

FREE—BICYCLES FOR READERS!

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No. 859. Vol. XXVI.

Week Ending July 26th, 1924.

The Magnet 2¢

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of
Complete School Stories

EVERY
MONDAY



NOT WANTED!

A HURRIED EXIT FOR WILLIAM GEORGE BUNTER!

(A "moving" incident from this week's grand story of Harry Wharton & Co., within.)



BUCCANEERS OF THE MAIN!

Thrilling Old-Time Pirate Stories!

No. 8. THE TIGER'S STRONGHOLD!

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

A Change of Identity!

"IN two days I shall be in the Tiger's city. If I can trick the dons, the buccaneer flag will wave over the stronghold in less than a week; but if they discover who I am, I shall be no better than a dead man."

Ned Lambert murmured the words to himself as he made his way through the mountain passes which led to Aracarybo, a rich and powerful city of the Spaniards on the Gulf of Campeachy.

In reality Ned was a British youth, with tawny hair and a fresh complexion, and was in the habit of bearing himself with his head in the air, and of looking steadfastly into the eyes of friends or foes. But this would not have been suspected by one stranger in a hundred who met him now, for his hair was dyed, and his skin stained, while he was dressed in miserable rags, and moved in a slouching, cowering way.

He looked, in short, like an outcast Indian, who was starving and homeless amid the mountains.

As a matter of fact, he was a young buccaneer, bent upon a daring expedition against the dons.

Ned had come to the Spanish Main to seek his fortune as one of the crew of the buccaneer ship, the Swallow, the skipper of which was the famous Captain Avery. They had found a deadly foe in Don Jose Avilar, the Governor of Aracarybo, who had proclaimed them pirates, and doomed them all to be hanged if they were captured.

Don Jose was, in fact, a bloodthirsty and greedy tyrant, who had never shown mercy to an Englishman who had fallen into his hands, and who had gained such a terrible name on the Spanish Main that he had won for himself the name of the Tiger.

The buccaneers had sworn to be revenged on him, but Aracarybo was believed to be an impregnable stronghold, and several attacks made on it had been defeated with terrible loss.

At last, however, Ned Lambert had learned from an Indian, whose life he had saved from the Spaniards, that there was a hidden subterranean entrance into Aracarybo. As to the whereabouts of this hidden way, the Indian had been unable to tell anything definite, but he had been so positive that it was to be found in Aracarybo, and that if the buccaneers learned it they would have the stronghold at their mercy, that Ned had decided to take his life in his hands, and go to the Tiger's city to see if he could not discover the secret.

Obtaining the consent of Captain Avery to the enterprise, he had disguised himself, and was now on his way through the mountains to the Tiger's city.

The knowledge that if he was discovered by the dons his life would not be worth a pin's purchase did not trouble him greatly. He was far more disturbed by his doubtfulness as to how he was to get to Aracarybo, and how he was to discover the secret of the subterranean way.

His doubts were partly solved in an unexpected fashion.

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It was afternoon, and ever since dawn he had pushed on his way without meeting a solitary human creature. An intense, ominous silence had reigned amid the mountains. Suddenly, however, as the disguised young buccaneer was advancing through a narrow, winding pass, there fell on his ears the clash of steel and the death-cry of a man, which echoed weirdly through the mountains.

"Some poor wretch is being murdered!" the thought flashed through Ned's mind. "I must help him if I can."

Drawing a hunting-knife he had carried concealed beneath his rags, he hastened along the winding pass. On the ground, sunk on one knee, was a man who was bleeding at the breast, but was fighting hard to defend himself against the ferocious attacks of two ruffianly Spaniards, whose appearance proclaimed them robbers of the mountains.

Standing near by were a couple of mules, one of which the traveller had been riding, while the other was bound with his baggage.

The robbers took no notice of Ned at first, for they thought he was a wretched Indian, who would not dare to interfere with them.

They were soon undeceived, however.

Ned attacked them without a second's hesitation. Rushing on the most powerful and truculent-looking of the pair, he struck up his sword with the blade of his knife, and, before the robber could make a second thrust, caught him a blow behind the ear with his clenched fist which sent him to the ground.

As the robber rolled over he dropped his sword, of which Ned took prompt possession.

Thus armed, he turned to meet the other robber, who was rushing on him.

Clash!
The blades had scarcely met when Ned sent his opponent's weapon flying from his hand, and passed his own blade through the other man's sword-arm.

The first robber had by this time staggered to his feet, but both of them had had enough of Ned, and fled through the mountain passes.

Then the youth approached the traveller who had sunk to the ground. The shadow of death was on his grey face, and he was muttering wildly and incoherently.

The gasped-out words he heard told Ned that he could go to the Tiger's city in a dead man's place.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Bull-ring of Aracarybo!

"IT means tempting death, but it is worth while!"

Ned muttered the words under his breath a few minutes after the flight of the robbers, as he knelt beside the body of the traveller, who was now stiff in death.

The unfortunate man was a famous Spanish bullfighter, who had gone by the name of El Moro, or the Moor, on account of his dark complexion.

Don Jose Avilar was in the habit of giving bull-fights on a large scale to please the savage populace over whom he ruled, and he had sent to El Moro, offering him a large reward to come and face the bulls in the ring at Aracarybo. But Don Jose was as greedy of gold as he was cruel and treacherous, and El Moro had been well aware that the governor would never pay him his reward if he could help it, but would, instead, do all he could to get him killed in the ring.

However, El Moro had decided to take his chance, and had been on his way to Aracarybo, when treacherously attacked by the robbers.

All this Ned learned by cleverly piecing together the matador's last wandering words, and he also learnt something else.

Don Jose had never seen El Moro, nor had the latter ever been in Aracarybo. Hence he was a stranger in the Tiger's city, and there was at least a chance that if someone else went thither in his stead, the Spaniards would fail to detect the imposture.

"If I go in El Moro's place," Ned told himself, "I shall have to risk being torn to pieces by the dons, and shall have to face the bulls! I'll take my chance. It is worth risking everything to get into the Tiger's city."

So Ned changed clothes with the dead man, and, taking possession of his mules, went on towards the Tiger's city.

He hoped that his stained hands and face and his borrowed dress would help him to pass himself off as El Moro.

How he would fare in the bull-ring, and among the dons, however, remained to be seen.

During the remainder of his journey through the mountains Ned met with no further actual adventures.

It was evening time when he reached the gates of Aracarybo and was challenged by a Spanish sentinel.

"Stand! Give the password, or I fire!"

Ned had acquired a fair knowledge of the Spanish tongue while on the Main, and he answered at once, in tones which he purposely made sulkily defiant.

"How should I know the password, fool, when I never set eyes on your city before? I am El Moro, the matador, and here is the command of Don Jose Avilar bidding me come here."

He showed the sentinel a scrap of paper he had taken from the dead man.

It acted like a charm.

(Continued on page 20.)

NOW TURN TO
PAGE 8 and WIN
A SPLENDID
BICYCLE!

Despite Tom Redwing's intention to keep to himself the reason of the "split" between him and Vernon-Smith, the sailor man's son comes up against formidable opposition in Peter Todd, the schoolboy lawyer, who has an uncanny knack of extracting information from unwilling witnesses. What does Peter find out?



Sentenced By the Form!

A Splendid Long Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co., of Greyfriars, by popular FRANK RICHARDS.



THE FIRST CHAPTER.

A Remove Removal!

"WILL you lend me—" "No!" "Lend me—" "Nix!"

"You silly ass!" roared Billy Bunter. "Can't you wait for a fellow to finish?"

Peter Todd smiled and shook his head. Peter had just come into Study No. 7 in the Remove for his bat, and he had found his fat study-mate, William George Bunter, there. Peter had no time to waste on Bunter—moreover, the word "lend" was enough for him.

"Life's too short," he explained. "You never do finish, Bunter. You're like the giddy little brook, you know; you go on for ever."

"I want you to lend me—" "Rats!"

"A hand—"

"A—a what?" ejaculated Toddy, quite surprised.

"Lend me a hand," said Bunter, blinking at him through his big spectacles with reproachful scorn. "Did you think I was going to ask you to lend me money?"

"Naturally."

"Oh, really, Toddy—"

"Well, what do you want me to lend you a hand for?" asked Toddy. "I'll lend you a foot with pleasure, with the boot on."

"I'm changing out of this study, and I've got to get my things moved," said Bunter, with dignity.

Peter Todd staggered against the door. He looked quite overcome. For the moment he forgot the cricket, and the fact that he was due to join Harry Wharton & Co. at the nets on Little Side. Billy Bunter had quite taken his breath away.

"Changing out of this study?" he gasped.

"Yes."

"Impossible!"

"Eh! How is it impossible?" demanded Bunter. "Fellows do change their studies sometimes, don't they?"

Redwing changed the other day out of Study No. 4 into Study No. 3."

"I know! But it's impossible in this case. It's too good to be true," said Toddy. "I simply can't believe it."

"You silly chump!" roared Bunter. "You'll miss me when I'm gone, anyhow. I know that. The fact is, Toddy, I can't stand you."

"What rot!" said Peter Todd cheerfully. "I stand you, Bunter. That proves that a fellow can stand practically anything, if he makes up his mind to it."

"I'm not going to argue with you," said Bunter disdainfully. "It's no good begging of me to stay now. I refuse."

Peter Todd chuckled.

"If you're changing out, old man, I'll lend you a hand," he said. "I'll lend you both hands, in fact. I'll lend you any old thing. Of course, it's on condition that you don't change back."

"I decline to take any notice of that, Peter Todd. Just you help me to carry my things into Study No. 4," said Bunter loftily. "Then I'm done with you."

"You're changing into the Bounder's study?" exclaimed Toddy, in astonishment.

"Yes—he's alone in Study No. 4, now Redwing's changed out. It's a jolly good study, and I shall like it all right. I shall get on with old Smithy," said Bunter. "He's not a poverty-stricken solicitor's son, like you, Toddy. I shall get on better with a fellow of my own position in life. Wealthy fellows ought to keep together. I can see now that I've made a mistake in chumming with you. It's let me down, really."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Peter.

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at. Look here, help me take my things along to Study No. 4. I'm rather pressed for time."

"What's the hurry?" asked Peter.

"Well, Smithy's out now—I mean, I'm in a hurry," said Bunter hastily. "Just you help me, and don't jaw."

Peter Todd looked at his fat study-mate with a grin. He was more than willing to help William George Bunter

in a moving job—if that moving job shifted him out of Study No. 7 for good. But he could not help seeing how extremely improbable it was that any Remove fellow would take Bunter into his study if he could help it.

"Look here, Bunter," he said. "Has Smithy asked you, or permitted you, to change into his study?"

"Don't be inquisitive, Toddy."

"That means that he hasn't," said Toddy. "Well, you fat duffer, Vernon-Smith is about the last fellow at Greyfriars to be jumped like this. Cut it out."

"Will you lend me a hand, and shut up?" hooted Bunter.

"Fathead! I knew it was too good to be true. Where's my bat?"

"Blow your bat! Lend me a hand and—"

"Bow-wow!" said Peter Todd.

He sorted out his bat, and quitted the study. He was quite convinced that if Bunter moved into Smithy's study during Smithy's absence, there would be another moving job as soon as Smithy came in—probably a very sudden and drastic one. So Peter sagely decided to have nothing to do with it.

"Beast!" howled Bunter after him.

Peter Todd chuckled again, and went on his way regardless. Billy Bunter was left alone in Study No. 7.

He was deeply annoyed.

Herbert Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, had gone out of gates, but how long he would be gone Bunter did not know. Bunter wanted to get the removal over before he came back. Whether the removal would be a success, even during the Bounder's absence, was not quite certain. But it was fairly certain that it wouldn't be a success with the Bounder present. Bunter's idea was to confront Smithy with a fait accompli—hoping that the Bounder would accept the accomplished fact!

There had been considerable speculation in the Greyfriars Remove, for the past few days, concerning Vernon-Smith and his study. His chum, Tom Redwing,

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had changed out, and gone into Study No. 3 with Ogilvy and Russell. They were no longer on speaking terms—the breaking of their friendship dating from the day of the last Rookwood cricket match.

Vernon-Smith was not likely to keep on "digging" alone in Study No. 4, the Removites thought. Many fellows would have been willing to "dig" with him. Skinner had once been his study-mate, before Redwing came to Greyfriars, and it was well known that Skinner would have been glad to get back to Study No. 4. Smithy could have found plenty of fellows in the Remove willing to share his study with him—but so far he had not mentioned the subject. But whatsoever fellow he might choose, it was pretty certain that he would not choose William George Bunter.

William George Bunter, fully aware of what a fascinating fellow he was, did not see any reason why the Bounder should not jump at the chance. But he was haunted by a lingering doubt; hence his astute determination to move in while the Bounder was out of gates.

Bunter's property in Study No. 7 was not extensive—it really was not a moving job requiring a Pickford's van. But anything in the nature of exertion was repugnant to Bunter. None of the study furniture belonged to him—besides, the Bounder's study was remarkably well appointed, and needed no addition that Bunter could have made. For this reason Bunter had decided not to take Peter Todd's armchair, or Dutton's bookcase.

Peter Todd having failed him in his hour of need, Billy Bunter reluctantly set to to the task himself.

He rolled along the Remove passage with a pile of books under either arm, and arrived at the door of Study No. 4.

Skinner and Snoop and Stott were loafing in the passage, and they stared at Bunter as he reached the Bounder's study thus laden.

"Hallo! What's this game?" asked Skinner.

"Open this door for me, will you?" asked Bunter.

"What on earth for?"

"I'm changing into this study," Bunter explained. "I'm done with that fellow Todd. How I've stood him all this time I don't know!"

"You're going in with the Bounder?" exclaimed Skinner.

"Certainly!"

"Does Smithy know?" grinned Snoop.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Don't ask cheeky questions, but just open this door," said Bunter.

Harold Skinner came forward. But he did not open the study door for Bunter. He gave him a sudden push, and the two stacks of books under Bunter's fat arms collapsed and crashed down to the floor.

"Oh! You silly owl!" roared Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Pick those books up!" yelled Bunter.

"I don't think!" grinned Skinner.

Skinner & Co. strolled away; and Bunter, with a red and wrathful face, hurled open the study door, and then picked up his books. Bunter's books were piled on the study table, and then the fat Removite sat down in Smithy's luxurious armchair to rest after his exertions.

But time was pressing, and Bunter felt that it was necessary to complete the moving job before Vernon-Smith came in. He rolled out of the armchair at last and rolled back to his own study.

He reappeared in the passage carrying an ancient desk—an old article which

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Bunter declared had been in the Bunter family for generations and generations, but which Fisher T. Fish said he had seen outside Mr. Lazarus' shop in Court-field, marked "Only 2s. 6d."

Sidney James Snoop shouted from the staircase.

"Buck up, Bunter! Smithy's coming in!"

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

He fairly rushed his old desk along the passage. It was slammed down in Study No. 4, and Bunter closed the door. He decided not to go back to Study No. 7 for any more goods—there was no time to bring along Toddy's inkstand, or Dutton's Latin dictionary. Vernon-Smith had to find him installed in the study—and Bunter hoped that he might take it for granted that Mr. Quelch had given official sanction to the removal.

Billy Bunter sat down in the armchair, his fat heart beating a little faster, prepared to turn on his most ingratiating smile when the Bounder entered.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The End of a Friendship!

TOM REDWING was in Study No. 3, when footsteps stopped at his door and the handle turned.

He did not look up, supposing that it was Ogilvy or Russell who had come in for something. The sailorman's son was hard at work in the study, with a Greek lexicon propped open before him, and a Greek grammar at his elbow, and his eyes fixed on the "Anabasis." Bob Cherry had burst into the study to hustle him down to the cricket, but Tom had resisted that temptation. He was working for a prize, and the exams were near at hand now.

Through the open window he could hear cheery shouts on the cricket-ground, and more than once Tom had been tempted to leave the Ten Thousand to their retreat over so many weary parangs, and join the cricketers. But he kept to his task.

The study door opened. It was not Ogilvy or Russell who stepped in. It was Vernon-Smith.

The Bounder of Greyfriars stood for some moments looking at the junior in the study, his handsome, sunburnt face bent over the Greek page. Vernon-Smith's expression was curious; it would have been hard to tell what he was thinking of at that moment. He did not speak; he waited for Redwing to look up.

Tom looked up at last and started as he saw that his visitor was his former chum.

He did not speak. His face flushed slightly, and his look was coldly inquiring.

"Can I come in?" asked the Bounder, with a sarcastic inflection in his voice.

"I suppose so, if you like."

"Thanks!"

Herbert Vernon-Smith came over to the table. He stood and looked across it at the sailorman's son.

"Well?" he said.

"Well?" said Redwing.

"Swotting?"

"Yes."

"Nothing to say to me?"

"Nothing."

The door stood half-open, and for a second a shadow stirred in the sunny

passage. But neither Vernon-Smith nor Tom Redwing noted it. They looked at one another in grim silence for some moments. The Bounder broke the silence.

"We used to be pals, Redwing."

"I know."

"Only a few days ago."

"Well?"

"You're making it rather hard for me," said Vernon-Smith in a low voice.

"I'm not the chap to ask favours of anyone. I've never made the first advance after a quarrel before. Do you want this to go on, Redwing?"

"There's no help for it," said Tom Redwing. "We can't be friends again, Smithy. It's impossible after what you've done. You know it as well as I do."

"Then we're to be enemies?"

"Nothing of the kind. I suppose we can keep out of each other's way," said Tom Redwing. "I've cleared out of your study, and you're not specially friendly with Ogilvy or Russell; no need for you to come here. I should certainly never be your enemy. But I can't be your friend, and the less said about it the better."

"Even if I own up that I was in the wrong?"

"That makes no difference. You did wrong, whether you own up to it or not. You knew it, and did it all the same. I can't be friendly with a fellow who played such a dirty trick as you did."

The Bounder flushed.

"So that's what you call it?"

"What do you call it?" exclaimed Redwing, his face flushing again. "Wharton picked me out to play at Rookwood. You'd lost your place in the team owing to your own fault. You chose to consider that I had bagged your place; you knew I hadn't, and that I didn't even know you were out of the team when Wharton asked me to play and I accepted."

"I know I've got a beastly suspicious temper. You used to make allowances for it," said the Bounder, with a mildness that would have astonished the Remove fellows.

"So I would, if that was all—so I did. But you came along with the team, and you tricked me into losing the train at Ashford, so that I couldn't get to Rookwood with them. You played in my place."

"And won the match for Greyfriars!" sneered the Bounder. "Ask any fellow in the eleven; they'll tell you that it was sheer good luck for Greyfriars that I played instead of you."

"I don't mind that. If Wharton had been willing to play you I'd have stood out with pleasure to make room for you. You know it isn't that. But pretending friendship all the time to make me trust you, and then landing me at Ashford; you couldn't have done it if I hadn't trusted you. I don't mind missing the cricket match, and I don't mind the journey to Ashford and back for nothing. All that's a trifle. But treachery—"

The Bounder winced.

"I was sorry afterwards," he said in a very low voice.

"Very likely. But next time you're in the same temper you'd play the same kind of dirty trick again. I never understood you before; I understand you now, Smithy. You couldn't have done it if you hadn't been capable of such things. And a fellow who's capable of such things isn't a fellow I want to speak to."

Herbert Vernon-Smith stood silent. "I'm sorry to have to put it like this," said Redwing. "I never meant to say a word to you or to anybody else. Nobody in the Remove knows the rotten trick

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you played—nobody will ever know from me. Let it all be forgotten. Only—"

"Only you don't want to have anything more to do with me?"

"Just that!"

The Bounder's lip curled. He had been very patient, as he considered it. He had made more concession than he would have made to any other fellow. And he had been rebuffed. He had humbled himself for nothing. His eyes gleamed as he fixed them on Redwing's flushed, troubled face.

"So that's that!" he said lightly. "Quite unusual for a millionaire's son to beg for friendship from a poor devil just making both ends meet on a scholarship, what? It would amuse the fellows if they knew."

"I never thought anything about your money, Smithy, and you know it. That makes no difference."

"Well, I'm done," said the Bounder. "But I'm asking no favours from you. You can tell our lofty and magnificent captain, Wharton, exactly what happened at Ashford."

"I shall tell him nothing."

"But you're such a slave to duty," said the Bounder mockingly. "Isn't it your duty to tell him? What! A member of the Remove eleven kept out of a school match by a dirty trick—it might have been played on any member of the team—even on the great man himself! Oughtn't you to put the Remove captain on his guard against such a rascal?"

"I don't know," said Redwing, deeply distressed. "I think perhaps it's not right to keep it secret. But I don't know. Anyhow, I can't give you away, and get you into a lot of trouble with the cricket club. I sha'n't say a word."

"Suit yourself."

With that, the Bounder turned his back on his former chum, and left the study. Tom Redwing looked after him, sadly and wistfully; then, with a sigh, he dropped his eyes to his book again.

Vernon-Smith left the study abruptly, and started a little as he saw Skinner lounging in the passage. He wondered whether the cad of the Remove had heard anything of what had been said in Study No. 3. But Skinner's face gave no sign.

He nodded cheerily to the Bounder.

"Tea in my study, Smithy," he said. "Coming, old man?"

"Thanks, no!"

Vernon-Smith walked along to Study No. 4, leaving Harold Skinner with a sneer on his thin face. The Bounder opened his study door, expecting to find the room vacant. He stared in surprise at an ancient desk and a stack of dog-eared books on the table—and then his glance travelled to a fat figure reposing in the armchair.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Another Moving Job!

BILLY BUNTER smiled sweetly at Vernon-Smith. The Bounder's stare expressed only surprise—certainly not anything like gratification. Actually he did not seem pleased to see the Owl of the Remove in his study. But Billy Bunter was there, and was going to remain there, somehow, if he could. But the Bounder's gleaming eyes and knitted brows were not very reassuring.

"Trot in, Smithy, old man," said Bunter.

"What?"

"I've been waiting for you, old fellow."



"You're going to dig in with the Bounder?" asked Skinner. "Certainly!" said Bunter. "Does Smithy know?" grinned Snoop. "Don't ask cheeky questions, but just open this door," said Bunter loftily. Skinner came forward, but he did not open the door. He gave the fat junior a sudden push, and the two stacks of books under Bunter's fat arms crashed to the floor. (See Chapter 1).

"Have you?" said the Bounder. "What is all this rubbish on my table? Does it belong to you?"

"Do you mean my books, old man?"

"Are they books?" said Smithy, staring at them. "They look as if they've been worried by a dog, then. Anyhow, what the thump do you mean by carting them here?"

"Well, I wouldn't put them on the book-shelf till you came in, old chap," said Bunter cautiously. He was breaking the news to the Bounder gently. "I wouldn't disturb your books, you know. I'm a considerate chap to share a study with."

"Are you?" said the Bounder. "And why the thump should you put your ragged old books on my book-shelf, any more than on my table? Are you wandering in your mind?"

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"What do you mean, anyhow?" snapped the Bounder.

"He, he, he!"

"What are you cackling at, you fat idiot?" shouted Vernon-Smith, with angry impatience.

"Your little joke, old fellow."

"Eh! What joke?"

"Making out you don't know I'm going to be your study-mate, old fellow," chuckled Bunter, with a somewhat feeble chuckle. "He, he, he! I can take a joke, old chap."

"My study-mate," repeated the Bounder. He understood now.

"That's it! Now Redwing's gone,

you're all alone here, you know, and so I've come."

"That's very kind of you, Bunter," said the Bounder, looking round the study as if in search of something. It was a cricket-stump he was looking for, but Bunter did not guess that.

"Well, the fact is, I mean to be kind," said Bunter, his fat confidence reviving at once. Only the very slightest encouragement was needed to make the Owl of the Remove bumptious. "I'm a kind-hearted chap, you know. I mean to be kind to you, Smithy."

"Thanks!" said the Bounder, still looking about him.

"Not at all. I'm not surprised that you got fed-up with that cad Redwing. Low rotter, isn't he?"

"You fat fool!"

"Oh, really, Smithy—" Bunter was rather taken aback. "I say, Smithy, we shall get on all right. Wealthy fellows ought to stand in together, in these days, you know, when the lower classes don't know their place. Don't you think so? That fellow Redwing, the son of a common foremast hand, was not a proper study-mate for you. Now, I'm exactly the chap you want—rich, well-connected, and all that. See?"

"I see," assented the Bounder.

"It's a ripping arrangement, really, isn't it?" said Bunter, quite relieved of his doubts now.

"Oh, top-hole!" said Vernon-Smith. Billy Bunter grinned complacently.

Bunter was much too obtuse to see anything that was not fairly under his fat little nose. The Bounder's calm manner quite deceived him; and he fancied, by this time, that all was calm and bright. He began to consider that he had been a little too propitiatory. If the Bounder was so willing to have him in the study, it was time for Bunter to let him understand how lucky he was to get such a study-mate—to put on, in fact, a little coyness!

"We shall pull together," he said. "Of course, there are some few little conditions I shall have to make, Smithy, before I consent to dig in this study with you."

The Bounder looked at him. He had found the cricket-stump now, in a corner. He held it in his hand behind him as he looked at Bunter.

"Conditions?" he asked. "Go ahead."

"In the first place, I shall want the armchair," said Bunter, in quite a positive manner. "Mind, I'm no hog—I sha'n't object to your using it when I don't want it. But when I do want it, I'm to have it—that's got to be understood."

"That's that!" assented Smithy.

"In the second place, I shall expect rather better grub than I got with Toddy," said Bunter. "Of course, I shall always stand my whack, as I always do and did. But on occasions when I happen to be short of ready money, I shall expect you to see me through at teatime. On similar occasions I will do as much for you."

"Is that all?"

"No—not quite all," said Bunter, emboldened to encroach more and more, as was his custom when not sufficiently kicked. "You know I get a lot of remittances—chiefly postal-orders—quite a lot of postal-orders from my titled relations. Sometimes there's a delay in the post. On such occasions I shall expect you to advance me the cash—you to take the postal-orders when they come, of course."

"I see."

"That being understood, I'm prepared to share this study with you, and put up with you, Smithy," said Bunter. "I think you might stand rather a spread this evening—for two reasons. I've been disappointed about a postal-order, so I'm rather short of money. And I think you ought to give a sort of house-warming, you know."

"Anything else?"

"No, that's about all," said Bunter fatuously. "If I think of anything else later, I'll mention it, of course."

"Good!" said the Bounder. "Now you've done, it's time for me to begin. Get out of that chair!"

"Eh! What for?"

"So that I can lay this stump round you," said Vernon-Smith; and the cricket-stump was brought into view.

Billy Bunter blinked at him in alarm.

"I—I say, Smithy—"

"Are you getting out of that chair?"

"Nunno—I—yarooooooh!" roared Bunter, as the Bounder grasped the back of the armchair and tilted him out on the rug.

Bump!

"Oh crumbs! Here, keep off! Whoooooop!" roared Bunter, as the cricket-stump came down on his tight trousers.

Whack! Whack! Whack!

"Whoop! Help! Fire! Thieves! Murder!" roared Bunter.

"Now get out!" said the Bounder, throwing the cricket-stump into the corner. "Travel, and take your rubbish with you!"

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Bunter sat up and roared.

"Yow-ow-ow! Beast! I jolly well won't share this study with you now—not with a low cad like you, Smithy? Wow!"

"Are you going?" shouted the Bounder.

"Ow! Wow!"

Bunter scrambled up. Vernon-Smith stood beside the doorway with his right foot drawn back. It was so evidently his intention to kick Bunter as he passed out, that the Owl of the Remove's hesitation was natural.

"Get out!"

"Beast!"

"Are you going?"

Vernon-Smith made a stride to the corner to pick up the cricket-stump again. Billy Bunter made a rush for the doorway.

The Bounder was after him in a flash. Quick as Bunter was, the Bounder was quicker. There was what a novelist would call a dull, sickening thud, as his boot landed on Bunter, and the fat junior fairly flew through the doorway.

"Whoooooop!"

The Owl of the Remove sprawled in the passage. And as he sprawled his dog-eared books came whizzing out after him, crashing all over and round William George Bunter. It looked very doubtful whether Bunter would share Study No. 4 with Smithy, after all; his second moving job had been much more rapid than his first.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Welcome Home!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

"What the thump—"

"It's Bunter!" grinned Nugent.

"Yaroooh! Help! Murder! Fire!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton & Co., fresh and ruddy from the cricket, had arrived at the top of the Remove staircase, when Billy Bunter made his sudden and emphatic exit from Herbert Vernon-Smith's study.

A dozen Remove fellows had crowded out of their studies, and they were roaring with laughter.

"What on earth's up?" exclaimed Harry Wharton, the captain of the Remove.

"Yaroooh! Help!"

"I don't know what's up, but Bunter's down!" chuckled Johnny Bull.

"The downfulness is terrific!" grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The excellent and disgusting Bunter is in the esteemed wars!"

"I say, you fellows—yaroooh!" howled Bunter as the last volume from the study smote him and he rolled over.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bunter's been fixing himself in Smithy's study," explained Skinner. "It looks as if he's come unstuck."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, help! Oh dear! Oh, my hat!" Bunter sat up in the midst of dog-eared school-books. "That awful beast Smithy—Ow! Just because I told him I wouldn't dig in his study, you know—he fairly begged of me, but I had to refuse—I couldn't associate with a fellow like that—Wow—wow—"

Crash!

Bunter's desk came out through the doorway of Study No. 4. It crashed down in the Remove passage, and parted. Since the time when Mr. Lazarus had sold that ancient desk to Bunter for half-a-crown, it had had some

hard usage—and now it gave in. It flew into six or seven fragments as it landed on the floor.

Slam!

Vernon-Smith's study door closed on Bunter and all his works.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Famous Five roared. It was just like Bunter to attempt to "plant" himself on the wealthy Bounder—and it was just like the Bounder to deal with him in this drastic manner. Bunter really had asked for it—but he did not seem pleased at getting what he had asked for. He scrambled up, in the midst of his scattered property, gasping with rage.

"I say, you fellows, there's nothing to cackle at!" he howled.

"There's lots!" chortled Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, Bob, old chap, go in and give Smithy a licking! I'll hold your jacket!"

Bob Cherry only chuckled.

"Well, lend me a hand to carry these things back to my study!" howled Bunter. "I'm going to make Smithy pay for that desk! It cost fifteen guineas. Now it's smashed."

"You shouldn't plant your rubbish in another chap's study, old fat bean," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "You will want a lot of glue to stick that desk together again—if it's worth the trouble. We'll gather up the pieces for you."

The Famous Five good-naturedly lent Bunter a hand with his second moving job. They gathered up books and fragments of desk, and laughingly carried them into Study No. 7. Peter Todd and Tom Dutton had come in to tea, and they were there now, and they stared at Harry Wharton & Co.

"What's all that rubbish?" asked Toddy.

"Bunter's. We're the removal men," said Bob Cherry, chuckling. "Are you going to tip us, Bunter? Thirsty work, moving in this weather."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, this study isn't a dust-bin!" exclaimed Peter Todd. "Don't bring that rubbish in here! Chuck it down outside!"

"But it's Bunter's!" said Wharton.

"Bunter doesn't belong to this study now. He's changed out."

"I haven't!" roared Bunter.

"You have—you told me so," said Peter Todd firmly.

"I—I was only joking, old chap!" gasped Bunter, greatly alarmed at the prospect of being excluded from Study No. 7, now that he was so unmistakably barred from Study No. 4. "I—I—I mean, I've come back. I wouldn't desert you, Toddy—not an old pal like you."

"Keep that rubbish out of this study!"

"I—I say, Toddy—"

"You needn't say anything. Get out!"

"Well here, goes," said Bob Cherry; and the Famous Five deposited their burdens outside the door of Study No. 7, and then walked back to Study No. 1 to tea, leaving Study No. 7 to settle their differences on their own.

Billy Bunter stood in the doorway, blinking at Peter in alarm and indignation. Peter's look was quite uncomplimentary.

"I—I say, Peter," urged Bunter, "I—I've come back, you know. I really couldn't make up my mind to leave you, after all."

"What—not a poverty-stricken solicitor's son?" asked Peter Todd.

"I—I don't mind your being no-class, Peter—I don't really. I'm no snob, you know."

"Wha-a-at?"
"Don't be a beast, Peter—after all I've done for you, too," said Bunter; and he edged into the study.

Peter Todd took up a loaf from the table, and took aim.

"Where will you have it?" he asked. Bunter dodged into the passage.

"I—I say, Peter, old fellow—dear old fellow—"

"Chuck it!"

"Look here, I'm coming back into my own study!" roared Bunter, in great indignation. "I'm coming in, Peter Todd."

"Do," said Peter. "I've got the loaf ready. I'll bet you two to one in doughnuts that I catch you right on the nose!"

"Oh, really, Peter—"

"Buzz off!"

"I—I say, dear old chap—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Toddy.

"I—I always liked you, Toddy. I—I always admired you, you know!" gasped Bunter. "I never said you were a freak, like other fellows. I've said a lot of times that looks ain't everything."

"You fat dummy—"

"C-c-can I come in, Peter?"

"You can go to your own study."

"I—I say, I can't stand Smithy, after all; I've turned him down, Peter. He fairly begged of me to stay—"

"Yes, it sounded like it," assented Peter Todd. "I heard him kicking you out, you fat frog; and I knew he would all the time. You'd have known it if you'd had the sense of a bunny-rabbit. You can come in, you fat owl, and bring in your rubbish!"

"He, he, he!" cackled Bunter feebly.

"I—I don't mind your little jokes, Peter. I know how glad you are to have me back."

"I believe you do," assented Peter Todd. "Just how glad! Are you hard-up, Bunter?"

"I've been disappointed about a postal-order, old chap," said Bunter eagerly, rolling into the study.

"Like a quid?"

"Yes, rather! Hand it over!"

"Well, I'll lend you a quid—"

"Good!"

"If you can persuade any fellow in the Remove to let you dig in his study and get out of this."

"Beast!"

Apparently Bunter had no hope of exercising successful persuasion anywhere along the Remove passage. At all events, he remained in Study No. 7.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Catspaw!

HAROLD SKINNER pushed his books away when he had scamped his prep as usual.

Skinner, that evening, had more important matters than prep to think about. Having done just enough to scrape through in class the next morning, Skinner dismissed prep from his mind. Snoop and Stott followed his example. Study No. 11 in the Remove was quite famous for slacking and did its best to live up to its reputation.

"You cut along to Study No. 7, Snoopey," said Skinner. "Ask Bunter if he'd like to come to supper."

"No need to ask him if he would; he would!" answered Sidney James Snoop. "But what do you mean? We're not going to waste a supper on that fat owl, are we?"

"Do I ever waste anythin'?" said Skinner. "I want Bunter to talk."

"Great Scott! You're the only fellow at Greyfriars that does, then."

"Fathead!" said Skinner politely. "Bunter's got to talk. Isn't he as good an advertising medium as the 'Daily Mail'? If you want a thing known all over Greyfriars, can you do better than mention it to Bunter?"

"I know all that. But what—"

"Smithy had a talk with Redwing this afternoon," drawled Skinner. "They jawed about the reason why Redwing threw him over."

"I know he went into the study," said Snoop. "I saw him! Did you hear anything when you were hanging about the door?"

"I?" said Skinner. "As if I'd listen! No; my idea is that Bunter must have heard something."

"Bunter—he was in Smithy's study at the time, waiting for the Bounder to come in and kick him out," said Stott.

"Nevertheless, I think he must have heard something; asses have long ears, you know," said Skinner calmly. "At any rate, every fellow in the Remove will think so, when Bunter spreads the yarn over the school to-morrow."

"Oh!" said Snoop. And Sidney James went along to Study No. 7 without further delay. Skinner was the undisputed leader of the select circle in Study No. 11, and his comrades had a great admiration for his cunning skill in laying little schemes. Evidently another of Skinner's little schemes was "on."

Snoop returned in a few minutes with William George Bunter. It had never been known for the Owl of the Remove to decline an invitation to a meal.

Bunter came in cheerily, and looked still more cheery at the sight of a cake on the table. Skinner gave him an affable nod.

"So glad you were able to come, old chap!" he said.

"Well, the fact is Mauleverer asked me to supper in his study, and I had an invitation from Coker of the Fifth, too," said Bunter. "But I've turned them down for you, Skinner."

"That's jolly decent of you!" said Skinner. "It must be a bit of a rush for you, Bunter, being sought after like this in all the Remove studies, and in the upper Forms as well."

"Well, the fact is, it is," said Bunter fatuously. "I've often thought that I should have to ration you fellows, you know, as it were. A chap can't be everywhere at once."

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Stott.

Skinner gave him a warning look. For the present the game was to pull Bunter's fat leg—and never was there a leg easier to pull. Bunter liked flattery, and he liked it, like pineapple, in chunks. Skinner was prepared to hand it out in any quantities when it suited his purpose. "Sit down, old scout," he said.



The Bounder opened the door of his study, expecting to find the room vacant. He stared in surprise at an ancient desk and a stack of dog-eared books on the table—and then his glance travelled to a fat figure reposing in the armchair. "Trot in, Smithy, old man!" said Bunter. "What!" gasped the Bounder. "Trot in. Now that Redwing's gone I've decided to be your study-mate," said Bunter. "That's very kind of you!" replied Smithy, looking round for a cricket-stump. (See Chapter 3.)

"You'll like this cake—I remember you said you liked plum-cake. Tuck in!"

"Thanks!" Bunter's mouth was soon full. "Not a bad cake, Skinner! Not like the cakes I get from home, of course. But not bad."

"I've never seen the cakes you get from home, at any rate," grunted Snoop, not at all pleased by Bunter's energetic frontal attack on the cake. The cake was not a large one, and it looked like disappearing at a record speed.

"Oh, really, Snoop—"

"Shut up, Snoop! It's jolly decent of Bunter to come in to supper with us when fellows along the passage are fairly competing for his company," said Skinner. "He's going to tell us the news, too. Bunter knows all about it, and I fancy he's the only fellow who really knows why Redwing broke with Smithy."

Billy Bunter, who had not the faintest idea why Tom Redwing had broken with Smithy, looked as deep and wise as he could. Bunter was the Peeping Tom of Greyfriars, and he prided himself upon knowing all that went on—and he had ways and means peculiar to himself of learning a great deal that did not concern him. But in the present case he was as much in the dark as the rest of the Lower Fourth.

Nothing would have induced him to admit as much, however. He preferred

to assume the attitude of a fellow who knew but wouldn't tell.

"Well, why was it?" asked Stott. "That's telling," said Bunter, taking another slice of cake.

"Of course," said Skinner. "Bunter can tell us, as we're all friends here, and of course it won't go any farther than this study. But how did you get to know about it, Bunter?"

Bunter shook his head mysteriously, implying that so deep a fellow as William George Bunter had all sorts of resources in that line.

"Bunter's a jolly sharp chap," Skinner told his chums. "Perhaps he's wise not to talk too much about it. There'd be trouble in the cricket club if Wharton knew, for instance, that Smithy tricked Redwing into losing the train at Ashford on Rookwood day."

"Did he?" ejaculated Stott.

"How Bunter found it out I don't know," resumed Skinner, with great gravity. "But he knows all about it, and he knows that Smithy landed Redwing at Ashford by a dirty trick, and went on to Rookwood with the team and played in his place. How did you get on to it, Bunter?"

Bunter grinned.

"Oh, I fancy I know most things that go on!" he said.

"You do, and no mistake!" said

Skinner. "That's why Redwing has turned Smithy down, and nobody knew excepting Bunter. Did Smithy tell you, Bunter?"

"Perhaps he did, and perhaps he didn't," said Bunter. "I'm not saying anything."

"I don't blame Bunter for keeping it dark," went on Skinner. "It would make a lot of trouble for Smithy."

"Would it?" said Bunter, his eyes glimmering behind his big spectacles. He still felt an ache reminiscent of Smith's boot.

"Of course it would," said Skinner. "Keeping a member of the eleven away from a match is pretty serious. Smithy would get turned out of the club, I fancy, if it came out."

"Serve him jolly well right!" exclaimed Bunter. "The beast kicked me. I don't see why I should keep it dark!"

"Well, of course, you'll use your own judgment about that," said Skinner affably. "You know better than I can advise you."

"I fancy I do!" assented Bunter.

"All the same, I'd like to know how you found it out," said Skinner gravely. "Did Redwing tell you?"

Snoop and Stott suppressed their merriment with difficulty. Bunter had swallowed the information at a gulp, and he was already beginning to think that he had known it all along, and, in fact, that it was he who had told Skinner. Bunter's assumption of deep and mysterious wisdom put a heavy strain on Study No. 11, but they contrived not to chuckle.

"Bunter has ways of finding out things," said Snoop, playing up to Skinner. "No good asking him—he's too deep for us."

"I fancy I'm rather deep, you fellows," said Bunter complacently.

"No fancy about it. You are!" said Skinner. "Well, we won't mention that you've told us, Bunter. You can suit yourself about telling other chaps."

"I shall think it over," said Bunter. "I say, you fellows, is there any more cake?"

"That's the lot," said Skinner carelessly. He was done with the Owl of the Remove now, and not in the least inclined to draw further on the study cupboard on Billy Bunter's account.

"Well, so long," said Bunter. "I'll drop in at Study No. 1 and see if Wharton's got anything on. Those fellows are always anxious to get a few minutes of my time."

And the fat and fatuous Owl rolled out of Study No. 11. Skinner shut the door after him, and then the long-suppressed chuckles of the precious trio broke forth.

"The fat duffer!" said Stott.

"Isn't he a peach!" grinned Skinner. "The fat idiot thinks he knew it all along now—and he's gone to tell Wharton. There will be a row in the Remove soon, my sons."

"But what's the game?" asked Stott. "I say, this will make trouble for the old Bounder."

"I should jolly well say it would!" grinned Skinner.

"But we're backing him up, ain't we, now that he seems to be going to back up against Wharton's crowd?"

"We are, old man, we is!" said Skinner. "And this will start the jolly old trouble, I fancy. Smithy was trying to make it up with Redwing to-day—actually humbling himself, you know—a fellow that's as proud as Lucifer. That's jolly well going to be stopped—and this will stop it, if anything will! Wharton's bound to take the matter up,

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and Redwing will have to say what happened on Rookwood day—he will have to be a witness against the Bounder.

“Smithy will get into no end of trouble. Serve him jolly well right for turning down his old pals as he’s done. It will be the Bounder against Harry Wharton and his crowd—the jolly old times in the Remove coming back again!” Skinner rubbed his hands. “The Bounder’s the only chap in the Remove who can give Wharton a fall, and we’re jolly well going to see that he does it!”

“Hear, hear!” grinned Snoop. “I say, I think that’s pretty thick, you know!” said Stott in his slow way.

“My dear man, don’t you begin to think—your brain won’t stand it!” said Skinner. “Leave the thinkin’ to your kind old Uncle Harold. Where are the smokes, Snoop?”

And Skinner & Co. smoked their cigarettes, and they went up to the Remove dormitory that night in a very cheery mood, especially Skinner. There was trouble ahead in the Remove, serious trouble, and in troublous times—for others—Skinner thrived.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Just Like Bunter!

“I SAY, you fellows—”
“How did Bunter know there were cheese-cakes in the study?” asked Bob Cherry in a tone of wonder.

“Ha, ha, ha!”
The Famous Five of the Remove had gathered in Study No. 1 for a chat after prep. Cheese-cakes accompanied the chat, and they had just been finished when the Owl of the Remove appeared in the offing.

“Oh, really, Cherry, of course I didn’t know,” said Bunter. “Still, as you’ve got them going I’ll have some. Where are they?” Billy Bunter blinked round Study No. 1.

“They’re not going—they’re gone!” grinned Bob. “You’re a minute too late for the last, Bunt!”

“Try the next study,” chuckled Frank Nugent, “or the next but one! In fact, any study but this, old fat top!”

“I didn’t come here for supper,” said Bunter. “I’ve had supper—a stunning cake, which was stood me by some friends of mine. I’m not likely to want any of your old mouldy cheese-cakes. I’ve looked in for a little chat.”

“Mercy!”
“You silly ass!” roared Bunter, glaring at Bob Cherry. “I’ve a jolly good mind not to tell you now!”

“Hallo, hallo, hallo! More news?” yawned Bob. “Whose keyhole have you been at now?”

“Oh, all right,” said Bunter loftily, “I won’t tell you! Wharton ought to know, as cricket captain in the Remove, but I sha’n’t tell him! After all, he’s just as bad himself. He leaves me out of the matches, just as the Bounder did for Redwing. Jealousy in both cases.”

“Oh, my hat!” said the captain of the Remove.

“What’s that about Redwing?” said Bob.

“That’s telling!” grinned Bunter. “You want to hear it now, do you? Well, I don’t know that I shall tell you anything.”

“Bosh! I don’t want to hear it, fat-head! Roll away and play,” said Bob indifferently.

“I might tell you if I were asked civilly,” said the Owl of the Remove, relenting.

“Rats!”

There was a complete absence of interest on the part of the Famous Five.



“Get out of that chair!” said Vernon-Smith. “Eh! What for?” gasped Bunter. “So that I can put this stump round you,” said the Bounder grimly. “I—I—I say—yaroooooh!” roared Bunter, as the Bounder grasped the back of the armchair and tilted him out on to the rug. (See Chapter 3.)

In fact, William George Bunter had interrupted a conversation on the subject of a forthcoming number of the “Greyfriars Herald,” and just then his room was preferred to his company—as was very frequently the case.

Billy Bunter blinked wrathfully at the quintette. He wanted to be beseeched to tell his news. But he wanted to tell it, anyhow—he never could keep anything to himself.

“It’s Wharton’s duty to inquire into these things,” he said, “otherwise I should decline to tell you. Besides, the beast kicked me, and smashed my valuable desk, which cost seventeen guineas.”

“Eh? Are you talking about Smithy now?” asked Bob.

“Yes. There ought to be an inquiry,” said Bunter. “My idea is that Smithy ought to get a Form ragging, and be sent to Coventry.”

“Because he kicked you out of his study?” chuckled Johnny Bull.

“Yes—I mean, no! Because he played that dirty trick on Redwing!” said Bunter. “Of course, Redwing’s a low fellow—a sailorman’s son or something, some sort of a longshoreman, and oughtn’t to be here at all by rights—”

“Oh, dry up, you fat chump!” growled Bob.

“Still, right’s right, and cricket’s cricket,” said Bunter. “A member of the eleven ought not to be tricked away from a School match.”

The Famous Five regarded Bunter curiously now. They forgot the “Greyfriars Herald,” interested at last in Bunter’s remarks. It was evident that the Owl of the Remove had got hold of something.

“Now, what does all that mean?” asked Harry. “There hasn’t been a School match, for the Remove, since we played Rookwood last week.”

“I’m speaking about Rookwood. You know that Redwing was down to play, and was left out—”

“Because he was ass enough to lose the connection at Ashford!” said Bob. “That was nobody’s fault but his own, ass!”

“That’s all you know.”

“Well, if you know anything more, spout it out and get it over!” exclaimed Bob impatiently.

“Oh, really, Cherry—”

Johnny Bull shook his head slowly and thoughtfully.

“You fellows remember I said there was something fishy about that?” he remarked. “Smithy was wild at being left out of the team, and Redwing being put in. We thought he’d be pleased, Redwing being his chum, but he wasn’t. I asked him, that day at Rookwood, whether he’d had a hand in Redwing losing the train, and he never answered. I remember. Redwing isn’t the fellow to lose a train. If Bunter knows anything about it he ought to cough it up. Get on, Bunter!”

“How could Smithy have had anything to do with Redwing losing the train?” said the captain of the Remove uneasily. “Bunter’s got hold of some rot, I suppose, as usual.”

“Oh, have I?” exclaimed Bunter warmly. “Well, I can jolly well tell you that Smithy tricked Redwing into losing the train at Ashford, and that’s

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why Redwing's changed out of his study and won't speak to him now."

There was silence in Study No. 1. All the Remove knew of the break between the chums of Study No. 4, and had wondered over it. Billy Bunter had supplied the explanation.

"I'm not going to believe it without proof," said Harry Wharton at last. "Smithy's got a beastly temper, and he was ratty about that time— But a dirty trick like that— Poof! How does Bunter know, anyhow? Smithy wouldn't say anything about it, and I'm sure Redwing never told him."

"That's so," said Bob. "How do you know, Bunter?"

"Well, I know!" said Bunter. "Never mind how I know. I know. It's your duty, as captain of the Remove, to take it up, Wharton."

"I don't want you to teach me my duty, you fat owl!" said the captain of the Remove gruffly.

"The fellows will jolly soon make you take it up," said Bunter. "Smithy ought to be barred by the Form. Kicking a fellow—"

"The more he kicks you the better, I think."

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Bunter's heard something at a keyhole, as usual, I suppose," said Frank Nugent, after some reflection.

"I haven't!" yelled Bunter. "Do you think I'd play the eavesdropper, you beast?"

"Oh, my hat!"

"I know what I know," said Bunter. "Precious little goes on without my knowing. You can ask Redwing what happened if you don't believe me. Yah!"

And with that Billy Bunter rolled out of Study No. 1.

He left a very uncomfortable quintette of juniors behind him. The "Greyfriars Herald" was completely forgotten now. Bunter had given the chums of the Remove something much less pleasant to think of.

"It's all rot!" said Harry Wharton at length. "We can't take any notice of tattle like that."

"There's something in it," said Johnny Bull.

"Redwing's said nothing."

"He's broken off with the Bounder, though. He must have had a jolly good reason for that."

"Well, his reason is his own bizney, not ours. We're not going to have a row with the Bounder because of Bunter's silly chin-wag. We can't take any notice of what he hears at keyholes."

"Yes, that's so," assented Johnny Bull.

"Let it drop," suggested Frank Nugent. "Smithy made himself jolly unpleasant over the Rookwood match; but, after all, he put up a splendid game at Rookwood, and helped to win for us. We don't want the old trouble over again in the Remove."

"Not without some proof, anyhow," said Harry. "Bother Bunter and his tattle! Let it drop."

After due consideration the Famous Five agreed to let it drop—if they could. But it soon began to look as if they couldn't. Hazeldene of the Remove looked into the study a little later.

"What's this yarn Bunter is spouting up and down the passage?" he asked. "You fellows heard it?"

"Oh, yes!" growled Wharton.

"Is there anything in it?"

"I believe not. At least, I hope not."

"You're not taking it up?" asked Hazel, with a curious look at the captain of the Remove.

"No," said Harry curtly.

Hazel nodded and walked away. A little later the Famous Five left the study, and they came on quite a little crowd in the Rag downstairs. The crowd were surrounding William George Bunter, who was spinning his yarn over again to more or less incredulous hearers.

"Hallo, here's Wharton!" exclaimed Russell. "Have you heard this, Wharton?"

Wharton knitted his brows. He had not only heard it, but it seemed that he was not to hear the end of it.

"Bunter says—" began Bolsover major.

"He says that Smithy—" said Ogilvy, taking up the tale.

"Smithy got Redwing landed at Ashford on Rookwood day, and diddled him out of the match," said Peter Todd. "All rot, in my opinion."

"Just that!" said Harry Wharton. "For goodness' sake, Bunter, dry up and give your chin a rest!"

"Yah!" hooted Bunter. "You're afraid to take it up, Wharton! You're funky of the Bounder!"

"You silly ass!" roared Wharton.

"I guess it looks like it," remarked Fisher T. Fish. "I guess—"

Harry Wharton walked out of the Rag. It was borne in upon his mind now that it would not be possible to "drop" the matter, as he had hoped. Whether founded or unfounded, Bunter's story was becoming the talk of the Remove. Wharton was keenly desirous of avoiding trouble with the Bounder—not at all from motives of funk, as the fatuous Bunter supposed. The captain of the Remove did not want to see the Form torn by dissension again, as in the days when Vernon-Smith had been his enemy. He was very far from sharing the amiable Skinner's desire for the "jolly old times" to return in the Remove.

The worst of it was that, at the bottom of his heart, Wharton more than half believed that the story was true; and the thought of such a trick played on a member of his eleven roused his deepest anger. If the Bounder had taken upon himself to prevent a fellow, selected by Wharton, from appearing in a School match, it was necessary to deal with the Bounder in a drastic way.

Still, there was no proof in the matter so far, and Wharton still hoped that the talk might die away of its own accord. But when the Remove gathered in their dormitory that night, it was evident that Bunter's story had roused the deepest interest all through the Form. The Bounder figured largely in the life of the Greyfriars Remove. He was a fellow of consequence, and could never be ignored. And his break with Redwing had been much discussed. It had been a matter of surprise in the Remove that the son of a millionaire should chum up with a sailor's son, who was at Greyfriars on a scholarship. It was not like the Bounder, who was wealthy and proud of his wealth, and rather given to "swank."

But the two had been great chums, and Redwing's friendship had been a good thing for the headstrong and perverse Bounder. It had helped to keep him on the straight path. Now it was ended the Remove fellows naturally talked about it, though, doubtless, it would have ceased to be discussed in a few days had not Bunter's story given the affair a new lease of life.

All eyes were turned on the Bounder when he came into the dormitory. Vernon-Smith had spent the evening secluded in his study, and so far had

heard nothing of the topic that was buzzing up and down the Form.

"Smithy!" yelled Bolsover major, as the Bounder came in.

Vernon-Smith glanced at him.

"Did you diddle Redwing that day at Ashford and keep him out of the Rookwood match by a trick?"

Vernon-Smith started violently. For a moment he was quite taken aback.

"What?" he ejaculated.

"Nothing in it, of course," said Skinner blandly. "But the fellows are all talking about it, Smithy. You've only got to deny it, old chap."

The Bounder was his usual cool, self-possessed self again in a moment. He glanced at Tom Redwing, who was sitting on his bed taking his boots off. Redwing's face was a little flushed, but he was turning a deaf ear to the talk round him.

"Did Redwing tell you so, Bolsover?" asked the Bounder, in icy tones.

"Oh, no! Bunter seems to have got hold of it," said Bolsover major. "I suppose Redwing told him, if there's any truth in it."

Tom Redwing looked up at that.

"I've told Bunter nothing," he said.

"Well, what about it, Smithy?" asked Bolsover major.

The Bounder yawned.

"Nothing about it, so far as I'm concerned," he answered. "If you're interested in Redwing's reason for losing trains on match-days you'd better ask Redwing, I suppose."

"Well, let's ask Redwing," said Ogilvy. "We know he will tell the truth, anyhow. Redwing, old scout—"

"I've nothing to tell you," said Tom.

"I suppose you can tell us whether Smithy tricked you into losing the train that day or not?" exclaimed Russell.

"I've got nothing to say about it."

"That won't do, Redwing," exclaimed Tom Brown. "That's as good as saying that there's something in it. You can deny it, I suppose, if it isn't true."

Redwing's face was crimson. He could have denied what was not true; but he could not deny the truth.

"Go it, Redwing," said Squiff encouragingly. "Tell us it's all Bunter's bunkum, and we'll bump Bunter for spreading such a silly yarn."

"Oh, really, Field—" ejaculated Bunter, in alarm.

But Tom Redwing did not speak. How the story had got about the Remove he could not imagine—he knew that he had told no one. He wanted to screen what Vernon-Smith had done; but he was not prepared to utter falsehoods for that purpose. All eyes were fixed on him now—and there was a mocking smile on the Bounder's face.

"Lost your voice, Redwing?" asked Skinner sarcastically, and there was a laugh.

"I say, you fellows, he can't deny it—it's true!" howled Bunter triumphantly.

The Famous Five looked at one another. Redwing's confused silence did not need interpreting to them. The story was true; and Tom Redwing was reluctant to say anything against the fellow who had been his friend—that was how the matter stood.

"We're waiting, Redwing!" hooted Bolsover major.

"You can wait!" snapped Tom.

"Are you going to tell us—"

"I'm going to tell you nothing."

Tom Redwing turned into bed without another word. Wingate of the Sixth came in to turn out the lights. After the prefect was gone there was an excited buzz of voices in the Remove dormitory. It was later than usual that

night when the Removites dropped off to sleep—and it was quite certain that the subject would be revived on the morrow.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Yes or No?

MR. QUELCH, the master of the Remove, was not pleased with his Form that morning.

Never had the Lower Fourth displayed so complete a lack of interest in the adventures of the "pius Æneas."

From Mr. Quelch's point of view, the whole attention of the Remove fellows should have been centred on Latin verse. But a Form master's point of view seldom coincides completely with that of his Form.

Matters of greater interest and import than Latin verse occupied the thoughts of the Removites.

Such matters should have been left outside the door of the Form-room. But they weren't! They ought to have been; but in an imperfect universe things do not happen precisely as they ought to happen.

There were whispers in the class that morning. The whispers grew into quite a buzz whenever Mr. Quelch's back was turned.

Something was going to happen—all the Remove knew that. Something had to happen. Once more it would be the Bounder against Harry Wharton—and such antagonists were certain of the concentrated attention of the Remove—even to the exclusion of Latin verse.

Mr. Quelch grew impatient.

He could see that some personal matters, not at all connected with Form work, filled the thoughts of his class, and naturally he was annoyed. He supposed that the Remove fellows were at Greyfriars to learn things—a supposition that would have surprised some members of the Remove at least.

"Bunter!" rapped out Mr. Quelch suddenly.

Bunter jumped.

"Oh! Yes, sir! I wasn't speaking!"

"You were whispering to Wibley," exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, no, sir! Not a word! I was only telling Wibley—"

"You will take fifty lines, Bunter."

"Oh dear!"

The chopper coming down on Bunter checked the flow of whispering in the Remove. But not for long.

"Skinner! You were speaking to Snoop!" rapped out Mr. Quelch. "You will take a hundred lines, Skinner."

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Skinner.

"You will go on, Wharton," said the Remove master. "The next boy who chatters idly will be caned."

Wharton went on to construe. Before he had finished, Mr. Quelch rapped out angrily:

"Bolsover!"

"Oh crumbs!" ejaculated Bolsover.

"You were talking to Dupont."

"Yes, sir," said Bolsover.

"Stand out before the class!"

Swish!

Bolsover major went back to his place, rubbing his hands ruefully. Then there was order for some time. Mr. Quelch was evidently getting "ratty." His gimlet-eye searched the Form for offenders; but for ten minutes or so there were no more offenders. Then the whispering became audible again.

Half a dozen separate and distinct times the Form master's cane was required that morning—and lines fell so thickly that Mr. Quelch must have had some difficulty in keeping count of them.

Form master and Form were equally relieved when the Remove were turned out of the Form-room, to take French with Monsieur Charpentier in another class-room.

In the French class there was attention to anything but French. Mossoo was accustomed to an inattentive class, and being an ineffective little man, he generally allowed his class to do very much as they liked. On this occasion they liked to discuss the latest sensation in the Remove—and few gave any heed to Monsieur Charpentier and his irregular verbs.

The class-room, in fact, was in such a buzz all through the lesson that Monsieur Charpentier could scarcely hear himself speak; and he was very thankful when he had done with the Remove that morning.

The Remove poured out into the sunny quad, happy in their release.

"What will Wharton do?"

That was the question which every Removeite asked, and to which, so far, there was no answer.

It was impossible for the captain of the Remove to let the affair pass unnoticed. But what steps he intended to take were, at present, only known to himself—and even whether he intended to take any at all. It was easily to be guessed that he was unwilling to begin trouble with the Bounder—and some of the fellows wondered whether he "funked" it—a doubt which perhaps occurred to the Bounder's mind also.

Harry Wharton was taking his time to think it out. He did not want to get hastily, in a matter that might have far-reaching consequences; in point of fact, he did not want to act at all. But it was no longer in his power to let the matter drop.

The nearer the time came for a struggle with the Bounder, the less the captain of the Remove liked the prospect. The Bounder's manner was far from conciliating—he looked like a fellow who would welcome trouble, and certainly would not take a step out of his way to avoid it. Possibly—probably—he was thinking again of his old schemes, of turning out the Remove captain and making a bid for his place. A contest of that kind was likely to play havoc with the Remove cricket fixtures—an important matter to Wharton. Yet the incident could not possibly be allowed to rest where it was.

If the Bounder had done what was alleged, it was a serious matter. But it rested with Redwing to accuse him, and Tom had not done so. Only the two of them knew what had happened at Ashford that day, and Wharton wanted to believe the best he could of the Bounder.



"Redwing! Stand forward!" roared out Peter Todd. "You stand before this Court as a witness for the Crown, and you are called upon to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the giddy truth. You will now tell the Court precisely what happened at Ashford on Rookwood day." "I've nothing to say," said Tom Redwing. There was a pause in the proceedings in the Rag. (See Chapter 8.)

He wanted, in fact, to let Smithy down as lightly as possible, and keep him in the cricket for the rest of the season.

After dinner, as Vernon-Smith was strolling in the quad with Skinner and Snoop—the Bounder seemed on very friendly terms with Skinner & Co. now—Harry Wharton came up to him. A dozen fellows had their eyes on Wharton, and they promptly gathered round to witness the interview. Wharton was very quiet and grave; the Bounder cool and nonchalant, with a rather mocking expression on his hard face. Many of the fellows remarked that he looked like the “old Bounder”—the Bounder of the days when he had been the hardest case at Greyfriars.

“Smithy, old scout,” began the captain of the Remove, and some of the eager onlookers were a little disappointed by the mildness of his tone. This did not promise an exciting interview.

“Hallo!” drawled the Bounder. “I suppose you’ve heard the tattle that’s going up and down the Remove, by this time?”

“I’m not interested in tattle.”

“Well, you know what Bunter has said—”

“I’m afraid I can’t confess to any interest in what Bunter may have said.” Wharton flushed a little, and Skinner & Co. grinned. The astute Skinner felt that his anticipations were well-founded. The Bounder was looking for trouble!

“You heard it last night in dorm, if you haven’t heard it since,” said Harry, keeping his temper. “I don’t want to take any notice of it, personally.”

“Why do so, then?” yawned Vernon-Smith.

“It’s not a matter that can be passed over. I don’t want a fuss about it—I’m prepared to take your word on the subject, without making any inquiry at all. Your word’s good enough for me.”

“Thanks!”

“I don’t know how Bunter got hold of the story—very likely he heard you talking to Redwing, and mixed it up and got it wrong, in his usual style,” said Harry. “If Redwing had knocked it on the head at once, the thing would have been at an end. But—”

“Hadn’t you better apply to Redwing?”

“I’m applying to you,” said the captain of the Remove sharply. “Redwing may have his own reasons for not speaking, and I’d rather not inquire into them, whatever they are. I only want to ask you to give me your word that there’s nothing in it, and the matter drops, so far as I’m concerned.”

“Does it concern you at all, anyhow?” inquired the Bounder, with deliberate insolence.

“You know it does! If you really played a rotten trick on a member of my eleven, and kept him away from a match, I’m bound to take some action, as cricket captain in the Form, and you know it.”

“And what action do you propose to take?” asked the Bounder, with an air of careless interest.

“We needn’t go into that now. The story is that you tricked Redwing deliberately into losing his train at Ashford, so that he couldn’t come on to Rookwood and play for Greyfriars. You played in his place, as you came with us on the reserve list. You played a jolly good game, and helped to win. But—but did you or did you not land Redwing at Ashford that day by a trick?”

The question was put directly now, and it was up to the Bounder. All eyes turned eagerly on him. Never had the

Bounder of Greyfriars looked so cool and nonchalant. He flicked a speck of dust from the sleeve of his well-fitting jacket, seemingly more interested in that speck than in Wharton’s question.

“I want an answer, Smithy,” said the captain of the Remove, at last, as Vernon-Smith did not speak.

The Bounder smiled. “What sort of an answer do you want?” he asked. “Do you want me to own up and confess, and profess repentance, like Good Little Georgie in the story-book? Good Little Georgie isn’t in my line.”

Some of the juniors laughed. “I want yes or no!” said Harry Wharton quietly.

“You won’t get either from me,” said the Bounder coolly. “If I did it, I’m not bound to accuse myself, I suppose. If I didn’t, your question is an insult, and deserves no answer. It’s for Redwing to accuse me, if he chooses. I refer you to Redwing.”

“It’s not a question of an accusation at present. I want the matter settled in a friendly spirit,” said Wharton patiently. “A word is enough, and the matter ends.”

“My dear man, why should I be keen on ending the matter, when the whole Form is fairly revellin’ in it?” grinned the Bounder. “Why should I deprive my beloved Form-fellows of a little harmless and necessary entertainment?”

“Oh, don’t be an ass, Smithy!” interposed Squiff. “Can’t you say yes or no, like a sensible chap?”

“I could—but I won’t,” said the Bounder coolly. “I’m not saying anything. If our high and mighty skipper isn’t satisfied, and wants an inquiry, let him get on with it.”

“Is that all you have to say?” asked the captain of the Remove.

“That’s about all, I think.”

Wharton compressed his lips. He had no further doubt on the subject now, and his own anger was rising fast.

“Very well, if you put it like that I’ll get on with it,” he said. “You’ll have to take the consequences, Vernon-Smith.”

“Something awful, what?” smiled the Bounder. “Something lingering, with boiling oil in it? Or are you goin’ to tell me to bend over, like a prefect, and give me six?”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“It’s a matter for the Form to deal with,” said Harry. “There will be a meeting of the Remove in the Rag this afternoon, after classes—say, at five o’clock. You will be there, Smithy.”

“I’ll try to find time to look in, if you make a point of it, old bean. You’re no end entertainin’ in the role of a kind old uncle, more in sorrow than in anger, and so on.”

“Ha, ha, ha!” roared Skinner & Co. Harry Wharton turned his back on the Bounder, and walked across to the School House. He did not want the matter to come to blows, if he could help it. And it had dawned upon his mind that Vernon-Smith was seeking to turn it into a personal quarrel, to be settled with the gloves on. That would have suited the Bounder admirably—it was doubtful whether he was a match for the captain of the Remove, but anything like fear had been quite left out of the Bounder’s composition.

“It will be all right, Smithy,” said Skinner. “All your friends will come and back you up.”

“Rely on us, old scout,” said Snoop. “Yes, rather,” said Stott.

The Bounder nodded, and smiled rather satirically. He knew that he could rely on Skinner & Co.—just so far

as he played their game and served their purposes—and not an inch further than that. They were keen to give Wharton a “fall”—and the Bounder was the only man to do it—that was where Skinner & Co. came in.

But apart from the black sheep in the Form, Vernon-Smith knew that he had little support to expect, unless he could come through clear. All depended on whether Tom Redwing would speak—and the Bounder would have died a dozen times over, rather than have asked of Redwing the favour of silence—or even have accepted the favour if offered.

The Bounder realised that he was “up against it.” But it was when he was up against it that the Bounder of Greyfriars was most cool and determined and unyielding.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

In the Rag!

AFTER classes that day there was a general move on the part of the Lower Fourth towards the Rag.

In that apartment, where most of the junior meetings were held, the order had gone forth for the whole of the Remove to gather—and few fellows in the Form were likely to miss this meeting. Even Lord Mauleverer displayed some interest in the matter, and came along with Sir Jimmy Vivian.

Skinner & Co. turned up quite early, and all Harry Wharton’s friends were there in force. By five o’clock hardly a member of the Remove had failed to appear. As the hour struck, the door of the Rag was closed, and Wharton took the roll of the Form. Two or three fellows were absent—but the only one that mattered was Tom Redwing. Redwing was needed.

“Fetch Redwing here,” said Harry Wharton; and half a dozen fellows went to look for Tom Redwing.

The sailorman’s son was found in his study. He had sat down to his books and had a pen in his hand; but he was not working. He knew about the Form meeting, and its purpose, and it troubled him deeply. He wanted to keep clear of it if he could; but he had little hope of being left in peace.

“Hallo, hallo, hallo!” boomed Bob Cherry, in the doorway of Study No. 3. “You’re wanted, Redwing, ‘old tulip!’”

“Why the thump haven’t you turned up?” demanded Bolsover major. “You know it’s a Form meeting.”

“Come on, Reddy,” said Squiff. “I’d rather not come, you fellows,” said Tom, turning his handsome face, dark with distress, towards the juniors in the doorway. “I’d much rather give it a miss.”

“Can’t be did,” said Bob. “The thing’s got to be settled, Redwing. I know it’s jolly unpleasant for you, old chap, as Smithy was your pal—but you’ve got to come.”

“Pal be blowed!” said Squiff forcibly. “If Smithy played such a trick on Redwing he’s not the kind of pal a fellow ought to want. Redwing’s bound to tell the truth about it.”

“I shall tell the truth or nothing,” said Tom Redwing quietly.

“I know that, old scout. Come on.” Tom Redwing still hesitated.

“Look here, you’ve got to come!” roared Bolsover major. “If you don’t walk you’ll be carried, so take your choice.”

“Shut up, Bolsover!” said Bob. “Get a move on, Reddy—the fellows are all

(Continued on page 17.)



Greyfriars Under Canvas!

By GEORGE WINGATE.

EDITORIAL!

By Harry Wharton.

IT is nothing new for the Greyfriars fellows to go away to camp during the summer months. I find, on going through the old records, that the school had a camping-out holiday as far back as 1822. There were tents in those days, but they were not of such a comfortable and convenient type as the modern bell-tent. The material from which they were made was very coarse, and by no means waterproof. And this gave rise to a deal of trouble.

It was in a large meadow, not many miles from Brighton, that the Greyfriars camp was pitched. The site was ill-chosen, for the meadow lay in a valley at the foot of the downs. Consequently, when it rained—and it pelted incessantly, we are told, for three days and nights—the little encampment was swamped out. There was a great deal of grumbling among the pupils of that period, and some of them contracted chills, as a result of sleeping in damp bedclothing. Something akin to a mutiny broke out in the camp. Tents were wrecked; law and order were thrown to the winds; and the Head and the masters were powerless to cope with the situation. Finally, the camp had to be abandoned, and the boys returned to Greyfriars a fortnight before their camping holiday was due to finish. I should imagine they were not sorry to get back to their dry dormitories and watertight studies!

A Memorable Year.

In 1866, the Great Fire of Greyfriars occurred. Extensive damage was done to the school buildings, and the firemen were busy all the night through, fighting the flames with all the skill at their command. They managed to save the older and more valuable parts of the building, but the Form-rooms and studies suffered severely; and the whole school had to go away to camp whilst the work of reconstruction was carried out. On this occasion, there was no "trouble in the camp." Glorious summer weather prevailed throughout, and the Greyfriars fellows had the time of their lives, despite the fact that lessons went on as usual. But they enjoyed the novelty of having lessons in the open air.

A Tragic Holiday!

Far less happy was the camping holiday which was taken in 1881. It was marred by a sad tragedy. The camp

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was pitched beside the sea, on a very wild part of the coast; and two members of the Remove Form—Derrick and Dangerfield—lost their lives as the result of a midnight escapade. They put out to sea in a boat, and were overtaken by a terrible storm. All efforts to rescue them proved futile. Their frail craft capsized, and both were drowned. After this tragic occurrence the penalty for breaking out of camp by night was instant expulsion.

A Skirmish with Gipsies!

The Greyfriars fellows who went to camp in 1903 had a very exciting time. The camp was invaded by a hostile tribe of gipsies, who endeavoured to take possession. A pitched battle took place, and the fighting raged furiously for an hour or more. Finally, the gipsies were put to flight, and the headmaster notified the police of the outrage. There were a few minor casualties among the Greyfriars fellows, but nothing serious.

Happy Memories!

Last year's camping holiday was a great success from start to finish. Apart from a "ghost" scare in the night, which caused a good deal of excitement, everything went without a hitch. Sport was the order of the day. There were cricket matches, swimming races, running races, and tennis tournaments; and most of the fellows declared, when the holiday was over, that they had never felt fitter in their lives. There is no doubt that a camping holiday is one of the finest tonics in the world; but, of course, everything must be properly organised. And it says much for the organisers of last year's summer camp that everything went so smoothly. The cooking arrangements were perfect; the camp could not have been pitched in a more suitable spot; and most of us had the time of our lives. I'm sure I did! It was "one crowded hour of glorious life"—or, rather, many crowded hours—which I would give a good deal to live over again.

"My boy Freddie," said the father of the family, "is an inventor."

"Ah!" said the friend. "Airships?"

"Not at present. His speciality just now is labour-saving devices."

"Really? What are they?"

"Excuses for not working."

IN the summer a schoolboy's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of—Camping-out! When he sits in his Form-room, mugging at Latin and Greek, his thoughts wander to the green spaces, the white rows of tents, the crowd of cheery campers. And he wishes his pen was a magic wand, so that by waving it he could transport himself to that pleasant scene. But soon it will be Breaking-up Day; the summer holidays will start; and, hey presto! He will taste once more the joys of camping.

Camping-out has many charms. It also has a few drawbacks, but no fellow worth his salt will mind "roughing it" a little. He won't expect to sleep on a feather bed, or to have his meals served on a snowy-white tablecloth. Neither will he expect his tent to be lit with electric light, and to possess all modern conveniences. And if it happens to rain in the night, and the water soaks through the canvas, and gives him a shower-bath, it won't damp his ardour. "It's all in the game!" will be his cheery cry.

According to Shakespeare, the course of true love never did run smooth; and neither did the course of camping-out. But I think most fellows will agree that the delights of camping-out are far in excess of the drawbacks.

Cricket, and swimming, and other summer sports are in no way interfered with. On the contrary, we indulge in them with greater zest than ever.

Of course, there are fellows who will tell you that camping-out is a very much over-rated pleasure. Greyfriars has its grumblers, and you will see what they have to say on the subject in this issue. Billy Bunter doesn't mind camping-out so long as the grub is good and plentiful. He would have no objection to being stranded on a desert island, like a plump Crusoe, provided a handsome cargo of tuck was washed ashore for his consumption. And Lord Mauleverer declares that camping-out would be "top-hole" if only a fellow was allowed to lie snoozing in his tent all day long, and all night into the bargain!

The majority of fellows, however, are great camping enthusiasts. The mere mention of camping-out makes their cheeks glow and their eyes sparkle. A life in the open air gives one a glorious sense of freedom and contentment; and, as Bob Cherry wittily remarks, "You can't have contentment without a 'tent' in it!"

HARRY WHARTON.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 859.



The Art of Camping-Out!

Specially Written for
The Greyfriars Herald
by
BILLY BUNTER.

CHOOSING A CAMPING-GROUND.

IF any fellow at Greyfriars knows more about camping-out than yours truly, let him stand forward!

Ah! There is no response to my challenge. To tell you the truth, I didn't think there would be, bekwase it is agreed on all sides that there is only one camping-out eggspert at Greyfriars—and that's me! I've camped out every summer for the last twenty years, so I ought to know what I'm talking about. (Draw it mild, Bunter! According to your statement, you must have been camping-out five years before you were born!—Ed.)

There are lots of fellows who would simply love to spend a camping holliday. Only one thing holds them back. They don't know how to go about it. I will now proceed to put them wise on the subject.

First of all, you must choose your sight. I don't mean your eyesight. I mean the sight on which your tents are going to be erected. Of course, it will have to be in the country somewhere, or beside the sea. You can't pitch a camp in Pickadilly Sirkuss, or any other crowded thoroughfare. If you did, it would soon be swept away by the stream of traffick. You must choose a spot "far from the madding crowd." Personally, I should select a secluded meadow in the hart of the country. I don't like being near the sea, owing to a natcheral aversion to cold water!

Before you take possession of the meadow, you must find out who it belongs to, and ask the old buffer if he has any objection to your camping-out on his property. If he says yes, go ahead! If he says no, tell him he's a beastly killjoy and a spoilsport. And if he says, "You can have the use of my meadow if you care to pay for it at the rate of five pounds per square yard," tell him he's a pig-faced profiteer, and can jolly well go to Jerriko!

Most farmers and landowners are decent sports, and I don't think you will have much trouble in finding a sootable meadow.

COOKING ARRANGEMENTS.

Food is the all-important part of camping-out. You can't have a cheery, comfortable camp without addikwet supplies of grubb.

Nothing is worse than to find oneself stranded without grubb, in a lonely meadow, about a duzen miles from a provision shop. It makes you feel like the Swiss Family Robinson Crusoe, on their desert island.

Before you go away to camp, you must thoroughly diskuss the queschun of meels. And you must arrange to take a lorry or a panteckneion, loaded with

provender, to your camping-ground. Bear in mind that a fellow's appytite is three times as big as usual when he is living in camp, and arrange your diet accordingly.

I once went away to camp with a chap who was an old campainer; but he hadn't bothered his head much about the grubb part of the bizzness. All that we had in the way of grubb was a huge packing-case full of dogg-biskits. We had dogg-biskits for brekker; dogg-biskits for dinner; dogg-biskits for tea; and dog-biskits for supper. Next day we would ring the changes by having biskits (dogg) for brekker; biskits (dogg) for dinner; biskits (dogg) for tea; and biskits (dogg) for supper.

Of course, we soon got fed-up with our froogal fare. There was a mutiny in the camp, and finally we packed up and went back home. And all bekwase the leader of the party had not made proper provision for proper provisions!

One of my scouting readers, who is in camp near Wembley, has sent me a copy of the bill of fare they have in his camp. It works out, he tells me, at three-and-fourpence per head per day, and he and his chums appear to be happy and satisfied. Well, all I can say is, some fellows are very easily satisfied! Here is the meenu for the first four days;

SUNDAY (Breakfast): One egg, bread-and-butter, tea, jam or marmalade. (Dinner): Roast beef, cabbage, and potatoes, raisin roll. (Tea): Tea, bread-and-butter, jam. (Supper): Bread-and-butter, fishcake, cocoa.

MONDAY (Breakfast): Two sausages, bread-and-butter, tea, jam or marmalade. (Dinner): Mutton, haricot beans, and potatoes, jam-tart. (Tea): Bread-and-butter, slice of cake. (Supper): Bread-and-butter, cheese, cocoa.

TUESDAY (Breakfast): One rasher of bacon, bread-and-butter, tea, jam or marmalade. (Dinner): Cold roast beef, salad, and potatoes, apple-pie. (Tea): Bread-and-butter, bath bun. (Supper): Bread, soup.

WEDNESDAY (Breakfast): Two kippers, bread-and-butter, tea, jam or marmalade. (Dinner): Liver and bacon, cabbage, and potatoes, jam-roll. (Tea): Bread-and-butter, jam. (Supper): Bread and cheese, cocoa.

Now, if I was in charge of the cooking arrangements at that camp, I should make drastick alterations. Do you know what I should do? I should compress that four days' bill of fare into one day. Sunday's breakfast, for eggssample, would be: Egg and bacon, bread-and-butter, tea, jam, or marmalade. Roast beef, cabbage, and potatoes, raisin roll. More tea, bread-and-butter, jam. More bread-and-butter, fishcake, cocoa.

That would make a nice, substantial breakfast; and the other meals would be arranged on simmiler lines. As the bill of fare stands at present, it is absurd! Fancy having one slice of cake for tea, or one sollitary bath bun! Why, it's hardly enuff to whett your appytite!

Your camping holliday will be a "wash-out" unless you take plenty of tuck with you. A starvation diet means mutiny in the camp; whereas an ample and satisfying bill of fare means smiling faces and happiness and contentment all round.

THE DAILY ROUTINE.

Here is a suggested time-table for an average day in camp. I'm not a fellow who beleeves in getting up at daybreak, and going for an early morning dip, and all that sort of rot. You are in camp to enjoy yourself and have a jolly good time—not to make your life mizzerable by having to rise at four, and bathe at five, and so on. If you came to camp with me, your day would be split up as follows:

10 a.m. Get up. (Washing optional.)

10.30 a.m. Brekker.

Bask in the sunshine till 11.30 a.m., and then adjern to the refreshment markee for a light snack.

1.30 p.m. Lunch.

The afternoon should be devoted to sport, such as Marbles, Winkle-catching, Tadpole-fishing, Kite-flying, etc., etc. Another light snack should be taken at 3 p.m.

4.30 p.m. Tea.

6 p.m. Supper.

7 p.m. Second supper.

8 p.m. Third supper.

After the final supper, you will crawl—you won't be able to walk—to your tent, and turn in, and sleep the sleep of the just.

9 p.m. Lights out.

I don't suppose my views on camping will appeal to everybody; but they are sane, sound, and sensible views, arrived at after twenty years of eggssperience. And if you are thinking of going into camp this summer, you won't go far wrong if you follow the advice contained in this artikle.

The Children's Best Coloured Paper
JUNGLE JINKS
Out on Thursday—Price 2^d



My Camping-Out Memories!

A Page of Lively Recollections, dealing with the Delights and Drawbacks of Camp Life.

BOB CHERRY:

I consider that camping-out is the grandest sport under the sun. What lively larks! What jolly japes! What comical capers! I have happy recollections of the time when Greyfriars was under canvas at Pinchaven-on-Sea. We lived on the fat of the land, and enjoyed ourselves up to the hilt. It was a "haunted" camp, by the way, and this added to the fun. We laid the "ghost" by the heels at last, and he turned out to be a half-witted fellow who had been paying midnight visits to the camp, and wrecking tents, and leading us quite a dance. On one occasion he arranged for Quelch's tent to be invaded by ducks, and when our worthy Form master awoke suddenly in the middle of the night he had the shock of his life. There were ducks to the right of him, ducks to the left of him, and ducks all round him. And he had to send out an S.O.S. to the chums of the Remove to come and eject the feathered army from his tent. It was great sport, but our friend the "ghost" didn't think so when we eventually colared him.

LORD MAULEVERER:

Talk not to me of the joys of camping out. There aren't any. All the time we were in camp last summer I don't believe I slept a giddy wink. When bedtime came at nine o'clock I would crawl away to my tent in the hope of snatching a few hours' slumber. But my tent-mates had no thought of going to sleep. Tom Brown would set his gramophone going, and Johnny Bull would perform on the concertina, and they would "vex with mirth the drowsy ear of night," as old Byron has it. In vain I implored them to desist. At last, just as I was dropping into a doze, daylight would come, bringing Bob Cherry with it. And Bob would rout me out and make me come for an early-morning dip. Oh, what a life! It was a wonder I didn't give up the ghost and perish through lack of sleep. How the other fellows managed to keep going without sleep I don't know. They were always bubbling over with energy, whereas I hadn't a kick left in me by the time our camping holiday was over. Camp life would be simply glorious if a fellow was allowed to doze all day and dream all night. But under present conditions it's simply awful, begad!

BILLY BUNTER:

Next time we go to camp I mean to ask the Head to appoint me camp cook. It will be my duty to lay in the provisions and cook the meals, and super-vised in the refreshment marquee. Of course, I shall want some assistance. I

Supplement iii.]

shall need someone to wash up all the pots and pans, and plates and cups and saucers. Perhaps the Head will be good enough to loan me a couple of masters for that purpose. Mr. Quelch and Mr. Prout would do nicely. Can't you picture them with aprons on, and sleeves rolled up, washing up the dinner things? In the capacity of camp cook, I should have the time of my life. Everything I cooked would be sampled by me before it was served out to the fellows. I should be sampling all day long, and there would be no fear of my wasting away to a skellington. Life would be a dream and a delight. But if the Head duzzent see his way to grant my request there will be weeping and nashing of teeth.

ALONZO TODD:

Camp life, I sadly fear, does not suit my frail and delicate constitution. Sleeping on hard tent-boards is a dreadful ordeal, and when I wake up in the morning I am covered with bruises from head to foot. Constant exposure to the sun causes my face to peel, and robs me of what little beauty I possess. I have strong objections to my face being roasted. It is most painful. Camp life is full of drawbacks, not the least of which is the number of beetles, cockroaches, and other creepy-crawly things which invade one's tent in the night. Ugh! The mere memory of it makes me shudder. I much prefer my snug bed in the Remove dormitory, where one can sleep in peace without fear of being bitten by gnats or nipped by earwigs.

WILLIAM GOSLING:

Wot I says is this 'ere. If the 'Ead asks me to go to camp with the boys this year, I shall say "NO!"—final an' emphatic. I've 'ad enough of sleepin' in them there tents. It's 'orrible, that's wot it is! The rain pelts down in the middle of the night an' soaks me to the

skin, an' touches up my roomatticks somethin' painful. It ain't right that a man of my years should 'ave to sleep in a damp, draughty tent. Wot's more, the young rips plays pranks on me in the night. One night, I remember, they put a big, prickly 'edgehog in my bed, an' it was like a lot of pins an' needles stickin' into me. It punctured me somethin' crool! Don't talk to William Gosling about the joys of camp life. There ain't none. All you gets in camp is sorrer an' tribulation, as ever was!

TOM BROWN:

I once went off on a camping-out expedition all alone. I had been reading a lot of wonderful romances, including "The Romany Rye" and "The Broad Highway," with the result that I had a bad attack of the "Wanderlust." I carried a folding tent with me and all the necessary equipment. After a long day's tramp I pitched my tent in a secluded spot and prepared to settle down for the night. I had about an hour's sleep, and then a terrific storm sprang up and blew the tent down on top of me. After crawling out from the debris I rigged up the tent once more, and again it came crashing down on top of me, and I was buried alive. Finally, I had to crawl away to some farm buildings and spend the night in a hay-loft. I began to wonder whether the heroes of "The Romany Rye" and the "The Broad Highway" would have enjoyed being in my shoes. I was drenched, depressed, fed-up, and far from home. The second night happened to be fine, and there was no sign of a storm brewing, so I settled down in my tent to enjoy a night's repose. I was routed out at midnight by a furious farmer, who threatened to have the law on me for trespassing. I soon realised that there is a vast difference between fiction and fact. Camping out by yourself is perfectly ripping—in the story-books, but in cold reality it pans out very differently. After several sleepless nights and many misadventures, I was jolly thankful to get back to civilisation once more, with a roof over my head.

MR. PAUL PROUT:

I regret there is not sufficient space in the "Greyfriars Herald" for me to recount all my camping-out adventures in the Rocky Mountains and elsewhere. But if any of the Greyfriars boys would like to hear of my wonderful adventures all over the globe, I shall be pleased to give them a lecture on the subject, illustrated by lantern-slides. The lecture will not last longer than six hours.

(Very sweet of you, sir; but we'd prefer a sixpenny seat at the local cinema.—Ed.)

.....

CAMPING-OUT!

.....

Harry Wharton & Co. get plenty of this when they go on holiday to the mysterious, glorious East! Don't you miss a line of the record of their adventures, starting shortly in "THE MAGNET"!

.....



A Shock for Sir Hilton!

By S.Q.I. Field.

SIR HILTON POPPER, the peppery old baronet, and the sworn enemy of the law-abiding (?) members of the Greyfriars Remove, uttered a fierce snort and clenched his hunting-crop tightly in his hand.

"The—the young villains!" he fumed. "Campin' out on my property, begad! Trespassin' on my private grounds! The impudence of it—the infernal impudence!"

Sir Hilton danced to and fro like a cat on hot bricks. He was in a towering rage, and he brandished his hunting-crop in the air and breathed threatenings and slaughter.

It was ten o'clock at night, and Sir Hilton was making a final tour of inspection. Sometimes it happened that a stray tramp helped himself to a night's repose on Sir Hilton Popper's estate, and the baronet took a fierce delight in ejecting these unwelcome nomads.

But it was no tramp that goaded him to fury on this occasion. It was the sight of three white tents glistening in the moonlight. The tents had been pitched in Sir Hilton's private paddock, and he had no doubt that they were occupied by Greyfriars juniors.

"Of all the brazen nerve!" roared Sir Hilton. "Those young rascals have had the audacity to turn my paddock into a campin'-ground—to erect tents under my very nose, begad! They shall pay dearly for this! They must have broken bounds from Greyfriars, with the object of spendin' the night under canvas. They concluded, I suppose, that I had gone to

bed. But they'll soon find that I'm very wide-awake, by George!"

So saying, Sir Hilton strode away in the direction of the tents. It was his grim intention to take the campers by surprise, and to haul them out of their snug beds and chastise them with his hunting-crop.

With every step he took Sir Hilton gave a snort, and each snort was fiercer than the last. He'd teach these audacious young rascals to camp out on his property! He could guess who they were. Not for one moment did he doubt that those tents were occupied by Greyfriars fellows, probably by Harry Wharton & Co. of the Remove, who had a liking for Sir Hilton's property.

So eager was Sir Hilton to get to grips with the trespassers that he fairly charged towards the first tent, like a mad bull which has seen red.

Crash! Sir Hilton's foot caught in one of the tent-ropes, and he went sprawling. He fell on his face, and his nose came into violent contact with the turf. He gave a bellow of pain and scrambled to his feet. He fancied he heard a sound of chuckling from inside the tent, and this lashed him into a state of ungovernable fury compared with which his previous wrath had been lamb-like.

"You—you insolent young scoundrels!" he spluttered. "I'll teach you to add insult to injury by sniggering at my misfortunes! Come out of it! D'you hear?"

There was no movement from inside

the tent. But Sir Hilton, peering through a chink in the canvas, distinctly saw a number of prostrate forms.

"Caught red-handed, by gad!" he exclaimed. "Out you come, you young rascals!"

It was not a pleasant prospect for the occupants of the tent, but they didn't seem to have any foreboding. They did not even rise. They lay perfectly motionless, and ignored Sir Hilton's repeated invitation to "come out and be skinned!"

The baronet stamped with fury. As the mountain would not come to Mahomet, Mahomet would have to go to the mountain. In other words, as the occupants of the tent refused to come out, Sir Hilton would have to invade their sleeping-quarters. And this he promptly proceeded to do.

Feverishly he loosened the cords at the entrance; then, with lowered head, he fairly charged into the tent.

Swish, swish, swish!

The hunting-crop rose and fell. It lashed upon those prostrate forms—an avalanche of stinging blows. But not a single cry of anguish rang out on the night air.

Sir Hilton Popper laid on the hunting-crop with renewed vigour. And still no sound came. Presently he drew back, puzzled and dismayed.

"What in thunder——" he began.

And then, on making close investigation, Sir Hilton found that he had been wasting his energy by chastising a number of dummy figures! That chuckle which he thought he had heard had been pure fancy.

Almost choking with rage and mortification he made his way to the other two tents, only to find that they also contained dummy figures which were insensible to the fierce rain of blows which he showered upon them.

Slowly it dawned upon the baffled baronet that he had been made the victim of a practical joke. The chums of the Remove had planned the jape for his benefit; and now they were sleeping soundly in the Remove dormitory at Greyfriars, while Sir Hilton wasted his energy on the desert air, so to speak.

Next morning Sir Hilton called at the school and endeavoured to discover the identity of the practical jokers. But he had no luck, and was compelled to go empty away, leaving the chums of the Remove masters of the situation.

I REMEMBER!

(After Tom Hood.)

By DICK PENFOLD.

I remember, I remember,
The camp beside the sea;
My little tent, where hours were spent
Of merriment and glee.
Each day a fleeting moment seemed,
But now it seems a week!
For I have got to sit and swot
At Latin, French, and Greek.
I remember, I remember,
The early morning dips;
The donkey-rides upon the sands,
The jolly steamer trips,
The revels in the morning sun,
The gaiety and glamour;
But now I sit, with forehead knit,
And tackle English grammar!
I remember, I remember,
The glorious games we played;
When runs were rattled up apace
And centuries were made.
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By day and night we took delight
In merry schoolboy capers;
No hateful Greek three times a week,
No beastly impot papers!

I remember, I remember,
The "ghost" that used to flit
Between the tents at dead o' night,
The joy of chasing it!
It proved to be a human ghost,
We gave it quite a lamming;
Those days of fun are dead and done—
We're back at Greyfriars, cramming!

I remember, I remember,
The camp-fire burning bright;
We'd lie and laze within its rays
And yarn for half the night!
Alas! those joyous days in camp
Flashed all too swiftly by;
Slowly in class the moments pass
'Neath Quelchy's gimlet eye!

I remember, I remember,
That happy holiday;
The merry rambles on the shore,
The boats upon the bay.
"Penfold, your mind is wandering!"
Comes Quelchy's wrathful shout.
My body's here; and yet, I fear,
My thoughts are camping out!

NEW BIRD!

The teacher had taken his class out to the country for the purpose of giving them some insight into the mysteries of natural history. He had proved to them that dandelions were not kept in cages, and then he discoursed on the various birds they saw. Luck was with them, and over them swooped a sparrow-hawk, beating its wings, and then gliding, as these birds do. "Now, can any of you tell me why it is that the sparrow-hawk can so easily catch other birds?" said the teacher. "Please, sir," said Tommy, whose big brother was a crack cyclist, "it's because the little birds haven't got free-wheel wings!"

To-morrow would be baby's birthday, and Tommy had decided that he would buy him a nice present. "What would you like to get him, Tommy?" asked his mother. "I think," suggested Tommy—"I think that I should like to buy him one of those nice guns." "But," objected mother, "baby will not understand a toy like that. Besides, he might hurt himself with it." "No, he won't, mamma!" pleaded Tommy. "Indeed—indeed, he won't! I sha'n't let him even touch it!"

[Supplement iv.]



(Continued from page 12.)

waiting, and Wharton sent specially for you."

"What am I wanted for specially?"

"To tell what happened at Ashford."

"I've nothing to say."

"Come along and say nothing, then!" grinned Bob; and he took the sailorman's son by the arm.

Redwing sighed and rose. He knew that he had to go; the juniors had been sent for him, and did not mean to return to the Rag without him.

"I'll come," he said.

"Well, get a move on!" grunted Bolsover major.

Tom Redwing went down the staircase with the Removites. There was a murmur of interest as he entered the Rag, and the door of that apartment closed behind him. He cast a troubled look over the eager assembly—nearly all the Remove.

"You might have turned up, Redwing," said Harry Wharton curtly. "I suppose you knew you'd be wanted."

Redwing made no reply.

The Bounder, standing with Skinner & Co. in a little group, looked across at him and laughed lightly. To the Bounder, in his present mood, the doubt and distress of his former chum seemed entertaining.

Hazeldene was standing with the Bounder's group, and Micky Desmond and Trevor and Fisher T. Fish. Already, as it seemed, the Form was grouping itself into different parties.

Peter Todd glanced round and mounted on a chair.

"Gentlemen—" he began.

"What are you burbling about?" demanded Skinner. "You're not captain of the Form, Toddy! You dry up!"

"Gentlemen," repeated Toddy, "we are assembled here to inquire into the offences alleged to have been committed on Rookwood day."

"Good old lawyer!" grinned Squiff.

"Don't give us your pater's second-hand piffle, Toddy!" growled Bolsover major.

Peter Todd frowned. Peter was supposed to have great legal knowledge, his father being a solicitor. Certainly Peter prided himself very much on his acquaintance with that deep and mysterious subject, the law.

"Our respected Form captain has asked me to take this matter in hand," he said. "Wharton does not desire to appear in it personally, excepting as a member of the Remove."

"Hear, hear!" said Squiff.

The Bounder's eyes glittered. His hope of turning the affair into a personal dispute between himself and Wharton was fainter now.

"Our friend Smithy is accused of certain misdemeanours unworthy of a member of the cricket club and of this honourable Form," went on Peter Todd.

"Cut it short!" said Skinner.

"Shut up, Skinner!"

"The chief witness is Redwing, a gentleman we all know and respect highly," resumed Peter.

"Rats!"—from Skinner.

"Herbert Vernon-Smith, stand forward!"

"I'm all right where I am, thank you," drawled the Bounder, who was sitting on the corner of the long mahogany table;

and some of the fellows laughed. Toddy frowned portentously.

"The accused will gain nothing by contempt of court," he said. "Any impertinence on the part of the accused may lead to his being committed."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence in court!" rapped out Peter Todd. "Vernon-Smith, you may sit on the table if you like—you will be considered to have come forward in a legal sense. Do you plead 'Guilty,' or 'Not guilty' to this charge?"

"What charge?"

"Did you, or did you not, on the day of the Rookwood match, play, or cause to be played, a dirty trick, by means of which Redwing was prevented from arriving at Rookwood and taking part in the match aforesaid?"

"Is he wound up?" asked Skinner; and there was a chuckle.

"Vernon-Smith, I am waiting for your answer."

"Wait!" said the Bounder.

"Guilty, or not guilty?"

The Bounder hesitated a second. It was all very well for Skinner & Co. to make fun of the proceedings, and it was easy enough to raise a laugh. But the matter was serious, all the same, for the Bounder. Peter Todd's assumption of legal gravity and dignity might be comic; but the whole Form were determined to learn the facts, and the result might very well be that the Bounder would be turned out of the cricket. That would not have suited him at all, as he had already determined upon a struggle with Wharton for the captaincy, and it was chiefly upon his distinction in games that he pinned his faith.

"Not guilty!" he said after that brief pause.

Tom Redwing gave him a quick look. Disappointed as he had been in his chum, bitterly as he had realised that Smithy was not quite the fellow he had believed him to be, it was a shock to him to hear the Bounder make that answer. He had never expected Vernon-Smith to lower himself so deeply as to tell a falsehood—and this was something perilously near to a direct falsehood.

"The accused pleads 'Not guilty,'" said Peter Todd. "The case, therefore, will have to go to trial."

"Oh, get on with it!" said Vernon-Smith.

"I say, you fellows, he's guilty! He kicked me—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shut up, Bunter!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Order!"

"Redwing! Stand forward!" rapped out Peter Todd.

Redwing came forward reluctantly. All eyes were fixed on him, and his face was crimson. Peter Todd raised his hand.

"Redwing! You stand before this Court as a witness for the Crown, and you are called upon to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the giddy truth. You will now tell the Court precisely what happened at Ashford on Rookwood day."

"I've nothing to say."

"That won't wash—I mean a refusal to answer will be treated as contempt of court!" said Toddy severely. "Speak up!"

Tom Redwing closed his lips firmly; and there was a pause in the proceedings in the Rag.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Peter the Lawyer!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. stood silent, waiting. They had quite made up their minds on the subject now, for Tom Redwing's reluctance to speak could have only one meaning. But the captain of the Remove did not speak. He had determined, so far as he could, to take no personal part in the matter; if the Bounder was to be condemned, he should be condemned by the Form, Wharton voting with the rest simply as a member of the Remove. Tom Redwing's refusal to speak rather puzzled the juniors; it called a halt in the proceedings, and Squiff remarked that they did not seem to be getting any "farrarder." Peter Todd, with all his legal wisdom, was a little perplexed to know how to act.

"Do you hear me, Redwing?" he asked at last.

"I hear you."

"Answer, then, you silly ass."

"I've nothing to say."

"That's all rot! You must have something to say!" exclaimed Peter, losing some of his judicial calm. "I suppose you haven't forgotten the cricket match at Rookwood, only last week?"

"No," said Tom, "of course not."

"You were selected as a playing member of the team. You started from Greyfriars with the rest of us. We all thought you a silly ass for losing the connection at Ashford. How did you come to lose it?"

"I—I lost it," said Tom.

"We know that, fathead!"

"I rise on a point of order!" said Skinner. "Is the judge allowed to address the witness as a fathead?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shut up, Skinner!"

"Make him speak!" roared Bolsover major. "Bump him till you bump the truth out of him!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Order!" snapped Peter Todd. "In a civilised court a witness cannot be put to the torture. There are ways and means of dealing with obstinate witnesses, Bolsover, beside bumping them. Robert Cherry!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"You were a member of the Remove eleven on the occasion of the Rookwood match?"

"You know I was, fathead! So were you," said Bob.

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BOYS' REALM

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"Never mind what I know. What I know is not evidence. Were you present when the team changed trains at Ashford?"

"Of course I was, ass!"

"Did you observe the conduct of the accused on that occasion?"

"Oh, I see, I'm a giddy witness!" said Bob. "Yes, I observed that Smithy and Redwing got into the last carriage in the express by themselves. All the fellows know that. Is that what you mean?"

"What happened after that?"

"You know what happened, ass, as you were there."

"Will you keep to the point, witness? You are telling the Court, not me."

"Oh, I see! Well, just as the train was starting Redwing jumped out, and came racing up the platform. He seemed to have changed his mind about travelling with Smithy and was coming along to join us. He was too late, and lost the train."

"Vernon-Smith remained in the carriage?"

"You know he did—I mean, yes, judge."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence in court! The next member of the public who laughs will be removed by the ushers."

"Oh, my hat!"

"What impression did you draw, Robert Cherry, from the fact that Redwing jumped out of the carriage at the last moment?"

"I thought he was a silly owl!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I will have this court cleared if the public cannot maintain the gravity suitable to a court of law. Did you infer, Robert Cherry, that Smithy had induced Redwing to leave the carriage when it was too late to get into another?"

"Can't say I did. Johnny thought something of the kind, I believe."

"Oh, did he? John Bull, kindly come forward!"

Johnny Bull came forward.

"Bull, you will kindly tell the Court what impression you had of Redwing's conduct on the aforesaid occasion."

"I thought it was fishy," said Johnny Bull stolidly. "I said so at the time, and I say so now."

"What do you mean by fishy?"

"I thought Redwing wasn't ass enough to lose the train like that. He's no fool. Smithy was ratty at his being in the team. He had the cheek to think that Redwing had his place. My idea was that Smithy had bamboozled him somehow into getting out."

Johnny Bull's statement made rather a sensation in court. Peter Todd turned to Redwing again.

"Thomas Redwing, did the accused—Herbert Vernon-Smith—bamboozle you into getting out of the Rookwood train?"

No answer.

"Did he tell you, for instance, that it was the wrong train, or anything of that kind?" asked Peter shrewdly.

Tom Redwing started slightly, but he did not speak.

"Do you answer in the affirmative, Redwing?"

"No."

"Do you answer in the negative?"

"I don't answer at all."

"Explain to the Court your reasons for refusing to reply."

Redwing's deep flush deepened, but he did not speak. His reasons for refusing to reply were pretty clear to all the Court, as a matter of fact.

"You refuse to explain?"

"Yes."

"Are you still on friendly terms with the accused?"

"All the Form knows I'm not," said Redwing, in a low voice.

"You are no longer friends?"

"N-no."

"From when does this date?"

No answer.

"Russell!" said Peter Todd.

Dick Russell came forward.

"Redwing changed into your study last week?"

"Yes, your worship," said Russell.

"On what date did he leave Vernon-Smith's study and take up his abode in Study No. 3?"

"The day of the Rookwood match—before the cricketers came back from Rookwood."

"Quite so. Then the Court may take it, Redwing, that your break with the accused occurred on the day of the Rookwood match, immediately after your losing the train at Ashford?"

"Yes," said Tom faintly.

"When you left Greyfriars in the morning you were on apparently friendly terms with the accused?"

"Yes."

"Then something occurred on the journey of a sufficiently serious nature to break off your friendship?"

Silence.

"Did you quarrel in the brake going to the station?"

"No."

"Did you quarrel in the train on the way to Ashford?"

"No."

"After you were left behind at Ashford, did you see Vernon-Smith again before the cricketers returned from Rookwood?"

"No."

"But by that time you had changed out of his study, and had ceased to be on friendly terms with him."

Tom's lips trembled, but he did not speak. Peter Todd, with great astuteness, was clearing up the matter, in spite of Redwing's determination not to bear witness against his chum.

"It appears, therefore," went on Peter ruthlessly, "that it was at Ashford that something occurred to break off your friendship with the accused."

"Ain't he a giddy lawyer?" said Bob Cherry admiringly. "Hasn't he got it down fine?"

"Members of the public will kindly refrain from interrupting the Court, even to pay a well-deserved tribute to the judge."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Redwing, you will kindly state what occurred at Ashford between you and the accused which broke off your friendship."

"I shall say nothing."

"Whatever took place occurred in the few minutes that you were separated from the rest of the party. Did you have a scrap with Vernon-Smith when you were alone in a carriage with him?"

"Of course not!"

"Did you have a row of any kind?"

"No."

"Were you still on friendly terms with him when you jumped out of the train?"

"Ye-e-es," muttered Tom.

"Then whatever occurred to break off your friendship occurred after you had left him alone in the carriage and before you saw him again," said Peter Todd triumphantly. "Gentlemen of the jury, I think we have made it pretty clear, in spite of this witness' obstinacy, that it was Redwing's losing the Rookwood train that broke off his friendship with the accused. If he had lost the train by his own fault, he could scarcely have regarded that as an adequate reason for turning down a fellow he had been friends with for whole terms. He lost it.

therefore, by Vernon-Smith's fault—in other words, the accused bamboozled him somehow into getting out of the train, as the witness Cherry so aptly put it. The witness Redwing may stand down. He is a most unsatisfactory witness."

Peter Todd looked round at the assembly.

"Gentlemen of the jury, the facts have been brought to light. I do not think there can be any doubt as to your verdict. It only remains to ask the accused whether he has anything to say in his defence. Herbert Vernon-Smith, if you have anything to say, say it."

And once more attention was concentrated on the Bounder.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

The Bounder's Sentence!

THE Bounder of Greyfriars had listened in silence to Peter Todd's cross-examination of Tom Redwing. He had realised that Tom Redwing did not intend to speak—that nothing would draw from him an accusation against his old friend. Feeling assured on that point, the Bounder had felt fairly secure—suspicion might be strong, but without proof there could be no condemnation. But he had not counted upon the skill and persistence of the schoolboy lawyer.

The Bounder's face hardened as Peter proceeded, and once or twice he glanced round him, observing the effect on the Removites of Peter's searching questions, and Redwing's reluctant answers. That effect was easily to be read.

Redwing's admissions, such as they were, could not have been avoided. There was no point upon which other evidence could not have been called. Plenty of witnesses—all the fellows who had gone over to Rookwood—could testify that Redwing and the Bounder had started the journey as friends. Russell and Ogilvy could witness that Redwing had changed into their study before the Bounder's return from Rookwood—which marked the break between the friends. All the cricketers knew that Redwing and the Bounder had had no dispute on the journey as far as Ashford—and they could not have had one later, as they had parted for the day when Redwing was left behind.

Redwing had said nothing that could not have been drawn from others, once Peter Todd had decided upon his skilful line of investigation. But the inference was clear.

It was losing the train at Ashford that had broken off the friendship between Redwing and the Bounder. It was, therefore, by a cunning trick of the Bounder's that Redwing had been left in the lurch that day.

He might as well have admitted it, for all the good that his silence did the "accused." Tom realised that, and he was deeply distressed. Never once had he glanced towards Vernon-Smith during the questioning; though several times he had felt the Bounder's keen glance on him.

Harry Wharton's face had been growing grimmer and grimmer. In placing the inquiry in Toddy's hands, he had certainly acted wisely—he would never have been able to elucidate the facts as Peter had done. The facts were clear enough now. The Removites, as they fixed their eyes on the Bounder, only wondered whether he would admit what everyone knew to be true, or whether he would persist in a denial which could only draw contempt upon him.

That, however, the Bounder was not likely to do. He had fallen low, but not so low as to tell palpable falsehoods, like Billy Bunter. There was a limit.

The Bounder, lounging against the table, with his hands in his pockets, met the eyes of the juniors with cool hardihood.

He did not flinch under the general gaze. Never had the Bounder wanted for nerve; and his nerve was of iron now.

"Did you hear me, Smithy?" asked Peter Todd.

"Yes, old bean," drawled the Bounder. "You asked me if I had anything to say, didn't you? I have—lots."

"This court is prepared to give you a hearing," said Peter, with dignity.

"I say, you fellows, he's guilty—"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"I tell you the beast kicked me—"

"Order!"

"He smashed my desk, that cost twenty-two guineas—"

"Squash that silly owl!" roared Bob Cherry.

There was a yell from Billy Bunter, as two or three fellows kicked him. He subsided into wrathful silence.

"If you've got lots to say, say it, Smithy," said Peter Todd. "Don't forget that it's getting near teatime, though."

"In the first place, allow me to express my heartfelt admiration for the way you've screwed the facts out of Redwing," said the Bounder cheerfully. "It was quite professional, Toddy. You will be a great lawyer when you leave Greyfriars—if you don't end up in chokey."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here—" shouted Peter Todd, his judicial calm again failing him.

"Dry up, Toddy—this is Smithy's innings!" grinned Skinner.

"Go it, Smithy!"

"We must all admire our tame lawyer," went on the Bounder calmly. "He has the true professional gift for brow-beating a witness, making the worst appear the better reason, and so forth. I have no doubt that he will have a brilliant legal career in the future, proving the innocent guilty, or the guilty innocent, according to the fees he gets and—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Peter Todd was crimson with wrath. The Bounder's description was not Peter's idea of a legal career. Peter, of course, was young yet.

"But to come to the point," went on the Bounder. "Our excellent judge and prosecuting counsel has got at the mutton. It is quite correct that I bamboozled Redwing into jumping out of the train at Ashford. I told him that that part of the train didn't go on to Rookwood, or somethin' of the kind, and he jumped out."

"You admit it?" exclaimed Wharton.

"Why not?" drawled the Bounder. "Redwing had bagged my place in the eleven. I was taken on as a reserve. I kicked him out of the team and took my place back. I don't regret it."

Wharton set his lips.

"Incidentally, I won the match for Greyfriars," said the Bounder. "I don't suppose even Wharton will say that Redwing would have put up so good a game as I did that day at Rookwood."

"That's true," said Squiff.

"Is that all you have to say?" demanded Peter Todd, with a glare at the accused.

"That's all—exceptin' that I'd do the same again," said the Bounder coolly.

"Hear, hear!" said Skinner.



Whack! Whack! Whack! Billy Bunter put all the force of his podgy arm into the task. There was a gasp from the Bounder. He made a terrific effort to free himself, but he was held, and the Owl of the Remove went on with the "six." "That's six," said Peter Todd. "Hold on, Bunter!" "I say, you fellows," said Bunter, "let him have some more. I'm not tired yet!" "Ha, ha, ha! I dare say Smithy is," grinned Wibley. (See Chapter 10.)

"Gentlemen of the jury, the accused admits his guilt. He owns up to having prevented a member of the eleven from arriving at the place where a match was to be played."

"Hold on!" exclaimed Hazeldene. "We all know that he put up a better game than Redwing could. That counts for something."

"That counts for nothing," said Peter. "He might have put up a worse game. He might have failed to play at all. The point is, whether a fellow can be allowed to keep a man away from a match, after he's been selected to play by his skipper."

"All the same—"

"Order!"

"Verdict!" exclaimed Peter Todd, taking no further heed of Hazel. "Guilty or not guilty."

"Guilty!"

It was quite a chorus. It was a little superfluous, too, as the Bounder had admitted his guilt, and seemed indeed rather to glory in it than otherwise.

"Sentence!" yelled Bunter. "Mind, he kicked me—"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"It's for the Form captain to deliver sentence," said Peter Todd, with a glance at Harry.

Wharton shook his head.

"I leave it to you, Toddy, if the fellows agree," he said.

"Very well! Herbert Vernon-Smith.

you are found guilty, on unmistakable evidence, and on your own admission, of having played a dirty trick on a member of the Remove eleven, having kept him away from a cricket match where he was booked to play. You are sentenced to take six from a cricket-stump, in the presence of the whole Form."

"Hear, hear!"

"That's not enough!" yelled Bunter. "I say six dozen!"

"Kick Bunter, somebody!"

"Yaroo!"

"After receiving six," resumed Peter Todd, "you will be turned out of Remove cricket for the rest of the season, Vernon-Smith. You will be barred from playing for the Form again under any circumstances whatever. You are not to be trusted!"

The Bounder gritted his teeth.

"Is that all?" he sneered.

"That's all. When football comes round again, we will hope that you will have learned a lesson, and chucked up your knavish tricks. But so far as cricket is concerned, you are a back number."

"Hear, hear!"

"It means losing matches," said Hazeldene.

"It's a matter of principle," said Peter Todd. "But the sentence will be put to the vote of all the Remove. Every fellow

(Continued on page 26.)

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BUCCANEERS OF THE MAIN!

No. 8.—THE TIGER'S
STRONGHOLD!

(Continued from page 2.)

The sentinel not only lowered his gun to let him go by, but called another soldier to act as a guide to the citadel, where the supposed El Moro was to be lodged.

The citadel was a formidable structure of stone, the rear of which overhung a precipice, while in front it was guarded by rocky, broken slopes. A glance told Ned that it could never be taken by storm.

"But that's all the more reason why I should find out the secret of the subterranean passage," he thought.

The disguised youth was taken before the Spanish governor, who fully believed that he was the bullfighter.

"You are welcome here, El Moro," he said, "and I hope you will beat the bulls to-morrow, and win the gold I promised you!"

His voice was soft and smooth; but Ned, looking at him steadily, was sure that he saw cunning and treachery lurking on his thin, cruel face and skulking in his cold, shifty eyes.

Ned would have leaped at the don's throat there and then, but there were too many soldiers present, and he could have effected nothing.

There was nothing for it but for him to bide his time.

The next day the sun blazed down on the Tiger's city, and all round the bull-ring were gathered thousands of fierce, savage people, eager for cruel sport and bloodshed, and little caring whether it was bulls or men who were killed, so long as there was no stint of excitement.

Dressed in his matador's costume, with a long, quivering sword in his grasp, the young buccaneer easily accounted for the first two bulls who were let loose against him.

But he guessed that these tests were as nothing compared with what was in store for him. The sneering smile of Don Jose, who looked down from a high box, confirmed his suspicions.

Suddenly a deathlike stillness fell on the circus, only to be broken by a roar of anticipant cruelty and pitiless excitement.

"Toro! Toro!"

And Ned Lambert looked, and realised that he would be lucky indeed if he escaped with his life from the bull-ring of Aracarybo.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Tables Turned!

"THE bull! The bull!"

That was what the people of Aracarybo shouted in Spanish.

The barriers had been thrown back to allow the entrance into the ring of a bull which would have been formidable enough under any circumstances, but was now a terrible antagonist through having been starved and tortured, so that it was gaunt and mad, with fury glaring in its bloodshot eyes, and white froth hanging from its lips.

"Toro! Toro!"

Again the cry sounded in the circus as the enraged bull lowered its head and charged full at Ned.

In the other cases the chulos and banderilleros had partially exhausted the bull by flinging their small, sharp darts into its flanks, and by luring it off on futile rushes by flaunting their red cloaks before it, and then darting away from its furious attacks; but in the case of this maddened animal they dared not do much.

A few darts were flung into the quivering foam-flecked flanks, a cloak or so waved before the bloodshot eyes, and then the chulos and the banderilleros vaulted over the barriers, leaving the disguised young buccaneer to confront toro alone.

"Toro has him! Toro has El Moro!"

The yell burst from the spectators as the bull tore across the bull-ring with lightning speed. It seemed impossible that Ned could escape, and the clouds of dust raised by the hoofs of the maddened creature hid him from sight.

But he was not to be beaten so easily.

The bull came towards him too quickly for him to take good aim, and he knew that if he struck and missed all would be over with him. So he waited coolly until the animal's heavy breath was on him, and then stepped swiftly aside.

The bull flew on, stumbled, and fell on its knees in the sand of the ring.

"That's one for me; but it isn't over yet!" muttered Ned.

And he was right.

He guessed that Don Jose had purposely had the bull starved and tortured, so that it should be maddened and more likely to kill the matador. If this happened, the

governor had calculated that he would give the people of Aracarybo fully as cruel and exciting a show as they wished for, and, at the same time, avoid paying the reward he had promised to El Moro.

But Ned intended to do his utmost to make the governor pay a heavier reward even than he had bargained on.

Hardly had the bull touched the ground than it was up again, and once more charged on Ned. Again the youth waited until the last second, and then moved quickly aside.

His object was to wear down the bull's strength, and so to madden and confuse it that it would fall an easier victim.

For the fourth time toro, bellowing with rage, and an awful sight now, by reason of the blood and foam which splashed its flanks, and the rage glaring from its eyes, which were like balls of fire under its shaggy brows, rushed over the sand of the ring.

And now Ned made up his mind that the time had come for him to strike.

The young buccaneer stood firm as a rock, his sword held lightly but firmly, his body poised for a lightning movement. The head of toro was nearly on the ground as he came on; but when he was very near Ned made the slightest swaying movement. Instantly the bull threw up its head, and then lowered it half-way, with the intention of tossing the daring youth, a bleeding corpse, on the circus sand.

Too late!

When the bull was less than a couple of feet from him, Ned leaped aside. His sword flashed, and his aim was true. The sharp point struck the maddened creature just behind the shoulder, and the quivering blade sank deep into its heart.

Toro stopped, staggered, and rolled over, dead.

Sword in hand, Ned strode across the ring until he stood under the governor's box.

"I claim my reward, Don Jose Avitar!" he cried.

"And you shall have it!"

The Tiger's answer was as soft and smooth as his other speech had been.

The Spanish soldiers led him from the bull-ring back to the citadel, and into the governor's private room.

It was a stone-walled apartment, with grated windows and iron-bound door, which could be fastened inside and out by a ponderous lock and massive bolts.

In one corner was a massive iron chest with a heavy lid.

Don Jose motioned to the soldiers to leave himself and Ned alone; and then, when he thought that the supposed bullfighter was not observing him, he shot the bolts, and thus secured the door from being pushed open from without.

"You want your reward, El Moro," he said, "and you shall have it! All the gold you can take from the chest is yours!"

He drew up the heavy lid. As Ned bent over the chest, the villainous governor leaped on him like the tiger whose name he bore.

"Go to your doom, fool!" he hissed.

But the young buccaneer was on his guard, and ready for him. The Spaniard's grip was met by one as strong and fierce as his own.

The foes were struggling hand-to-hand literally on the brink of destruction. For the chest was no chest at all, but merely the opening to a secret abyss in the floor of the room. There was no bottom to it; and as Ned fought with Don Jose he could see a black shaft which descended sheer through the solid rock into the bosom of the earth.

All at once, with a wild yell of despair, the Spanish don fell into the abyss and disappeared.

Then, feeling with his feet, Ned touched the first series of iron spikes, which were driven into the side of the shaft, and found a ladder.

He descended the shaft in safety, and found the governor lying dead at its base. The shaft was the opening into the subterranean passage, which Ned traversed for a mile, eventually emerging, after pushing aside a mass of undergrowth, into one of the mountain passes.

Scarcely was he in the free air again when he fell in with Captain Avery and a strong band of his buccaneer companions, who were on their way to seek and help him.

Guided by Ned, the buccaneers hastened through the secret passage, and had clambered up the shaft ere the Spaniards dreamed that they were near. Then followed a sharp, fierce fight, and the Tiger's city was taken.

THE END.



When the bull was less than a couple of feet away from him, Ned leaped aside. His sword flashed, and his aim was true. The sharp point struck the maddened creature just behind the shoulder. Snorting wildly, the bull stopped, staggered, and rolled over on its side.

Start This Wonderful Romance of the Days of Robin Hood Now!



SHERWOOD GOLD

By
**FRANCIS
WARWICK**



INTRODUCTION.

Story is staged over the period when Richard Lion Heart, the king, was away in Palestine on the Third Crusade. **TOM HADLEIGH**—a youth of sixteen, who was found as a babe by the monks of Hadleigh Priory deserted in Sherwood Forest. Brought up by the good monks and apprenticed to a goldsmith, Simon Rye, Tom discovers in Simon Rye an unscrupulous and slave-driving master. He breaks away from him, determining to seek fortune under more savoury conditions, and throws in his lot with

LANTERN—a carefree adventurer of diminutive stature, but withal a sterling swordsman.

ROBIN HOOD—chief of the band of outlaws, whose headquarters are in the depths of Sherwood Forest. A good friend to the poor and needy, and a source of continual worry to **EARL HUGO** of **CHARNDENE**—an unprincipled vassal of Prince John, known to the people of Nottingham as the Black Wolf.

FRIAR TUCK, ALAN-A-DALE, LITTLE JOHN, etc.—members of Robin Hood's band.

LON—once jester to Earl Hugo, but now the friend of Tom Hadleigh and Lantern. Lon tells Tom that the peculiar talisman in his possession—a half circle of polished horn upon which are the words "The cave betwixt—a split oak—follow the water—Gold," which was found near Tom by the good monks of Hadleigh when the former was a babe—would reveal the whereabouts of a wondrous treasure could the other half of the talisman be fitted to it. Lon declares that the other half of the talisman is in the possession of the Black Wolf.

Lantern suggests that Tom, Alan-a-Dale and himself should journey to the tournament given in honour of Prince John by Earl Hugo as nameless knights. By taking part in the tourney they will assuredly be invited to the banquet at the castle of Charndene. Once there it is their intention to rob Earl Hugo of the other half of the talisman. The plan carries exceedingly well. The three "nameless" knights enter the lists and acquit themselves with honour. Tom Hadleigh is drawn against Earl Hugo and has the satisfaction of unhelming him. The squires rush out to render aid to their fallen master. They loosen his gorget, and Tom, to his great delight, sees suspended round the neck of Earl Hugo a piece of polished horn—the other half of the broken talisman telling of the vast treasure he is seeking.

(Now Read On.)

At the Red Inn!

TWAS but a glimpse I caught of it, very certain I was that I was right.

So that was where the other half of the talisman was to be found! Somehow I had imagined it locked away in some secret hiding-place in the walls of Charndene. If Hugo took the precaution of wearing it around his neck, 'twould indeed need all our wits to obtain his talisman from him!

Though I had left my talisman with Robin Hood ere riding to the tournament—for there was no denying we ran good risk of detection, and, whatever befell, I was determined that Hugo should never obtain it from me—usually I wore my own half around my neck for safety, as you know.

Strange that Hugo should have adopted the very same plan!

I had but a glimpse of it, I say, and then his squires carried him away to his tent, though not ere his eyes had opened. And strange it was to see how swift his senses returned to him, and he knew all that had happened—directing upon me such a gaze of malevolent hatred as I have seen in the eyes of no other man, however evil.

He knew not, of course, who I was. Of that he could not have even dreamed. But he found himself vanquished at my hands—though by misfortune, 'tis true—and for that he hated the unknown knight upon the white destrier.

The cheering was well-nigh deafening as Lantern and Alan-a-Dale and I, as the victors, rode slowly 'cross the grass to the prince's pavilion. 'Twas clear enough that ours was a popular victory with the crowds that swarmed 'gainst the barriers

and in the long galleries—for the Black Wolf was hated by them all for a black-hearted tyrant, and De Vaux they disliked for being his kinsman. Hugo's jackal, they called him, and right well did Gilbert de Vaux merit the name.

The nobles around John of England stared at us mighty curious. They would have given their thumbs to know who the three strange, nameless knights were who had thus vanquished their team of champions! We came to a standstill, and bowed our heads and lowered our lances in salute.

"A goodly passage of arms," said John of England. "We would vastly like to see the faces that those visors hide, or to know who are these nameless ones who have overthrown our champions; but a vow is a vow. Raise your lances, sirs."

And upon the point of each he hung a small wreath of honour.

He was more gracious now, but still there was in his voice a faint sneer veiled 'neath the smooth words—a sardonic coldness that seemed ever to lurk in the tones of John of England.

Back in our tent, my pride vastly humbled to learn from Roger of Avon of the stumbling of Hugo's horse. But at least I had unhelmed him, and that thought went far to console me. And, better still, it had been the means of telling me where Hugo kept his talisman!

I told the others of what I had seen. Lantern stared at me, then gave a delighted shout.

"Oh, rare—rare!" cried he. "Who could have dreamed of such luck? To think that we have already discovered that which we came for, without having

so much as set foot in Charndene! No need now to enter those accursed walls—"

He broke off to open his beaver, raising on high a goblet of the wine Roger had poured out for us.

"We have discovered now where the solution to the riddle may be found!" said he gaily. "It remains but to unfurnish Hugo's neck, and then, when we have fitted the two talismans together and read what is written there—Here's to the gold that lies somewhere in Sherwood!"

We drained the goblets with a laugh, and at that moment one of the bowmen came hurrying to tell us that the squires of Gilbert de Vaux and Hugo of Charndene wished to speak respectively with Lantern and myself. We were still in our armour, and, lowering our visors over our faces, we stepped forth from the tent.

In accordance with the law of arms, each squire was leading his master's war-horse, piled with the armour they had worn in the lists—all rightfully ours, unless we chose to ransom them. Hugo had also sent the customary invitation to the banquet at the castle that night.

This invitation we courteously declined. Also, since we had no need of destriers or armour, we each accepted the ransom offered for them—not that we intended to use the money for ourselves, but Robin Hood, we knew, could find good use for the gold in the poverty-stricken hovels of Hugo's demesne.

We had achieved our object, but nevertheless we felt disinclined for the ten hours' journey back to the outlaws' THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 859.

camp. We three had been in our armour since dawn, and mighty weary we were after our encounter in the tourney. So 'twas decided that we would seek out some hostel in the town, and there spend the night ere riding back to the camp on the morrow.

And so we rode away from the tournament ground, followed by many a pair of curious eyes. Mighty mysterious we must have seemed to that motley throng.

The town was a quarter of a mile away, and as we rode t'wards it I glanced up the dark hillside at the castle that towered black and grim high above us, its mighty walls towering to the soft evening sky. How sinister it looked, I thought—an evil shape to desecrate that peaceful countryside!

I have said that Charndene was a small town, for it was far from being the size of Nottingham, or of the cities of Winchester and York; but, for all that, 'twas fair enough size, and the streets were very full of people now, for many others beside the knights and nobles had been attracted to the tournament. The presence of Prince John had drawn large numbers, for, though he was not popular, all wished to have set eyes upon him.

Yeomen and burghers, men-at-arms, and 'prentices thronged the streets, and difficult it was to ride through. But we were soon recognised as the three nameless knights whose victory had been so popular with the crowd, and their good humour t'wards us enabled us to make a way, slow though it was.

"'Twill be hard to find a hostelry not crammed to bursting-point already, with the town so full," said Alan-a-Dale.

Indeed, it seemed at first that there was no accommodation to be obtained anywhere. But at last two of the bowmen who had played squire to us were accommodated in a tavern in a quiet back-street, while we three and Roger of Avon rode on to a hostelry on the outskirts of the town, which, we had been informed, would be able to provide for us.

'Twas not a pleasant-looking inn, being far back from the road among dark trees, and the walls for the most part were painted a sinister red. And the host—a little rat of a fellow—had such a villainous squint that 'twas hard to know whether he spoke to me or to Lantern,

or to whom, when, mighty servile, he ushered us to our apartments.

Two small rooms they were, at either end of a long and crooked passage. Lantern and I took one, while Alan-a-Dale and Roger went to the other. And mighty glad we were to be able to put aside our armour and spread our tired limbs before the hearth!

A meal was soon provided for us, which Roger brought to our room, for we durst not let anyone see our faces. When we had eaten our fill we let the bar fall into place across the door, and lay down wearily upon the rough hutches, stuffed with straw and spread with sheep-skins, that had been provided for our slumbers.

I was asleep in a few minutes. But it seemed that I had scarce closed my eyes ere I was awake again, though the first thing that met my eyes was the dim embers of the fire that had been crackling merrily when I lay down. A hand was on my shoulder, and instinctively I made to shake it off. Then I heard Lantern's voice, very soft, and realised that his mouth was very close to my ear as he whispered:

"Look! See there!"

'Twas too dark to follow easily the direction of his pointing hand. But as my eyes grew more used to the dim light I made out the square of a trap-door in the rafters above us.

"What of it?" I whispered.

"It moved!" answered Lantern in the same low voice. "I awoke a few moments back, thinking that I heard a sound. I was just in time to see the trap-door fall softly into place."

My eyes met his, and I could see that his lips were set queerly.

"There was someone there?" I muttered.

He nodded.

"But, Lantern, what does it mean?"

"I'll tell you what I think it means," said he softly. "'Tis clear enough that someone has been spying upon us, though, perchance, 'tis but our host trying to satisfy his curiosity. But I suspect that the Black Wolf has sent someone to follow us and find out our identity, mad to know who humbled him at the tourney, that Hugo's man has bribed our host to obtain a glimpse of us through that trapdoor, which, by misfortune, looks down upon us, and can, no doubt,

be reached by some stairway or passage without passing through this room."

He broke off, listening.

A faint sound seemed to come from above, like one stealing across the rafters. I sat up eagerly, and my hand went out to the sword that lay at my side.

"Whoever he is, this spy of darkness, we must rout him out!" I whispered excitedly.

Lantern laughed softly.

"Then let me mount upon your shoulders, Tom," said he swiftly. And he, too, snatched up his sword. "With your height you can easily swing up through the trap from the bed. Now."

In a moment he was upon my shoulders, crouching down with his sword in one hand and his other arm crooked 'neath that mysterious trap-door. Then, all suddenly, he exerted his strength and flung it up. Another moment and he was through, while I, hastily slipping my sword into my belt, sprang up and caught the edge of the dark opening to follow him.

There was a narrow window in the little chamber above, through which the moonlight streamed and the night wind murmured. By its light Lantern must have espied someone crouching there, for I heard his sudden exclamation. And then:

"Stab me!" he cried gaily. "May my blood to turn to sap if 'tis not my old friend Gilbert de Vaux, with whom I enjoyed such a rare passage of arms but a few hours ago at the tournament. So the Black Wolf has sent his jackal to spy upon the nameless knights. A blessing on him!"

And then, as I swarmed up to Lantern's aid, I heard the clash of steel as their blades met.

'Gainst Odds!

I SWUNG myself up into that dark chamber, lit by the moon to a dim silver mistiness in the centre of the floor, but hemmed in by blackness all around.

Gilbert de Vaux, an ugly snarl upon his hawklike features, was backed in a corner of the room. Lantern's nimble blade was twinkling like a streak of starlight, and 'twas all De Vaux could do to hold his own.

So Lantern had been right. Hugo had sent De Vaux to spy upon us.

The Norman wore a shirt of chain-mail, but he was without his badge of the five white roses. He would not wish to be recognised when following us from the tourney. My eyes gleamed to see upon his forehead the mark my sword had placed there when I fought with him in Hugo's castle. I doubt if he saw me standing there, he was too hard pressed; and the blood thrilled in my veins as I watched their blades darting like silver tongues of snakes in that little moonlit chamber, where there was scarce space to stand upright.

There was no denying that De Vaux was a fine swordsman, otherwise he could never have held his own for an instant 'gainst Lantern.

The clash of steel echoed weirdly in that confined space. I watched De Vaux' face, and I saw that he knew he had met such a swordsman as never before had crossed steel with him. Little beads of sweat stood out upon his brow, and then there came a sudden screech along his blade as Lantern sent De Vaux' sword flying from his hand.

I gave a gleeful shout. The next moment Lantern's point was at the other's throat, as De Vaux covered back against the wall, his arms outflung, his

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fingers clawing the woodwork. His eyes glittered strangely, and I think he believed he was about to die.

But Lantern only laughed.

"There," he said. "I see no reason why you should die at my hands, so I will not skewer you to the wall. But in return for your life, deliver for me this message when you return to your kinsman. Tell Hugo—"

And then I gave a sudden shout of warning.

There was the dark opening of what seemed the head of a narrow stair in one corner of the room. To this Lantern's back was turned. Now, in the darkness, I heard a sudden soft footfall.

Someone was coming up those stairs.

Even as the startled shout broke from me, two armed men leapt swift into the room. For a moment the moonlight gleamed on the raised knife that flashed into the air above Lantern, as yet only half aware of his danger.

I sprang forward. My sword sang through the air—only just in time. The man with the knife crashed to the boards with scarce a groan.

The second villain turned upon me, an ugly axe raised in his great hairy hand. Behind him I could make out more dark forms running in from the stairs. Hugo's jackal had not come alone by any means. Then Lantern was at my side, and I heard De Vaux scrambling to regain his sword.

The villain with the battle-axe—a giant of a fellow with a thick black beard—struck at me savagely, and my sword flashed up to ward off the blow. Again he struck, and again, and this third time, as our weapons met, there came a tinkle of falling steel.

My sword had snapped in twain!

I flung the useless stump in his face, and saw the scarlet spurt out upon his hairy cheek. He gave a howl of pain and fury and threw himself upon me.

We swayed and fought there in the misty moonlight, while Lantern, cornered near the opening to the stairs, fought desperately to keep at bay De Vaux and five other villains who pressed upon him. The blood from my foe's wounded cheek flecked my face, and his foul breath choked me. We struggled furiously, our arms entwined like steel about each other, our muscles standing out like knotted rope upon our necks, and the sweat pouring from us. I felt as though my ribs would crack.

And then suddenly we were falling, hurtling downwards, still locked in each other's fierce embrace.

In our struggles we had drawn nearer and nearer to the open trapdoor, till now we went crashing down through the big square opening into the room below.

I felt a stinging pain shoot through my arm as we fell in a fighting heap upon one of the beds. Then I was lying on my back with the bearded villain kneeling on my chest, his dagger at my throat.

"Lie still!" growled he. "Lie still, young wolf, or your breath will go whistling through a slit windpipe!"

I lay panting, my eyes on his. "T'would have been suicide to disobey.

Up above I could still hear the clash of arms. In spite of their numbers, it seemed that Lantern held his own even yet. And then a figure came dropping to our side from above. 'Twas another of De Vaux' men, and while the bearded rogue kept his knife pricking my throat the other lashed my hands to my sides, and I was helpless.

They flung me down, and then, after a moment's hesitation, crossed swiftly to the door. Evidently they argued that the six men above could deal with

Lantern without their help. Lifting the bar, they flung open the door and hurried away down the passage outside. I thought I caught a glimpse of our host—that little rat—lurking fearfully in the shadows, but either he had been bribed, or else he durst not interfere.

The noisy footsteps of the two men hurried away down the crooked passage, and 'twas clear they made for the room where Alan-a-Dale and Roger were. They made no attempt at silence, and I was amazed at their lack of caution, until a minute later they returned, dragging Alan-a-Dale, as securely bound as I. Then, sick at heart, I realised that our comrades had been attacked and overpowered before they came to us.

They flung the bound outlaw down beside me. But of Roger of Avon there was no sign.

"Where is Roger?" I muttered, a sickening dread within me.

Alan-a-Dale's face was livid with anger, and the sweat stood out on his face as he strained against his bonds.

"He was struck down in the fight, and they have left him in the room, lying there—I know not whether alive or dead," answered Alan bitterly. "The villains! But Lantern—where is Lantern? Ah!"

Up above, the sound of steel on steel was drowned by a sudden horrid scream. Then came a swift rush of feet, and the next instant a nimble figure came dropping from the opening in the rafters, sword still in hand.

'Twas Lantern! Our two captors rushed upon him; he felled the bearded villain straightway with a sword-thrust, so swift and clean that the steel stood out a hand's-breadth from the fellow's back. He glanced swift at us, lying there bound and helpless, and seemed to hesitate. Then, as the men above came dropping through the trapdoor in pursuit of him, Lantern sprang for the window.

I saw that his shoulder was wounded and bleeding; but even so, I could scarce believe my eyes at what followed. Of another man I might have believed it, but of Lantern—

To the window he sprang, without so much as another glance at us. Strong and nimble as he was, he was through in a trice. I heard a shout from Gilbert de Vaux; the next moment Lantern had dropped from view.

They rushed to the window. But 'twas mighty small, and they were not so nimble as he.

"The stairs—to the stairs!" screamed De Vaux. "He must never escape us! We must get him for Earl Hugo at all costs—to the stairs, you clumsy knaves!"

And he led the way to the open door.



In our struggles we had drawn nearer and nearer to the open trapdoor. Then we went crashing down through the big square opening into the room below. (See this page.)

The others raced after him, and we heard their feet thunder down the corridor and the stairs beyond. They knew that we were secure enough! Their footsteps died away in distant echoes, and the silence that followed was strangely eerie, broken only by faint groans from the chamber above. Lantern had taken his toll of them!

In the silence we strained desperately 'gainst the thongs that bound us. How useless it was!

Giving up the vain attempt, I dragged myself across to the window and there struggled to my knees. The window was low in the wall, low enough for a youngster of my big build to peer out.

The moonlight streamed brightly on the red walls of that accursed inn. Below was the stable, and from this shed a dark form was stealing—just as a door was flung open and our enemies came pouring out into the yard.

I heard their shouts when they saw him, and swift they raced to cut him off.

I heard Lantern's defiant laugh. The next moment the thunder of Hereward's hoofs rang out. With his head low over the horse's mighty neck, I saw the little swordsman gallop past in the moonlight and vanish in the trees.

Something like a sob choked my throat, and a mist seemed to swim before my eyes.

For Lantern had deserted us—had deserted us in our hour of dire need!

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 859

"Usurper!"

IT was like a knife thrust into my heart. That bitter moment! What cared I what should follow?

They were soon back in the room for us, and, with our ankles untied, they took us out into the yard, where we were mounted upon led horses. And thus did we ride away from the red inn. As we passed I saw the white, scared face of our host staring down from the window of that little room above the stable, where the man with the black beard lay dead.

And I thought, too, of the man who lay in that other room—Roger of Avon—should we ever know whether he still lived?

Skirting the town by lonely roads, we were soon trotting swiftly up the hillside to the castle above. I wondered what hour it was. Though we had not met a soul below us in the lighted town, the streets still seemed very gay, and I realised that 'twas not so late as I had imagined. At the castle, no doubt, Hugo and the knights and barons would sit

with Prince John at their festivities long into the night.

There were four men guarding us, so that De Vaux must have been accompanied by nine men at least when, having spied upon us and discovered our identity, he attacked us at the inn. Two of the six who had survived unscathed were left at the inn to attend to the wounded and the bodies of the slain.

Silent and morose, De Vaux seemed as he rode ahead, with his head sunk upon his chest. 'Twas a sad blow to him that Lantern had slipped through his fingers.

I glanced at Alan-a-Dale. His lean, nut-brown face was strangely drawn. For there was upon his mind that same heavy weight that pressed upon mine also. Lantern—

'Twas not long ere we reached the castle, and passed across the drawbridge and through the great archway beyond. Wild ideas of throwing myself from my horse, bound though I was, had passed through my mind; but these I had not had the remotest chance of putting into practice with any hope of success. And now it was too late, and Alan-a-Dale and

I were within the walls of the castle of Charndene!

An object of great curiosity and jesting we were to the men-at-arms in the great courtyard. Then De Vaux, who had vanished 'neath a low arch by the East tower, returned; he had cleaned himself, and changed his shirt of mail for a tunic embroidered with his badge of the five white roses. He gave a curt order to a captain of pikemen, and we were hurried along a narrow passage, that soon opened into a spacious corridor thronged with pages and lackeys. There was a sensation at our appearance, but they fell back swift enough before De Vaux, and the pikemen led us into an ante-room adjoining the great hall, separated from it by a low curtained arch.

And when the curtain was held back and we were dragged roughly through, what a scene confronted us!

I had been in that great hall once before; I had seen the mighty pillars that soared to the vaulted roof, and the fine tapestries that hung upon the walls, and the arms and banners and emblazoned shields. But 'twas well-nigh deserted then. While now, long tables were thronged with men, and on the dais 'neath the minstrel's gallery, side by side, sat John of England and the Black Wolf himself!

Hugo's gaunt features were bent towards us. A wolfish glitter was in his evil eyes, and a slow, wicked smile crept out upon his face. An excited shout echoed round the walls—for clearly De Vaux had already informed them of our capture—together with a hubbub of laughter and snatches of wild song. The women had long since retired; 'twas well past midnight, and the dissolute companions of John of England were already riotous with wine.

We were led roughly to the dais, where Prince John, his right hand outflung upon the table to a wine cup that I had seen before—for 'twas none other than that which Simon Rye, the goldsmith, had fashioned for Hugo while I was yet his 'prentice—leered stupidly upon us. But in his crafty face there lurked something of the same cold cruelty as was to be seen in the face of Hugo.

And we were in their hands!

"So these are two of the impostors who dared, in knightly guise, enter the lists to-day with men of noble rank!" said the Prince.

"Ay—and who overthrew them, too!" I cried recklessly, my eyes on Hugo.

I saw his eyes glimmer at that, and I laughed aloud to see the taunt strike home.

And then from one of the nobles on the dais there came a sudden shout:

"Why, by the bones of the saints, 'tis that fellow Alan-a-Dale, one of Robin Hood's band of outlaws!"

What a sensation there was!

"Oho! An outlaw, and of that evil brood of Robin Hood!" cried Prince John. "Oho! I have heard of this fellow Alan-a-Dale, as the gleeman of that spawn."

"Ay, 'tis he sure enough!" cried Hugo. "I remember the dog now as one of those who attacked some of us in Sherwood forest a week ago—ay, and gave me some slight wound, a plague upon his rotting flesh! But methinks that now I can repay that debt—"

He turned to a tall man-at-arms who stood near him—a fine big fellow wearing the crimson surcoat with the black wolf's head of Charndene upon it. Leaning sideways towards this man, his lank hair falling over his brow almost to his eyes, Hugo flung out an unsteady hand and pointed.



With what seemed an eternity of pause 'twixt each shot, one by one the arrows came. I had closed my eyes, but I could feel the arrows strike the screen; could hear the curious crunch of wood as their heads sank deep into the oak—

"See you," said he, "that lean, brown fellow clad in green? Send him to paradise, here and now!"

A thrill of horror ran through me. I looked fearfully at Alan-a-Dale, but he did not so much as reveal by the tremor of an eyelid any emotion that he may have felt. There was a scornful smile upon his face, and I think 'twas this that so maddened Hugo.

The pikeman took three slow steps forward, then he faltered.

"Hasten, rogue!" roared Hugo.

Three more steps did the pikeman take. Then suddenly his pike clattered to the floor, and, turning, he flung himself down at Hugo's feet.

"Nay, sire, nay! Spare me, by your grace, from doing this thing! For Robin Hood and his band were once kind to my mother—"

Hugo rose to his feet, his face livid. In his hand he grasped a great goblet, holding it high above his head, as though to dash it down upon the trembling man. His lips were working. Like so many seemingly cold-natured men, he could fly swift enough into a passion upon occasion. Then he glanced at the Prince, who sat unmoved, a smile upon his thin lips. With a harsh laugh, Hugo called to his men-at-arms.

"Strip this rogue of that brigandine!" snarled he. "Then bind him, with those two outlaws, to yonder screen!" He turned again to the Prince. "I have a little sport in store, my lord!"

There was an eager murmur from them all. Then, as the men-at-arms stepped forward to execute Hugo's commands, there came a sudden surprised hush as Alan-a-Dale's voice rang out hotly:

"You speak of two outlaws! I am an outlaw, and you can do with me what you will. But this lad here is no outlaw, and while there is any justice in England you—"

One of the men-at-arms struck him in the mouth, and there came a laugh from Prince John.

"Keep thy tongue 'twixt thy teeth!" snarled Hugo. And the next moment we were seized and dragged to the screen.

'Twas a great screen of carved oak, and to this they lashed us, with the pikeman in the centre. I had seen an attendant hurry off at a whispered word from Hugo, and now three archers appeared in the great hall with full quivers at their sides. Hugo flung out a pointing hand.

"Archers," said he slowly, his eyes upon us, "a contest! Let us decide once and for all which of you three is the best shot of all my bowmen! To him who fixes a dozen arrows in the screen nearest to his man, without actually striking him, I will present this goblet here, filled with gold pieces! Stand you by that farthest pillar, and let us now witness your skill!"

A shudder ran through me. 'Twas a fiendish torture—the torture of the mind rather than of the body, which, as Hugo well knew, is a thousand times the worse. For while a score of shafts might well be loosed without striking any one of us, the first miscalculation might well mean some horrid wound, or even death.

But 'twas clear that the fiendish sport appealed vastly to all that ruffian crew. I bit my teeth together like a vice as the three bowmen at the farther end of that great hall took shafts from their quivers and notched them to their bowstrings. And then from the man beside me, the brave pikeman who had refused to slay Alan-a-Dale, broke passionately a stream of words that brought a deadly hush upon that evil company.

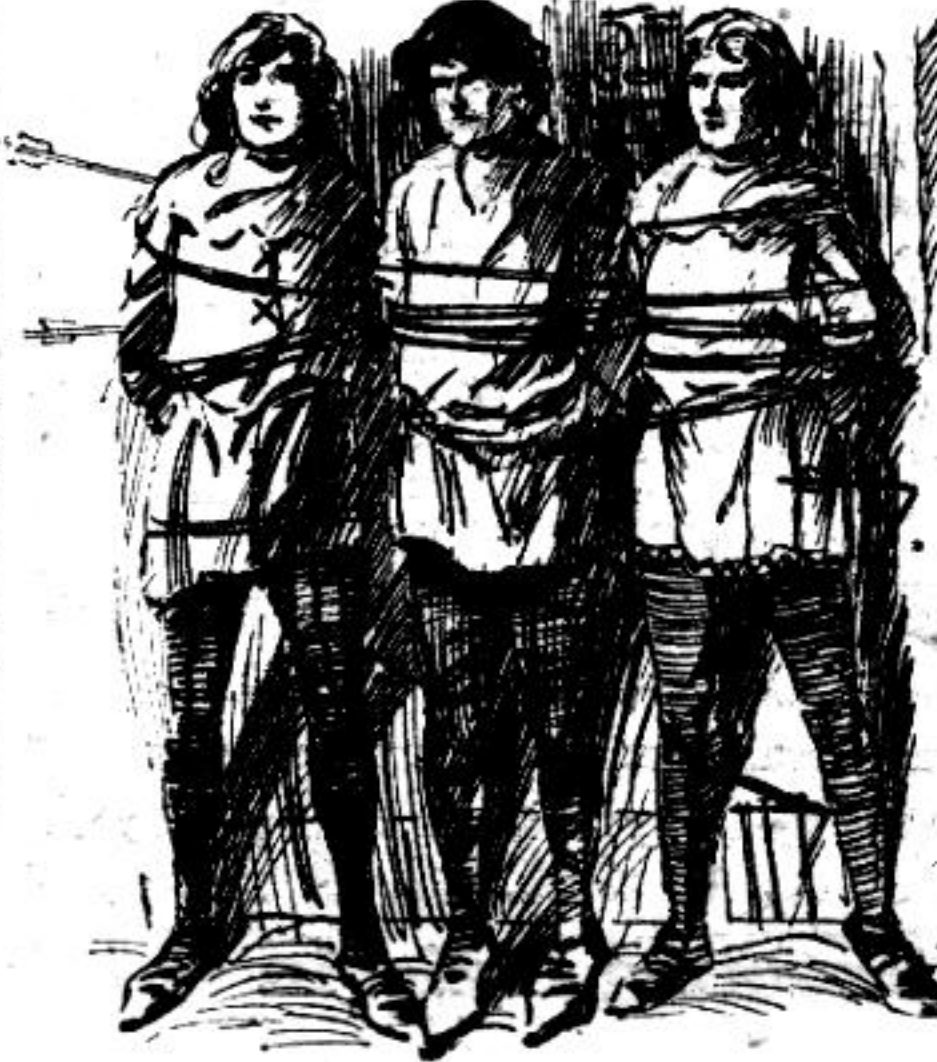
"Ay, slay us, torture us! We know you, Earl Hugo—we know you well for

the Evil One's captain upon earth! But I knew this fair demesne before you came to blacken it, and I know you to be no true Earl of Charndene! Tyrant and usurper! When the King returns, look to yourself, usurper! Ay, before them all I name you thus—foul usurper!"

All eyes were turned on Hugo. I thought he would take a sword and slay the man for this, for his face was terrible. But he did not. He had started to his feet, but now he sank down again with a queer, uneasy laugh, and made a sign to the three bowmen.

And three shafts came singing. The fiendish contest had begun. Though those moments that followed were so ghastly, I like to remember that we held ourselves bravely and betrayed no sign of the agony of mind within us. But I vow that no man, however brave, could have faced with a calm soul that terrible ordeal.

With what seemed an eternity of pause 'twixt each shot, one by one the arrows came. I had closed my eyes; but I could feel the arrows strike the screen, could hear the curious crunch of wood as their heads sank deep into the oak. Once a shaft pierced the cloth at my armpit, though it scratched me not.



—Soon we were to be outlined with these arrows. Strange to think that I should ever have blessed the fact that Hugo had good bowmen 'neath his banner. Yet thanks to their skill not one of us had been struck.

(See this page.)

Soon we were outlined with these arrows. Strange to think that I should ever have blessed the fact that Hugo had good bowmen 'neath his accursed banner! Yet, thanks to their skill, so far not one of us had been struck.

The ghastly suspense was making me mad. My head swam.

And then I wondered if my brain had really gone, for I could not believe my very ears.

There came a sudden clatter of running feet, and the rattle of arms. I opened my eyes, to see that everyone was upon his feet, his eyes fixed strangely on the great entrance of the hall, which we three lashed to that screen could not see. A distant clamour echoed from beyond, drawing nearer.

An uneasy, puzzled shadow was upon the face of he whom the man beside me had named usurper. His hand had gone to his sword, where he stood motionless upon the dais beside the Prince. And then he started back with pallid lips as there rang through the hall, all suddenly, a wild shout of fear:

"Robin Hood! Robin Hood and his outlaws! Robin Hood is here!"

The Coming of the Outlaws!

"ROBIN HOOD is here!"

That wild shout echoed in the great hall of Hugo's castle with strange effect. In a moment everyone was on his feet, his sword or fancied weapon gleaming—a vast, wavering sea of steel.

Robin Hood!

'Twas all too wondrous to be true, so it seemed. Joyous shouts broke from the lips of each one of us lashed to that oaken screen, outlined with arrows like so many jugglers at a May Day revels! The three archers whose skill alone—no thanks to them—had stood 'twixt life and death for Alan-a-Dale and the gallant pikemen who had named Hugo usurper, and myself, lowered their bows in alarm. And in another moment we were utterly forgotten.

"Robin Hood—Robin Hood and his outlaws!"

The cry was taken up, and how the faces around us blanched to hear that hero's name! 'Twas strange indeed to see how they all feared him, with something almost of a superstitious dread, such wondrous tales were told of his bravery and daring, and of his prowess in battle.

I had no time to wonder how the outlaws had learnt of our need. My mind was all on the tumult that came to us from the passage beyond the entrance of that vast hall.

Louder and louder it came, while the interrupted feasters seemed rooted to the spot. And then the clash of steel and the streaming footsteps burst loud upon our ears, and though we could not see the archway from where we were lashed to that great screen, we knew that the outlaws were pouring through into the hall itself!

'Twas all so swift and unexpected that something very like a panic followed. Tables and chairs and benches were flung aside or overturned as the crowd surged back. Then Hugo's voice rose above the clamour, cursing them all for white-livered dogs, and crying to them to protect their prince.

Whatever else his faults, Hugo was no coward. He was among the first who sprang to the aid of the handful of men-at-arms who still fought desperately to keep at bay the men in Lincoln green. He wielded a treble-chained flail with a mighty spiked head of iron—a terrible weapon in a man of his great stature—and he shouted hoarsely as he raced t'wards the archway we three would have given so much to see.

They rallied to him, and with shouts and war-cries they surged to where the outlaws fought to gain the archway. And then above the din I heard the note of a horn.

'Twas the silver horn of Robin Hood himself, and at the signal—or thus I pictured it—the foremost outlaws drew suddenly aside, and revealed a line of tall bowmen, the arrows ready notched to their strings. The next instant the cloth-yard shafts flew thick and fast, raining down on the Norman barons and their men-at-arms with devastating effect.

Cries and groans there were, and the thud of falling men. I saw a man at Hugo's side go crashing to the stones with an arrow through his heart. Then the bugle rang out again, and like a summer shower that rain of arrows ceased all suddenly, and the men of Sherwood swept forward, driving their demoralised foes before them.

And at last, as the Normans fell back, the bowmen of Sherwood fought their way in view of us.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 859.

Nearest to the screen appeared the great figure of Little John, armed with a mighty war-hammer, engaged with two of Hugo's spearmen. I cried to him, and he saw us. With a terrible sweep of his gigantic arms, he felled both men at one blow, and then he was at my side.

"Heaven be praised!" he cried as he slashed our bonds.

'Twas the work of a moment to free us, and then he clapped me on the shoulder and thrust into my hands the great broadsword that hung at his waist. Another of the outlaws armed Alan-a-Dale, while the pikeman snatched up the weapon of a wounded noble who lay in a swoon across a table hard by. 'Twas clear enough upon which side the pikeman meant to fight!

And what a fight that was!

Straightway we plunged into the thick of it, despite the numbness that had cramped our limbs but a few moments before. The tumult and the excitement had put new life and energy into us; and mighty savage 'gainst our foes we were, with high cause, which ever gives new life to a man. Hot blood is better than strong arms, and when both are found together—

The noise of it was deafening. The outlaws had won their way to the centre of the hall, and a dozen were holding the dais 'gainst a fierce assault. Of Prince John there was no sign. A craven at heart, he had made good his retreat at the first warning of danger, slipping away almost unnoticed, and whither no one knew.

De Vaux I noticed striving with Alan-a-Dale, and then the swirling tide of battle swept them apart. Friar Tuck I saw also, doing deadly work in the thickest of the fight with a great broad-

sword, exerting every ounce of his immense strength. He saw me, and shouted to me cheerily—though his words were drowned—and at the same time he beat a Norman to the floor by one mighty blow with the flat of his sword.

"Sherwood! Sherwood! Sherwood!"

The battle-cry of the outlaws rang out again and again, and in answer came the defiant "Charndene! Charndene!" of our foes.

Hugo I could see on the farther side of the hall, his wolfish face set in a snarl of fury as he fought. His deadly flail was breaking many a limb and skull as he swung it about him on all sides with ferocious dexterity—and the flail is a weapon that requires much skill of handling. But in the hands of the right man 'tis indeed a terrible weapon, as Hugo was now proving.

But I was ever reckless and hot-headed, and what cared I for his flail? I turned his way, and slowly, inch by inch, I fought t'wards Hugo.

He saw me hewing a path in his direction, and he cursed me from afar, and strove to draw to me, for his part.

Nearer and nearer we came, till two men only separated us. These fell, struggling together, and with a spring I was over them. All around us swayed the sea of fighting men, wave upon wave; betwixt us were but two yards of floor space, where sprawled, face down, a dead man-at-arms.

And then the Black Wolf and I were face to face!

(How will young Tom fare? Will he live to piece together the secret of the broken talisman, or will he fall a victim to the deadly flail in Earl Hugo's hands? See next week's instalment, chums.)

SENTENCED BY THE FORM!

(Continued from page 19.)

here will vote 'Yes' or 'No.' Hands up for 'Yes'!"

A crowd of hands went up.

"That does it!" said Peter.

"Hold on!" said Skinner. "I demand a show of hands for Smithy! Hands up for 'No'!"

Six or seven hands went up. Skinner shrugged his shoulders. The great majority of the Form was for the sentence.

"Are you ready, Smithy?" asked Peter Todd.

The Bounder gave him a savage look. He had expected that sentence, or a severer one, when his trickery was brought to light. It came hard to him, nevertheless. He was barred from cricket for the summer—unless in the coming struggle he could "down" Wharton and take the lead himself in the Remove. That was his intention and his hope. But the outcome was very problematic. At the present moment it was clear that almost all the Remove were against him.

But bitterest of all to the proud and arrogant Bounder was the sentence of "six."

Billy Bunter, his eyes gleaming behind his big spectacles, darted out of the Rag. He came back speedily with a cricket-stump in his fat paw.

"Here you are, 'Toddy!" he gasped.

"Who's the giddy executioner?" asked Tom Brown. "You, 'Toddy?"

Peter Todd shook his head.

"No fear! I'm judge, not executioner. You, if you like, Browney."

Tom Brown shook his head in his turn.

"Redwing?" suggested Squiff.

Tom Redwing turned away, and walked out of the Rag. His heart was heavy within him. He was well aware that the Bounder's sentence was just; but he would not remain to witness the humiliation of his former friend. The door of the Rag closed behind him.

"I say, you fellows, I'll give him six!" howled Bunter. "I'll give him sixty, if you like!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bunter's the man," said Peter Todd. "Smithy, it's time for you to bend over. There's a chair."

"Ready, Smithy?" grinned the Owl of the Remove, prancing up to the Bounder, stump in hand. Bunter was enjoying the proceedings now. His forcible removal from Smithy's study was to be avenged at last.

The Bounder's eyes blazed. He backed away a little, pushed back his cuffs, and clenched his fists hard.

"Hands off!" he said.

"I say, you fellows—" ejaculated Bunter, jumping back in alarm.

"Bend over, Smithy!" roared a dozen voices.

"Rats!" said Smithy.

"Smithy—" began Harry Wharton.

"Look here! It's the sentence of the Form, and Smithy's got to toe the line!" roared Bolsover major angrily. "If he won't bend over, collar him and make him!"

"Yes, rather!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific!"

"Collar him!"

The Bounder evidently intended to resist, hopeless as resistance was. His coolness was gone now. He panted, and his eyes blazed at the Removites.

"Last time of asking, Smithy!" said Peter Todd.

(Continued on page 28.)

"THE PLUCK OF THE CURLEWS!"

A Great School and Scouting Tale in



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"VERNON-SMITH'S FEUD!"

NEXT Monday's grand extra-long story of Harry Wharton & Co. will be remembered for many a day to come. As the title suggests, Herbert Vernon-Smith, otherwise the Bounder, plays a very important role. The worst in the Bounder's complex nature comes to the surface, and we get a glimpse of the old character which Mr. Frank Richards moulded with such interesting clay in the early days of the MAGNET. A bad and bitter enemy, Vernon-Smith will go to any lengths to satisfy the cravings of revenge. Unaided, the Bounder's task of making Harry Wharton & Co. "sit up" would seem impossible. But the Bounder has one or two trump cards up his sleeve, and he plays them well—if one agrees with his unscrupulous code.

IN A QUANDARY!

That's how Harry Wharton finds himself when he comes to make up the Remove cricket eleven to play against Highcliffe. But if Vernon-Smith is determined to create chaos with the cricket eleven, Harry Wharton is equally determined that he shall not. In consequence, we see some strategic moves culminating in an unexpected fashion, and thereby ringing down the curtain on what was once known as

"VERNON-SMITH'S FEUD!"

What happens you will learn for yourselves. But you can rest assured, chums, Mr. Frank Richards' latest story is a real jewel. Be well advised—order next Monday's MAGNET now. There's bound to be a rush for it, accentuated on account of our

SIMPLE COMPETITION!

which is offering a weekly prize of a magnificent "Royal Enfield" Bicycle. This is a sparkling opportunity that should on no account be missed. Most of you are cyclists, or would-be cyclists, I have no doubt, and such a useful prize appeals to you. Remember, too, that if you are not successful in winning a bicycle this week, you may fare better in the weeks to come. That's the beauty of it.

"SHERWOOD GOLD!"

Next Monday's trenchant instalment of this amazing story will hold you spellbound. Tom Hadleigh has one secret object in view—to secure the other half of the broken talisman—the talisman known to be in the possession of the Black Wolf. Caring naught for the risk he is running, young Tom sets out on a lone trail. That he runs up against adventure goes without saying with so capable and virile an author as Mr. Francis

Warwick wielding the pen. If you miss this coming treat, boys, you will be missing something really good.

"CHAMPIONS!"

That is the subject Harry Wharton has chosen for the coming supplement. There are Champions of everything at Greyfriars, from Boxing to Ludo, and the adventures of these star performers narrated by the "Herald" staff is distinctly refreshing. Of course, William George Bunter figures largely in the supplement for next week—it would not be complete without the fat and fatuous Owl of the Remove. But even Bunter's idle chatter can be interesting at times.

FELIX KEPT ON WALKING!

Without a doubt Felix knew a bit. If you don't keep on, what happens? You simply get crowded out. That's the ticket. And nobody wants to be crowded out, like the author's best romantic passage when the smiling, kindly printer starts to make up the pages. But it isn't only walking. No need to think it. It is keeping on getting to know. The thoroughfare to everybody's mind ought really to present a scene somewhat similar to that of a busy shopping street when the early morning vans deliver the goods to be sold during the day. Get in the bulky packing-cases and the crates full of good, sound facts and useful knowledge. That is the real wealth. You will find the world a jolly sight easier. Why not aim at being the fellow who knows things? You will have the crowd queuing up to ask your help.

THE GOVERNOR'S BUSINESS!

Some people with a big letter-bag say they are "pestered" with inquiries. That's all wrong. There is no finer compliment out than that contained in a request for advice. One typical letter reached me this morning. It was from a fellow who dislikes his father's business. His father has made a really prosperous business just on his own, and has given his son a topping education, and bought him everything the youngster asked for. Now, it's plain as paint that the son's job is to sail in and help the old man with the work, now that schooling is over. But my correspondent says it is "such a fag." He feels he was cut out for something better. Besides, his father "does not understand." Think of that now! The senior in question understood enough to make good, and create an income so that his family could have everything money could buy. I should advise my corre-

spondent to jump to it, and do his best in the business, where a post awaits him. He might also forget, for the time being anyway, that he knows better than the "governor."

PIGS AND POETRY!

You may say these two articles do not run together. They do, though. Of course, sometimes poetry takes the lead. I have seen an absent-minded dreamer up North do a fair sprint with an infuriated grunter in full cry after him. It was in a wild part of the country where the porcine quadrupeds fend for themselves and grow to be sinewy and athletic. But that's neither here nor there. I wanted to say a word about the country stunt. Everybody is talking about the delights of the country these days. Some people pretend to like the country, whereas they really hate it like poison. Others make no bones about it. They detest being away from a town however fine the weather may be. To them the country is a very dangerous place, full of wild animals, cows, and things, and with lots of mud in the lanes. Languid fellows may have no use for the country. They would be like Mauly, and want to call a taxi. But the Hon. Herbert misses a good thing. There is nothing to equal the country, whether you are hiking, or biking, or doing a turn with a punt in some of the navigation backwaters, which are half-canal, half-river, and very jolly whichever way it is.

A CANADIAN CHUM!

Allan Pollock, 266, Johnston Street, Kingston, Ontario, Canada, writes to me about the work he is doing as Sports Editor for a paper in Kingston. He would like to receive tips from other amateurs. Will amateur journalists please note this request, and send along any advice based on their own experience in this line?

POETRY WANTED!

No need to get the idea that Bunter is anxious to hear from any poets, budding or otherwise. I am referring to the matter because a staunch supporter of the Companion Papers—namely, W. Pithey, 11, Park Road, Gardens, Cape Town, South Africa, asks me to assist him in a book of poetry he is making up. "I want," he said, "to get into communication with boys all over the world who are interested in poetry. You see, I am trying to make a book full of world-famous poets, but I need help. I would especially like poems by Tennyson, Burns, Kipling, Whitman, and Delamere." I know any reader who can will give this correspondent a helping hand. In the meantime, if he keeps his eyes open, he will be sure to see extracts from the works of the poets named, and others, which he can add to his collection.

SPECIAL!

I want all my readers to look out for the grand new series of stories shortly to appear in THE MAGNET LIBRARY. They concern the adventures of Harry Wharton & Co., on vacation, in the wonderful East. Tell your pals, too!

Your Editor.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 859.

SENTENCED BY THE FORM!*(Continued from page 26)*

"Bah!"

"Collar him!"

There was a rush of a dozen fellows. The Bouncer hit out savagely, and Tom Brown rolled over, and Squiff fell across him with a yell.

Then the Famous Five joined in. Vernon-Smith, fighting fiercely, was collared on all sides.

"Skinner, Hazel!" yelled the Bouncer. "Back up!"

But Skinner & Co. had no intention of entering into a scrap with an angry Form. They strolled out of the Rag, leaving the Bouncer to the tender mercies of the Remove.

In the midst of an excited crowd, the Bouncer of Greyfriars still struggled and resisted. But he was grasped on all sides and dragged to the chair.

By main force he was bent over and held in position for punishment. He panted, and still struggled feebly, as he was held.

"Now, Bunter—"

"I say, you fellows, have you got him safe?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it, you fat duffer!" exclaimed Bob Cherry impatiently.

Whack!

Billy Bunter put all the force of his podgy arm into it. There was a gasp from the Bouncer. He made a terrific effort, and for a moment the half-dozen fellows holding him swayed. But he was held, and the Owl of the Remove went on with the "six."

Whack, whack, whack, whack, whack! "That's six!" said Peter.

"I say, you fellows, let him have some more. I'm not tired yet."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I dare say Smithy is," grinned Wibley.

"Just one more!" urged Bunter. "He kicked me—"

"You fat villain, I'll kick you if you don't dry up!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Let him go!" said Peter.

The Bouncer was released. He sprang away from the juniors, gasping, panting, his face white as chalk. The punishment itself was little enough to the hardy Bouncer. It was the humiliation that stung him to the quick.

For a moment or two Herbert Vernon-Smith stood looking at the crowd of Removites, panting. Then he hurried from the Rag. A moment or two more, and his study door in the Remove passage closed on him and the key turned.

Harry Wharton & Co. did not see the Bouncer again till the Remove went to their dormitory that night. When they saw him there, he did not speak to them or look at them. He turned in without a word, or a look, to any fellow in the Remove. He did not seem to hear Skinner & Co. when they called good-night to him, and did not heed the fat chuckle of Billy Bunter. But the Remove knew the Bouncer too well to believe that he was subdued, and the whole Form anticipated the trouble that was to follow.

THE END.

(Be sure and read next Monday's grand, extra long story of Harry Wharton & Co., entitled "Vernon-Smith's Feud"—a yarn that will be remembered for many a day to come.)

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