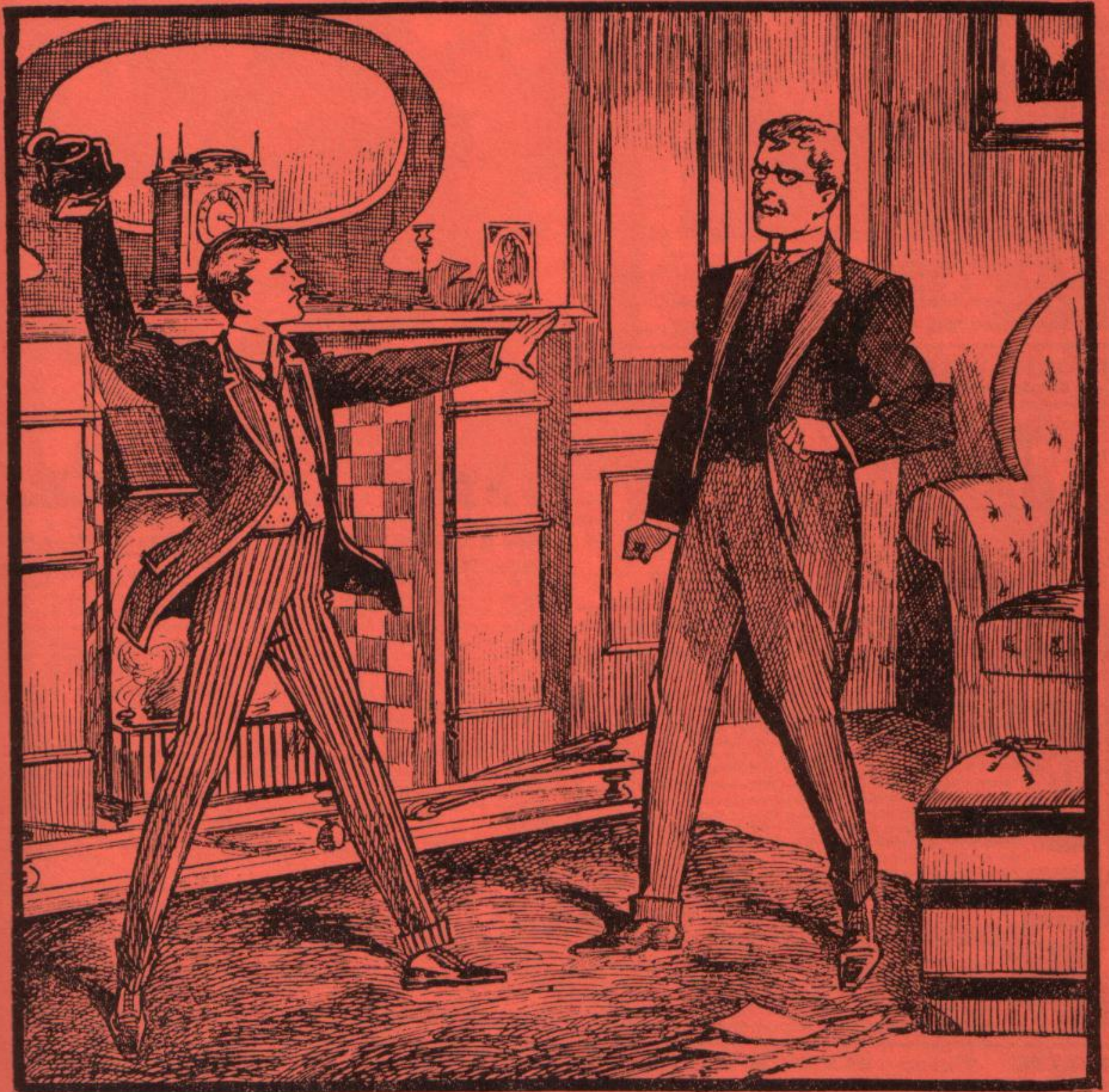


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Keeping carefully in the cover of the rocks, the Bounder watched the German master. Herr Gans took picture after picture until his camera was full, and then he slung it in the leather satchel again. (See Chapter 10.)

The Sneak's Revenge!

A Magnificent, New, Long,
Complete School Tale of
Harry Wharton & Co. at
Greyfriars.

By FRANK RICHARDS.

More than once the Redclyffe players had been baffled by the speed and dash of the Greyfriars winger.

But the Remove team were outclassed. Redclyffe were an older eleven—older and heavier, and at the top of their form also. Indeed, many of the Removites considered that in taking on the Redclyffe team at all, Harry Wharton & Co. had "bitten off more than they could chew." And eighty-five minutes of hard struggle had only resulted in a single goal for Redclyffe, and nil for the Friars.

Nearly all the Remove had walked or cycled over to see the match, and they were watching the doubtful tussle anxiously.

And there was a burst of shouting from the Removites as Vernon-Smith was seen getting away with the ball, in a brilliant dash right along the

touch-line.

For the moment, the Redclyffe defence seemed to be nowhere.

"Go it, Smithy!"

"On the ball!"

"Good old Bounder!"

Vernon-Smith was going it—for all he was worth. If that dash ended in nothing, the match was lost for Greyfriars—they all knew that.

Harry Wharton was dashing on to take a pass. Wharton was centre-forward. The Bounder gave one quick glance round.

"To me!" called Wharton.

But even as the words left his lips, he went reeling over under a charge from one of the Redclyffe backs.

And from all the Greyfriars fellows at the ropes one loud yell went up to the Bounder.

"Shoot!"

There was no one to receive a pass—and, difficult as the kick was, the Bounder had to take it—and he had one second to take it in.

Before that yell from the Greyfriars onlookers had died away, the ball sped from the Bounder's foot. Whiz!

The Redclyffe goalie made a bound at it; but he was a fraction of a second too late.

Wharton, as he staggered up dazedly from the charge that had knocked him over, heard the delighted yell from the Greyfriars fellows.

THE FIRST CHAPTER. A Great Goal!

"PLAY up, Smithy!"

"Go it, Bounder!"

A dozen Greyfriars fellows, packed close to the ropes on the Redclyffe football ground, shouted the words of encouragement with the full force of their lungs.

It was a critical moment.

Harry Wharton & Co., of the Remove Form at Greyfriars, were playing Redclyffe, on the latter's ground. It had been a gruelling match, and luck had been against the heroes of the Remove. Redclyffe were a goal up—one goal to nil—and there were five minutes to go.

Fortune had not smiled upon Harry Wharton's eleven. Not that they were off their form in any way. Harry Wharton was as good as ever. Nugent and Hurree Singh were first-class in the front line. Bob Cherry was as good a half as could be desired, and Johnny Bull was a host in himself at back. Peter Todd, in goal, was as good as a garrison. And the outside-right of the Greyfriars junior team—Vernon-Smith—was at the top of his form.

Wharton had had some doubts about playing Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars. They were not on good terms personally; but the Bounder had more than justified his selection.

He was playing up splendidly for his side.

**DON'T
FORGET
THE
TICKETS!**

(See page III.
of cover.)

"Goal!"

Bob Cherry rushed up to the Bounder and clapped him on the back. The ball was in the net, and the Redclyffe custodian was looking blue.

"Goal; by Jove!" gasped Wharton.

"Goal, by gum!" roared Bob Cherry. "Smithy, you bounder, you're worth your weight in gold! Hurray!"

The Bounder gasped.

"Don't bust my backbone, fathead. By Jove, I didn't think I should really pull it off—but there it is!"

"There it is—and the score's level," grinned Bob Cherry, "and only three minutes now to go. They won't touch us in that time!"

"Bravo, Smithy!"

"Hurray!"

"Good old Bounder!"

The Bounder grinned as he walked back to the centre of the field. Harry Wharton clapped him heartily on the shoulder.

"That was simply ripping, Smithy," he said. "Simply topping!"

The Bounder gave him a curious look. Not a hint of envy was there in Harry Wharton's look or tone—only sincere pleasure and relief and hearty congratulation. The Bounder had played in that match with the determination to outshine his leader if he could, and he had done it. But Wharton was thinking only of his side, and not in the least of his own personal glory, and Vernon-Smith felt an unaccustomed compunction as he saw it.

"It was touch and go," he said. "Luckily, it came off. You haven't had your chance to-day, Wharton."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Never mind that," he said. "So long as Redclyffe don't beat us, I'm satisfied. I'm afraid a win for us is out of the question now."

"We'll do our level best," said the Bounder. "Games have been won in the last two minutes before now."

The teams lined up again, and Redclyffe kicked off.

They followed up the kick-off with a determined attack, and Wharton had no choice but to pack his goal and defend.

"I guess it'll be a draw," remarked Fisher T. Fish, with the air of an oracle, to the other lookers-on from Greyfriars.

And Billy Bunter, the Owl of the Remove, grunted, as he blinked at the hard-pressed defenders through his big spectacles.

"Of course it will," he said. "Might have ended very differently if Wharton had played me—what?"

"Very differently," agreed Hazeldene. "Three or four to nil, instead of one to one."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Hazel—"

"There goes the whistle," said Bolsover major. "One all!"

Pheep!

The referee's whistle rang out; the match was over. Greyfriars had drawn with their opponents, goal to goal—and it was only the Bounder's brilliant play in the last few minutes that had saved them from defeat.

Both sides were panting as they came off. Lucas, the Redclyffe skipper, gave Wharton a rueful grin.

"Jolly near did you," he remarked. "That's a ripping winger you've got!"

"Top-notch!" said Harry. "You'll have another chance next week, when you come over to us."

"Yes; it won't be a draw next week," agreed Lucas.

"Not if we can help it!" said Wharton, laughing.

And the Greyfriars footballers rubbed themselves down, and changed their clothes, amid animated discussion of the match, and that brilliant goal by the Bounder. It was the opinion of some members of the team, and of most of the Removites, that Wharton's nose would be put out of joint by that fine display on the part of his old rival. But much to their astonishment, and to the chagrin of some of them,

Wharton's nose showed not the slightest sign of being out of joint—and he came out of the dressing-room with his arm linked in the Bounder's, chatting to him cheerily.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Homeward Bound!

"I SAY, you fellows, who's going to take my ticket?"

Billy Bunter asked the question.

Quite a little crowd of Greyfriars fellows had marched into the railway-station at Redclyffe, to take the train home. Billy Bunter was among them. The members of the eleven had return tickets, but Billy Bunter had apparently neglected to provide himself with one. Most of the Greyfriars spectators had come over on bicycles, and they were already pedalling back—and two or three of them had declined—without thanks—Billy Bunter's offer to ride home standing behind on their footrests.

Bunter planted himself in the way of the footballers as they were making for the platform.

The Bounder stared at him, and grinned, and walked on, with Skinner and Bolsover major—his chumie, who had been spectators of the match. But Wharton paused.

"Haven't you got a ticket, you fat duffer?" he asked.

"Well, you see, I happened to be short of tin to-day," explained Bunter, "and so I took the ticket only one way. I've been disappointed about a postal-order I was expecting from a titled relation—"

"Oh, cheese it! How did you expect to get home without a ticket?" growled Wharton.

"I offered Bulstrode to ride home behind him—"

"Ha, ha, ha! I can see Bulstrode dragging your weight nearly five miles, you ass!"

"It would be a big order!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"The bigfulness of the order would be terrific," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, with a shake of the head. "The esteemed Bunter will have to remain at Redclyffe behind-fully."

"Oh, really, Inky, you know I can't stay here!" said Billy Bunter. "I should be late for calling-over, you know. Which of you chaps is going to take my ticket? It's only eightpence, you know, and I'll hand it back out of my postal order when it comes—"

"That's where the statute of limitations would come in," said Nugent, shaking his head. "Debts are not recoverable after seven years."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, you can subscribe for it, if you like," said Bunter. "If you like, I'll do some of my ventriloquial tricks in the train going home to keep you amused."

"You'll get chucked out if you do!" growled Johnny Bull. "I'm fed up with your blessed ventriloquism."

"I suppose I must take your ticket, you fat fraud!" growled Bunter indignantly, as the footballers made a move for the platform.

"I suppose I must take your ticket, you fat fraud!" growled Wharton.

"All right, Harry, old man!"

"If you Harry old man me, I'll leave you behind, you fathead."

"I'll come in the carriage with you, and keep you company home, Harry, old fellow," said Bunter, moving on towards the platform. "First-class, remember."

"We're travelling second, Tubby."

"Ahem! I'm accustomed to travelling first class, but I don't mind stretching a point to keep you company, Wharton."

"Take a third for the fat beast," suggested Johnny Bull, "then he won't be able to bother us in the train."

"Good egg!" said Wharton.

And he presented Billy Bunter with a third-class ticket as he went on the platform. Bunter blinked at it.

"I say, Wharton, this is third class!" he howled, as he ran after the captain of the Remove. "What on earth did you take a third-class ticket for me for?"

"Because there isn't any fourth," explained Wharton.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, I refuse to travel third class with common people!" howled Bunter. "It's rotten!"

"Rotten for the common people?" asked Nugent. "Still, somebody's got to put up with you, you know, and better them than us."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And as Bunter continued to expostulate, Bob Cherry gently sat him down on the platform, and jammed his hat over his eyes and left him.

The train was not yet in, and the juniors stood in groups on the platform waiting for it, and chatting. There were two other passengers waiting for the same train. They were speaking in German to one another, and the juniors glanced

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The Bounder gave Skinner a furious look. "You've got to own up, Smithy!" said Skinner desperately. "It's not fair to leave me to stand it alone!" "So you've sneaked, Skinner!" said the Bounder quietly. (See Chapter 8.)

at them. Foreigners were not common in the quiet countryside. One of the Germans was a broad-shouldered, fair-haired man of middle age, with a pair of large spectacles, behind which his light-blue eyes winked and blinked. The other was a man probably twenty years older, or more, with white hair, and also in spectacles.

The younger of the two Germans seemed interested in the Greyfriars fellows, for he glanced at them several times, and drew the attention of the old man to them. Skinner, who was the humorist of the Remove, and not always a good-natured one, bumped into the old German as he came up the platform, and shoved him against the other. Then he took off his hat and bowed to the man he had bumped into, and apologised in an exaggerated way that was intended to be very funny.

"I'm so sorry, mein herr!" he exclaimed. "I was thinking of sausages and sauer-kraut, and didn't see you."

The old man muttered something in German, and turned his back.

Harry Wharton caught Skinner by the arm, as he was

about to continue his little pleasantries, and marched him forcibly up the platform. Skinner glared at him.

"What are you up to?" he demanded.

"You're going to shut up, you pig," said Wharton directly. "What do you want to chip those foreigners for? Let them alone!"

"They can't understand English, fathead."

"All the more reason why you shouldn't worry them. Shut up!"

"Yes, shut up, Skinney," said Bob Cherry. "You can't help being a worm, but worms get trodden on sometimes. That's a hint."

"Oh, go and eat coke!" said Skinner.

But he let the two foreigners alone after that, and a few minutes later the train came in. There were a good many passengers in the train, as it happened, and the Greyfriars party were not able to get carriages to themselves. Harry Wharton and the Bounder and Skinner and Bob Cherry got into one carriage, and Billy Bunter rolled in after them. He planted himself in a seat and declined to budge.

"You can't stop here, fathhead," said Bob Cherry. "You've got a third-class ticket."

"Whose fault is that?" snorted Bunter. "If there's any row, you can take the consequences. It's all right if you pay excess on the ticket, you know."

"Gerrout!"

"Sha'n't!"

"Hallo, one of those sausage-merchants is coming in!" said Skinner, looking out of the carriage window. "The young Obadiah is saying good-bye to the old Obadiah. German waiter going to one of the Courtfield hotels, I suppose. Like his cheek travelling second class. Help me hold the handle, Smithy, and he can't get in."

"Oh, do shut up!" said Bob Cherry.

"This carriage is full!" growled the Bounder. "We don't want any more in here."

"I should jolly well say so!" said Bunter indignantly. "It's rotten to travel in an overcrowded carriage. Let him keep out!"

"Well, you cheeky ass, you've got no right in here with a third-class ticket," said Bob. "The German chap could call the porter to chuck you out if he liked."

The two Germans had bidden one another farewell on the platform with a fine flow of German and many gestures, after the manner of the Fatherland. The old man stood watching the other as he came to the train. Skinner and Vernon-Smith both held the handle of the carriage door inside; but the German turned it, apparently, without difficulty, and pulled the door open. Skinner and Smithy looked a little rueful. They had not expected that strength of wrist in a middle-aged foreigner, especially, as Skinner murmured, a blinking ass in barnacles. The German was smiling a little, as if he knew that the juniors had tried to keep him out, and was a little amused by their failure.

Seeing that the carriage was full, the German stood up by the door, standing very steadily upon his feet as the train moved on. He looked a very quiet and good-natured man, and even if he was, as Skinner suggested, a foreign waiter going to take up his job at a Courtfield hotel, Harry Wharton did not see that that was any reason for being uncivil to him. But noblesse oblige did not appeal to the Bounder or Skinner. Kindness to a stranger in a strange land was not their way. A hapless foreigner who could not speak the language of the country seemed to them fair game, and they prepared to amuse themselves on the journey to Courtfield by "pulling the leg" of the gentleman from Deutschland.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Very Mysterious!

"I SUPPOSE you chaps don't happen to have any sandwiches about you?" Billy Bunter remarked, as the train ran out of Redclyffe station.

"I don't!" growled Bob Cherry.

"I was going to bring a lunch-basket, and treat you fellows to a feed going home," Bunter explained, "but owing to being disappointed about a postal order——"

"Cheese it!"

"What have you got in that bag, Smithy?" asked Bunter, as the Bounder took a paper-bag from his coat pocket.

"Tarts," said the Bounder.

"Oh, good!"

"They're rather good, yes," agreed the Bounder, as he helped himself and Skinner.

"Jolly lucky for us you've got something to eat along with you!" hinted Bunter.

"Lucky for me," said Vernon-Smith. "I don't see where your luck comes in, unless it's a pleasure to you to watch me eating. If it is, you can go ahead and enjoy yourself. I don't mind."

"I suppose you're going to offer a fellow a tart!" bawled Bunter.

"Something wrong with your supposer, then," said the Bounder calmly. "I'm not going to."

"Ask the German gentleman if he's got any German sausage about him, Bunter," said Skinner, "or any sauer-kraut?"

The German glanced at Skinner. Whether he could speak English or not, he must have recognised the word sauer-kraut, which was in his own language.

"Shut up, Skinney!" said Bob Cherry. "Don't be a pig!"

"Oh, the chap can't understand English!" said Skinner.

"Like his cheek to shove himself in here, I think. If I could speak German I'd tell him so, but I dare say he wouldn't understand the German Herr Haeckel taught us."

"Ha, ha! Very likely not."

"I'm jolly glad Herr Haeckel's gone, and I only wish the Head wouldn't have another German master in his place,"

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went on Skinner. "What do we want to learn German for? It hurts my neck."

"Shut up!"

"Sha'n't! The German waiter doesn't understand," said Skinner.

"How do you know he's a waiter, you ass?"

"Oh, they're all waiters!" said Skinner. "He's going to have a job at Courtfield. There are lots of German waiters there—one or two, anyway. Or he might be a spy. The papers say there are a lot of German spies in England now, especially on the coast. Think he looks like a spy, Smithy?"

"Shouldn't wonder," said Vernon-Smith, "only I don't think he could spy much with those blinking optics and those big barnacles. Looks as blind as an owl or Billy Bunter."

"Oh, really, Smithy——"

"Look here, Smithy," said Harry Wharton, "why don't you shut up? The chap knows you're talking about him, even if he doesn't understand. It's piggish."

"Oh, rats!"

The train stopped in the next station to Redclyffe, and three passengers alighted from the carriage. There was now plenty of room, as there were eight places, and only five Greyfriars' fellows and the German to occupy them. Harry Wharton turned to the spectacled German, and spoke in the best German he could muster.

"Da ist nun ein Platz frei zum sitzen, mein herr!"

The German smiled.

"Thank you very much!" he said in English, though with a strong accent of the Fatherland. "I am fery much obliged to you!"

Vernon-Smith and Skinner gave a simultaneous jump.

The German gentleman evidently understood their language, and their elegant remarks had been quite comprehensible to him. He sat down, however, without taking any notice of them. Vernon-Smith had the grace to blush, but Skinner only looked annoyed. He felt that he had been taken in.

Harry Wharton leaned across to Skinner as the train started again.

"He understood you," he whispered. "Apologise!"

Skinner sniffed.

"Sha'n't!"

"Tell him you're sorry, Smithy."

"Rats!" said the Bounder. "I'm not sorry. Why couldn't the fellow let on that he understood English? Besides, I'm not going to apologise to a blessed waiter. Rats!"

"I suppose it's up to you to be as decent to a waiter as to anybody else."

"Oh, rot!" growled the Bounder.

There was silence in the carriage for a little while. Wharton and Bob Cherry were feeling annoyed and uncomfortable. The German seemed to them to be a particularly inoffensive man, and the rudeness of the two Greyfriars fellows was inexcusable. The German, behind his big spectacles, seemed to note what was passing in the juniors' minds, and which was reflected in their faces. He spoke pleasantly to Wharton.

"It is fery pretty country here, my young friend."

"Yes, sir," said Harry, glad of an opportunity of being civil to the foreigner. "It's better further on, when you get near the coast. You live in England, sir?"

"Ja, ja! I am stranger here now, but I live here afterwards," said the German. "You speak, too, my language, nicht wahr?"

Wharton laughed.

"A little bit, sir; we learn it in class, you know. But Lower Fourth German would not be of very much use in Germany, I suppose? You like England?"

"Very much," said the foreigner. "It is a great country, and te manners of te people, dey are so polite."

Wharton coloured. The German spoke quite amiably, but Wharton guessed that he was referring to the elegant badinage of Vernon-Smith and Skinner.

"Lots of Germans like England, don't they, mein herr?" said Vernon-Smith, with a grin. "They come over in crowds, anyway, and stay here."

The German looked at him.

"They love so much the politeness," he explained. "In Chermany ve have much to learn from te young English gentlemen."

And the Bounder scowled and was silent.

"Courtfield!" said Bob Cherry.

The juniors turned out. They had to change at Courtfield for Friardale, the station for Greyfriars. The footballers proceeded in a crowd across the platform to the other side, where the local train for Friardale was waiting.

"Blessed if that blessed German isn't coming, too!"

exclaimed Skinner, loud enough for the foreigner to overhear, as he sat down in the local train.

"Will you shut up?" said Wharton fiercely. "It would serve you right if the chap went to the school and complained about you to the Head."

"Oh, rats!"

"Plenty of room in this carriage, sir," said Wharton, holding the door open for the foreigner.

"Tank you, my young friend."

The German took a corner seat, and opened a German newspaper, and settled himself behind it. Bunter sat opposite to him, with the Bouncer and Skinner next to him. The other seats in the carriage were occupied by Wharton and Bob and Nugent and Mark Linley. The local train moved out of Courtfield, and the Bouncer leaned over to Bunter, and whispered in his ear.

Bunter chuckled.

"Got any of the tarts left?" he asked.

"Yes; here you are!"

"Well, I'll begin as soon as I've had a snack."

The Bouncer handed out his bag of tarts, and Bunter disposed of what were left. Then he gave the little preparatory cough which indicated that his ventriloquism was coming. Harry Wharton gave him a warning glance, which the Owl of the Remove was too short-sighted to see.

Grrrrr!

A deep, threatening growl came from under the German's seat, and in a flash he had jumped up, the newspaper dropping to the floor.

"Mein Gott! Dere is a tog here!" he exclaimed.

The juniors grinned. Bunter's ventriloquism did not have full scope at Greyfriars, where most of the fellows knew of his peculiar gift, and had fallen into the habit of bumping him without mercy if he played tricks on them. But it was, of course, utterly unknown and unsuspected by the gentleman from the Fatherland.

Gr-r-r-rh!

"Mein Gott!"

That ferocious growl was sufficiently alarming to a middle-aged gentleman whose plump calves were within easy reach of a dog under the seat. The German gentleman took his fat umbrella down from the rack, and poked under the seat with it.

"Come out, you peast!" he said.

Gr-r-r-rh!

"Tat you come out, you peast!"

The German stooped down and looked under the seat. He was evidently short-sighted, and he had to stoop very low to get his spectacles in line with the confined space under the carriage seat. Vernon-Smith thrust out his boot, and the German gentleman went plunging on his hands and knees.

"Ach! Ow! Yah!"

He jumped up with a very red face.

"Sorry, sir!" said the Bouncer. "Quite an accident, you know!"

"You hit me wiz foot!" shouted the German gentleman.

"Quite an accident, sir!"

"Look out for that dog!" shouted Skinner.

There was a sharp growl behind the German, and he spun round. But he did not see the dog. He looked alarmed and amazed.

"Vere is tat tog?" he exclaimed. "Is it tat you see a tog here, young gentlemen? I do not like te togs close to mein legs, isn't it?"

Buzzzzzz!

"Mein Gott! Now zere is ein vasp here. Mein gootness."

The German gentleman caught up his newspaper to keep the invisible wasp off. He sat down in the corner seat, and immediately there was a savage growl beneath him. He jumped up again and grasped his umbrella.

"Come out, you peastly tog!" he roared, thrusting fiercely under the seat.

Gr-r-r-rh!

The train stopped in a station. The German gentleman leaned out of the window, and waved his hand and shouted:

"Portair! Dienstmann! Portair!"

"'Allo! What's wrong there?" said the guard, coming along the train.

"Dere is ein hund—a tog—vat you call tog—under der seat!" exclaimed the German gentleman. "It is not right fat te tog be under der seat for to bit viz himself te legs of te passengers, ain't it?"

The guard opened the door and looked in.

"Dog belong to you young gentlemen?" he asked.

"Not ours," said Vernon-Smith.

"It is a strange tog," said the German gentleman. "Ein

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peastly savage tog tat growl and bite te legs. Turn him out of te train, if you please."

The guard clambered in.

"Come out, you brute!" he said, bending to look under the seat. "Come out! Why, there ain't any dog 'ere!"

"Dere is a tog! I have hear him growl mit himself."

"I tell you there ain't no dog!" growled the guard. "Oh, these blessed furriners! There ain't no blooming dog in this blooming carriage. If you can find a blooming dog here, I'll blooming well eat him."

"I tell you tat tere is a tog!" shrieked the German gentleman. "He growl viz himself under der seat afterwards."

"And I tell you there ain't!" roared the guard, growing exasperated. "If there's a dog, where is it—eh?"

"I do not see him, but I hear him mit mein ears."

"Well, you couldn't 'ear 'im with your nose, I s'pose," grunted the guard. "Look for yourself, sir! I tell you there ain't no blooming dog 'ere."

The German gentleman descended upon his hands and knees, and scanned the space under the seats through his spectacles. He had to admit that there was no dog in the carriage, and he looked amazed.

"It is very strange," he said—"ferry, ferry strange. I hear a tog, and dere is no tog. I do not understand pefore."

The guard snorted, and jumped out of the carriage.

"Gr-r-r-rh!" came from under the seat as soon as he was gone, and the German gave a shout.

"He is here mit himself. I hear him once more to growl!"

Slam! The guard appeared to be fed up with the German and the imaginary dog, and he had no more time to spare. He closed the carriage door with unnecessary force, and stamped away down the train. The German took another careful survey under the seat, and then apparently gave it up as a mystery. He sat looking helplessly bewildered as the train moved on to Friardale.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

A Surprise!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. left the train at Friardale, and the German gentleman also stepped out. The Remove eleven walked down the platform with their bags, and the German went down the train to look after a big trunk.

"You've got to pay on your ticket, Bunter," said Bob Cherry. "You've travelled second."

"Oh, that's all right," said Bunter. "Nobody noticed."

Bob snorted.

"You're not going to swindle the company, whether anybody noticed or not," he growled. "It will be another tanner on the ticket; here's the tanner."

"All right—I'll let you have this back out of my postal-order"

"Rats!"

The juniors poured out of the station. As they came down the old High Street of Friardale, Bunter paused outside Uncle Clegg's tuck-shop.

"I'm going in here," he remarked.

"What's the good of going in there, fatty?" said Nugent.

"Uncle Clegg never gives tick."

"Oh, that's all right—I've got a tanner—"

Bob Cherry's grasp descended upon the fat junior as he was entering the shop.

"Got a tanner, hey?" roared Bob. "Then you didn't pay on your ticket?"

"Ow! Leggo!"

"Come out, you fat fraud!"

"Yow! I—I'm going to settle with the railway company when my postal-order comes—ow!"

"You're going to settle with the railway company now," said Bob Cherry. "This way!"

"Yah! Leggo! Ow!"

"Buck up!"

Bob Cherry's knuckles were grinding into the back of Bunter's neck, and the fat junior had no choice about "bucking up." Bob rushed him back at top speed towards the railway station, Bunter's fat little legs going like clock-work.

"Ow! Oh! Leggo!" spluttered Bunter. "Groogh! You're chook-chook-choking me! I—I say, Bob, old man—Cherry, you beast—groogh!"

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"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the juniors.
 "Ow! Rescue! Ow, help! Yah!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter was rushed breathlessly into the station. Bob Cherry rushed up to Phipps, the old porter of Friardale, who was taking a nap on a trolley.

"This fat fraud owes the company a tanner," said Bob.

"Ow! Ow! Ow!"

"The fat swindler travelled second with a third ticket," Bob explained. "He's got a tanner to pay."

"Yessir," said Phipps.

"Pay up, Bunter."

"Ow! Ow! Ow!"

"Are you going to pay up?" roared Bob, bringing his boot into play on Bunter's fat person.

"Yah! Oh! Leave off, you beast! Of course I'm going to pay—I forgot! Here's the rotten tanner—grooh! Leggo, you beast!"

Bunter paid. Phipps received the sixpence with a grin, and Bunter staggered breathlessly out of the station. But whether that sixpence found its way into the coffers of the railway company, or whether it was invested in ale at the Friardale Arms, we will not undertake to say.

Bob Cherry, looking a little warm with his exertions, rejoined his chums, and they started for Greyfriars. As they walked down the lane, Vernon-Smith glanced back, and uttered an exclamation.

"That blessed German again!" he exclaimed. "Dashed if the fellow isn't haunting us."

All the juniors looked back. There was the fair-haired German, his spectacles gleaming in the sun as he came striding down the lane, umbrella in hand.

"What is the beast following us for?" muttered Skinner uneasily.

"Going to complain of you, perhaps," grinned Nugent.

"You deserve it."

"Well, it was Smithy kicked him," said Skinner. "I didn't do that."

The Bounder's lip curled.

"I don't care if he complains," he growled. "Let him complain and be hanged!"

"It would mean a licking," muttered Skinner.

"I don't care!"

But the Bounder looked dissatisfied as he walked on. It was not a pleasant prospect for his elegant wit and humour to be followed by a caning at Greyfriars. He did not relish the idea of being called into the Head's study to account for his conduct.

There seemed to be no doubt that the German was going to Greyfriars School. When the juniors reached the school gates he was still following them down the road. They crossed the old Close and reached the schoolhouse, and looked back and saw the German coming in at the gates. He paused for a minute or two to speak to Gosling, the porter, and then came striding across the Close towards the schoolhouse.

"It's all up," growled Skinner. "The beast has followed us to complain to the Head! Who'd have thought it?"

"Serve you jolly well right," said Bob Cherry.

The German entered the schoolhouse after the juniors.

"You tell me vere is te Headmaster, please," he said.

Trotter, the page, came forward to show the gentleman into the Head's study. He took in the German's card, and then conducted him into the presence of the Head. Skinner and Vernon-Smith exchanged gloomy looks. There was no doubt about it now. They waited in glum anticipation for a summons into the Head's study.

But the summons did not come.

The juniors went up to their studies to tea, leaving the German gentleman still in the Head's study with Dr. Locke.

It was an hour later when Harry Wharton and Co. came down. They found Vernon-Smith and Skinner in the passage, staring in the direction of Mr. Quelch's study.

"Look at that!" said the Bounder, in a low voice.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Still here, by gum," said Bob Cherry.

The German gentleman was standing in the doorway of Mr. Quelch's study, with the Remove master chatting to him in German.

"What on earth is he doing at Greyfriars all this time?"

asked Wharton in surprise. "He must be a visitor."

"And we've been ragging a visitor of the Head's," groaned Skinner. "Just our luck."

"Have you been called over the coals?"

"Not yet. But he must have mentioned it to the Head—or he may be telling Quelch now. I'd rather he complained to the Head, of the two."

"Doesn't look as if he were complaining," said Johnny Bull. "He must be a good-natured chap if he is going to let you off."

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"THE PENNY POPULAR,"
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"The goodness of his honourable nature must be terrific," said the Nabob of Bhanipur. "Why not approach him humbly—and demand his esteemed pardon?"

"No fear," growled the Bounder.

Mr. Quelch went into his study, and the German gentleman came towards the group of juniors. He blinked at them through his spectacles, and nodded.

"So we are all together with ourselves here," he remarked.

"Yes, sir," said Harry. "Are you staying at Greyfriars, sir?"

The German smiled.

"Tat is so. You did not know, hein, tat I am te Cherman master?"

Vernon-Smith and Skinner almost staggered.

"The new German master!" said Skinner faintly.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured the Bounder.

"I am Hans Gans, te Cherman master," said the German gentleman, a little sternly. "I hope, mein poys, tat we get on fery well together mit ourselves. I say nothing of te disrespect tat have been shown while tat you know not who I am—tat shall all be forgotten mit us. But in future you vill kindly please to remember tat respect is due to a master, and tat it is fery rude and uncivil to play joke on strangers in te land. You two poys are fery rude and ill-mannered poys, but ich hoffe—I hope tat you learn petter."

And the German master walked away.

Skinner looked dolorous.

"Oh, my only Sunday hat!" he groaned. "We've put our foot in it this time—right in it! That Deutsch Johnny will have his hoof down on us now. It was all your fault, Smithy. Why couldn't you let him alone?"

"Oh, go and eat coke," snapped the Bounder. "I don't care twopence whether he has a down on me or not. If he goes for me, I'll jolly well go for him—in fact, I shall make it a point to rag him anyway, to show him I'm not afraid of him."

"Better let him alone," said Wharton. "It was kind of him to overlook your beastly bad manners."

"Oh, rats!"

And that was the beginning of the trouble between the Bounder of Greyfriars and the new German master—trouble that was destined to have some very curious results.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Bounder Tries It On!

HERR GANS had the pleasure of taking the Remove in German the next day.

The late German master at Greyfriars, old Herr Haeckel, had been regarded by the juniors as almost harmless. He was a sleepy old gentleman, and he seemed content to let the fellows learn about as much German as they chose—which was not an overwhelming quantity. Sometimes, indeed, he would wake up to a stern sense of duty, and would hammer irregular verbs into them without mercy. But as a rule the German lessons passed off without danger of brain fog to the recipients. The Removites were curious to see whether there would be any change under the new rule. Some of the fellows averred that the late master's easy methods had not been approved of by the Head—who had a prejudice to the effect that boys came to school to learn things. Bob Cherry said dolefully that the new master would turn out to be a Tartar in the Form-room—by which he meant that the fellows would have to learn German in the German lessons, instead of eating toffee, or drawing impossible battles and football matches in their exercise books.

So the Remove entered upon that preliminary canter, as Vernon-Smith called it in his slangy way, with some uneasiness, and a good deal of curiosity.

Although the amount of German absorbed by the Removites was not large, it was sufficient to enable them to tumble to the fact that the German master's name was a name to play upon. "Gans" being German for "goose," the juniors nicknamed Herr Gans "The Gander" before he had been three hours at Greyfriars. When Mr. Quelch resigned the class to Herr Gans that Thursday afternoon, a good many glances were turned upon Vernon-Smith. And there were whispers of "Go it, Smithy!"

The Bounder had taken a dislike to the Gander, and he had made no secret of his intention of ragging the German master. It was partly from his natural love of opposition, Harry Wharton and Co., having pronounced that Herr Gans was a good chap, and ought to be let alone. And most of the Form, from sheer love of mischief, were anxious to see how the Bounder would handle the gentleman from the Vaterland.

The Remove soon made the discovery that Herr Gans was

a worker, and that he expected them to be workers too. This did not "jump" with the inclinations of the Remove, as Fisher T. Fish expressed it, and some of the juniors opposed a passive resistance to the efforts of the German master. But when Vernon-Smith's turn came, his resistance was not passive.

The class looked on with deep interest when Herr Gans tackled the Bounder.

The Herr had not seemed very well satisfied with the amount of German the Remove were acquainted with. Mark Linley was well up in German; but, then, Mark was regarded as a "swot."

The others had woeful failings. The Bounder was pretty nearly as good a German scholar as Linley, but it did not suit him to display his knowledge now. He preferred to rag the master.

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"Thou beast!" said Vernon-Smith innocently.

And there was another giggle.

"Silence in te class!" said Herr Gans, looking round. "Te class-room, it is not a place for to laff. Du bist—tat is te second person, Smit. I am ashamed tat I have to tell tat to a poy of your age. It is like for te infants!"

"Thank you, sir; you are so kind."

"Du bist—tou art," said Herr Gans. "You know him now!"

The Bounder looked puzzled.

"Would you mind telling me what 'tou' means, sir?" he said. "I do not remember that word in the German we had with Herr Haekel."

The master flushed angrily.

"Tat is not a Cherman word, tat is an English word!" he exclaimed. "Tou art, te second person singular!"

"Yes, sir, I know it is singular," said Vernon-Smith calmly. "It sounds very singular indeed to me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!"

Herr Gans was getting decidedly "ratty" by this time. He knew that the Bounder was making fun of his English pronunciation.

"You vill now tell me te first person, Smit."

"Ish bin," said the Bounder.

"Not ish!" exclaimed Herr Gans. "Ich!"

"Ik!" said Vernon-Smith.

"Not ik, eider, you stupid poy! Ich!" roared Herr Gans.

"Itch!" said Vernon-Smith.

"Mein Gott! Is it tat you cannot speak, ten? Can you not say te word ich?"

"I'm afraid not, sir. You see, sir, if I pronounced it like that, it would give me a crick in the neck!"

Herr Gans looked steadily at the Bounder. He could not doubt any longer that the junior was attempting to ridicule him before the class.

"I tink, Smit, tat you vas not so stupid as you would make me tink," he said. "I tink tat you pretend, ain't it, afterwards?"

"Oh, sir! I'm sure I would grunt just the same as you do if I could, but my throat isn't made that way, sir!"

"Stand out pefore de class, Smit!"

"What for, sir?"

"I bunish you for te impertinence!"

"This is where the giddy joker gets it in the neck!" murmured Bob Cherry.

The Bounder went out before the class, his eyes gleaming dangerously. Herr Gans had picked up a cane from the

Form-master's desk.

To be caned before the class for his impertinence was not what the Bounder wanted. It was rather an ignominious ending to the pulling of the Gander's leg.

"Hold out te hand, Smit!"

"Herr Haekel never used to cane us, sir," said Vernon-Smith sullenly.

"Perhaps it is tat you vas not impertinent to Heri Haekel as you are mit me, Smit. Or perhaps he did not cane you enoff. Hold out te hand!"

The Bounder breathed hard through his nose. The eyes of all the boys were upon him, and he was expected to do something. To be caned like a naughty boy and sent back to his place would make him utterly ridiculous, after his declaration that he was going to make the German master "sit up." And yet there was no help for it; it was impossible to "buck up" against authority. The Bounder had brought himself into a humiliating position, and nothing was

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"Ach! It is you, Skinner!" said Herr Gans sternly as Skinner stood blinking confusedly in the light. "You have peen in my room, ain't it?" went on the German master. "And—and mein Gott, look at my ped!" (See Chapter 7.)

The Bounder chose the method of professing complete ignorance. Upon so simple a verb as "sein" he seemed hopelessly at sea.

"You tell me," said Herr Gans, looking suspiciously at the Bounder, "tat you do not know vat tat is?"

"Oh, yes, sir! It's a German word, I think," said Vernon-Smith.

"Sein is te infinitive—to be."

"Thank you, sir!"

"You vill tell me te present indicative of sein, Smit."

"I wish I could, sir," said the Bounder seriously. "I know it would hurt my neck, but I'd tell you if I could, sir."

And some of the Remove giggled. The fun was beginning.

"Ich bin," said Herr Gans, breathing hard, "I am."

"Yes, sir."

"Du bist—tou art."

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left but ignominious retreat, or else defiance of the master—which meant very serious trouble.

The class looked on breathlessly. At this point anybody but the Bounder would have given in; but the juniors knew his reckless manner well. It was quite possible that he would stand his ground and chance the consequences, be they what they might.

"I have tell you, Smit, to hold out te hand," said the German master ominously.

The Bounder put his hands behind his back.

"Do you hear me, Smit?"

"Yes, sir."

"Will you obey me?"

"I'm not going to be caned," said Vernon-Smith.

The Remove gasped.

The Bounder was more than fulfilling their expectations. They looked at Herr Gans, and wondered what he would do. Mr. Quelch, in his place, would have taken the Bounder by the collar, and thrashed him then and there. But the Gander was new to Greyfriars, and he was not of the stern cast of Mr. Quelch. If he allowed the Bounder to go unpunished, certainly he would never possess a fragment of authority over the boys again.

"You refuse to hold out te hand, den, Smit?" said Herr Gans, after a long pause, during which a pin might have been heard to drop in the Form-room.

"I won't be caned."

"Fery well. Den I take you to te headmaster."

The German master laid down the cane, and opened the door of the Form-room.

"Follow me!" he said curtly.

He strode out into the passage.

Vernon-Smith did not stir.

"You'd better go, Smithy," murmured Bolsover major uneasily.

"I'm not going!"

"There'll be trouble."

"I don't care!"

"Don't be an ass, Smithy!" said Harry Wharton. "Do you want to get a flogging instead of a caning? Take it quietly."

"Rats!"

The Bounder's reckless nature was fully roused now. Anything seemed better than submitting, after the show of resistance he had made. To defy his master before all the Form—and then to yield as meekly as a fellow like Bunter or Snoop—it seemed impossible to the Bounder! He would not give in!

The German master came back into the Form-room, his face very red, and his blue eyes gleaming behind his spectacles.

"You have not follow me, Smit."

"No, sir."

"Vunce more I tell you, valk dis vay!" said Herr Gans.

The Bounder's lip curled.

"I can't walk that way, sir," he said, deliberately misunderstanding. "I couldn't walk that way without having bandy legs!"

It took the German master some moments to understand fully the play upon words.

Some of the Removites grinned, but most of them felt that the matter was becoming too serious. As the German master realised Vernon-Smith's meaning, his face became nearer purple than red. He strode towards the Bounder, and the juniors held their breath. Vernon-Smith was about to get it "in the neck" at last.

"Den I take you!" said Herr Gans.

He grasped the Bounder by the collar. Vernon-Smith struggled; but the middle-aged, spectacled German had a grip like iron. The junior, athletic as he was, was whirled fairly off his feet as the German swung him to the doorway. He was marched out by main force, with that powerful hand gripping his collar behind, and the two of them disappeared.

"Poor old Bounder!" murmured Skinner. "Always biting off more than he can chew! I wouldn't like to stand in his shoes when he gets to the Head!"

Five minutes later Herr Gans came back into the Form-room; but the Bounder did not return. The lesson proceeded, and there was no more chipping or ragging of the new master. The Removites, for once in their lives, were as good as gold.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

A Midnight Raid!

VERNON-SMITH'S friends looked for him when classes were dismissed that afternoon. The Bounder was discovered in his study, pale, with gleaming eyes, and his features twitching with pain. He had evidently been "through" it.

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"What did you get?" asked Bolsover major sympathetically.

The Bounder ground his teeth.

"Licked, of course?" said Skinner.

"Yes."

"Was it pretty rough?"

"As hard as the old bounder could lay it on," said Vernon-Smith, referring to the reverend Head of Greyfriars in that disrespectful manner. "My hat! I never knew the old bird was such an athlete!"

"Well, he was bound to do it, after what the Dutcher reported to him," said Bolsover. "You went too far, Smithy."

"I'll go further yet!" growled the Bounder savagely. "I'm not going to be bullied by a dashed foreigner! I'll make him sorry for it!"

"My advice to you is, let him alone," said Bolsover, with a shake of the head. "He's hot stuff. You can't handle him as you do Monsieur Charpentier."

"When I want your advice I'll ask for it."

Bolsover grunted, and left the study. Vernon-Smith was not in a mood to be argued with.

"I'm going to make him sit up yet," said the Bounder, when he was alone with Skinner, his study-mate, "and you're going to help me!"

Skinner looked uneasy.

"I—I'd rather let him alone, Smithy," he said. "After all, he's not such a bad sort. He might have reported us for our little game yesterday, but he didn't."

The Bounder's lip curled.

"You mean you funk it?" he snapped.

"Well, I'm game if it's a jape," said Skinner reluctantly.

"But I'm not looking for a licking. What's the good of telling a master you won't be caned, when he can cane you if he likes. It's silly!"

"He won't know who it is when I get at him this time," said the Bounder.

Skinner brightened up.

"Well, now you're talking sense!" he agreed. "What's the little game? I'd like to damage him as much as you would, but it's no good getting the Head down on us. He has an eye on me already."

"He's got Herr Haeckel's old room," said Vernon-Smith. "He goes to bed early. We're going to pay him a visit to-night after lights-out."

"Oh!" said Skinner.

"If you funk it, say so, and I'll go alone," said the Bounder irritably. "But there's no danger. Somebody swamps his bed with water in the dark, and clears out before the old josser is fairly awake. How's he to know who did it? And if he guesses, how is he going to prove it?"

"Well, it seems safe enough," said Skinner slowly. "But there will be a fearful row. They're sure to suspect you at once, after what's happened to-day."

"It won't hurt you, if they suspect me!" growled the Bounder.

"No; that's quite true," said Skinner cheerfully. "Good egg! I'm on! I'd like to make him wriggle for grinding irregular verbs into me to-day!"

"Keep it dark. None of the other fellows need know."

"Right-ho!"

And when the Remove went up to bed that night, Vernon-Smith and Skinner were keeping their little secret very dark. Harry Wharton & Co. had no suspicion that anything was on, although, of course, it would not have been their business to interfere if they had known. Vernon-Smith was his own master, and at liberty to look for as much trouble as he wanted.

The talk of the Removites, as they chatted before going to sleep, ran on the new German master, and on the return Redclyffe match the following Wednesday. Harry Wharton & Co. were thinking far more of that match than of the Bounder and his troubles with the Gander. Wharton wanted very much to beat Redclyffe the following week, and it was necessary for Vernon-Smith to play in the eleven if that was to be done. Matters had changed. It was not so long since Wharton had declined to admit the Bounder into the Form team at any price. But now that Vernon-Smith had proved his value, and seemed to have dropped completely the old selfish tactics which had rendered his good qualities as a player useless, Wharton was only too glad to put him in. For that reason, as well as others, he was sorry to see the Bounder on his present course. If Smithy should get himself gated for the following Wednesday it would be a bad thing for the eleven.

But most of the fellows considered that the Bounder had had his lesson, and would leave the German alone. It was

quite evident that Hans Gans was not a man whose leg could be pulled with impunity.

But the Bounder was thinking of nothing else but his new scheme for a jape on the new master. The talk of football passed unheeded by his ears. He made monosyllabic replies when fellows mentioned to him the next Wednesday's match. He affected to sleep after a short time.

The buzz of talk died away in the Remove dormitory.

One by one the fellows dropped off to sleep, and the deep bass snore of Billy Bunter rumbled through the stillness.

The Bounder lay with steady, unwinking eyes, sleepless. Skinner had dozed off, depending upon his comrade to awaken him, or perhaps secretly hoping that the Bounder would sleep too, and leave the German master alone for that night.

But Vernon-Smith was not likely to sleep. His hands were still aching from the severe caning he had received. It was seldom that Dr. Locke caned a boy severely, but he had felt it necessary in Vernon-Smith's case, and he had done his duty thoroughly. Very seldom had the Bounder had such a licking, and it rendered it easy for him to keep awake.

Twelve o'clock sounded from the old tower of Greyfriars, and then the Bounder stirred. At that hour all Greyfriars was in bed.

The German master would be sleeping peacefully in his room, dreaming probably of the Vaterland, or anything rather than the jape planned by the Bounder of the Remove.

Vernon-Smith slipped quietly out of bed, and shook Skinner by the shoulder. Skinner opened his eyes and blinked at him.

"Hallo! That you, Smithy?"

"Yes. It's twelve."

"Oh, all right," mumbled Skinner.

He turned unwillingly out of bed and drew on his trousers. The Bounder led the way quietly from the dormitory. The German master's room was on a lower floor, and the two juniors stole cautiously past Mr. Quelch's room and down the stairs. They reached the door of Herr Gans' room, and paused to listen outside.

"Quiet as a giddy tomb!" murmured the Bounder "He's fast asleep."

"Seems like it," murmured Skinner.

"You know what to do. You're to yank off the bedclothes, while I swamp him with water. Before he knows what's happened we can bolt."

"Ye-es."

"Funking?" sneered the Bounder.

"Oh, rats! I'm ready if you are."

"Good, then."

The Bounder turned the handle of the door. It opened to his touch. All was dark within. The two juniors, with beating hearts, stepped into the room. From the window came a pale glimmer of moonlight, which showed the outlines of the bed in the corner, but they could not see the sleeper. Skinner tiptoed cautiously towards the foot of the bed, and the Bounder glided towards the washstand. He grasped the water-jug, and felt that it was full to the brim. He lifted it up and stepped close to the bed.

Still there was no sound from the bed. The juniors could not even hear the breathing of the German master.

"Now!" muttered the Bounder.

Skinner grasped the bedclothes and tugged.

Swamp!

Down came the water in a flood on the bed.

The Bounder dropped the jug and ran for the door, and Skinner dashed out at the same moment.

Then they stopped.

They had expected a wild and unearthly outbreak from the German master as he was thus startled out of his slumbers.

But it did not come.

Silence reigned.

Not a sound from the bed, save the trickle of the water as it ran to the floor, and dripped there. Not a sound, not a movement.

In sheer astonishment the juniors stopped in the doorway. They looked back into the room. No sound or movement from the bed, and yet the sleeper—if he was there—must have been drenched to the skin by that sudden flood of cold water! There was something eerie and uncanny in the dead, grim silence.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Sneak!

VERNON-SMITH drew a quick, deep breath.

"Hold on, Skinney!" he murmured.

"What does it mean?" muttered Skinner, whose face was pale in the darkness. "He—he hasn't made a sound! He—he can't be—be—"

"He can't be hurt, of course."

"I—I've heard of people dying of shock," stammered

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Skinner, with chattering teeth, "and those big, fat men often have weak hearts. If he had heart-disease he might—might—"

The same thought had occurred to the Bounder—rather late in the day. A man subject to heart-disease might have expired in such a sudden shock. The Bounder's face was as white as Skinner's now.

"Hold on!" he murmured. "I'm going to see."

He stepped back into the room. Skinner stood trembling in the doorway, leaning heavily on the doorpost. He would have given a great deal to be safe back in the dormitory, with that wretched jape unplayed.

The Bounder bent over the German master's bed. It was too much in shadow for him to see much, but he groped over it with his hand. Then he uttered a sudden suppressed exclamation:

"It's all right, Skinney!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"He's not here."

Skinner gasped with relief.

"Not there, Smithy?"

"No," said Vernon-Smith, gritting his teeth. "He's not gone to bed after all. I know the beast went to bed early last night, and I thought— But where is he, then? The bed hasn't been slept in! But all the lights are out downstairs!"

Skinner joined the Bounder in the room. His curiosity was excited.

"He's not here, and he's not downstairs in the dark," he muttered. "He must have gone out."

"Gone out at midnight!" muttered the Bounder.

"Jolly queer!"

"I'd like to know where he's gone," said Vernon-Smith, his eyes glinting. "What is he going out at midnight for, eh? It looks fishy to me. I'll jolly well bet you that the Head doesn't know he goes out at midnight."

"He'll have a key to the side gate, and he can go in and out without the Head knowing, of course. But what for—that's the giddy puzzle."

"Something fishy, of course."

"He doesn't look the kind of johnnie to go on the randan," said Skinner, with a chuckle. "Nobody would suspect the blinking old grampus of keeping it up with the boys."

"No fear. But there's something in it. I shouldn't wonder—"

The Bounder paused.

"Well, what?"

"You know what the papers have been saying lately about German spies on the coast. There were some arrested and sent to prison in Portsmouth some time ago. There are known to be lots in the country. This coast is just where the Germans would land if they ever came. They get all sorts of jobs in England—and one of them might get a post as German master in a school near the sea—"

Skinner whistled softly.

"I say, Smithy, that's jolly thick, you know. He doesn't look like a spy."

The Bounder sniffed.

"If he did look like a spy, ass, it wouldn't be any use employing him as one, would it?"

"Well, I suppose not," agreed Skinner, struck by that argument. "But—but it's too thick, you know. He's not a spy—it's all rot. They put those things in newspapers, but we all know what newspaper yarns are worth. But, I say, if he's gone out, he may come in any minute—"

"And catch us!" grinned the Bounder. "Well, he'll find it rather damp in bed. He won't be very comfy to-night."

"Let's get out!" muttered Skinner.

"Wait a bit. We may as well do the thing thoroughly as we've got time. I'll put a string across the floor for him to tumble over—"

"I'd rather not stay here—"

"You get along the passage and keep watch for him," whispered the Bounder. "You'll hear him coming up the stairs when he gets back. It won't take me five minutes to fix the string here, and he'll come a cropper—"

"You'll get caught—you never can leave well alone."

"Well, if I'm caught, I sha'n't give you away," sneered the Bounder. "You'll be safe enough in the passage, you blessed funk. If you hear him coming, cut off, and leave me alone; I'll chance it."

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"Oh, all right! If I bolt you'll hear me pass the door, anyway."

"Right."

Skinner tiptoed out of the room, towards the head of the lower stairs. The Bouncer drew a string from his pocket—and then he started. From the dark passage came a sudden exclamation.

"Mein Gott! Who is tat?"

It was Herr Gans' voice.

The Bouncer understood in a flash.

The herr had been coming upstairs quietly on his return, so as not to awaken anyone—and Skinner had run right into him at the end of the passage, in the darkness. The scuffling sound of feet showed that Skinner was in the grasp of the German.

The Bouncer did not hesitate a moment. He could not help Skinner, and there was no use in being caught, too. He glided silently from the room and scudded up the stairs to the Remove dormitory. It was understood between the two japers that if one was caught he was not to give away the other, and the Bouncer, at least, could have been relied upon to keep to the bargain. No amount of punishment would have induced him to betray his comrade in the jape.

In the dark passage, Skinner was wriggling in the powerful grasp of Hans Gans.

"Who is tat?" said the German master. "I know tat it is a poy. You should not be out of the dormitory, ain't it, at tat late hour afterwards. Who are you, mein poy?"

Skinner did not reply, but strove to wriggle loose. But he had no chance of escaping from that iron grasp. As he did not speak, the German master marched him on to his room, walked him in, and with his disengaged hand turned on the switch of the electric light.

"Ach! It is you, Skinner," said Herr Gans, as Skinner stood blinking confusedly in the sudden glare of light.

"Grooh!" murmured Skinner. "I—I—"

"You have peen in my room, ain't it?" said Herr Gans sternly. "Te door was open. And—and mein Gott, look at my ped!"

In the electric light, the swamped state of the disordered bed was only too evident. The German master's fat, good-natured face became dark with anger.

"So tat is vat you have done, Skinner."

"Nunno, sir," stammered Skinner. "I—I didn't do it, sir."

"Vat! Den if you did not do it, who did, hein?"

"The—the other chap, sir."

"Den you vas not alone before?"

"N-no, sir."

"You have vun confederate, and I tink tat I guess who tat poy is—a fery pad poy," said Herr Gans. "You tells me who tat poy is, ain't it?"

"I—I—I—"

"Perhaps you tells me vat you call lies, Skinner, hein? Dere vas no oder, and you vas have trown ze vasser over mein bed on."

"I—I swear I didn't, sir," groaned Skinner, shivering as he thought of repeating the Bouncer's experience in the Head's study. "I—I didn't, sir. I—I just looked on, sir."

"I do not pelieve you, Skinner. If dere vas an odder, vere is tat oder? Nein, nein, mein poy, I do not you pelieve. I takes you to te Head in te morning, and I tink tat you vill sorry be."

"I—I'm very sorry now, sir."

"I tink tat you will sorrier be in te morning, Skinner. Mein bed is yet, and I must sleep viz myself on a sofa, isn't it? I like not tat, Skinner. I tink that ven you are flog you lets te master's ped alone, ain't it, afterwards."

"It was the other chap, sir," wailed Skinner. "It—it was Smithy, sir."

"Vat! Vernon-Smit!"

"Yes, sir."

"Ach! I vill go and see Smit immediately, and you vill come mit me, Skinner."

And the German master marched Skinner to the Remove dormitory.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

The Flogging!

A SUDDEN blaze of light in the Remove dormitory awakened most of the juniors.

Harry Wharton sat up in bed and looked round him.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry drowsily. "What's the row?"

"Vernon-Smit!" said a stern voice.

"My hat! It's the Gander!" muttered Nugent.

"And Skinner with him."

"Looks like trouble," yawned Johnny Bull.

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Herr Gans walked directly to Vernon-Smith's bed. The Bouncer lay there, with his head peacefully on the pillow, apparently fast asleep. Herr Gans looked down at him with a stern brow.

"Vernon-Smit!" he repeated, more loudly.

The Bouncer opened his eyes sleepily.

"Hallo!" he murmured. "What's the matter? Not rising-bell yet."

"It is I, Vernon-Smit. You have been to my room dis night before."

"I sir?" said the Bouncer, in surprise.

"Ja, ja, you, mein boy."

"Oh, no, sir! I've been fast asleep," said Vernon-Smith calmly. "I haven't been out of bed since lights out, sir."

The Bouncer did not yet guess that Skinner had given him away. He fancied that the German master had paid that visit to the dormitory merely upon suspicion.

"How dare you lie like tat, Smit?" said Herr Gans. "Skinner, vas it Smit who was mit you, or vas it not?"

The Bouncer gave Skinner a furious look. Skinner avoided his eyes.

"You've got to own up, Smithy," said Skinner desperately. "It's not fair to leave me to stand it alone. We were both in it, and you've got to own up."

"So you've sneaked, Skinner?" said the Bouncer, very quietly.

"I had to own up you were with me."

"Vill you tell me te troot, Smit?"

"Yes, sir," said Vernon-Smith, with the same deadly quietness. "I swamped your bed with water. I thought you were in it, you see—I didn't know that you had a habit of going out in the middle of the night."

"You pad poy! I have been out to visit a sick relation, you vicked poy. How dare you to be impertinent?"

"Well, I did it, sir," said Vernon-Smith. "You can let that shivering cad off. He only pulled the bedclothes off while I swamped the water in."

"Fery goot. Skinner, you will take a hundred lines of Cherman; and you, Smit, you vill come to te Head's study to-morrow morning."

"Very well, sir."

"Now, go to ped, Skinner."

The unhappy Skinner went to bed. Herr Gans turned out the light and left the dormitory. There was a hum of voices at once. All the Lower Fourth were awake now.

"In for it again, Smithy," said Bolsover major. "You do have rotten luck!"

"Skinner sneaked," said the Bouncer grimly. "He ran into the Gander's arms like a fool, and I got clear—and then he sneaked and brought him here to spot me."

"I—I didn't exactly," stammered Skinner. "He got it out of me—he knew there was another chap in it, and—and—"

"Rotten sneak!" said Bolsover major, in disgust. "Why couldn't you hold your tongue?"

"He thought I'd swamped his bed with water—and that means a flogging—"

"So you gave Smithy away?" sniffed Bob Cherry.

"Well, he shouldn't have left me to stand it alone."

"Perhaps not; but it was a dirty trick to give him away."

"I was against the rotten jape from the beginning," snarled Skinner. "Smithy fairly forced me into it. Why couldn't he leave the Dutchy alone?"

"If I were Smithy," said Bolsover, in measured tones, "I'd yank you out of bed, Skinney, and thump you till you couldn't crawl!"

"It will keep till to-morrow," said the Bouncer quietly. And there was an ominous tone in his voice that made Skinner shiver. The wretched junior knew that he had earned the bitter enmity of his one-time pal, and he knew what the Bouncer's enmity could be like.

He half wished he had held his tongue, but then he thought of the flogging that certainly awaited the reckless young rascal who had swamped a master's bed with water. Vernon-Smith's vengeance was better than that.

The Bouncer did not speak again, and the dormitory was quiet at last.

When the rising-bell clanged out in the freshness of the autumn morning, and the Remove turned out, there were two very dark faces among them.

Both Skinner and the Bouncer had very painful anticipations for that day.

The Bouncer did not speak to his former comrade. He dressed himself quietly and went down with the others.

It was not long before the story of the jape on the German master spread in the House. Vernon-Smith was looked at with much interest and curiosity. There was no doubt whatever that he would be flogged, and that punishment, seldom administered, was very severe, and always made a deep



An adventurous fag stole close to the door and listened, and then came tiptoeing back with an excited face and announced he had heard the swishing distinctly. The Bounder was being flogged! Yet not a single cry! "Hard as nails, and no mistake!" said Nugent. "Smithy's got lots of pluck!" (See Chapter 8.)

impression on the fellows. There was much sympathy for the Bounder, and open scorn and contempt for Skinner. But the latter did not worry Skinner so much as his private anticipation of what he had to expect from Smithy after the flogging had been administered.

Before prayers, Wingate of the Sixth, the head prefect, called to Vernon-Smith, and the Bounder came to him quietly.

"You're wanted in the Head's study," said Wingate shortly.

"Very well!"

"Come with me."

Vernon-Smith disappeared with the captain of Greyfriars. Herr Gans was already in the Head's study. The bell rang, and Trotter answered it, and when he came out of the study, the curious juniors questioned him. Nearly all the Remove and a great many fellows of other Forms had gathered in the passage near the Head's study.

"What's going on, Trotter?" asked Tom Brown.

"The 'Ead's sent me for Gosling," said Trotter.

"Then it's a flogging," said Harry Wharton, as Trotter disappeared. "Well, I don't see what else Smithy could have expected."

"Yes, rather!" said Temple, of the Fourth. "It seems that some of you fags sneaked about him—eh?"

"Go and eat coke!" said Bob Chewy curtly.

"Skinner sneaked," said Hazeldene. "It was a rotten

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thing to do. Smithy will get it thicker than Skinner would have got it—the Head's down on him already."

"The beast got it out of me!" muttered the wretched Skinner. "I couldn't help—"

"Oh, rats!"

"Shut up!"

"Sneak!"

"Rotter!"

"You ought to be scragged, you young villain!" said Coker of the Fifth. "I've a jolly good mind to wallop you myself."

"Smithy will do that!" said Bolsover.

Gosling the porter came in, and passed into the Head's study. Then the fellows waited in painful anticipations for the howls of the flogged junior.

That the flogging was proceeding there could be no doubt. But they listened in vain for the cries of the culprit.

"Smithy's as hard as nails," said Tom Brown. "Not a single howl."

"It's rotten!"

"Poor old Smithy; he's getting it in the neck this time!"

"I guess he's up against it, and no mistake!" said Fisher T. Fish. "He should have asked me to manage that little jape for him. I guess I could have pulled it off for him all O.K.—just a few! Now he's come out at the little end of the horn, and no mistake!"

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Still there was no sound from the Head's study. Was the Bouncer being flogged after all?

An adventurous fag who stole close to the Head's door and listened, came tiptoeing back with an excited face, and announced that he had heard the swishing distinctly. The Bouncer was being flogged!

Yet not a single cry!

"Hard as nails, and no mistake!" said Nugent. "Smithy's got lots of pluck."

The Head's door opened at last. Vernon-Smith came out. The juniors crowded round him anxiously. The Bouncer's face was livid, and his eyes seemed to be burning. His hands were shaking.

He made no reply to the sympathetic inquiries of the juniors. He seemed unable to speak. He pushed his way through them without a word, and went to his study and locked the door after him. He did not attend prayers that morning, and he was late for class; but Mr. Quelch, who was generally very strict upon punctuality, made no remark upon his lateness. He allowed the Bouncer to go to his place unquestioned—and did not trouble him during lessons—and the Bouncer sat silent, with a white face, while the rest of the Form did their morning's work.

THE NINTH CHAPTER. Skinner's Punishment!

HARRY WHARTON stopped to speak to Vernon-Smith when the Remove came out of the Form-room after morning lessons.

"I suppose you don't feel up to footer practice, Smithy?" he said.

The Bouncer shook his head.

"Not to-day."

"I hope you're not going to leave us in the lurch over the match next Wednesday," said Wharton anxiously. "We're relying on you, you know."

The Bouncer's lip curled sardonically.

"You never used to be so anxious to get me into the team," he said.

"Not when you were worse than useless in it, certainly. But you played up splendidly against Redclyffe on their ground, and if we're to beat them next Wednesday, we want you. You owe it to the eleven to keep in form for the match."

"That's all right—I'll do my best. Excuse my being ratty," added the Bouncer. "I'm not feeling very comfy at the present moment."

"I suppose not. Was it very bad?"

"About as bad as it could be," said Vernon-Smith, between his teeth, "and I owe it all to Skinner, next to the German rotter. I'll make him sorry he sneaked about me!"

"It was a rotten thing to do," said Harry. "But—but—I'd let him alone if I were you. He's not worth licking. And he's such a weedy waster, he can't stand up to you, anyway."

"All the worse for him—he's got to!" said the Bouncer grimly.

He walked away. Harry Wharton & Co. went down to the footer-ground for practice, and Vernon-Smith joined Skinner. The latter looked at him very doubtfully.

"I—I say, Smithy, I'm sorry about—about that!" he stammered. "I really didn't mean to give you away, and—and I'm sorry!"

"I dare say you are," said Vernon-Smith. "I want you to come out with me."

"What for?"

"I'm going to lick you!"

Skinner turned paler.

"Look here, Smithy, I don't want to fight you. We've been pals—"

"That's finished now. You gave me away, and got me a flogging that I sha'n't get over for days. You're a sneak and a cad and a rotter. Take that!"

Smack!

The Bouncer's open hand caught Skinner across the face, and he reeled back.

"Now will you come out?" said Vernon-Smith, between his teeth.

"He's got to," said Bolsover major. "Come on, Skinner!"

A crowd of juniors gathered round Skinner and marched him out. Skinner went very reluctantly. He did not want to fight the Bouncer. Fighting was not in his line at any time; and he knew, too, that he had no chance against Vernon-Smith. But there was no help for it.

They did not go to the gym. It was not to be a contest with the gloves on. They streamed out of the school gates and stopped in a quiet spot behind the boathouse.

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"Make a ring!" said Bolsover major. "Who's your second, Skinner?"

Nobody offered. Nobody wanted to second the sneak. Skinner peeled off his jacket unaided, while any number of hands were ready to help the Bouncer.

"Rounds, I suppose?" said Bolsover. "I'll keep time, if you like."

"I don't care how we fight, so long as we get at it," said the Bouncer.

"Two-minute rounds, and one-minute rests, then," said Bolsover. "I dare say Skinner will be able to do with the rests."

"I guess he'd rather have one-minute rounds and two-minute rests!" grinned Fisher T. Fish, and the crowd of juniors chuckled.

"Toe the line!" said Bolsover major.

The Bouncer strode forward with his shirt-sleeves rolled back, and evidently meant business. Skinner reluctantly came forward to face him.

"Time!" said Bolsover.

The Bouncer attacked like a whirlwind. Skinner, driven to the wall as it were, put up the best fight he could. But he had no chance. The Bouncer's blows seemed as thick as hail, and they came like lightning.

Right and left, left and right, and Skinner reeled under them, his defence going helplessly to pieces.

"Time!"

Skinner staggered away gasping.

"I'm done!" he panted. "I'm not going on!"

"Faith, and it's easily satisfied ye are!" said Micky, in disgust. "Pile in, bedad, and put your beef into it."

"Time!"

"I'm done!" howled Skinner.

"You may be done, but I'm only just starting," said the Bouncer. "You'll take a licking, anyway, and you may as well put up your paws."

"I tell you—"

"Will you come on?"

"No, I won't!"

"Then I'll make you."

The Bouncer advanced to the attack, and Skinner had to put up his hands to defend himself. The second round commenced, and it was very like the first. The Bouncer had it all his own way, and Skinner's punishment was terrible. At the end of the round, when Bolsover major called time, Skinner lay gasping on the ground.

And when time was called for the third round, he refused to move.

"Time!" repeated Bolsover.

"Jump up, Skinner!"

"Get on!"

"You're not licked yet."

Skinner sat up, and blinked at the ring of fellows through half-closed eyes.

"I tell you I'm done," he mumbled. "You can see I can't go on."

"Rats!" said Snoop. "You're not half licked yet."

"So you're a coward as well as a sneak," said the Bouncer bitterly.

That last taunt moved Skinner. He sprang to his feet, and rushed fiercely at the Bouncer, and the third round was fought out. Skinner was desperate now, and he hit hard, and the Bouncer received a considerable amount of punishment. But it was nothing to what Skinner received.

"Time!"

"I'm done!" panted Skinner. "Hang you! What more do you want?"

"Get up!" said the Bouncer.

"I won't!"

"Let him alone, Smithy," said Bolsover major. "Dash it all, he's licked!"

"Sure, and he's had enough, Smithy darling."

"He's not had enough. He's going to have as much as I got from the Head. Get up, you grovelling funk, or I'll kick you!"

But Skinner did not get up. Nothing would have induced him to face those whirlwind fists again. The Bouncer ran towards him.

"Will you get up, you coward?" he shouted furiously.

"No, I won't!" said Skinner. "And you can do what you like!"

"I give you half a minute to get up," he said.

"Hold on," said Bolsover sharply; "you're not going to kick a fellow when he's down."

"Let him get up, then."

"It's over; he's owned up he's beaten, and that's enough," said Bulstrode. "Let him alone."

The Bouncer did not reply, but he kicked Skinner. There

was a sudden exclamation, and a figure in football garb came dashing to the scene. It was Harry Wharton. The news of the fight behind the boathouse had spread, and fellows were gathering to see it, and it had drawn the captain of the Remove away from the footer-ground.

Wharton's face was flushed with indignation as he saw the Bounder's action. Vernon-Smith had drawn back his foot to repeat the kick when Wharton ran up, and caught him by the shoulder, and whirled him away from his victim.

"Let him alone!" Wharton shouted angrily. "Don't be a rotten coward!"

"Hands off—"

"I'll put my hands on you—jolly quickly, too—if you touch Skinner again. I don't care whether he's a sneak or not; you're going to let him alone now."

"I won't. I—"

"Get up, Skinner," said Wharton, more quietly. "I'll see that Vernon-Smith doesn't touch you."

Skinner staggered to his feet. He was utterly exhausted, and he could barely stand.

The Bounder made a spring towards him, and Wharton stepped promptly in front of Skinner, with his hands up.

"Stand back!" he said curtly. "I don't want trouble with you, Smithy, but if you will have it, it's your own lookout."

The Bounder did not reply. He came on savagely, and Wharton hit out straight from the shoulder. The Bounder fell at full length.

"You all saw that he forced me to do it," said Harry, looking round. "Skinner's had too much already, and he's not going to have any more."

"Smithy's a bit beside himself," said Bolsover major. "After all, he's got a flogging through Skinner's sneaking about him."

"I know that, but he's done too much already. Come away, and bathe your face, Skinner. You look an awful sight."

Skinner staggered away, leaning on Harry Wharton's arm.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

On the Track!

BOB CHERRY looked at Skinner as he came into the Form-room for afternoon lessons, and whistled. Skinner was in a sorry plight. Perhaps even the Bounder felt some compunction when he saw him. Vernon-Smith had been carried away by his temper, and he had hit harder than he realised at the time, and his former friend had suffered severely.

"Quelchy will spot you at once, Skinney," said Bob.

Skinner grunted and went to his place. It was extremely unlikely that the Form-master would pass over Skinner's state unnoticed. Mr. Quelch was tactful enough to close his eyes to an occasional swollen nose or thick ear, and a purple shade round an eye often escaped his attention. But Skinner was a wreck, and it was pretty certain that the Remove-master would inquire into the matter.

Mr. Quelch had not been present when the juniors had their dinner, or Skinner would have been called upon to explain then. The Bounder realised very clearly that he had gone too far again, but he said nothing. He waited grimly for the storm to burst.

Mr. Quelch came into the Form-room, and there was a hush. The juniors wondered how many minutes it would be before he spotted Skinner. As a matter of fact, it was about twenty seconds. Then Mr. Quelch rapped out:

"Skinner!"

"Yes, sir," mumbled Skinner.

"What is the matter with your face?"

"Nothing, sir!"

"Have you had an accident?"

"No, sir."

"Stand out here."

Skinner went out before the class. Mr. Quelch made him turn his face to the light, and he scanned the blackened eyes and the swollen nose and cut lip. The Form-master frowned portentously.

"I suppose you have been fighting, Skinner?" he said ominously.

"Yes, sir."

"With whom?"

Skinner was silent. He had suffered so much for sneaking once, that he preferred not to repeat the experiment if he could help it. Mr. Quelch did not repeat his question, but turned to the class, and fixed his piercing gaze upon the Bounder.

"Vernon-Smith, I understand that it was from Skinner that Herr Gans learned of your outrageous prank last night. Was it you who treated Skinner in this manner?"

"I fought with him, sir," said Vernon-Smith.

"You do not show many signs of injury yourself. You

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appear to have attacked savagely a boy who was no match for you."

The Bounder was silent.

"Did you use gloves?"

"No, sir."

"You know, I suppose, that fist fights without the use of gloves are strictly forbidden?"

"Yes, sir."

Mr. Quelch paused.

"I hardly know how to deal with you, Vernon-Smith," he said. "I do not care to report you to the Head for a flogging, as you were flogged this morning. It appears that punishment has no effect upon you. I warn you to take care, or you may find yourself expelled from the school. I do not care to administer corporal chastisement upon you again to-day. You will be detained instead for all the half-holidays during the remainder of the term. Perhaps that will have some effect upon your obstinacy."

The Bounder's face fell.

He would have preferred another flogging to that. But there was no room for argument; Mr. Quelch took no further notice of him. Skinner was sent back to his place, and the lessons proceeded.

Harry Wharton was looking almost as glum as the Bounder. The gating of Vernon-Smith meant that he would not be able to play for the Remove against Redclyffe on the following Wednesday. Fisher T. Fish tapped Wharton on the shoulder with his bony forefinger when the Remove were dismissed.

"I guess you won't be able to play Smithy now," he remarked.

"I suppose not," said Harry.

"You'll want me—just a few."

"Rats!" was the Remove captain's polite reply. And he turned away from the enterprising American, only to run into Billy Bunter.

"I say, Wharton, hold on a minute!" puffed Bunter. "I want to speak to you—it's important! Smithy's detained for next Wednesday."

"I know that, ass!"

"I'm willing to play against Redclyffe, if you like."

"Fathead!" said Wharton gruffly.

"I'm sorry," said the Bounder, joining Wharton. "I couldn't foresee that Quelchy would take it like that. It's all up with my footer for the rest of the term, I suppose?"

"It's your own fault," said Harry sharply. "You acted like a brute towards Skinner. He was a rotter to give you away, but there was no need to play the hooligan."

"Perhaps I went a bit too far."

"There's no perhaps about it. You were a brute. Now we shall very likely get licked by Redclyffe. There isn't a fellow in the Remove anything like your form to take your place. It's rotten!"

"Might get off," said the Bounder softly. "It's all come about through Gans. The Head and Quelchy would both come round if I were able to show him up."

Wharton stared.

"Show him up!" he repeated. "What on earth do you mean?"

"I'm keeping it dark at present," said Vernon-Smith, in a low tone, "but I'm going to keep an eye on him and spot him if I can."

"Spot him! What do you mean?"

"I believe he is a spy."

"A—a—a what?"

"You know there are lots of German spies planted in this country along the east coast. The papers were full of it a short time ago. There's something jolly suspicious about old Gans. He was out in the middle of the night last night. That's an unusual thing, to start with."

"He said he had gone to see a sick relative."

"That's gammon. We know he's only lately come to England, and he's not got any relations here. It would be queer if he had a relation living near Greyfriars. I believe that was a lie. He was up to something—something he wants to keep dark. I believe he is a foreign spy."

Wharton laughed impatiently.

"What utter rot! You wouldn't think so for a moment if you didn't dislike him. It's a case of the wish being father to the thought. The idea's simply preposterous."

"Well, I don't think so. And I'm jolly well going to know where he goes next time he gets out of the house secretly at night."

"How can you know?"

"By keeping an eye on him."

"You said just now he was a spy. It seems to me that you're thinking of starting in that line yourself. If you watch him, that will be spying."

NEXT
MONDAY

"THE GREYFRIARS HERALD!"

A Splendid Complete Tale of Harry
Wharton & Co. Order Early!

"All's fair in dealing with a foreign spy."
 "I don't think so. One spy is as bad as another. I know there are foreign spies in England; but an English chap ought to have too much decency to do anything of the kind. Besides, you're hunting a mare's nest. It's ridiculous—idiotic!"

"We shall see."

"Then you're going to play the spy on Herr Gans?"

"If you choose to put it like that—yes."

"It's a rotten thing to do! You'll get into trouble again, too."

"If I get into trouble I sha'n't ask you to help me out of it. I thought you might be willing to help me in showing him up."

"I'm not likely to make such a silly ass of myself. And even if he were a spy, I wouldn't spy on him."

"What about serving the country?" said the Bounder virtuously. "I suppose foreign spies are not to be allowed to do their spying without being watched?"

"England would be in a bad way if she had to depend upon rotters watching people and spying out dirty secrets," said Wharton disdainfully. "When a country takes to spying, it's time that country went to the wall. You can't help a good cause by playing dirty tricks. Not that I believe for a single moment that there's anything in what you say about the Gander. You're simply blinded by your dislike of him. He's as harmless as Mossos Charpentier."

"Well, we shall see."

"Then you're going ahead with this rot?"

"Yes."

"I hope it won't end in your being sacked from the school, then. That's what's most likely to come of it."

The Bounder turned away without replying.

He had fully made up his mind. He was convinced that the German master had, at all events, a secret of some kind to keep, and he intended to know what that secret was. And when, half an hour later, Herr Gans left the school and strode away down the lane towards Friardale, Vernon-Smith sauntered out after him.

Herr Gans did not seem to suspect for a moment that he was being followed.

He walked steadily on, without looking back once, and reached the path by the cliffs which led towards the village of Pegg, on the bay.

There he paused, and took out a camera from a little leather satchel slung over his shoulder.

The Bounder's eyes glistened.

It was another proof. Whenever he had read of foreign spies being arrested, it had always come out that they had been watched taking photographs.

Keeping carefully in the cover of the rocks, the Bounder watched the German master.

Herr Gans took picture after picture until his camera was full, and then he slung it in the leather satchel again.

Then he walked away briskly down the cliff path till he reached the first cottage on the outskirts of the fishing village of Pegg.

He stopped there and knocked at the door.

The door was opened by an old man with white hair, and the Bounder, watching from the distance, recognised the old German he had seen with Herr Gans on the railway platform at Redclyffe.

The door closed on the German master as he went in, and he disappeared from view.

The Bounder strolled on to Pegg, and stopped in the little post-office. In the village the post-office was the centre of local gossip, and Vernon-Smith knew that he could learn there what he wanted to know. It did not take him long to get his information. The outlying cottage was tenanted by a German gentleman named Muller, a stranger in the neighbourhood, who kept very much to himself. The Bounder walked back to Greyfriars, feeling pretty well satisfied with what he had discovered. A mysterious German in a lonely cottage by the sea, secret midnight visits from the German master, who also took photographs of the coast. There was ample ground for suspicion there.

As Harry Wharton had said, with the Bounder the wish was father to the thought. His suspicious mind rejected any possible innocent explanation of the circumstances. He was determined to look upon all the facts he had gathered as supporting his theory, and his theory was founded upon his dislike of Herr Gans.

But he knew that he would have to discover something much more tangible before he could hope to "show up" the Gander, as he expressed it. And how to discover it, that was the problem the Bounder now had to solve.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Spy!

SKINNER was in the study when the Bounder came in.

Still looking very black and blue,

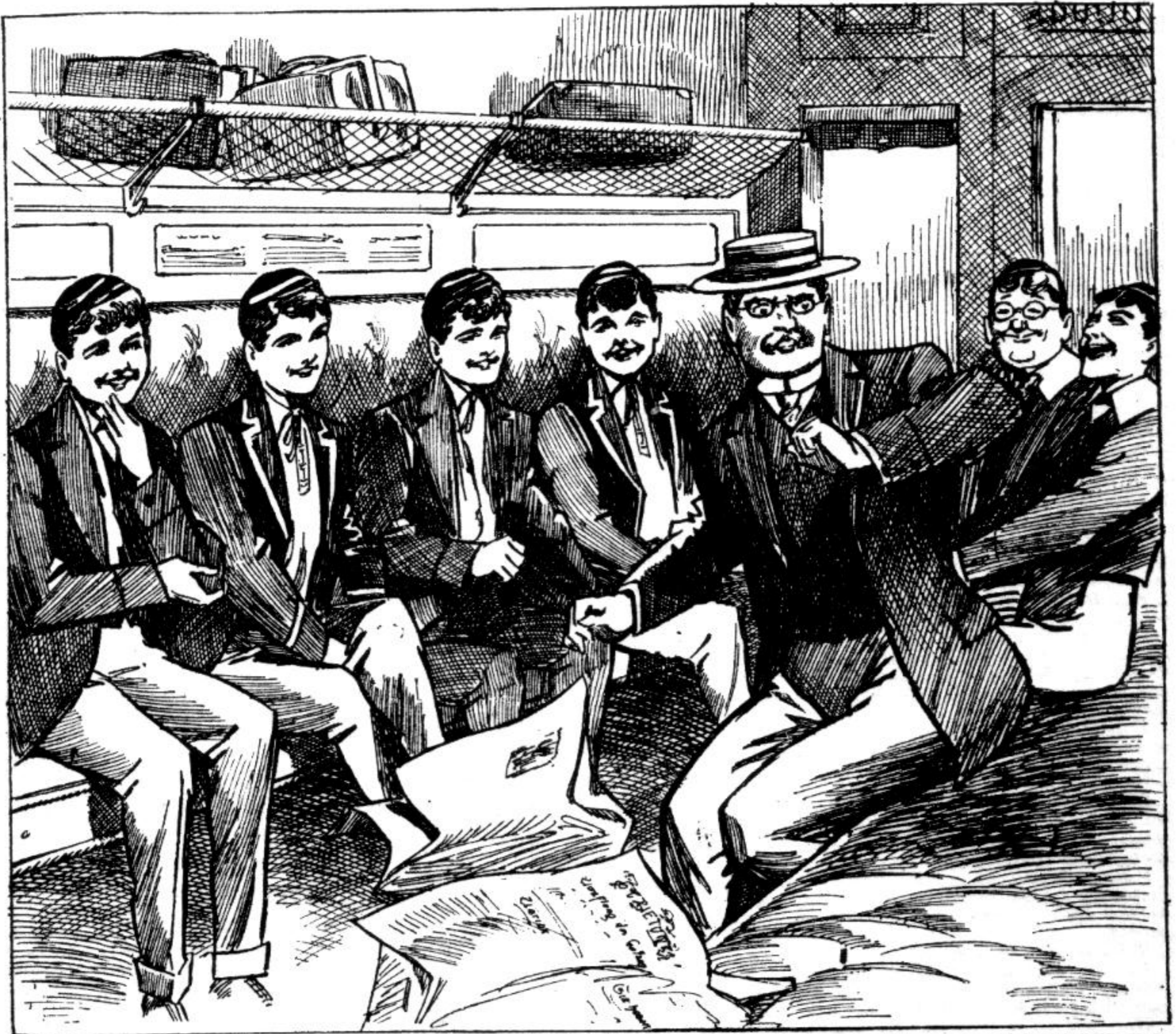
Skinner was seated at the table, with books and papers before him. The Bounder, as he came in, noted that the books were a German dictionary and a German grammar, and he saw that Skinner was writing in German. His lips curled contemptuously. His immediate conclusion was that Skinner, having found that Herr Gans was too tough to be tackled, had resolved to curry favour with him by "mugging up" German.

"Taken a fancy to Deutsch all of a sudden?" asked Vernon-Smith sardonically.

GOOD TURNS—No. 12.



A Magnetite hastening to recover an old gentleman's "topper" which has been blown off by a gust of wind.



Grrrr! A deep, threatening growl came from under the German's seat, and in a flash he had jumped up, the newspaper dropping to the floor. "Mein Gott! Dere is a dog dere!" he exclaimed. The juniors grinned, for they knew the Greyfriars ventriloquist was at work. (See Chapter 3.)

Skinner started. He had been so deeply occupied that he had not noticed his study-mate in the doorway. He flushed crimson, and gathered up his papers at once.

"Mind your own business!" he growled.

Vernon-Smith laughed.

"Oh, I don't mind," he said. "You can mug up as much German as you like, if you want to get into the Gander's good graces. Don't mind me."

"I don't intend to," said Skinner.

"About time we had tea, isn't it?" said the Bounder, in a more conciliatory manner.

"I'm not going to have tea here."

"I don't see where you'll have it, then. This is your study, isn't it?" said Vernon-Smith good-humouredly.

"No, it isn't. I've asked to be changed out."

"Pooh! What rot! Look here, Skinney!" said Vernon-Smith. "I hammered you to-day. You got me a flogging. That's square. Perhaps I was a bit too rough."

"Perhaps you were," said Skinner bitterly. "And perhaps I'll make you sorry for it. We shall see."

"I've got gated for the term," said the Bounder.

"Serve you right!"

"Perhaps it does," said Vernon-Smith, with unusual patience. "Look here, Skinney! There's no need for us to quarrel. You played me a dirty rotten trick, and I licked you for it. Call it square."

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"I'll call it square when I've got even with you, if you like," said Skinner. "Not before."

"And what are you going to do?" said Vernon-Smith, with contemptuous amusement. "Do you think you can hurt me?"

"We'll see."

"Changing out of the study as a punishment to me?" grinned the Bounder. "Whom else are you going to sponge on?"

Skinner flushed.

"I'm not going to sponge on you any more, anyway," he said. "I know you're rolling in money, and I don't have much. Well, you can keep your money. I don't want any of it."

The Bounder looked at him curiously. He had always treated Skinner with contemptuous tolerance, as a useful toady. He had never suspected his study-mate of possessing much spirit, and had certainly never considered him sensitive. But there was evidently more in Skinner than he had deemed.

Skinner, with his books and papers under his arm, moved towards the door. The expression on his bruised face was dark and bitter.

"Look here!" said the Bounder. "I don't want to quarrel, Skinner."

"You should have thought of that before," said Skinner.

"You hammered me, and that was fair and square. You made me go on when you knew I couldn't stand. You kicked me when I was down. I sha'n't forget that in a hurry."

"I'm willing to say I'm sorry," said the Bounder, after a pause.

"I'll make you sorrier, if I can!"

And Skinner left the study.

The Bounder burst into a scornful laugh. Skinner was riding the high horse now; but he had little doubt that Skinner would descend from that elevation in time, and come back to the study. Vernon-Smith's study had been a land of plenty for Harold Skinner, and his thoughts were pretty certain to turn to the fleshpots of Egypt when he had left them behind.

But the Bounder was mistaken. Skinner did not come back, and Vernon-Smith learned later that he had carried out his intention of changing his study. After what had happened, it was easy for him to get permission to do so, and Skinner took up his quarters with Snoop and Stott.

Skinner's new "dodge" of mugging up German was soon known in the Remove. Snoop and Stott related how he swotted over it in the study that evening. And the next day, after lessons, Skinner contrived to get the German master to give him a half-hour's extra lesson.

Herr Gans was only too willing to help a junior who wanted to grind at German, and he was very pleased with Skinner's assiduity. Perhaps he had some suspicion of Skinner at first, knowing him as he did; but, if so, he was soon satisfied with the junior's earnestness. Skinner simply slaved at German; and when the extra lesson was over that afternoon, the German master set him exercises, and Skinner spent the whole afternoon in his study working at them.

That Saturday afternoon the Remove were playing the Upper Fourth on the footer-ground. Vernon-Smith, of course, was detained.

The Bounder spent the afternoon dismally in the Form-room.

Skinner was grinding German in his study; but Vernon-Smith had no desire whatever to grind at the language of Goethe and Schiller. He wanted to be on the football-field, and he groaned in spirit as he heard the shouts of the distant footballers.

Mr. Quelch had set him Latin exercises for the afternoon to keep him from idleness. The Bounder worked at them in a desultory way.

He was "in" for it.

Gated for the rest of the term, he had to give up football for good. He had won his way into the Form team—only for this misfortune to fall upon him, and dash all his brilliant prospects to the ground.

If he could succeed in "showing up" Herr Gans, certainly that great service would count very much in his favour, and he had little doubt that he would be rewarded with a pardon.

But how was he to do it?

The Bounder gave much more thought to that problem than to the Latin exercises Mr. Quelch had kindly provided him with to pass away the time.

How was he to bowl out the spy in the school? It was possible—nay, certain—that if Herr Gans was a foreign spy, he had incriminating documents of some sort in his possession. He must have his official instructions—perhaps in cipher. But ciphers could be deciphered, if only they could be got hold of. He must be drawing up reports to send to his employers at Berlin; and if the Bounder could get a sight of them! They would be written in German, of course; but the Bounder was quite at home in German.

It pleased him to rag Herr Gans by affecting ignorance of the language; but, as a matter of fact, he was a good German scholar. He had won a prize with a German paper the previous term, and he thanked his luck now as he thought of it. His German would come in very useful now—if he could get a sight of Herr Gans' papers.

From the window of the Form-room—where he spent a considerable part of the afternoon—he saw the German master walk out, and leave the school gates.

Being under detention, the Bounder could not follow him and play the spy again; and, indeed, he felt that he had already discovered all that he could hope to discover by that method.

The next step was to see the German's papers—to get hold of some report; or, better still, some letter from the spy's employers in Berlin. That would be proof positive. And while the spy was absent, upon his nefarious business, was the Bounder's opportunity—if he could get into the Herr's room unobserved.

At five o'clock he was free from his detention. As five struck he left the Form-room, with his resolution already made.

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"THE GEN" LIBRARY,
Every Wednesday.

Our Companion Papers.

"THE PENNY POPULAR"
Every Friday.

It was a fine afternoon, and the house seemed deserted. Mr. Quelch had gone out, and all the fellows were on the playing-fields or in the Close.

Everything seemed to favour the Bounder.

He went quietly upstairs, without meeting a soul, and paused outside the German master's room. The door was not locked. The Bounder entered quickly, and closed the door behind him.

He was breathing hard now.

He had no scruples about what he was doing. The Bounder was not troubled by scrupulosity in any form.

But he knew that the results might be serious for him if he was discovered in the German master's room, after his late jape upon the Gander.

But that was a risk he had to take, and he took it coolly.

His search of the room did not take long. None of the drawers or doors were locked. The only receptacle in the room with a lock fastened was a leather travelling-trunk, with foreign labels upon the outside. In that trunk, evidently, the German master kept his private papers. Spy or not, naturally he would have letters or papers of some sort that he would prefer to keep under lock and key; but Vernon-Smith chose to regard the locked trunk as a suspicious circumstance.

He felt the lock with his fingers. It was a strong one, and, of course, he dared not break it. Incriminating documents inside the trunk would perhaps justify his action, if he discovered them; but if none were there—

"I've got to see the inside of that trunk!" the Bounder muttered. "I suppose he carries the key about with him." He examined the lock closely. "It's a common lock enough; shouldn't wonder if I could find a key to fit it. I'll come here again with a bunch of trunk keys; I can get any number in Courtfield. I'll cycle over this afternoon, and get a couple of dozen on spec. If one of them fits the lock—"

His eyes gleamed.

There was nothing more to be done there, and he was in danger so long as he stayed.

He quitted the room as stealthily as he had entered it.

"Found anything out?"

The Bounder gave a jump, and then a gasp of relief as he saw that the speaker was only Skinner of the Remove. Skinner was looking at him over the banisters of the upper staircase.

"Found out that he's a spy, or an Anarchist, or anything?" asked Skinner sarcastically.

"Go and eat coke!" growled the Bounder.

And he walked away.

Skinner chuckled.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Skinner the Swot!

HERR GANS welcomed Skinner with open arms, so to speak, when the junior came into his study about six o'clock. Skinner was laden with a sheaf of impot paper, upon which he had written out exercises galore in the German tongue. And Skinner had been careful to practise the German "fist," and not to content himself with writing his Deutsch exercises in ordinary 'script, as so many of the fellows did.

Skinner had covered sheet after sheet in the angular writing of the Vaterland. His earlier sheets looked like pictures of wild spiders attacking one another ferociously; but they improved as they went on, and the last sheet was quite good.

Herr Gans looked at it, and informed Skinner that it might have been written by a "knabe" in Deutschland—than which, of course, there could be no higher praise.

If Herr Gans had been a suspicious gentleman, he would certainly have suspected Skinner of some ulterior motive in taking up the study of German so assiduously. Hitherto, Skinner had studied just as much German as was driven into his head by force, and no more.

But now he was attacking it in deadly earnest, as if he intended to tackle an examination in that difficult language.

Indeed, Skinner had let it be known in the Remove that he was going to have a try for the German exam. paper at the end of the term.

And as Skinner was never anything of a "swot," and generally avoided anything in the shape of work if he could, the juniors were surprised to hear it.

A more plausible explanation was that he was "crawling up" to the German master, with a view to removing the "down" Herr Gans had on him.

If that was his object, he certainly succeeded.

Herr Gans was flattered and pleased by the keen interest Skinner took in German.

He was accustomed to having his language regarded as a

difficult and painful species of labour—the natural lot of a teacher in a foreign country; and Herr Gans was naturally glad to find that one of his pupils, at all events, appreciated at its proper value a great and noble language.

And the kind-hearted gentleman from Deutschland was willing to devote a large amount of his spare time to the improvement of Harold Skinner's German.

He told Skinner to sit down, and looked over his exercises with that painstaking thoroughness characteristic of German professors.

"Fery good—fery good, mein poy!" said Herr Gans. "You get on much even in a few days, isn't it? You keep on, und you become great Cherman scholar, nicht wah? I am fery please mit you, Skinner—fery please!"

"I like German so much, sir," said Skinner modestly, without a hint in his respectful manner that he was pulling the leg of the unsuspecting German. "Do you think I should have a chance for the German paper this term if I keep on, sir?"

"I tink a goot chance, mein poy. I vill help you gladly!" "You are very kind, sir. I was thinking, sir, that I would try to compose a little essay in German, to see how I can get on with the syntax. Then, if you would look at it and tell me where I'm wrong—"

"A good idea, Skinner." "Yes, sir; I'm turning it over in my mind," said Skinner thoughtfully. "Let me see—what would you say in German, sir, for 'Information required'?"

Herr Gans smiled. "You would say, 'Auskunft verlangt,' Skinner." "And what do you call a hydroplane in German, sir?" "A vat?" "Aeroplane that goes on the water, you know, sir?" "Ach! We say he is a hydro-aeroplane, Skinner. Is it tat you are writing an essay on tat subject, den?"

"I was thinking of something of the kind, sir. Lemme see—to report is 'berichten' in German, isn't it, sir?"

"Tat is so, Skinner." Skinner asked some more questions, of which Herr Gans could not quite see the drift, but which he answered good-naturedly.

When Skinner left the study he left the Gander with the impression that he was a hard-working lad with a keen appreciation of the beautiful German language.

Herr Gans considerably modified his first impression of Skinner. The meeting in the railway train had not impressed him favourably, of course. But Skinner seemed to be trying to make up for his bad conduct, and the kind-hearted German was glad to give him the chance.

Skinner dropped into No. 1 Study a little later. The Famous Five were there, having their tea. They had beaten the Upper Fourth in the football match by a comfortable margin of three goals to one, and they were feeling very satisfied with themselves. On the strength of that victory they were standing themselves an unusually handsome tea.

When Skinner came in they greeted him cordially enough. The terrific hammering Skinner had received from the Bounder was considered to have wiped out his offence in sneaking to the master; and the sight of his bruised face touched the juniors a little.

"Just in time," said Harry Wharton hospitably. "Sit down, Skinney!"

Skinner shook his head. "I haven't asked myself to tea," he replied. "Well, I'm asking you," said Harry with a smile. "Sit down, my son—if you haven't had your tea, of course. I hear that you're not with Smithy now in his quarters?"

"I've changed out," said Skinner. "Well, I suppose it was a sensible thing to do, after what's happened," said Harry. "But you'll make it up sooner or later surely."

"No fear!" "Smithy was very ratty, you know—and he was sorry afterwards!" said Harry, with the intention of pouring oil upon the troubled waters if he could. He was not very friendly either with Skinner or the Bounder, but he did not want to see two fellows who had been friends on fighting terms.

"He's going to be sorrier," said Skinner grimly. "I'll see to that. When I changed out of his study, he twitted me with sponging on him; I'm not going to sponge on him any more—or on you either, Wharton. I haven't come to tea."

"Just as you like, of course." "I've got a letter to write," Skinner explained. "Last vac, you fellows had a holiday abroad, didn't you?"

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"Yes," said Harry, in surprise.

"I suppose when you wrote letters home you used that thin kind of foreign notepaper, didn't you—people abroad generally do?"

"Yes," said Harry again. "It saves a good bit on the postage, if you write a long letter, you know."

"Yes, that's it," said Skinner, with a nod. "I've got to write to a relation abroad, and I wondered if you had a sheet or two left you could let me have."

"I've got a whole quire in my box," said Wharton. "You're welcome to it, Skinner. Do you want it now?"

"Oh, any time!" said Skinner. "When you've finished your tea will do. Two or three sheets will be enough."

"Right-ho!"

After tea Harry Wharton found the foreign notepaper which had been reposing in his box ever since his holiday on the Continent, and handed half a dozen sheets to Skinner. The matter made no impression on his mind, of course, and he forgot all about it ten minutes later.

But Skinner's eyes were gleaming as he took the notepaper to his study. There he held it up to the light, and he grinned with satisfaction as he discerned a German water-mark on the paper.

"Better luck than I expected," he murmured. "I suppose lots of this stuff is made in Germany. Any foreign notepaper would have done; but German is the best. Ha, ha, ha!"

Which was certainly very mysterious, and would have puzzled Harry Wharton very much if he had heard it.

Skinner did his preparation that evening in the study with Snoop and Stott, and his German was kept out of sight. But when Snoop and Stott had finished their work and gone down Skinner started German again.

His keenness on that subject was really amazing.

With a dictionary on one side of him and a German grammar on the other, he laboured patiently, and his "essay" grew in shape and form.

The result did not satisfy Skinner, and he made a list of words and phrases about which to consult the obliging Herr Gans later on.

At bedtime he put his books away, and carefully locked up in his desk the

papers he had scribbled. The Bounder glanced at him when he met him in the Remove dormitory, but Skinner turned his head away. Vernon-Smith was willing to make it up—he would have been glad of his former comrade's help in tracking down the supposed German spy. But Skinner was not in the least disposed to make it up with the Bounder. When Vernon-Smith said "Good-night, Skinner!" Skinner maintained a sullen silence, and the Bounder shrugged his shoulders and went to bed.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Gander is Very Good!

"TRY the Gander!"

Bob Cherry made the suggestion.

Wednesday had come round, the day of the return match with Redclyffe School. During morning lessons Harry Wharton had been very thoughtful—not on the subject of the lessons.

He was thinking about the footer match. The Bounder was detained—gated for all half-holidays for the rest of the term. He would not be able to play for the Remove that afternoon, and the team would miss him sorely. He had brought the punishment on himself, and he deserved it—but that did not help the eleven. They wanted the Bounder on the wing, to help them to beat Redclyffe. The Remove was a keen footballing Form and there were plenty of candidates for the vacant place—and a good many of them were good players. But there was no one available who was anything like Vernon-Smith's form.

After dinner, the chums of the Remove met to consult about the matter. It was a question of whom to play in the Bounder's place—for the juniors knew, by long experience of Mr. Quelch, that it would be useless to ask him to let Vernon-Smith off for that special afternoon.

Then Bob Cherry made his sudden suggestion—a suggestion that was met with blank stares by his comrades.

"Try whom?" Wharton repeated, in astonishment.

DON'T FORGET THE TICKETS!

(See Page iii. of Cover.)

"The Gander!" said Bob.

"Herr Gans?"

"Yes."

"You howling ass! The Gander doesn't play football—and if he did he wouldn't be likely to play in a Lower Fourth match!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob. "I didn't mean try him as a footballer, fathead! I mean try him about getting the Bouncer off!"

"But it is Quelchy who has detained him."

"I know that; but it was on Gans' account. Skinner sneaked to Gans, and Smithy hammered him, and Smithy got gated. It was really through Gans, wasn't it? If the Gander hadn't come gandering here at all Smithy wouldn't have been gated."

"Yes, but—"

"The Gander is good-nature all over. If he knew how we were fixed, I'll bet you a French penny that he'd go to Quelchy and beg Smithy off. Quelchy would tell us to go and eat coke—in other words—but he couldn't tell the Gander to go and eat coke. They get on famously together—they jaw to one another in German, and lend one another books—I've heard them going it in German till I've wondered they didn't get a crick in the neck. If the Gander asked Quelchy as a special favour—"

"My hat!" said Wharton. "Quelchy couldn't say 'no.' But—but would the Gander do it? Smithy has been a beast to him."

"Chance for him to be a good Samaritan," suggested Bob. "Good for evil, you know, and a brilliant example to fellows to forgive injuries, and so on."

"Hum! Good Samaritans are a bit out of date. It would be a cheek to ask him, considering how Smithy has treated him."

"Well, we've got cheek enough," said Bob coolly. "Coker says we've got too much cheek. Besides, we sha'n't be asking him for Smithy's sake, but for our own."

"Quite true," said Nugent. "Might try it. The Gander is a jolly good-natured chap. See how he's taking trouble over Skinner and his blessed swotting—after the rotten way Skinner treated him in the train the day he arrived here."

"That's so. We'll try," said Wharton decidedly. "It won't do any harm if we fail. Anybody know where the Gander is?"

"Reading his German paper under the trees, out there," said Bob Cherry, jerking his thumb towards the window on the Close.

"Come on, then; we'll all go together and pile in."

And Harry Wharton & Co. marched out on that forlorn hope. Herr Gans was seated on one of the old oaken benches under the elms, reading a paper he had received from the Fatherland. He glanced up kindly over his spectacles as the juniors bore down upon him. They all took off their caps very respectfully.

"Good-afternoon, sir!" said Wharton. "We—we want to speak to you, sir, if it isn't bothering you too much."

"Not at all, mein poy!" said Herr Gans. "I like to be boddered by mein poy. Vat is it tat I can do for you?"

"We—we want to ask you a very big favour, sir," said Nugent.

The German master beamed.

"Ach! Is it tat you take up te Cherman examination baper, like that goot and fery industrious poy Skinner?"

"Ahem! Not exactly, sir," murmured Wharton. "We—ahem!—we're leaving that to Skinner, sir. It's only fair to give Skinner a look in, as he's so jolly keen on German. It's a different matter, sir. It's about Smithy—Vernon-Smith, sir."

The German master frowned a little.

"Vat is it?" he asked.

"We're in a very difficult position, sir, owing to Smithy being gated. We're playing Redclyffe this afternoon."

"Is tat a game?" asked Herr Gans innocently.

"Ahem! No; it's a school. They're coming over here to play us at football. That's a game."

"Ach! I have hear of te great English game of ball wiz te feet!" cried Herr Gans cheerily. "In Chermany we play him fery much now; he go fery strong. I gome and see you blay wiz your feet, ain't it?"

"Thank you, sir. But about Smithy. He's in the team, sir, and he's detained, and we wondered if—if—if—"

"Tat is fery pad," said Herr Gans. "You vant Smit to play, and it is tat he is detained viz himself, nicht wöh?"

"That is it, sir. He was detained owing to the trouble arising out of his rotten joke on you, sir."

"He is a fery pad poy."

"Yes, sir. I suppose we mustn't ask you—"

"Ask me anyting you like, mein poy," said the Gander kindly.

"Well, sir, we—we thought that if you would kindly

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speak to Mr. Quelch he might let Smithy off for this one afternoon, so that he could play in the match. If you mentioned to Mr. Quelch that you wouldn't like to be the cause of our losing the match—"

"I understand, Wharton."

"I know it's asking a lot, sir," said Wharton, colouring a little, "but we're in a fix. Redclyffe is our hardest match, and we want Smithy to play. We shall be licked if we don't have him, most likely. Of course, Smithy has been very rotten to you, sir, but as you are so kind, we thought—perhaps—" Wharton hesitated.

Herr Gans looked very thoughtful.

"I care not apout Smit's conduct to me," he said. "I forgive him for tat. But I tink it fery difficult for me to interfere mit anoder master, ain't it?"

"It wouldn't be quite like that, sir. You see, it was really owing to you, in a way, that Smithy was gated; though of course, we know it was his own fault."

Herr Gans rose to his feet.

"I vill speak mit Herr Quelch," he said.

"Oh, thank you, sir!" chorused the juniors.

"Nein, nein! I vill do my pest," said the German master.

And he trotted away to the School House.

"Jolly good old boy!" said Wharton. "That was a ripping idea of yours, Bob. He will do his 'pest,' as he calls it. Quelchy can't say 'no.'"

The juniors followed the German master into the house, and waited in the passage in a state of great anxiety. They knew that the kind-hearted German would do all he could for them, and all depended on Mr. Quelch now. Ten minutes later Mr. Quelch came out of his study, with a somewhat severe expression upon his face. His look was not promising, and the juniors' hearts sank.

"It appears that you have asked Herr Gans to request me to release Vernon-Smith from his detention this afternoon," said Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir," said Harry. "We're playing Redclyffe, and—"

"Vernon-Smith has been punished for bad conduct. He fully deserves more than has been inflicted upon him. But Herr Gans tells me it would be painful to him to be, however indirectly and innocently, the cause of a disappointment to you. I think he shows more kindness than is called for, but—Mr. Quelch paused—"since Herr Gans has put it to me in that manner, I feel that I cannot refuse. You may tell Vernon-Smith that he is free for this afternoon only."

"Thank you, sir!"

"You need not thank me. Your thanks are due to Herr Gans," said Mr. Quelch; and he returned into his study.

The juniors exchanged satisfied looks.

"Worked the oracle, by Jove!" said Johnny Bull.

"Good old Gander!"

"It's simply ripping of him!" said Harry Wharton. "If I ever find anybody ragging the Gander again, I'll talk to him—without gloves!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Let's go and tell Smithy!"

And the juniors rushed off to the Form-room, where Vernon-Smith, under detention, was sitting alone, with Latin exercises before him.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Vernon-Smith is Obstinate!

"COME out of that!"

"Gerrup!"

"Chuck that rubbish away!"

"You're let off!"

"The let-off-fulness is terrific!"

Vernon-Smith started in astonishment as the chums of the Remove rushed into the Form-room, announcing his unexpected freedom at the top of their voices. Bob Cherry, in the exuberance of his spirits, grasped the Bouncer by his shoulders, and whirled him off the form.

"What do you mean?" growled the Bouncer. "What's the little game?"

"The little game's footer, and we mean that you're going to play!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "You're let off!"

The Bouncer brightened up. He had been thinking about the forthcoming match as he sat there alone in the Form-room. It was good news for him, as well as for the chums of the Remove.

"Let off!" he exclaimed. "You don't mean to say that Quelchy—"

"We do—we does!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Come along, my son. Redclyffe will be here in half an hour, and we want you, and we want you badly."

"Well, I'm jolly glad," said the Bounder. "But—but I don't quite understand it. Quelchy never lets a chap off when he's gated. He'd see football matches galore in Jericho first! How did you get him to do it?"

"It wasn't us; it was the Gander."

"Herr Gans?" exclaimed the Bounder, starting.

"Yes; good old Goosey-gander!" chirruped Bob Cherry. "He's coe of the best—first chop—A 1—gilt-edged, though made in Germany."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Bounder's expression changed.

"Do you mean to say that it was Herr Gans who got me off?" he exclaimed.

"Yes, the giddy gander!"

"What did he do it for?"

"Because we asked him, and he's the jolliest old boy going!"

"Come on, Smithy!"

"So I owe this to the Gander!" said the Bounder, setting his teeth.

"Yes; and after this I fancy you'll have to admit that he's a good sort," said Nugent. "No more pulling his Deutsch leg, you know!"

The Bounder smiled bitterly. He sat down deliberately in his place again at the desk, a proceeding which was watched by the Removeites with amazement.

"Come on!" repeated Harry Wharton. "What are you sticking there for?"

"I'm not coming!" said Vernon-Smith quietly.

There was a yell.

"Not coming! What do you mean, you chump?"

"(Of course you're coming!" said Bob Cherry hotly. "Are you off your silly rocker? Do you think we've taken the trouble of begging you off for nothing?"

"I'm not going to be under any obligation to Herr Gans!" said Vernon-Smith. "If I were, I should be bound in common decency to let him alone. That's what he wants, I expect."

"What rot!" said Wharton angrily. "Herr Gans asked Quelchy to let you off as a favour to us. Do you think he cares twopence about whether you dislike him or not?"

"I think he may have guessed something."

"Guessed what?"

"That I'm on his track."

"On his track?" said Johnny Bull. "Off your dot, you mean! You silly ass, if you're not balmy in the crumpet, explain what you mean."

"Wharton understands," said Vernon-Smith. "I've told him what I suspect."

"You fathead!" exclaimed Wharton. "I'd forgot that silly rot, and I thought you'd forgotten it, too!"

"What is it?" asked Johnny Bull.

"The champion chump has got an idiotic idea into his silly head that Herr Gans is a German spy!" snorted Wharton.

"A German spy? Oh, scissors!"

"Well, of all the barmy chumps—"

"Ha, ha, ha! Poor old Gander! Ha, ha, ha!"

"You can cackle as much as you like!" said Vernon-Smith. "I know what I know. I'm perfectly convinced that Gans is a German spy masquerading as a school teacher. There are lots of them in England on the East Coast spying out the fortifications, and the lie of the land, and taking notes about places for landing troops, and that kind of thing. There's another spy in Pegg, skulking in a lonely cottage, in league with him. Herr Gans pays him visits, and takes photographs of the bay, and—"

"My hat," said Nugent, "I've taken photographs of the bay myself, for that matter! But I haven't sent them to Berlin to the German War Office. Ha, ha, ha!"

"This coast is just where the Germans would land, if they made a sudden attack," said Vernon-Smith, "and lots of the newspapers say that is what they are going to do some day. It's bound to come."

"Oh, rats! The newspapers will say anything when there isn't a murder case or a sea-serpent to print piffle about," said Johnny Bull. "I'm afraid your brain's going, Smithy."

"Or gone!" growled Wharton.

"Such a harmless old codger as the Gander," murmured Nugent. "I suppose there are German spies in existence, but poor old Gander. Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm going to prove it," said the Bounder coolly. "You'll talk differently then when the police come down to take him."

"Yes, when that happens!" said Nugent. "Fancy P.-c. Tozer coming along and taking the poor old Gander up on a charge of taking photographs in Pegg Bay. Smithy, old man, I didn't know you were a humorist before. You are too funny to live!"

"We shall see."

"For goodness' sake, chuck all that piffle, and come out," said Harry Wharton. "If you weren't simply blinded by dislike of the Gander, you'd see what a silly ass you're making of yourself."

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"I'm not going to accept any favour from Herr Gans." "Well, it isn't a favour to you, it's a favour to us. We want you."

"I'm sorry."

Wharton stared angrily at the Bounder.

"Do you really mean that you're not going to play for the Remove this afternoon?" he demanded hotly.

"Yes."

"You're going to leave us in the lurch, after we've begged you off, because you've got a silly, cranky idea like that in your silly head?"

"I think I've got on to the truth. If I take favours from Herr Gans, I can't go on spotting him, and proving the case against him. Well, I'm determined to do that. I'm going to show him up, and get him arrested."

"More likely get yourself sacked."

"I shall risk that."

"Look here," said Wharton, "we want you in the eleven. You've got to come. You were put in the team on your promise to play up when you were wanted, and not to leave us in the lurch. It's up to you to play."

"It's a peculiar case. I'd be jolly glad to play—you know that. But I can't accept any favours from Herr Gans. If I did, could I go on working against him?"

"I suppose not; but—"

"That settles it. I'm not going to let him off and let him go on doing his rascally spying for the sake of a football-match."

"Oh, you're dotty!" said Wharton impatiently. "Blessed if I didn't think you had more sense. So you won't come?"

"I can't."

"Stay here, and be hanged, then! And I shall jolly well think twice before I give you a chance of playing for the Remove again!" said Harry angrily.

"I've got my duty to do," said the Bounder loftily.

"Duty! Rats! It's nobody's duty to be a rotten spy and watch people about. If spying wasn't in your nature, you wouldn't think it could be a duty!"

And with that Wharton stalked out of the Form-room in high dudgeon. He was utterly exasperated by the line the Bounder had taken up. He regarded Vernon-Smith's suspicions of the German master as absurd. The accusation was possible, but it was not at all probable. It was the restless, suspicious, tortuous nature of the Bounder that was at the bottom of it, not any suspicious conduct on the part of Herr Gans. And after all the trouble that had been taken to get Vernon-Smith set at liberty for the afternoon, it was distinctly exasperating to have to leave him out of the team after all.

The other fellows stayed to reason with the Bounder, and urge him; but it was useless. Vernon-Smith had made up his mind; and the juniors quitted him at last, angry and disgusted, and followed Wharton.

The Remove fellows were gathering round the junior footer ground now. It was getting near time for the match.

"Whom are you going to put in, Harry?" Bob Cherry asked.

"Ogilvy," said Harry shortly. "He's not anything like Smithy's form, but he's a good winger, and very keen. He'll do his best."

"What-ho!" said Ogilvy. "I'll play up for all I'm worth, Wharton, though I'm afraid it won't be quite like Smithy."

The Remove fellows changed for the match, and they were punting about a footer on the ground when the Redclyffe team arrived.

Lucas, the Redclyffe skipper, and all his men, looked very fit. They had come over to wipe out the drawn match with a crushing victory—if they could—and it was only too probable that they could, with the best winger in the Remove team left out. The Remove could not afford to give away a single point in that match, and the absence of the Bounder might spell defeat. It was more than likely.

Redclyffe were a junior team, playing members of the Shell, the Fourth, and the Lower Fourth of Redclyffe School. Wharton's team was a Form team—all in the Lower Fourth. The Redclyffians, therefore, had a natural advantage, and they regarded it as a cheek for a Lower Fourth team to challenge them at all. All the more for that reason Harry Wharton & Co. wanted to pull off the match, and with the brilliant play of the Bounder to help them, there was no reason why they should not have done so. But the Bounder was sulking in the Form-room, like Achilles in his tent of old. The Remove had to do the best they could without his help.

It was with grim determination, but without much real hope of success, that the Remove eleven lined up for the match.

From the window of the Form-room, Vernon-Smith saw them, and his face was darkly shadowed. He wanted keenly to be there in the ranks. But his resolution did not falter.

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Ho had marked out the work he was to do, and he meant to do it. But his heart was heavy as he looked on and saw the game begin.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER. In Black and White!

VERNON-SMITH turned from the window as he heard a step in the Form-room.

Skinner looked in at the doorway.

"Hallo, I thought you were let off!" he exclaimed.

"I've declined to be let off!" said the Bounder grimly.

"What on earth—"

"I'm not taking any favours from a German spy."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Skinner walked away laughing. The Bounder looked out of the window again. He caught a glimpse of Mr. Quelch crossing the Close on his way to the gates. The Remove-master was going out that afternoon. No one was likely to keep an eye on Vernon-Smith. As he had been excused from his detention for that afternoon, he was not compelled to remain in the Form-room unless he chose. Everybody was outside the house. It was a golden opportunity for carrying out his investigations in the German master's room. If Herr Gans had gone out too:

"My hat, he's there!"

Vernon-Smith caught sight of the German master, standing by the ropes on the footer ground, clapping his hands. Herr Gans was watching the junior match, with interest none the less keen because he did not understand the game. He was clapping a goal now—it was a Redclyffe goal, but Herr Gans did not mind.

Vernon-Smith felt in his pocket. The bunch of keys was there that he had procured from Courtfield. He had twenty or more keys of various sizes and makes, and he was pretty certain that one or another of them would fit the lock of the German master's trunk.

Vernon-Smith left the Form-room quietly. The house was deserted. There was a football match going on on the senior ground, and that had drawn out the seniors. Hardly a study in the School House was occupied just then. It was the best chance the Bounder could possibly have had for pursuing his investigations, and any considerations of personal honour did not deter him.

He passed only one fellow as he went upstairs. It was Skinner. Skinner looked at him, and walked on without speaking, and left the School House.

The Bounder reached the German master's door, and paused. Like Moses of old, he looked this way and that way. But there was no one in sight. He entered the room quickly, and closed the door behind him. Once more he was in the quarters of the supposed spy, but this time he had come better prepared.

He took the bunch of keys from his pocket and knelt before the trunk. His heart was beating hard.

If he should be discovered there!

He rose hastily, and crossed to the door with the intention of locking it. If anyone came, he could escape by the window, and it would remain unknown who had been in the room and locked the door on the inside.

But there was no key to be seen.

The Bounder grunted, and returned to the trunk. After all, the German master was watching the football-match, and he was not likely to leave before it was over. And that would be a good hour yet.

As the Bounder knelt before the mysterious trunk—mysterious in his suspicious eyes—a sheet of paper crumpled under his knee. He glanced at it, and saw that it was a letter upon foreign paper, written in German.

His heart thumped as he picked it up.

He knew that Herr Gans had received one or two letters from Germany lately—one had arrived only that morning. There was nothing surprising, certainly, in a German master receiving letters from his native land. It would have been more surprising if he had not received any. But the Bounder did not look at it in that light. He wanted very much to get a sight of those letters. He was convinced that some of them, at least, were from the Berlin War Office, and contained communications referring to the spy work in England which he believed Herr Gans was engaged in.

If this was one of the letters!

The Bounder's eyes gleamed.

Quite possibly the German master had intended to lock the letter up in his trunk, and had dropped it there. Not knowing that he was suspected, he would not be very much on his guard. And he knew, too, that German was an unknown language to the servants who did his room, and to most of the boys. School German did not enable a fellow to read a letter written in German. But the Herr's careless-

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ness was likely to cost him dear this time. The letter was in Vernon-Smith's hands now, and Vernon-Smith had not studied German for nothing.

The Bounder held it up with a shaking hand.

It was written on foreign notepaper, and as he held it to the light he saw a German water-mark. The writing was in German script and the German language—difficult enough to read—but the Bounder could read it. And the first words upon the sheet made his heart jump:

"Auskunft verlangt!" (Information required!)

The Bounder uttered a suppressed cry. It was certain now. This was a paper of instructions, enclosed in a letter from Berlin. There could be no doubt about it. The Bounder almost turned giddy at this clear and distinct proof of the correctness of his suspicions—undeniable proof in black and white.

Almost forgetting where he was and his danger of being discovered, in his eagerness, Vernon-Smith deciphered and read the paper. His hands trembled with eagerness, and his breath came thick and fast as he read. For the letter ran:

"AUSKUNFT VERLANGT:

- "1. Ein Verzeichnis der Festungen an der Mündung der Themse.
- "2. Angabe der Zahl der Hydro-aeroplane in Besitz der britisch Admiralität.
- "3. Anzahl der Truppen die in kürzester Frist marschbereit an der Ostküste zur Verfügung stehen.

"Dem Herrn General Krankenstein in Berlin direkt zu berichten."

The Bounder held his breath as he read it. Although he was well up in German, there were some phrases not quite clear to him at the first glance. But the general meaning of the document was clear, and the Bounder, careless of the danger of discovery now—now that he had proof positive in his hand—set to work to clear up the doubtful points. He sat down at the German master's writing-table, and consulted Herr Gans' own dictionary, and wrote out a translation in English of the mysterious paper.

When he had finished it, he compared it with the original, going over it word by word, phrase by phrase, and was satisfied with the result. In English the letter ran:

"INFORMATION REQUIRED:

- "1. List of the fortifications at the mouth of the Thames.
- "2. Number of waterplanes at disposal of British Admiralty.
- "3. Number of troops available at short notice on the east coast.

"Report direct to General Krankenstein, Berlin."

So ran the English translation of the letter in German, and there was evidence enough there to convict a whole army of spies, as the Bounder said to himself, with a chuckle. The paper had evidently been enclosed in a letter from the headquarters of the Secret Intelligence Department—otherwise, the spying department—in Berlin. That was how the Bounder figured it out. Probably Herr Gans had dropped it in opening the letter, or he might have been conning over his instructions in his room, and left the letter there. At all events, there was the letter—there was no doubt upon that point—and it furnished evidence enough to send the recipient to prison.

"My hat!" said the Bounder aloud, scarcely able to believe in his good luck. "No need to open that blessed trunk now! I've got evidence enough. If the Deutscher can crawl out of this he's a cleverer man than I give him credit for being. Fortifications at the mouth of the Thames. By Jove! That's for a raid up the river! Number of waterplanes in the service of the British Admiralty. How was the Gander to find that out, I wonder? Very likely he's in connection with a whole crowd of spies. If they make one of them a school teacher, they might get another into the Admiralty as a clerk or something. Or perhaps he's got to bribe somebody to give information away. Something of that kind happened only the other day. Number of troops ready to march to the east coast at short notice. Not very many. Trust our giddy War Office for that! And he's to send the report direct to General Krankenstein at Berlin. I wonder if anything could be clearer than that?"

The Bounder chuckled gleefully.

With all his suspicions of the German master, he had had a lingering doubt—a dread that he was on the wrong track, and might be making a fool of himself all the time. But he could not have any doubt now.

That letter of instructions for spy work sent to the German master from the spy headquarters in Berlin was evidence enough for any court of law.

In his mind's eye the Bounder saw Herr Gans marching away from Greyfriars between two detectives from Scotland Yard. He pictured the eager policemen, and Herr Gans, like Eugene Aram, walking between with gyves upon his wrist.

It seemed almost too good to be true! The fellows had laughed at his suspicions, and ridiculed them. They would laugh in another way now. He had only to show that letter—

The Bounder reflected. Should he go directly to the police or to the Head. When it all came out, the Head would naturally consider that he ought to have been told first of all. Better go to the Head, and he could telephone for the police, and they could arrive and capture the scoundrel before he had a suspicion that he was discovered, before he had a chance of escape. Having seen that letter, Dr. Locke could not possibly refuse to act in the matter, however little he might like the idea of a scandal and publicity in connection with his school.

"I'll take it straight to the Head!" muttered the Bounder. "Then—" He gave a sudden start. Heavy footsteps were coming along the passage, and he knew the weighty tread of Hans Gans.

He thrust the letter and the translation quickly into his pocket, and gave a hunted look round. He was caught—fairly caught—and if the spy guessed the truth, he might never get out of that room alive!

That was the terrible thought that flashed into his mind as the footsteps approached the door and stopped there.

But the Bounder was cool, and he had an iron nerve. He drew closer to the table, his hand resting close to the heavy

"I haven't played any trick."

"Den vat you come for?"

"Oh, just to look round," said the Bounder coolly, but with beating heart. If he could only get past the German master and bolt for it!

"Surely, Smit, it is impossible tat you are a tief?" said Herr Gans. "I should not like to tink tat you come here to steal. But vat for you pring dose keys, hein?" He pointed to the bunch of keys which Vernon-Smith had left lying on the trunk when he picked up the letter.

"Those—those keys!" stammered the Bounder.

"You tink tat you open my trunk, isn't it?" said Herr Gans sternly.

"I haven't opened it."

"But you vas going to open it mit dem keys, I tink."

The Bounder was silent. Surely the German must guess now that he was detected. But Herr Gans did not look at all like a criminal discovered. He looked like an angry and annoyed German master. That was all.

"You are a pad and vicked poy, Smit!" said Herr Gans. "Some masters would tink tat you came to steal ven you unlock a private trunk mit tings in it; but I tink tat it is a trick you play, hein? I tink it necessary to punish you!"

He strode forward.

The Bounder sprang back, with a cry, whirling up the heavy inkstand.

"Put a finger on me and I'll brain you!" he shouted.

Herr Gans almost fell down in his astonishment. He stopped and stared at the Bounder, his light-blue eyes growing big and round behind his glimmering glasses.

"Smit! Is it tat you are mad?" he gasped.

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inkstand. If the worst came, he would hurl it at the German and make a rush for the door.

The door opened.

Herr Gans, with a frowning brow, strode in. His eyes gleamed behind his spectacles as he saw the Bounder. Vernon-Smith faced him, with glittering eyes and hard-drawn breath, ready for a fight for his life if it came to that.

"So it is you, Smit!" said Herr Gans quietly.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Accused!

THE Bounder did not falter.

He drew a hard, sharp breath, and his fingers closed on the inkstand.

"Yes, Herr Gans," he said; "it is I."

"I thought so," said the German master. "You are te poy I expected to find here."

"You knew I was likely to come to your room?" sneered the Bounder. "So you have been suspecting me?"

"I did not suspect you, Smit; but Skinner say—"

"So Skinner told you I was here?"

"He tell me noting. He seem surprise to see me on te football ground, and mention tat he thought me in my room, because he hear somebody move dere when he pass. So I tink to myself tat is Smit tat play anoder trick, isn't it. So I come in and I catch you mit yourself in mein room, Smit."

"Skinner meant you to catch me. But it doesn't matter now. If you'll kindly stand aside, Herr Gans, I'll go."

"Pefore you go, Smit, you vill tell me vat trick you have played in mein room," said the German master. "Vat is te game, hein?"

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"Keep off, you scoundrel!"

"Mein Gott!"

"Keep your distance," said the Bounder. "I only want to leave this room, that's all. If you try to stop me, I'll brain you!"

"Mein Gott! You are vun dangerous ruffian!" stuttered the German master. "I have neffer seen ein poy like you pefore, afterwards. Smit, I shall report all dis to te head-master. I vill not deal mit you meinself!"

"That's all I want," said the Bounder.

"You vant me to report you to te Head, ven alretty last veek pefore he have given you vun flogging!" exclaimed Herr Gans.

"Yes. I'm going to the Head now. Follow me there if you dare!" said Vernon-Smith.

"Mein Gott! Te poy is mad—insane!"

Vernon-Smith had been sidling towards the doorway; and now, as the astounded German master blinked at him helplessly, he made a sudden backward spring, and reached the passage. He flung down the inkstand and ran.

"Mein Gott! Te poor poy is mad—mad!" muttered Herr Gans. "I vill not be harsh mit him, because he is mad; but I tink I must report to te Head tat he is out of his senses, ain't it?"

Vernon-Smith went down the stairs three at a time. He feared every moment to hear the heavy footsteps of the German in pursuit. But Herr Gans did not pursue him. He was not accustomed to making quick movements, and apparently he saw no cause for hurry just now.

The Bounder dashed violently into Skinner on the lower landing. Skinner staggered back against the wall.

"Hallo! Where are you going?" he ejaculated.

The Bounder panted.

"I'm going to the Head!"

"What's happened?"

"I've discovered proof against Herr Gans—a letter from the headquarters in Berlin, with instructions for his spying," said the Bounder triumphantly.

"My hat!" said Skinner.

The Bounder had cast a quick glance up the stairs. The German was not following him, and he was reassured. Immediately he resumed his usual coolness.

"I fancy the fellows will look a little blue when they know!" he remarked, with a sneering grin.

"I shouldn't wonder," said Skinner. "They're looking blue enough now, for the matter of that. Redclyffe took two goals to one in the first half, and they're having it all their own way. We shall be beaten to the wide!"

"Oh, rot! Do you think I've got time to think about football matches now? The Gander will be arrested before he's an hour older. What do you think of that?" grinned the Bounder.

He hurried away towards the Head's study without waiting for Skinner to reply. Skinner looked after him with a sardonic grin. The Bounder had asked him what he thought of it, and apparently Skinner thought it funny, for as soon as the Bounder was out of sight he burst into a roar of laughter.

Vernon-Smith reached the Head's study, and tapped at the door. Dr. Locke's quiet voice bade him enter.

The Head was spending a few hours with Horace, as he frequently did on a half-holiday. Our old friend Horatius Flaccus was his most valued companion. He sighed a little as he bade the applicant for admission come in, and the glance he gave the junior was not wholly a welcoming one.

"Well, Smith, what do you want?" he asked.

"I have a most important matter to lay before you, sir, if you'll allow me," said the Bounder.

"Cannot your Form-master see to it?"

"No, sir. It is a very important matter—a matter really of national importance," said Vernon-Smith, with involuntary consequence in his manner.

The Head laid down his pen and stared at him.

"It seems to me, Vernon-Smith, that you are either venturing to play a foolish joke upon your headmaster, or that you are out of your senses!" he said. "What do you mean by talking such nonsense to me?"

Vernon-Smith was a little damped. This was not really an encouraging reception for a fellow who had run risks to detect and bring to justice his country's foes. But the Bounder did not think of retreating.

"Will you kindly look at that letter, sir?" he said.

He laid the letter on the Head's table before him. Dr. Locke adjusted his glasses, and glanced at it in surprise.

"This letter is in German," he said.

"I have a translation here, sir; but, of course, you can read the German," said Vernon-Smith. "Will you read it, and I will explain?"

"This is a very curious letter," said the Head. "Do you mean to tell me that someone has written to you in German to this effect?"

The Bounder smiled.

"No, sir. That letter was not written to me."

"Then how did it come into your possession?" demanded the Head sternly.

"I found it, sir, when tracking down the German spy it was sent to."

"The—the what?"

"The German spy, sir. You can see by the letter itself that it was sent to a German spy from the headquarters in Berlin."

"It certainly reads like that," said the Head, amazed. "Here is a demand for information which would certainly be useful to a foreign Government, and could only be obtained by the base work of a spy. But it is incredible, Smith, that you have found out a foreign spy at work! How could you possibly have done so?"

"The spy is living in Greyfriars, sir."

"What!"

"It is Herr Gans, sir."

"Are you mad, boy?"

"No, sir," said Vernon-Smith calmly; "I'm not mad. I've bowled him out, that's all. Herr Gans is a spy, in the pay of the German Government, and he is masquerading as a school teacher to carry out his work on the coast here."

"Impossible!"

"There's the proof, sir. I've been suspecting him ever since he came. I thought he was fishy. I watched him—I knew that he had left the school secretly at night—one night last week—"

"He did not leave the school secretly, Smith. He went to visit his uncle, who lives near Pegg—a gentleman named

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Muller—who was ill, suffering from the results of the Channel crossing," said the Head coldly.

"His—his uncle, sir!" stammered the Bounder.

"Certainly," said the Head. "Herr Gans supports his uncle, who is practically an invalid, and when he accepted a post in an English school, he naturally brought Mr. Muller with him to England. And you have dared—"

"He takes photographs of the cliffs and the bay—"

"How do you know?"

"I've seen him!"

"You mean you have watched him?" said the Head sternly.

"I thought it my duty to do so, sir."

"You have very peculiar ideas of duty, Smith. I was quite aware that Herr Gans makes a hobby of photography and he has shown me some of his photographs of the coast."

"I—I— Look at that letter, sir. I dare say he's cunning enough to explain away the other things, but he can't explain that away."

"Did you write this letter yourself, Smith, with the intention of maligning Herr Gans to me? I am aware that you have been disrespectful to him ever since he arrived at Greyfriars, and have punished you severely for it once!"

"I!" yelled the Bounder, taken by surprise. "I write it! Of course I didn't! It's written in German!"

"You have taken a prize for German, and it would not be beyond your powers, I think. I shall certainly show it to Herr Gans; but—"

There was a tap at the door, and Herr Gans came in. He glanced at Vernon-Smith with a compassionate expression.

"Ach! I find you here!" he said.

"Yes, you do!" said the Bounder fiercely. "And you find yourself exposed, Herr Gans—if that is really your name. I've found you out, and I've told the Head that you are a German spy!"

"Mein Gott!"

"Silence, Smith!" thundered the Head.

"Let him answer it if he can, sir."

"Mein Gott! He is quite mad, te poor boy!" murmured Herr Gans. "Herr Doctor, I find tat poy in my room, and he treated me viz violence; but I tink he is not sane. I do not vish tat he be bunished. I tink he had petter see a doctor, isn't it?"

"Read that letter, Herr Gans, if you please," said the Head.

"Hold on, sir! He will destroy the evidence!" exclaimed the Bounder excitedly. "I found it in his room, where he left it! If he gets a chance to destroy it—"

"Hold your tongue!"

The Head handed the letter to the German master. Herr Gans adjusted his spectacles and looked at it. His eyes grew wider and wider behind his glasses as he read. Amazement, almost stupefaction, could be read in his face, but nothing like alarm, and the Bounder felt an inward sense of uneasiness. Was it possible that he was mistaken, after all—that he had made a horrible blunder? But the letter—the letter!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The German master was laughing—actually laughing—with tears of merriment running down his fat cheeks! Vernon-Smith stared at him, open-mouthed, the Head with a growing frown. But Herr Gans went on laughing. He seemed unable to help it. He sank down in the nearest chair, gasping for breath, and still laughing.

"Ha, ha, ha! Ach! Mein Gott! Ha, ha, ha, ha!"

"He's trying to brazen it out!" hissed the Bounder desperately. "He—"

"Silence! Herr Gans, pray—"

But Herr Gans only roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

Quits!

HERR GANS ceased to laugh at last, but his cheeks were wet with tears, and still internal rumbles shook his plump frame. The Bounder was regarding him with furious looks.

"Well, Herr Gans, perhaps you will kindly explain to me now," said the Head somewhat tartly. "Vernon-Smith states that he found that letter in your room. I shall properly punish him for inquisitiveness; but pray tell me whether that letter is your property."

The German master rumbled again, and shook his head.

"It is not mine," he said.

"You received it from Berlin to-day!" howled the Bounder.

The German looked at him mildly.

"I have a letter from Berlin to-day," he said. "It is a letter from mein grandmuzzer, tat I show Dr. Locke if he vish to see. But dis letter—dis letter—ha, ha, ha! I fear tat it is a shoke."

"A what?"
"A shoke, sir—a practical shoke."
"Oh, a joke!" said the Head. "Indeed! You think that Smith wrote this letter?"

"Nein, nein. Dere is a poy in te Remove who study Cherman fery much—a poy named Skinner."

The Bounder started.
"Tat poy he write many exercises in Cherman," went on Herr Gans. "He ask me advice about Cherman composition. He not show me dis—but I recognise vords und phrases in dis letter tat he have asked me apout. I have no doubt tat Skinner write tat letter, and put him in mein room for Smit to find. Perhaps he know tat Smit tink me a Cherman spy—ha, ha, ha!"

The Bounder's face was a study.
He understood now.
This was Skinner's revenge—and this was the true explanation of Skinner's remarkable outbreak of "swotting" in German!

Vernon-Smith would have given whole terms of pocket-money for the floor to open and swallow him up. But the floor showed no signs of intending to oblige him in that way; and the Bounder could only stand with crimson cheeks and downcast eyes, with his knees knocking together.

"I will send for Skinner," said the Head. "This matter must be cleared up."

He rang, and sent Trotter for the humorist of the Remove. Harold Skinner had probably been expecting the summons. He came into the study in a couple of minutes, looking very demure.

"Did you write that letter, Skinner?" demanded the Head, pointing to the famous document as it lay on his desk.

"Yes, sir," said Skinner promptly.

"Did you leave it in Herr Gans' room?"

"Yes, sir."

"And why?"

"Smithy has been talking a lot of rot about Herr Gans being a German spy, sir, and watching him about, to discover things—and I thought it a pity he should be disappointed," said Skinner calmly. "I've been keeping an eye on Smithy, and when I knew he was going spying into Herr Gans' room, I put the letter there for him to discover. I thought that it would show him up, and make him look a fool, sir, and put a stop to his silly rot about German spies."

The Head's lips twitched for a moment, but he restrained the smile.

"It has certainly had that effect, Skinner," he said. "You should not have played such an absurd trick, but—but—Perhaps it was just as well. I did not know that Vernon-Smith was uttering these wicked slanders concerning a very estimable gentleman." And the Head bowed to Herr Gans. "I am glad the matter has come to light. On your part, Skinner, it was a harmless joke—and you may go!"

"Thank you, sir!" said Skinner.

And he quitted the study. He gave the Bounder a look as he went—a look of malicious satisfaction, which said, as plainly as a look could, "Quits."

But the Bounder hardly noticed it. He was too overwhelmed with confusion and terror to think of Skinner now, or Skinner's triumph. Dr. Locke was gazing at him with an expression that could only be described as awful. A silence that could be felt followed the closing of the door after the departing form of Skinner. The Head's deep voice broke it:

"Vernon-Smith!"

"Ye-e-es, sir!" stammered the Bounder.

"Have you anything to say?"

"I—I—" The Bounder's voice trailed off and died away.

"You have slandered your master. You have brought a wicked and ridiculous accusation against him; you have accused him of base conduct without a shred of evidence. There is only one punishment I can possibly impose in such a case, Smith. I shall expel you from Greyfriars!"

The Bounder was white to the lips. He had expected that, if he could not prove his accusation. He could not prove it—he no longer believed it himself. He gave a low groan and staggered, rather than walked, towards the door.

"Ach!" said Herr Gans, looking very distressed. "Vait a minute, you foolish poy. Herr Doctor, I beg you—"

"Surely, Herr Gans, you have nothing to say in favour of that wretched boy, who has done his worst to injure you!" the Head exclaimed.

"I tink he is a fery silly poy," said Herr Gans, with a pitying look at the miserable Bounder, who was hanging on his words now. "I tink he dislike me, and is led away by tat. I am sorry tat he dislike me; I do not tink tat I deserve it. But I shall be fery unhappy, Herr Doctor, if tat poy is turned out of te school on mein account. I forgive him for wanting to harm me—tat is noting. I vish fery much tat you forgive him, too, Herr Doctor. I tink vat has happened vill be vun lesson to him. I beg you, Herr Doctor, to pardon tat silly poy."

The Head paused.
"You are the injured person, Herr Gans. If you pardon him—"

"I do, Herr Doctor."

"You hear that, Vernon-Smith. You have acted wickedly, and Herr Gans requests me to pardon you. If I do so, it is for his sake. I hope you will have the grace to be grateful to him. You may go. Let this be a warning to you!"

The Bounder gasped for breath. He moved to the door, and moved back, hesitating. Then, for once, he looked the good-natured German frankly in the face.

"I beg your pardon, sir," he said. "I've been a fool, and—and I'm sorry! I'll try to make up for it."

"Tat is right, mein poy. I forget all apout it," said the Gander.

And Vernon-Smith left the study.

Outside, in the passage, quite an army of Removites waited for Vernon-Smith. Skinner had already spread the story, and the juniors roared over it. But some of them were not laughing—they were looking angry. Greyfriars Remove had lost the football match—Redclyffe had won by three goals to two. Redclyffe had gone off in triumph—leaving the defeated team feeling very sore towards the Bounder. A howl greeted Vernon-Smith as he came along the passage.

"Sacked?" asked Harry Wharton.

"No."

"What have you got?"

"Nothing."

"Let off!" howled the juniors, in amazement.

"The Gander spoke up for me," said Vernon-Smith.

"He's a good sort."

"I should jolly well think he is, if he spoke up for you after what you've done!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "So you're satisfied that he isn't a German spy?"

"Ye-es."

"We've lost the match—do you hear? You let us lose the match, while you were spying and playing the giddy goat!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Smithy has been holding forth that there's a spy in the school," said Harry Wharton. "He was quite right—there is a rotten spy in the school. Only it isn't the Gander—it's Smithy. He's let a footer match be chucked away while he was spying. I propose that we make it clear what this school thinks of spies!"

"Hear, hear!"

The next moment the juniors had closed in on the Bounder. They rushed him out into the Close, and frog-marched him across to the gates and back again. The Bounder struggled furiously, but the frog-march went on amid a wild uproar.

Dr. Locke threw up his window.

"Cease that disturbance directly!" he exclaimed. "What is all that noise about?"

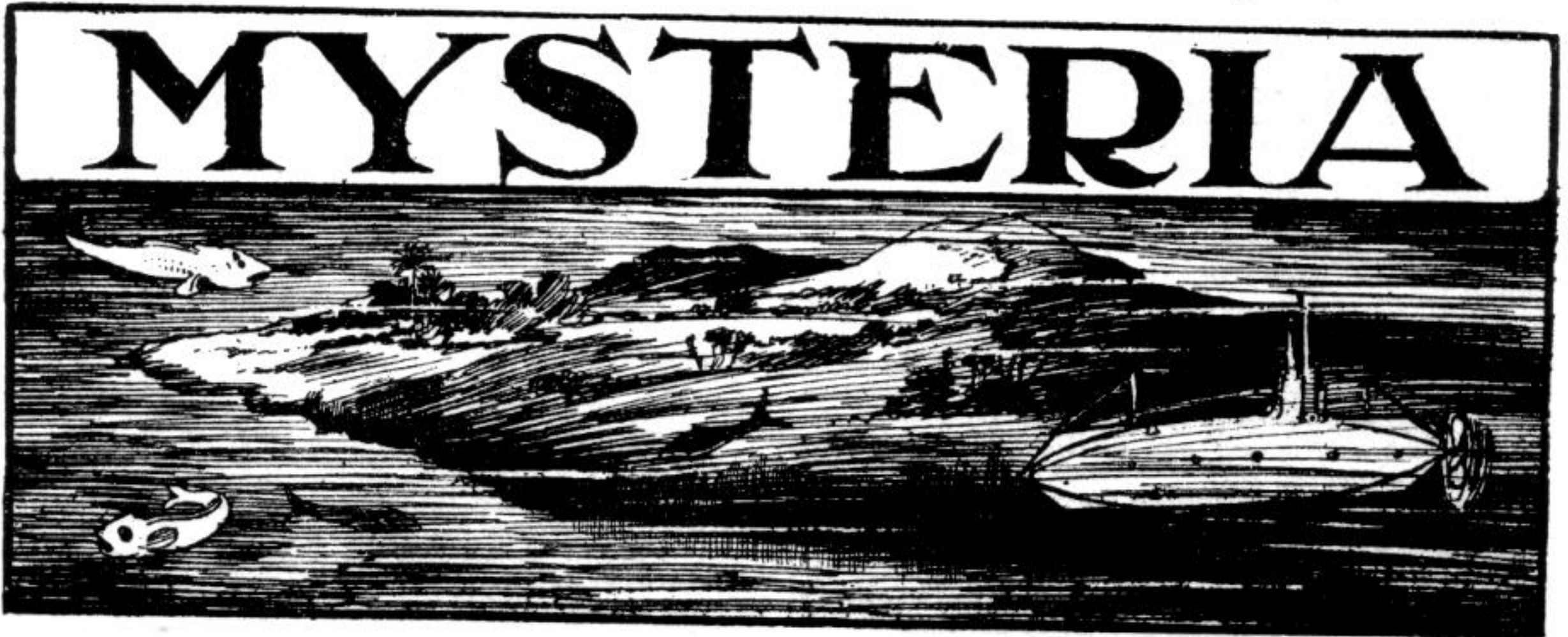
"Yes, sir! It's all right, sir! We've found there's a spy in the school, sir, and we're letting him know what we think of him!"

The Head smiled, and closed his window.

The Bounder was feeling that life was hardly worth living when he escaped from the hands of the indignant juniors. And for quite a long time afterwards a variety of aches in his bones reminded the Bounder of the mistake he had made when he undertook the task of tracking out a Spy in the School.



Our Grand New Serial Story!



By **SIDNEY DREW**, Prince of Adventure Story-tellers.

READ THIS FIRST.

Ferrers Lord, the famous multi-millionaire, is surrounded in his magnificent London residence by his friends Ching-Lung, Barry O'Rooney, Gan-Waga the Eskimo, and Prout & Co.—the stalwarts of the millionaire's famous submarine, the Lord of the Deep. After a period of inaction there is a rumour afloat that Ferrers Lord is about to start upon one of his great expeditions again. Meantime, the millionaire himself is devoting all his attention to a curiously carved narwhal's tusk which he has picked up in an East-End curio-dealer's shop. The tusk proved to be hollow, and to contain some gold coins and a small wad of parchment, which bears a strange message from the sea. This tells of a mysterious floating island inhabited by strange monsters, which Ferrers Lord determines to go in search of. Thurston immediately christens the phantom island "Mysteria" in advance. All hands board the Lord of the Deep, and the adventurers at last catch sight of "Mysteria." The mysterious island—bare and ghostly-looking—appears to be floating in the sky. It is a mirage, but, as Ferrers Lord points out, there can never be a mirage without a substance. The millionaire determines to start in pursuit of the floating island at once, but a terrific volcanic eruption occurs, in the course of which a blazing fireball falls on the Lord of the Deep, passing through her from deck to keel. The millionaire runs the submarine aground in the bay of the nearest island, and sends Ching Lung and Thurston with a party of men in the launch to cut some logs. On landing the party are confronted by a curious figure in a red tam-o'-shanter, who warns them that the island belongs to Germany. They ignore the warning, and Redcap—by name Julius Faber—returns with a party of ragged-looking ruffians, and forces them to leave the island by swimming, under cover of the fog. Ching-Lung, remaining behind, is captured and imprisoned in a cave. One of his captors, a man named Bullock, less brutal than the rest, refreshes him with some water. While his captors are in a drunken sleep, Ching-Lung manages to get free, and securely ties them up. In the meantime, Ferrers Lord and some of the crew go in search of him. They are on their way back to the submarine when Ching Lung is seen to be running along the sands, hotly pursued by his former captors. He is taken aboard the boat, the members of which immediately open fire at the ruffians on the beach. After several minutes the latter fly. Julius Faber announces his intention of mining the creek so that the submarine cannot get out without being blown to pieces. Hal Honour is still at work on the damaged plates of the vessel, and Ferrers Lord and his friends go down to watch the engineer at work. While they are down at the bottom of the sea a terrific explosion takes place. Faber and his ruffianly companions strike one of their own mines, and the boat is blown into fragments. Ching-Lung finds that being at the bottom of the sea is thirsty work, and as soon as he gets out of his helmet calls for a drink. Gan-Waga gets him a tankard, and after a luxurious pull Ching-Lung smiles again.

(Now go on with the story.)

A Warm Time for Prout & Co.

Ching-Lung felt much better. Gan, who worshipped him, grinned broadly, and suggested another of the same, but his Highness shook his head.

"One's enough, and plenty is sufficient, Eskimoses. What have you been doing with yourself all these forty-five long leap-years? Been hard at work helping Tommy and the other rascals by looking at 'em while they worked, eh?"

"I dids tries when I wakes ups, my chingy, but de bad 'noughs beasts chucks me outs."

"On your face?" inquired the Prince. "Disgusting for the floor. We'll hop round presently and see how they're getting along. I'm sure they'll greet us either with open arms or else with closed fists—the latter most probably. How strange it is that they should love us as they do, didn't it? What a thing it is to be born so absolutely beautiful!"

Taking Gan's arm in an affectionate embrace, Ching-Lung turned in the direction of the fore-castle.

The tireless hammers were still at work, their blows falling with machine-like precision and regularity. Ching-Lung gently tried the door of the fore-castle, only to find it bolted. Ching-Lung put his eye to the keyhole, for although there was a keyhole, there was no key. He had attended to that matter himself, by borrowing the key when nobody was there to see the dreadful deed committed.

About this precise period in the history of civilisation, Thomas Prout, Barry O'Rooney, and Benjamin Maddock, with the exception of the divers outside, were the busiest trio beneath the Southern Cross. Barry was chief cutter-out, and grasped a murderous-looking pair of shears. Prout used a sailor's needle with much energy and skill, and Mad-

dock, with a tape-measure, performed heroic deeds of energy.

They had left the manufacture of the framework of the canvas boat in other hands, for, unlike Joe, they were not master-carpenters.

Ching-Lung knocked softly.

"Who's there, souse me?" growled Maddock.

"Ach, he asks dot who vas id?" said Ching-Lung, imitating the voice of Herr Schwartz with wonderful fidelity. "Ja, I vas vant do gome in, ain'dt ut? I vas going do mine hammog, yes!"

A passing glance into the galley had shown Ching-Lung and Gan-Waga the cook snoring by his stove.

"Why don't you go to bed afore you get up, by hokey, and save all this trouble?" said the steersman. "Crawl in through the keyhole, chef. It's too late for a young hinfant like you to be out!"

"Och, I thought ut was a mice scattin' at the dure," said Barry, rising lazily. "Shall I let him in, darlints?"

"Sarve the himp right if we kep' him out, souse him!" remarked the bosun. "Why can't he keep decent hours, like a Christian? He must ha' been readin' poetry again, instead o' peelin' onions and lookin' arter the job he's paid fourpence-farden a month for. He vas vont to gome in, ain'dt ut? He vas goin' do mine hammog! What the marlingspike is mine hammog? Tell him we're sold out o' the critters, but we'll have a fresh supply in the mornin', when the milkman calls with our pint of coals."

"Himmel! If you shall nod oben der door quick, I shall mit der voot of me kick him down!" came the angry voice of Herr Schwartz. "Und den—b-r-r-r!—den I shall der

vat headts of you snack mit mine vist—yes. B-r-r! I pear no more insultts. Oben der toor, und I ead you mitouts. sauce, ain'dt ud?"

At these unexpected and bloodthirsty threats the three men looked as astounded as if they had received nineteen-and-sixpence change out of a threepenny bit. Prout, in fact, was so completely taken aback that he mistook the palm of his hand for the canvas he was sewing, and attempted to put a stitch in it. Needless to say, the chief petty officer of the Lord of the Deep quickly discovered this foolish error, and made quite a fuss about it.

"Minds yo' eye, Chingy!" whispered Gan-Waga warningly. "Oh, cookie, him wakens up! Ho, ho, hoo! Hears hims feetfalls, Chingy? Betterer goeses—hunk? We scootles—hunk, and scootles back pleasantly?"

"Yes, scootle, Eskimoses," said Ching-Lung. "He might think us vulgar if he saw us listening."

Ching-Lung hissed a few more terrible threats through the keyhole about amputating people's limbs and ears, and gently-combing their silken locks with a fire-shovel. Then he glided into the darkness after Gan-Waga with noiseless steps. Slipping behind a pile of boxes, they listened, with anticipatory grins, to the footfalls of the chef.

Utterly unconscious that anything less grateful and comforting than his cosy hammock awaited him at the end of his journey from galley to fore-castle, the chef shuffled bedwards. He was only half awake, and at peace with himself and the whole world. In happy ignorance he tried the door.

"Shuf," he called sweetly, "vy am I shud oud, is ud? Vas dere some of you awake, yes? Led me in, please!"

"Be jabers, he's shtarted to change his chune, has he?" said Barry, rolling a piece of canvas into a club. "Yis, Oi'll lit yez in, me Dutch darlint. Will yez sioice the ears of us, and comb our hair wid the foire-shovel? We'll lit yez in. Don't worry yerself. Oi'm ridy, and waitin'. Ben, my jooil, open the dure—open the dure! I'm now prepared to perform the great swattin' act as depicted on all the posters."

"Eh—phwat?
Is ut hot?
Whin Oi swat,
Loike thot?"

Barry raised himself on tiptoe, and brandished the club in readiness, while Prout gently drew back the bolt, and prepared to jerk open the door. Down came the club, but it missed its intended mark, which was Herr Schwartz's head; for the cook, by some mysterious and unseen agency, was suddenly dragged backwards violently. At the same instant a bucket of most unclean water, dangling from the end of a boathook, took the chef's place.

It was not in Barry's nature to do things by halves. The canvas club in itself was not a weapon to inflict very serious injuries, but Barry intended to get all he could out of it. He was utterly unable to check its downward sweep. He struck the bucket, instead of the chef, a gallant and lusty blow, and Barry got much more than he intended out of that bucket.

So did Prout and Maddock.

The dirty water flew far and wide, sprinkling their fevered brows, and cooling their panting bosoms. There was a greasy swab at the bottom of the pail, which alighted on Thomas Prout's bald head, and hung down over his neck and features. The bucket tried to hang itself up on Maddock's collar-stud, and, finding that a bad fit, it alighted on Barry's toe, while the boathook, spinning over with great velocity, gave him a pat on the cranium that would have cracked a cocoon five times out of six. All three sat down wearily, and red, wrathful faces appeared over the sides of various hammocks.

There was, however, no rest for the sad and weary in that fore-castle. Hard things that hurt—boots, brushes, and stony pieces of soap—hurled by strong hands, descended like an avalanche, and struck them on tender places. Brave as they were, they could not withstand such a deadly cannonade. They left without trying to argue about it. It was not at all hot when Barry O'Rooney "swatted loike thot"; but, on the contrary, very chilly. However, it made up for it when the missiles began to arrive by becoming unpleasantly warm—almost tropical, in fact.

At the far end of the corridor the three friends halted. Barry rubbed his head, and emitted a few hollow groans, for the boathook had knocked at his seat of knowledge with a good deal of energy. Prout had foolishly tasted a mouthful of the water, and he was perfectly convinced that he infinitely preferred the flavour of whisky. The bo'sun had also suffered by putting a rocky piece of soap to a purpose it was never intended for. He had stopped several ounces of it that was flying through the air with the bridge of his nose.

"Ochone, ochone!" wailed Barry. "Whoy did Oi iver come to say whin there was a widdy wid noine pigs, and a lovely brickyard dovin' to marry me? Shure the head of me is cracked loike a chiney taypot run over by a sthame-roller! Ow! Is ut two heads Oi've got, or only wan? Bad luck to ut! Ochone—ochone! Phwat was 'ut the riptoile

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hit me wid? Arrah! There's a lump roisin' as big as Mount Ararat! Oi'll be able to lit meself out for mountain-climbin to tourists! Musha! Foind me a quiet place, where Oi can doie in pace! Oi want to doie! Phwat's the use of livin whin futballs and foire-balloons starrt sproutin' up loike this?"

Maddock, with moist eyes, glared fixedly at nothing in particular, and nursed his nose.

"Shut up, souse me!" yelled the bo'sun. "It was you as did it, you weevil!"

"Did Oi? Thin ut's quite toime they put me away!" groaned Barry. "Av Oi did that, Oi must be a babblin' lunatic! Fancy me hittin' meself on the head with a sidge-hammer. Mebbe Oi was thryin' to kill an ould bluebottle that was ticklin' me, is ut? Oi won't quarrel wid yez, Ben. Oi haven't the heart to quarrel wid yez. At this blissid moment yez could rob me of me diamond socks and ruby bootlaces, and Oi'd submit wid a gintle, peaceful smoile! No, bedad, Oi haven't the heart to quarrel wid yez, Benjamin, friend in adversity; but av yez dares to repate that remark about Barry O'Rooney doin' ut, Oi'll paste yez as flat as a harrd-biled egg, wid a fifty-ton weight on top of ut!"

Benjamin caught Barry's wrathful eye, and came to the conclusion that it would be better for his health not to repeat the statement. Prout had not joined in the elevating conversation hitherto. He had not been able to make up his mind as to what delightful beverage the water reminded him of. He was certain that it did not taste like champagne, and he was equally certain that it did not resemble whisky. But it was like red ink.

Prout put his mouth under the fresh-water tap, but the taste—like certain marking-inks advertised—appeared of the indelible kind, that cannot be washed out. The lump on Barry's head, too, was steadily gaining in magnitude, and Ben's nose continued to swell with a perseverance worthy of a better cause.

But, come weal or woe, the boat had to be finished. The sorrowful trio bathed their wounds, and went back to work. The angry faces had vanished, but the missiles still strewed the battlefield. Clenching his fist, and crouching down, Barry crept towards the chef's hammock. He could tell by the bulge of the canvas that the gentleman who was responsible for his anguish had crept into his berth. Prout and Maddock, thirsting for vengeance, watched the proceedings hungrily.

"Don't waken nobody, souse me!" muttered the bo'sun feelingly.

"Not him," said Prout. "He'll only wake Schwartz, and they'll think he done it. By honey, they'll all go for that cook, and sarve him right! I'd like him and me and a boat-stretcher to ave about five minutes together on the quiet. I'd lay him out—by honey, I would!"

The bo'sun and the steersman resumed their work, keeping an eye on Barry. Barry looked the canvas up and down to find the exact spot. He opened his hand, spat on it, and closed it again.

"That's wan for his nob!" he hissed, and smote upwards.

Regrets are vain, but, all the same, Barry regretted that smite. He fancied he had hit a flint wall. Up into the air shot boots, brushes, combs, tin plates, mugs, and other miscellaneous property. They rattled down about the ears of the paralysed Irishman. He did not remain paralysed for long, for a leather slipper alighted on his latest bump, and cured him at once. He gave one shriek of bitter woe, and bolted after his comrades.

Twelve furious sailors, whose slumbers had been disturbed so often, rolled out of their twelve hammocks. There was nothing lamblike or dovelike about any of them. They were fond of their watch below, and they expected to enjoy it in peace and quiet. Catching hold of any object that could be used to inflict torture and torment on their fellow-men, these twelve barefooted giants poured out of the fore-castle to hurt somebody.

It had struck the great Thomas Prout, and the equally great and famous Maddock—it was when the descending contents of the hammock were striking Barry O'Rooney—that for the rest of the night the fore-castle would not be a comfortable place to stay in. They had worn out their welcome, so to speak, into very large holes indeed, and were making themselves much disliked in that quarter.

It had also soaked into their brilliant brains that, unless the canvas was ready for the framework of the boat by the stipulated time, there would be trouble to face in very large chunks.

So, before making their hasty exit from the dangerous land, Maddock and the steersman had scooped up the tools and materials, intent on discovering some quiet spot where they could labour unmolested.

Prout, Barry, and Maddock get into Trouble, and find it Difficult to Work.

"By hokey," panted Prout, glancing back, "the whole blessed hornets' nest is arter us!"

"Where can us go, souse me?" asked Benjamin furtively. Barry, who had no extra weight to carry except the lump on his head, drew close up with a magnificent sprint.

"Throy the swimmin'-bath!" he howled. "Faith, av the murtherin' blayguards git howld of us they'll ate us up wid-out salt. Ochone! Whoy—whoy did Oi iver come to say? Me poor ould head's splittin', and Oi've smashed me hand to splinters. Bad luck to the day Oi iver set fut out of Ballybunion, the swate home of my youth! Och! Ut's a cripple for loife Oi shall be, walkin' about on four wooden ligs, wid the poor head of me on crutches. Thry the dure, for mercy's sake! Av ut's locked, we're dead min. A-a-a-ah!"

Almost falling through the doorway, O'Rooney pulled himself up short, and gave a long, hoarse sigh of relief.

They shot the bolts promptly, and barely in time to keep the first of the pursuers out.

As it was, a quantity of boots struck the panels with resounding thuds; but the noise failed to arouse Gan-Waga.

There he floated in the light of a single lamp, as beautiful as a water-lily blooming on some rustic lake. His nose played gentle music, and a cigar still smouldered between his ruby lips.

"We're 'avin' a 'oliday, souse me, ain't us?" growled the boatswain savagely.

"I ain't looked at the almanack," answered the steersman, with a dismal groan, "but, judgin' by the way we're enjoyin' ourselves, I should reckon it's Christmas Day, at least. Christmas comes but onest a year, but when it does it brings good cheer, by hokey! Does it? P'r'aps it's Whit-suntide, or August Bank Holiday twice over."

Barry examined his fist. Ching-Lung and Gan-Waga, who had prepared that surprise-hammock, had not been altogether unkind.

They had been generous enough to place a pillow as a buffer between the canvas and the other harder articles to lessen the concussion.

Barry ought to have been grateful for it, but he wasn't. He wasn't feeling grateful just then towards anybody.

"Come and work, souse you," said Ben, with a wrathful gleam in his eyes, "or there'll be old 'Arry to pay!"

They sat down reluctantly on the cold floor, and Barry sadly took up the shears.

"Which pace d'yez want now?"

"The long strip that goes under her keel," said the steersman.

"Thin, bedad, give me the plan, and Oi'll sloice ut off!" said Barry.

Benjamin and Prout raked feverishly among the canvas. They had forgotten the plan in their hurry.

"Go and fetch it, Irish!" said Prout.

"No, honey!" said Barry firmly. "Oi'm in wake hilt. Besides, Oi wudn't think of robbin' yez of the bliss."

"Cut along, then, Ben! They won't 'urt you, and we must have it."

"Fetch it yourself, souse me!" snapped the boatswain.

"They won't hurt you, neither."

Prout stood up like a martyr going to the stake—not a beef-steak, or he would have risen more promptly.

"If anybody was to ax me what I thought on you," he said witheringly, "what d'ye think I'd tell 'em?"

"Not the truth, souse me, I'll bet!" said Maddock.

"By hokey, I would! I'd tell 'em the naked truth. I'd tell 'em as you perfessed to be pals. I'd tell 'em, by hokey, as I once thought you was men. You ain't men; you're a couple of blear-heyed, quiverin', shiverin', floppy, floppy, wall-heyed jellyfish! I'm ashamed on you, so I am. You're jellyfish. D'ye 'ear? Flappy, spongy jellyfish!"

With this fierce denunciation, Prout snapped his fingers and strode to the door.

"Jellyfish!" he roared back. "Flappy, spongy, floppy jellyfish!"

"What a sweet little buttercup!" murmured Benjamin Maddock. "Ain't he a gentle pet, souse me!"

"Soft as the dove
That coos above
My blissid love!"

sighed Barry dreamily.

Gan-Waga, with one little black eye open, snored on. The cigar gradually grew shorter, and two thin streams of smoke trickled from his nostrils. Gan could smoke when fast asleep, and he could also snore when wide awake, as he was now, a much more simple task to perform.

A syringe lay at the bottom of the bath, and his fingers

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"THE GEM" LIBRARY,
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Our Companion Papers.

"THE PENNY POPULAR,"
Every Friday.

were itching to use it. Suddenly he rolled over, and paddled silently for the steps.

"Makin' canvas boats is rotten, souse me!" snarled the discontented boatswain.

"Ut is," agreed Barry. "Wance more Oi hear the wurruds of truth. Och! Ut's bastely. Wid all my sowl Oi hate ut. My Uncle Dennis, whin he was makin' the canvas boat in which he aftherwards sailed to the North Pole and climbed ut, made this remarrk. Oi rimimber ut will, mind yez, Ben, for Oi was fadeing the pigs, a thing we did reg'lar wance a month, and he was in the parlour. Says he

"Gurur-r-r-ow-wow-wooh-owsh-arr!" thundered Gan-Waga.

They had absolutely forgotten the existence of the Eskimo. At the sound of that ear-splitting shriek Barry rolled back into the arms of Ben Maddock, and Gan, with a scream of laughter, dived back into his liquid bed.

"Ut's that Eskimo!" hissed Barry. "Bedad, he scared me. Oi apologoise for thryin' to walk on your face, Benjy. My misthake, ould man. Did Oi hurrt yez?"

"Never mind me, souse us!" roared the enraged boatswain. "I like it. Where's that oily, grease-drinkin' blubber-faced haythin? I must get my own back out of somebody for this blessed night's work."

"Tooral-i-ra-ra-riety!" sang Gan-Waga from the bath.

Barry and Maddock each grasped a mop and glided back against the wall. Then, on hands and knees, they crawled towards the edge of the swimming-bath.

"Charley can't catch me! Too-roo-ra-riety!" chirped the Eskimo. "Silly faces. Maddock! Looney-ooney-Rooney! Go and boils yo' heads! Yah-h-h!"

Maddock obtained a view of Gan-Waga's shining head as it bobbed about on the dull water.

"Watch me, people," he muttered. "This is where I strike twelve o'clock at one smack, souse me!"

The Cavern Once More—Stumpy and Larkin Concoct Diabolical Plot.

At the sudden glare and at the crashing thunder of the explosion, the cinnabar-hunters turned their blanched faces seaward. The mighty flash made the darkness that followed more intense. The ground where they stood seemed to shiver. They strained their eyes, blinded by the light, but saw nothing. What was there to see? Nothing except a few spars racing swiftly round the rim of a gurgling whirlpool that spun, glassy and green, amid the seething water.

The vessel, rent and shattered, her port-bow practically ripped out of her, had already settled down. An overturned boat was drifting away on the tide, and a terrified man clung to an oar, shrieking vainly for help. His voice was lost in the turmoil, it was too feeble to reach the ears of the paralysed men on the cliff. Faber shook his clenched fists at the sky, cursing like a maniac.

He had been hoisted by his own petard, trapped in his own snare.

They looked a haggard, sullen crowd as they gathered in the cave. Several torches burned in the crevices of the rock, and clouds of smoke rolled along the roof. There were twenty-seven of them, and they lay about in little groups. Larkin, Faber, and the wooden-legged man sat near the fire.

"Ow d'ye think it 'appened?" asked the cripple hoarsely.

"One of the anchors must have dragged and the rope chafed through against a sharp rock," said Faber, his face working spasmodically. "It's Old Nick's own luck. Who could have foreseen it? Who could have guessed that it would strike her? The chances were millions against it."

"It seems to have knocked the heart clean out of 'em, cap," muttered the fat man.

Stumpy nodded as he peered at the silent groups with red-rimmed eyes.

"Look 'ere," he wheezed, bending close. "Am I a fool? Am I brimstone idiot? I know I ain't beautiful, but I've got brains at the back o' my face. Them chaps is quiet now. Why are they quiet? Because they're mighty sick and scared. They ain't got the pluck o' suckin' pigs. This job 'as bowled 'em out. But they'll come round and they'll kick—kick like mules."

"What do you mean?" snarled Faber uneasily.

"As they'll not work—as they'll drink theirselves mad and mutiny."

Faber clenched his teeth murderously, but was silent. He had expected this without being told it by the cripple.

"It's a good thing Bullock's a stiff 'un," went on Stumpy, with a grin. "He was too brimstone soft. He didn't love you, cap. Ha, ha, ha! Bad taste, warn't it? Yes, it's a blessin' he's fish-food, and it's a blessin' Jimson's shark-bait ditto. They did a sight too much whisperin' and pryin'. The wust on it is, cattle like them"—he jerked his dirty

thumb towards the men—"takes fancies for such brimstone fools as Jimson and Bullock, 'stead of lovin' dreams of beauty like me an' Larkie. He, he, he! I'd like to scrag the bunch."

"You talk like the fool you are!" cried Faber, in a sudden outburst of passion. You talk as if we had not a rag to our backs, a cartridge, an ounce of food, or a single tool. You talk as if no ship would ever pass the island from this moment throughout eternity. Aren't there trees here? Can't we build a boat? Isn't that cave a mine of treasure? Isn't it worth a year of labour to make ourselves rich for life?"

"Not diggin' cinnabar, it ain't," growled Stumpy, replying to the last question only. "That ain't no job for any white man who's a pardner in the firm. Don't look so thunderin' loud. Look at the facts, cap. We've lost the ship. What was she good for most? Why, to go black-birdin' and ketch niggers to work that stuff while we laid around smokin' and boozin' and watchin' our dollars pile up. Fact the fust."

"Without a brimstone ship 'ow can we ketch niggers? These 'ounds won't work, and I don't blame 'em. There's the rainy season comin' atop on us, and that's enough to wash the rivets out of an ironclad. I can see my wooden pegs goin' rotten. He, he, he! I can see all yellin' mad wi' fever. Cheerful, ain't it? Makes you want to carol wi' glee, don't it? He, he, he! Oh, ho, ho!"

Stumpy met Faber's curious gaze, and suddenly stopped tittering.

"Shut your mouth!" hissed the man in the red tam-o'-shanter. "I've had too much of your chatter. Do you think I don't know all about this, you utter fool. Let me hear one whisper of mutiny, let me see the man who will not run to obey my slightest nod, and I'll shoot him down like a dog. I'm not beaten, I was never beaten. That submarine has not escaped yet."

"Quite right, quite right," puffed Larkin. "We've still got a sportin' chance, cap."

Faber shrugged his shoulders, and looked contemptuously at Stumpy.

"And the launch, you miserable fool, is a fifth fact."

Stumpy helped himself to rum, and was silent. Even the cripple was afraid of Faber, though less afraid of him than the others. The launch, if fitted with mats and sails, would make a serviceable sea-boat, quite capable, in ordinary weather, of reaching one of the larger inhabited islands, at which vessels regularly called. It merely needed repairing, and the repairs were a matter of small difficulty.

He passed the rum to Larkin. Faber, who never drank, seized the rifle and strode out of the cave.

"Has he gone?"

The cripple leaned down, his ear close to the ground. The firm, steady footfalls of the chief grew fainter and fainter.

"Yes, knife 'im, he's gone!" snarled Stumpy. "I wish he was wi' Bullock and Jimson. He knows too much, and he's brimstone. Here's luck to Red Nob—the wust, blackest, poisonest luck! Drink to his funeral!"

Larkin blinked his little eyes in murderous assent.

"You found most o' the dollars for this job, Larkie. The ship's gone, but she's insured. She's wrecked, d'ye see. She run on a brimstone rock, d'ye see"—he thrust his impish mouth close to Larkin's ear—"and only two was saved. Only two, my merry boy—you and me!"

"S-sh! Don't let 'em hear you!" puffed Larkin. "I don't quite follow."

Stumpy's whisper became a hiss.

"You'll foller in a minute, matey. There's only two pardners in this firm—you and me. Stumpy, Larkin & Co., sole proprietors of the biggest cinnabar lode on the brimstone earth. Does it sound well? He, he, he! Ain't it? Ho, ho, ho!"

He took another long pull at the rum.

"This is 'ow we does it. The fever's comin'. He's a pal of our'n, that fever, bless 'im! He'll wipe 'em out like a frost kills flies. We'll watch our time, matey—spoil the stores and the cartridges likewise. Ho, ho, ho! I can navigate, my merry darlin', and we'll pinch that launch, and leave 'em to the fever. When we draws the insurance for the vessel that went down wi' all 'ands bar two, we'll come back. Won't we shed tears when we finds the skilingtons, showin' that some on 'em got ashore? Ho, ho, ho! And what price cinnabar then?"

But something still lay like an ominous shadow between them and the success of their diabolical scheme, and both the heartless scoundrels recognised it.

It was the Lord of the Deep.

(Another splendid long instalment of this grand serial next week. Order now.)

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NEXT
MONDAY

"THE GREYFRIARS HERALD!"

A Splendid Complete Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. Order Early!

SPECIAL FEATURE!

Greyfriars Lyrics

BY

"The Magnet" Library's Own Rhymester.

No. 10.—ALONZO TODD.

We love to follow, week by week,
The doings of the Duffer,
Who through his manner mild and meek
Has often had to suffer.
Philanthropy is Toddy's aim,
Wild ways he seeks to soften;
And, acting thus, it seems a shame
He's bumped both hard and often!

To Loder's study he will go,
In manner melancholy,
And in wise words that few could know
Point out the prefect's folly.
"Your conduct does not show good taste,"
Todd urges to remind him,
Then travels forth in fearful haste,
With Loder's boot behind him!

The precepts of his Uncle Ben
To Todd are milk and honey;
They often bring distress, but, then,
The fellows will be funny!
And those of charitable mind
Need pluck to do their duty;
For when misunderstood they'll find
Black eyes don't add to beauty!

The solemn story of a spud
Alonzo finds inspiring;
But though it thrills his boyish blood
The others think it tiring.
It causes them peculiar pain
When Toddy starts relating;
And many would prefer the cane,
Or lines, or even "gating."

The dreamy Duffer's ways, so odd,
Cause fun to Snoop and Skinner;
The latter once prevailed on Todd
To eat the Head's own dinner!
The joke was reckoned very rich
By all the boys who knew it;
But when, alas! there came a hitch,
The humorists went through it!

When Peter Todd to school did come,
The fun was fast and furious;
This gallant fairly made things hum,
And led the Freaks so curious.
Alonzo joined the Funny Four
By Peter's stern instructions;
With Wharton they intend to war,
And give that hero ructions!

What boy can fail to like this lad,
So keen in his ambition
To better those whose ways are bad,
And make them feel contrition?
Some splendid heroes have been born
Since MAGNET stories started;
And one to whom all hearts are drawn
Is Todd the tender-hearted!

The Subject of next Monday's Lyric will be
LORD MAULEVERER.



My Readers' Page

WHOM TO WRITE TO :
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 AND
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 EVERY FRIDAY.

The Editor
 is always
 pleased to
 hear from
 his Chums,
 at home or
 abroad.

FOR NEXT MONDAY:

"THE GREYFRIARS HERALD!"

By **FRANK RICHARDS.**

In this grand, long, complete school tale of the famous chums of Greyfriars, the Removites conceive a great idea for raising the prestige of the school in general—and the Remove Form in particular. One of those principally concerned with the great idea—which aims at nothing less than the starting of a school paper—is Fisher T. Fish, the American junior, and it is his firm conviction that the only person properly qualified to fill the editor-in-chief's chair is—Fisher T. Fish! Harry Wharton & Co. do not see eye to eye with him on this point, and there is a certain amount of trouble; but, nevertheless, the first number of

"THE GREYFRIARS HERALD"

duly comes out, and the sensation it creates is terrific.

YOUR EDITOR ASKS A SPECIAL FAVOUR.

I have a special favour to ask of my chums this week, and, in asking it, I must draw their particular attention to the

Tickets of Introduction

printed on the cover opposite this page. The idea of the tickets is to provide a

Tangible Reminder

which can be given by my chums to non-readers of our magnificent companion paper, "The Penny Popular," together with a strong recommendation of that paper. By pasting the page of tickets on thin cardboard, and then carefully cutting out each one, my chums will have a bundle of handy tickets to give away to their friends. This is what I am asking each one of my loyal reader-friends to do. I want them to go to one of their friends, who has never yet sampled the delights of "The Penny Popular," and say to him or her—for I am specially looking to my large army of girl readers to help me in this—"I am sure you would enjoy reading 'The Penny Popular' so much; I read it, and think it's ripping.

Why not get a Copy

and see for yourself? Here is a special ticket of introduction, which the Editor gave me specially to give you, and to be presented to any newsagent in the town." Then, having parted from you, with your words still ringing in his ears, your friend will have the ticket in his hand to remind him of your recommendation whenever his eyes light on it; and the result will be that, sooner or later, one of the local newsagents will have that ticket presented to him, and another reader will be added to the long roll of "Penny Popites."

This is the scheme, then, in which I ask my readers' generous co-operation; and I know that I shall not have to ask it in vain.

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

G. Adams (Shoreditch).—The address you require is the "Gem Exchange Circle," Mr. H. W. Henbest, 17, Dickens Terrace, Wainscott, Rochester, Kent.

"A Sunderland Reader."—Many thanks for your letter and suggestions.

"Australian Girl Chum."—Please accept my best thanks for your very interesting letter.

L. Warman (Manor Park).—I am very sorry I do not know the paper you mention.

AN IRISH READER'S REQUEST GRANTED.

The following is one of several letters that have reached me on the same subject, and as the matter is one of general interest to my readers I will answer my Dublin chum's question here in our Chat Page. This is the letter:

"Dublin.

"Dear Editor,—I and all my chums are great admirers of the 'Greyfriars Lyrics,' which, we think, are about the best feature the good old 'Magnet' has ever had. I am writing on behalf of our boys' club, to know if you would be kind enough to allow us to recite some of the ripping 'Lyrics' at our next monthly entertainment. We should be willing to pay something for the privilege, but, of course, we cannot afford much."

I have pleasure in giving Pat R., the writer of the letter, my full permission to recite the popular "Lyrics" at his entertainment, free of all fee or charge whatsoever, knowing that in return I can rely upon his saying a good word for his favourite "Magnet" Library whenever opportunity offers. I am quite willing also to extend the same permission to any of my readers upon the same conditions.

AUTUMN CYCLING.

This is the time of the year when some cyclists, after enjoying six months or so of ideal weather conditions, consign their machines to the lumber-room; there to remain until the season of warmth and sunshine should once more return. Summer has gone, they reflect, therefore has not the cycling season departed with it?

No, my chums, it has not! A bicycle is not an instrument that will dissolve like sugar if it rains, or freeze if there is a little chill. And the rider? A strong, healthy British lad is not likely to be afraid of a little cold weather, I know.

Cycling in autumn will do you more good than riding under a broiling sun.

How many times in the past summer, when you were out for a long ride, and the blazing orb poured its heat-laden rays down upon your head, and you were feeling literally bathed in perspiration, have you not wished that it was just a little cooler? How many times, when your eyes were smarting and your throat parched and dry from the dust of the road, have you not longed for some rain to wet the ground? And what would you not have given on these occasions to be well away from such a hot and extremely fatiguing exercise as forcing unwilling muscles to push the pedals round continuously?

Now, then, is the very time to get the most enjoyment out of your favourite sport. There is nothing like cycling in autumn. The strength of the sun is diminishing, cooler breezes are springing up, and the air has a keen nip in it. It is just that keen nip that makes all the difference. You will notice that difference as you ride along. It strengthens and invigorates you; it sends the warm blood coursing through your veins, and fills you with exhilaration. Life indeed seems worth living.

Your bicycle seems like a horse, ready at touch of spur to pile on yet greater speed.

And the roads. They are firm and hard, and it feels delightful to skim along their surface. There is no dust to choke and blind you, or to retard the progress of the tyres. Everything is going splendidly, and you feel sorry you did not think of coming out before.

The countryside is looking beautiful, although most of the blooms have disappeared. The leaves are falling from the trees and lie thick upon the borders of the road, making a pleasant, musical rustle as the breeze stirs them. Overhead the naked branches extend, looking like long bony fingers in their leafless state. Truly there is a beauty all its own in the countryside at this time of year.

After all this, then, why leave your bicycle neglected during the winter months?

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 See Column 1 of "Your Editor's Chat."

THIS FRIDAY!

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 3rd.

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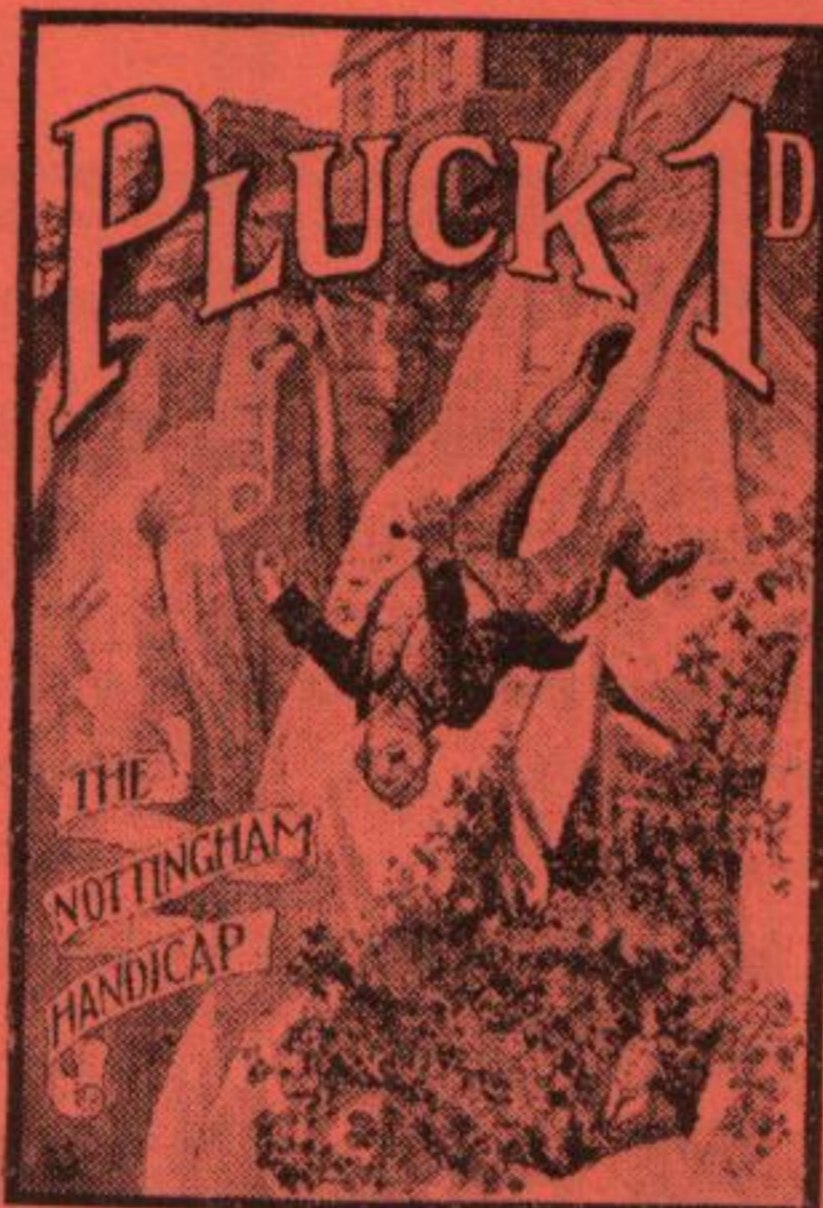
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will be found in this week's



A small reproduction of the front cover of this week's PLUCK illustrating a stirring incident from one of the tales.

Out on Friday. Price One Penny.