

and Boots-they're made to stand rough usage. Weatherproof, waterproof, snag proof, comfortable. All styles. Get a pair this winter. "The mark of quality" on every pair.

mine. This man may do or he may not.

You have no more to say to it till I

send him down to tell you one thing

or the other. Clear out, sir, clear out;

and if you think you've anything to

complain of you stick it down in the

view the thin voice had gathered

strength, and the last shrill insult was

screamed after the devoted medico as

he retired in such order that I felt cer-

tain he was going to take this trying

patient at his word. The bedroom door

clesed, then the outer one, and the

doctor's heels went drumming down

thec ommon stair. I was alone in the

"And a damned good riddance!"

croaked the invalid, raising himself on

one elbow without delay. "I may not

have much body left to boast about,

but at least I've got a lost old soul

to call my own. That's why I want a

gentleman of sorts about me. I've been

too dependent on that chap. He won't

even let me smoke, and he's been in

the flat all day to see I didn't. You'll

find the cigarettes behind the Madon-

It was a steel engraving of the great

Raffaelle, and the frame was tilted

from the wall; at a touch a packet of

cigarettes tumbled down from behind.

I struck the match and held it,

while the invalid inhaled with normal

lips; and suddenly I sighed. I was ir-

resistibly reminded of my poor, dear

old Raffles. A smoke ring worthy of

the great A. J. was floating upward

"And now take one yourself. I have

smoked more poisonous cigarettes.

I cannot repeat what I said. I have

no idea what I did. I only know-I

only knew-that it was A. J. Raffles in

"Yes, Bunny, it was the very devil

of a swim, but I defy you to sink in

under water at all, but went all I

set down as a case of suicide. I shall

but I'd rather be dropped by the hang-

having you by the hand again! I feel

since a nightmare. I thought that time

"It looked rather like it, Bunny. It

was taking all the risks and hitting at

everything. But the game came off,

enough for me to see you lying there.

I don't want to know how you came

I raised one of the blinds, I sat upon

the bed and I had that look. It left

my own mind that my dear Raffles

that he had been. He had aged twenty

years; he looked fifty at the very least.

trick about that; and his face was

His hair was white; there was no

another white. The lines about the

corners of the eyes and mouth were

both many and deep. On the other

and gray and gleaming, like finely

a cigarette to close it, was the mouth

of Raffles and no other-strong and

unscrupulous as the man himself. It

appeared to have departed; but that

was only the physical strength which

was quite sufficient to make my heart

bleed for the dear rascal who had

cost me every tie I valued but the tie

"Think I look much older?" he ask-

"A bit." I admitted. "But it is chief-

"Whereby hangs a tale for when

sure you. And Naples is a rummier."

"You went after all?"

and some day I'll tell you how."

"Oh, my dear old chap, to think of

get outed quite soon enough, Bunny,

man than throw my own wicket away.'

But even these are not Sullivans!"

"Thanks; and now a light."

from the sick man's lips.

the flesh!

was the last!"

another word!"

between us two.

ly your hair."

flat with this highly singular and

rather terrible old man.

na of the Chair."

In the mild excitement of our inter-

## RAFFLES

Amateur Cracksman.

By E. W. Hornung, Author of "Shadow of the Rope," "Rogue's March." Etc.

"At last! You're the very first I've not had to argue with as to what is and what is not a public school. Ex-"No," I said after a moment's hesi-

I toto nim, and he signed relief.

tation; "no, I was not expelled. And I hope you won't expel me if I ask a question in my turn?" "Certainly not."

"Are you Mr. Maturin's son?" "No, my name's Theobald. You may have seen it down below." "The doctor?" I said.

"His doctor," said Theobald with a satisfied eye. "Mr. Maturin's doctor. He is having a male nurse and attendant by my advice, and he wants a gentleman if he can get one. I rather think he'll see you, though he's only seen two or three all day. There are certain questions which he prefers to ask himself, and it's no good going over the same ground twice. So perhaps I had better tell him about you before we get any further."

And he withdrew to a room still nearer the entrance, as I could hear, for it was a very small flat indeed. But now two doors were shut between us, and I had to rest content with murmurs through the wall until the doctor

returned to summon me. "I have persuaded my patient to see you," he whispered, "but I confess I am not sanguine of the result. He is very difficult to please. You must prepare yourself for a querulous invalid, and for no sinecure if you get the

"May I ask what's the matter with "By all means-when you've got the

billet." Dr. Theobald then led the way, his | the Mediterranean. That sunset saved professional dignity so thoroughly in- | me. The sea was on fire. I hardly swam tact that I could not but smile as I folfollowed his swinging coat-tails to the knew for the sun itself. When it set sick-room. I carried no smile across I must have been a mile away; until the threshold of a darkened chamber | it did I was the invisible man. I figur which reeked of drugs and twinkled | ed on that, and only hope it wasn't with medicine bottles, and in the midgie of which a gaunt figure lay abed in the half-light.

"Take him to the window, take him to the window," a thin voice snapped, "and let's have a look at him. Open the blind a bit. Not as much as that, damn you, not as much as that!" "So you think you could look after me, do you?"

"I'm certain I could, sir." "Single-handed, mind! I don't keep another soul. You would have to cook your own grub and my slops. Do you think you could do all that?"

"Yes, sir; I think so." "Why do you? Have you any experience of the kind?" "No, sir, none."

"Then why do you pretend you look at you before I let you speak sting. "I only meant that I would do my

"Only meant, only meant! Have you me all unable to conjecture his true done your best at everything else, state of health, but quite certain in

I hung my head. This was a facer. was not and never would be the man down my throat.

And there was something in my invalid which thrust the unspoken lie "No sir, I have not" I told him plain-"He he he!" the old wretch titter-

ed; "and you do well to own it; you do well, sir, very well indeed. If you hand, the eyes themselves were alight hadn't owned up out you would have and elert as ever; they were still keen gope, out neck and crop! You've saved your bacon. You may do more. So you tempered steel. Even the mouth, with are a public-school boy, and a very good school yours is, but you weren't at either university. Is that correct?" "Absolutely."

"What did you do when you left school?" "I came in for money."

"And then? "I spent my money." "And since then?" I stood like a mule.

"And since then, I say!" "A relative of mine will tell you if you ask him. He is an eminent man, and he has promised to speak for me. I would rather say no more myself." "But you shall, sir, but you shall!

Do you suppose that I suppose a public-school boy would apply for a berth like this if something or other hadn't happened? What I want is a gentleman of sorts, and I don't much care what sort; but you've got to tell me what did happen if you don't tell anybody else. Dr. Theobald, sir, you can go to the devil if you won't take a

fault. It's the kind of wicket you don't get out unless you get yourself out. So here I am again, and have been for the last six weeks. And I mean to have another knock." "But surely, old fellow, you're not

awfully fit, are you?" "Fit? My dear Bunny, I'm dead— I'm at the bottom of the sea—and don't you forget it for a minute." "But are you all right or are you

"No, I'm half poisoned by Theobald's prescriptions and putrid cigarettes and as weak as a cat from lying why on earth lie in bed, "Then

"Because it's better than lying in jail, as I am afraid you know, my poor, dear fellow. I tell you I am dead, and my one terror is of coming to life again by accident. Can't you see? I simply dare not show my nose out of doors-by day. You have no idea of the number of perfectly innocent things a dead man daren't do. I can't even smoke Sullivans, because no one man was ever so partial to them as I was in my lifetime, and you never know when you may start a

"What brought you to these man-

"I fancied a flat and a man on the boat recommended these. Such a good chap, Bunny; he was my reference when it came to signing the lease. You see, I landed on a stretcher-most pathetic case-old Australian without a friend in old country-ordered Engadine as last chance-no go-not an earthly-sentimental wish to die in London-that's the history of Mr. Maturin. If it doesn't hit you hard, Bunny, you're adverse chances had been weeded our the first. But it hit friend Theobald hardest of all. I'm an income on him. I believe he's going to marry on me."

he hasn't treated me for since he's had | characteristic methods of minimizing me in hand. To do him justice, I be- even that danger, of which something lieve he thinks me a hypochondriac of anon. Meanwhile he recounted more the first water; but that young man I than one of his nocturnal adventures. will go far if he keeps on the wicket. | all, however, of a singularly innocent He has spent half his nights up here | type, and one thing I noticed while at guineas apiece."

"Guineas must be plentiful, old

say more. But I don't see why they landing as well. Thus every step shouldn't be again." I was not going to inquire where the guineas came from. As if I cared! But I did ask old Raffles how in the world he had got upon my tracks, and thereby drew the sort of smile with which old gentlemen rub their hands and old ladies nod their noses. Raffles merely produced a perfect oval

of blue smoke before replying. "I was waiting for you to ask that, Bunny. It's a long time since I did anything upon which I plume myself more. Of course in the first place I spotted you at once by these prison articles; they were not signed, but the fist was the fist of my sitting rabbitt?"

"But who gave you my address?" "I wheedled it out of your excellent editor; called on him at dead of night, when I occasionally go afield like other ghosts, and wept it out of him in five minutes. I was your only relative; your name was not your own name; if he insisted I would give him mine. He didn't insist, Bunny, and I danced down



Raffies led me up two flights. his stairs with your address in my as though we were both aboard that German liner, and all that's happened

"Last night?" "No, last week."

"And so the advertisement was yours as well as the telegram!" I had of course forgotten both in the high excitement of the hour, or "Oh. I'm in no hurry to hear. It's | I should scarcely have announced my belated discovery with such an air. As it was I made Raffles look at me there, or why, though I fear you must | as I had known him look before, and be pretty bad. I must have a good | the droop of his eyelids began to

> "Why all this sublety?" I petulantly exclaimed. "Why couldn't you come straight away to me in a cab?" He did not inform me that I was hopeless as ever. He did not address me as his good rabbit. He was silent for a time, and then spoke in a tone

which made me ashamed of mine. "You see, there are two or three of me now, Bunny; one's at the bottom of the Mediterranean and one's an old Australian desirous of dying in the old country, but in no immediate danger of dying anywhere. The old Australian didn't know a soul in town; he's got to be consistent or he's done. This sitter Theobald is his only friend and has seen rather too much of him; ordinary dust won't do for his eyes. Begin to see? To pick you out of a crowd, that was the game; to let old Theobald help to pick you, better still! To start with, he was dead against my having anybody at all; wanted me all to himself, naturally; but anything rather than kill the goose! So he is to have a fiver a week while he keeps me alive, and he's going to be married next month. That's a pity in some ways, but a good thing in others; he will want more money than he foresees, and he may always be of use to us in a pinch. Meanwhile he eats out

of my hand." we've talked ourselves out, though I I complimented Raffles on the mere have often thought it was that long swim that started it. Still, the island composition of his telegram, with half of Elba is a rummy show, I can as- the characteristics of my distinguished kinsman squeezed into a dozen odd words, and let him know how the old "Rather! It's the European pararuffian had really treated me. Raffles dise for such as our noble selves. But was not surprised; we had dined tothere's no place that is a patch on gether at my relative's in the old days little London as a non-conductor of and filed for reference a professional heat; it never need get too hot for a valuation of his household goods. I now learned that the telegram had been posted, with the hour marked for its despatch, at the pillar nearest Vere street, on the night before the advertisement was due to apear in the Daily Mail. This also had been carefully prearranged; and Raffles' only fear had been lest it might be held over despite his explicit instructions, and so drive me to the doctor for an explanation of his telegram. But the

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His greatest risk, acording to Raf-"Does he guess there's nothing fles, lay nearest home. Bedridden invalid that he was supposed to be, his "Knows, bless you! But he doesn't | nightly terror was of runing into Theoknow I know he knows, and there | bald's arms in the immediate neighborisn't a disease in the dictionary that | hood of the flat. But Raffles had he talked. His room was the first as you entered the flat. The long, inner wall divided the room not mere-"They have been, Bunny. I can't | ly from the passage but from the outer upon the bare stone stairs could be heard by Raffles where he lay, and he would never speak while one was ascending until it had passed his door. The afternoon brought more than one applicant for the post which it was my duty to tell them that I had already obtained. Between 3 and 4, however. Raffies, suddenly looking at his watch, packed me off in a hurry to the other end of London for my things.

"I'm afraid you must be famishing, Bunny. It's a fact that I eat very little, and that at odd hours, but ought not to have forgotten you. Get rourself a snack outside, but not a square meal if you can resist one We've got to celebrate this day this

"To-night?" I cried. "To-night at 11, and Kellner's the place. You may well open your eyes, but we didn't go there much if you remember, and the staff seems changed. Anyway we'll risk it for once.

"You made as sure of me as all that!" "There was no harm in ordering supper. We shall have it in a private room, but you may as well dress | all there is to it." if you've got the duds."

"They're at my only forgiving rela-"How much will square you up and bring you back bag and baggage in good time?"

I had to calculate. A tenner easily.

is, and I wouldn't lose any time if I | but of the rare delights of that supwere you. On the way you might | per I can scarcely trust myself to look up Theobald, tell him you've got | write. It was no mere meal, it was it and how long you'll be gone, and | no coarse orgy, but a little feast for that I can't be left alone all the time. And, by Jove, yes! You get me a stall for the Lyceum at the nearest agent's -there are two or three in High street-and say it was given you when you come in. That young man shall be out of the way to-night."

I found our doctor in a minute consulting room and his shirt sleeves, a | single out any one dish; but the Jamtall tumbler at his elbow. At least I caught sight of the tumbler on entering. Thereafter he stood in front of it, with a futility that had my sympathy.

Theobald. "Well, as I told you before, and as you have since probably discovered for yourself, you won't find it exactly a sinecure. My own part of the business is by no means that: indeed, there are those who would throw up the case after the kind of treatment that you have seen for yourself. But professional considerations are not the only ones, and one cannot make too many allowances in such a

"But what is the case?" I asked him. "You said you would tell me if I was

Dr. Theobald's shape was worthy of the profession he seemed destined to adorn: it was not incompatible with any construction which one chose to put upon it. Next moment he had stiffened. I suppose I still spoke more or less like a gentleman. Yet, after all, I was only the male nurse. He seemed to remember this suddenly, and he took occasion to remind me of the fact.

"Ah," said he, "that was before I knew you were altogether without ex-

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surprised even at Mr. Maturin's engaging you after that; but it will depend upon yourself how long I allow him to persist in so curious an experiment. As for what is the matter with him, my good fellow, it is no use my giving you an answer which would be double Dutch to you. Moreover, I have still to test your discretionary powers. I may say, however, that that poor gentleman presents at once the most complex and most troublesome case, which is responsibility enough without certain features which make it all but insupportable. Beyond this I must refuse to discuss my patient for the present, but I shall certainly go

up if I can find time." He went up within five minutes. found him there on my return at dusk, But he did not refuse my stall at the Lyceum, which Raffles would not allow me to use myself, and presented to him offhand without my leave.
"And don't you bother any more

about me till to-morrow," snapped the high, thin voice as he was off. "I can send for you now when I want you, and I'm hoping to have a decent night for once."

It was half-past 10 when we left the flat in an interval of silence on the noisy stairs. The silence was unproken by our wary feet. Yet for ina surprise was in store upon the very landing. Instead of going downstairs Raffles led me up two flights, and so out upon a perfectly flat roof.

"There are two entrances to these mansions," he explained between stars and chimney stacks; "one to our staircase and another round the corner. But there's only one porter, and he lives on the basement underneath us and affects the door nearest home. We miss him by using the wrong stairs, and we run less risk of old Theobald. I got the tip from the postmen, who come up one way and down the other. Now, follow me and look

There was indeed some necessity for caution, for each half of the building. had its L-shaped well dropping sheer to the base, the parapets so low that one might easily have tripped over them into eternity. However, we were soon upon the second staircase, which opened on the roof like the first. And twenty minutes of the next twentyfive we spent in an admirable hansom. skimming east.

"Not much change in the old hole, Bunny. More of these magic-lantern advertisements \* \* \* and absolutely the worst bit of taste in town, though it's saying something, in that equestrian statue with the gilt stirrups and fixings. Way don't they black the buffer's boots and his horse's hoofs while they are about it? \* \* \* More bicyclists, of course. That was just beginning, if you remember. It might have been useful to us. \* \* \* And there's the old club getting put into a crate for the jubilee. By Jove, Bunny, we ought to be there. I wouldn't lean forward in Piccadilly old chap. If you're seen I'm thought of, and we shall have to be jolly careful at Kellner's. \* \* \* Ah, there it is! Did I tell you I was a lowdown stage Yankee at Kellner's? You'd better be another while the waiter's in

We had the little room upstairs, and on the very threshold I, even I, who knew my Raffles of old, was taken was in last night talking like a stage | horribly aback. The table was laid American and super's ordered for 11 | for three. I called his attention to it in a whisper.

"Why, yep!" came through his nose. "Say, boy, the lady, she's not comin', but you leave that tackle where 'tis. If I'm liable to pay I guess I'll have "Who on earth was the lady?" I in-

quired aghast at the first opportun-"She isn't on earth. They don't like

Bunny-my Bunny-here's to us And we clinked glasses swimming "I had one ready for you. Here it i with the liquid gold of Steinberg, 1868; the fastidious gods, not unworthy of Lucullus at his worst. And I who had bolted my skilly at Wormwood Scrubbs and tightened my belt in a Holloway attic, it was I who sat down to this ineffable repast! Where the courses were few, but each a triumph of its kind, it would be invidious to bon de Westphalie au champagne tempts me sorely. And then the champagne that we drank, not the quantity but the quality! Well, it was Pol Roger, '84, and quite good enough "So you've got the billet," said Dr. | for me; but even so it was not more dry, nor did it sparkle more, than the merry rascal who had dragged me thus far to the devil,, but should lead me dancing the rest of the way. was beginning to tell him so. I had done my honest best since my reappearance in the world, but the world had done its worst by me. A further antithesis and my final intention were both upon my tongue when the waiter with the Chateau Margaux cut me short, for he was the bearer of more than that great wine, bringing also a card upon a silver tray. "Show him up," said Raffles laconi-

"And who is this?" I cried when the man was gone. Raffles reached across the table and gripped my arm in his vise. His eyes were steel points fixed

"Bunny, stand by me," said he in the old, irresistible voice—a voice both stern and winning. "Stand by me, Bunny-if there's a row!" And there was time for nothing more, the door flying open and a dapper person entering with a bow, a frock coat on his back, gold pincenez on his nose, a shiny hat in one hand and a black bag in the other. "Good evening, gentlemen", said he,

at home and smiling. "Sit down," drawled Raffles in casual response. "Say, let me introduce you to Mr. Ezra B. Martin of Schicawgo. Mr. Martin is my future brotherin-law. This is Mr. Robinson, Ezra, manager to Sparks & Co., the celebrated joolers on Regent street." I pricked up my ears, but content-

new name and address, "I figured on Miss Martin bein' right here too," continued Raffles, "but I regret to say she's not feelin' so good. We light out for Parrus on the 9 A. M. ed she'd be too dead. Sorry to disappoint you, Mr. Robinson, but you'll see I'm advertisin' your wares." Raffles held his right hand under

To be continued,

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