapet. We learnt that there were fifteen of them, nine being ladies and children; and they shouted down that they had had no water for twenty-four hours. It was quite dark now, but we could see the glimmer of the stars in the flooded nullah, and, finding that the little garrison had ropes, Dashwood sent some men into the village to fetch some earthenware jars which we soon filled and hauled up.

"While a dozen of the Bangalore sowars busied themselves with the water supply, Dashwood and I, with the Irish lieutenant, reconnoitred and found that we should have no little difficulty in effecting an entrance. We were fired at from the loophole doors on each side, and a shot through Dashwood's helmet did not improve his temper.

"'Get picks and spades!' he cried. 'We must dig a hole in this wall!'

"And, choosing a spot where it was composed almost entirely of mud, our men went at it with a will, and after a couple of hours of hard work, the duffardar, who was a sort of bronzed Hercules, gave a cry of delight as the head of his pick disappeared into the interior of the pagah.

"I could talk to you all night about that wall—until we had made a hole large enough to crawl through, encouraged by the grateful shouts of the poor things on the tower-top, and little children clapping their hands—but I must come to the point of my story.

"Dashwood was the hero of that adventure, and I can see him now. As soon as the hole was wide enough, he darted through, guarding his head with his sword, and our dark-skinned sowars swarmed in after him. The duffardar was the second man in, and he certainly saved Dashwood's life, and, by gad, how the imprisoned party yelled and cheered as we got in and drove the scoundrels across the courtyard! Our blood was up, and there was no stopping us.

"But the rogues were as cunning as serpents, and something had happened which we did not know then. While we had been clearing the inside of the fort, as we thought, the rest of the mutinous regiment had come into Tung to join their comrades, and, cutting down the two men we had left in charge of our horses outside, promptly barricaded the hole we had made, secured both doors so that no strength of ours could open it, and in less time than it takes me to tell you, we found we were in a pretty trap. Instead of relieving the little garrison, we were about to be besieged ourselves.

"All night long the rebels—who must have been now about eight hundred strong—paraded round the fort, mocking us, and shrieking with laughter. And after a last ineffectual attempt to break out, we officers looked blankly at each other, and were obliged to silently admit that we were beaten. The most serious part of it was that we had used up all our ammunition upon the attack on the fort, and unless we could get a fresh supply of those celebrated greased cartridges, which were popularly supposed to be the cause of the mutiny, we should be simply starved into a state of defenceless weakness, and then butchered by the fiends outside.

"But if there was a man ready in an emergency, that man was Harry Dashwood; and after we had shaken hands with the English folk on the tower, and kissed the children, aye, and the ladies, too, I looked round for my brother officer, and found him leaning his elbows on the parapet, gazing down fixedly into the darkness.

"'This is out of the frying-pan into the fire with a vengeance,' I said.

"But, to my surprise, as he struck a match to light his cigar, I saw that he was smiling.

"'It's all my fault, old chap,' he said, 'and I'm going to do my best to remedy it. These niggers will get tired of marching round presently, and the bulk of them will go into the village to prime themselves with arrack and bhang; then you will just lower me down at the end of that rope, I will slip over to the cantonment, and if you don't have plenty of ball cartridges in half an hour, it will be because I am dead."

(To be continued.)

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