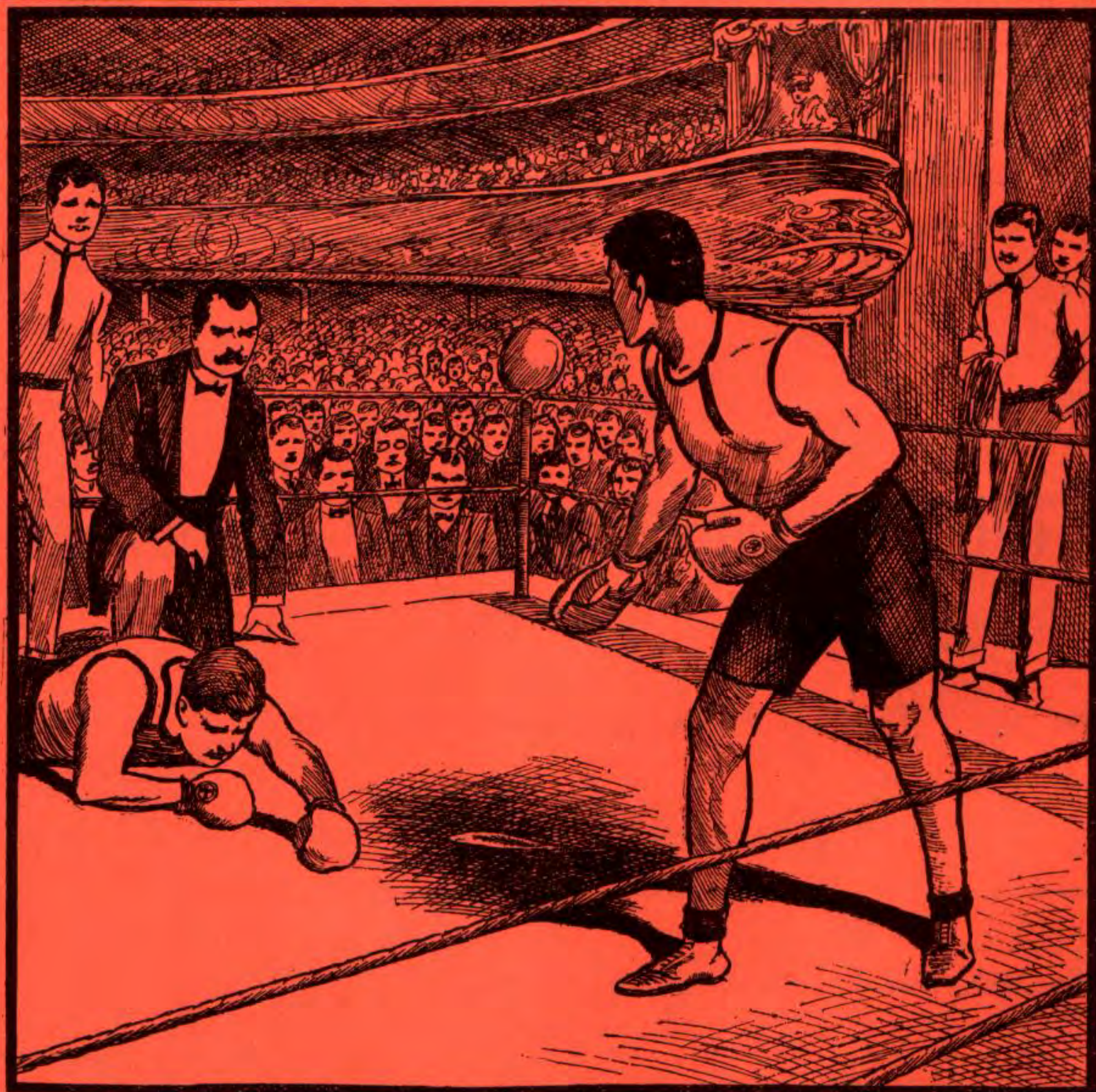


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A Magnificent Long Complete Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars. By Frank Richards.



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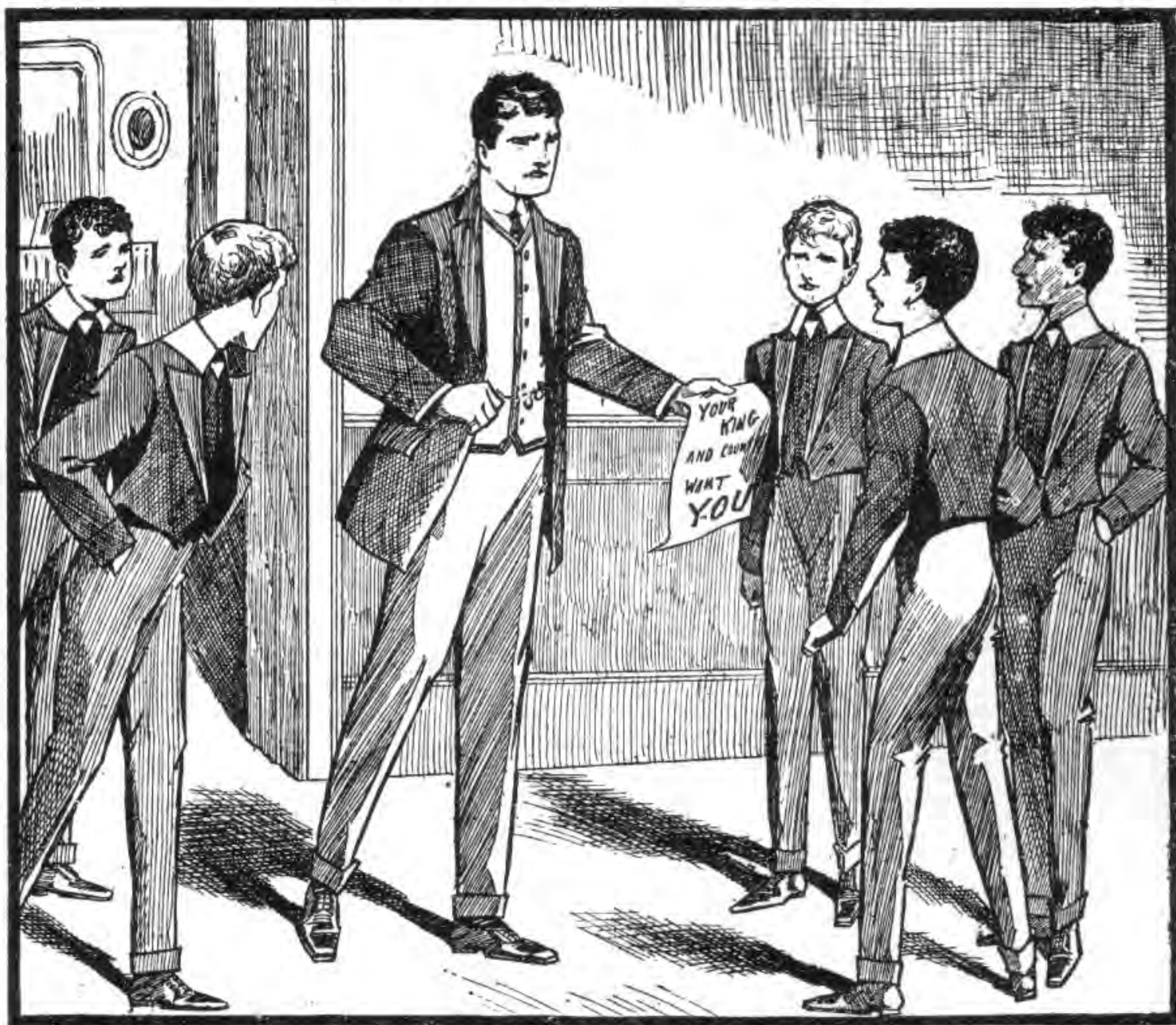


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friend.

THE MASTER WHO STAYED AT HOME!

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

By FRANK RICHARDS.



Mr. Lascelles held a sheet of impot paper in his hand, bearing the words: "YOUR KING AND COUNTRY WANT YOU!" "I found this paper pinned to my chair," he said, in a quiet voice. "Do any of you know who placed it there?" (See Chapter 1.)

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Why Not Larry?

"LARRY looks down in the mouth!"

Bob Cherry of the Remove made that remark. Harry Wharton & Co., the Famous Five of the Greyfriars Remove, were chatting in the passage when Mr. Lascelles passed them. Mr. Lawrence

Lascelles, the mathematics master at Greyfriars, was always affectionately alluded to as "Larry" by the juniors, not in his hearing, of course.

Mr. Lascelles generally had a cheery nod and a smile for the heroes of the Remove. But on this occasion he had passed them with a clouded brow, and did not seem to have observed that they were there.

He went into his study, and the door snapped shut.

"Something has happened to ruffle the noble serenity of the esteemed Larry," remarked Hurree Singh.

"Tain't all lavender being maths master," said Frank Nugent sapiently. "Just fancy trying to drive maths into Bunter's head, or Snoop's. And he's so jolly conscientious that he gives them extra toot to make them get on. Not that they appreciate it."

The juniors grinned. All the fellows who got "extra toot" from Mr. Lascelles regarded it as a long-standing grievance. The slackers did not appreciate in the slightest degree the conscientiousness of Larry. Skinner and Snoop and Bunter and the other idlers could almost have sung a "Hymn of Hate" about the mathematics master. A master who made them work and wasn't satisfied unless they made some progress was not at all to their liking.

"But it isn't the slackers who're worrying Larry now," said Johnny Bull. "He's got some bigger worry than that. He hasn't looked his old self for a long time. I've noticed it. I wonder——" Johnny Bull paused, and coloured a little.

"Well, what do you wonder?" asked Harry Wharton. "What's the matter with Larry?"

"Well, I was thinking——" Johnny paused again.

"Get it off your chest," said Bob Cherry, encouragingly. "If you've been thinking, old chap, it's worth while telling us the result."

"Ass!" said Johnny Bull. "I've been thinking—well, it's rather a rotten thing to think about such a splendid chap as old Larry—but I couldn't help the thought coming into my head—why don't he go?"

"Go!" repeated Wharton.

"Yes."

"Whither, O King?" asked Bob.

"To the front!" said Johnny Bull.

"Oh!"

A painful silence fell upon the Famous Five. Johnny Bull was the first of the Co. to voice the common thought; it had occurred to all of them. They had not cared to utter it, but they could not help thinking it.

At a time when every fit man was needed to fight for King and country, what was Mr. Lascelles doing at Greyfriars?

He was a young man, well under thirty, and splendidly fit. It was by this time an open secret at Greyfriars that he had earned his bread as a gentleman boxer, after leaving college, before he had been able to secure his appointment at Greyfriars. He was exactly the man that was wanted in the khaki line, and if he did not care to rough it in the ranks there was no doubt whatever that he could obtain a commission if he chose. Why didn't he go?

It was a painful thought to the juniors, who admired him immensely, and respected him without limit. Mr. Lascelles had always been a hero in their eyes. The fact that he had been through hard times, and had been known as Larry Lynx, the boxer, in earlier days, only added to his prestige in the eyes of the juniors. The Remove fellows had more respect for a perfectly fit man and a splendid boxer than for the most tremendous scholastic attainments. Until the war came they had never seen a fault in Larry.

But now—why didn't he go? They didn't want to lose him, as the song says, but they thought he ought to go. They tried not to think so, but the thought would come into their minds. No doubt Mr. Lascelles knew his own business best. Still, why didn't he go?

The same thought had occurred to many others, as well as the Famous Five. Mr. Lascelles had enemies among the juniors—fellows who liked to slack, and hated anybody who made them work. Skinner and Snoop had often indulged in sneering remarks. On any other subject Harry Wharton & Co. would probably have bumped the cads of the Remove for sneering at their hero. But on that subject they had to be silent. For when Skinner asked why he didn't go the question found an echo in their own hearts, though their tongues were silent.

Mr. Blaine, the master of the Second Form, had gone; he was the only master of military age at Greyfriars, with the exception of Larry. Instead of directing the

studies of the lags in the Second Form-room, Mr. Blaine was fighting in Flanders under the old flag. Dicky Nugent & Co. of the Second Form were enormously proud of their Form-master now, though while he had been with them they had often been heard to allude to him as a "beast." But as Nugent minor said nobly he might be a beast, but he was evidently a brave beast, and he was doing his bit.

Why wasn't Larry, who was younger and fitter than Mr. Blaine, doing his bit, too?

The five chums all looked very uncomfortable in the silence that followed Johnny Bull's remark. Nobody spoke for a few minutes.

"It's his own business," said Harry Wharton at last. "I dare say he's got jolly good reasons. We know he's got heaps of pluck."

Johnny Bull nodded.

"I mean, I think that's perhaps why he looks down in the mouth lately," he said. "I suppose he can guess what a lot of the fellows think."

"It's beastly," said Nugent. "It would be rotten without old Larry here, but—but he's not married, and he's as fit as a fiddle, and—and why the thunder don't he go, I wonder?"

"Shush!" murmured Bob.

Mr. Lascelles's study door opened suddenly. The young master appeared, and looked out into the passage. There was a slight flush in his cheeks, and his dark eyes were glinting. He signed to the juniors.

"Come here!"

The Famous Five came up, wondering what was wanted. Mr. Lascelles held a sheet of impot paper in his hand. The juniors reddened as they saw it. For upon it was written in large letters:

"YOUR KING AND COUNTRY WANT YOU!"

"I found this paper pinned to my armchair," said Mr. Lascelles, in a quiet voice. "Do you know who placed it there?"

"No, sir," said Harry.

The rest of the Co. shook their heads. They could guess; it was pretty certain that Skinner of the Remove had done it, but they did not know.

"Some cad, sir," said Bob Cherry.

Mr. Lascelles smiled slightly.

"The handwriting is disguised," he said, "but I fancy I recognise it. Kindly look for Skinner of your Form and send him to me."

"Yes, sir."

Mr. Lascelles stepped back into the study. Harry Wharton & Co. exchanged glances, and proceeded in search of Skinner of the Remove.

"It's a rotten trick," said Nugent, in a low voice. "It's queer that Larry doesn't go, but when a chap doesn't go everybody ought to conclude that he's got a good reason. It's rotten to chip a fellow about staying."

"Just like Skinner!" growled Bob Cherry.

Harold Skinner was discovered in the Close. He was the centre of a little crowd of Removites, who were grinning. Skinner was evidently telling them one of his little jokes, and the Famous Five could guess what it was.

"You're wanted, Skinner," said Wharton.

"Hallo, who wants me?"

"Larry!"

Skinner looked uneasy.

"You don't mean to say he knows——" he began.

"He's found a paper in his study, and he thinks he knows the fist," said Bob. "You're to go to him. If you put it there I hope you'll get licked."

"Why shouldn't I put it there?" sneered Skinner. "Ain't there posters stuck up everywhere telling the slackers that their King and country want them?"

"Larry isn't a slacker."

"Then why don't he go?" jeered Snoop.

"Better ask him!" growled Johnny Bull.

"No need to ask him," said Skinner. "He don't go because he won't go. There's lots of his sort, skulking at home while other men do their fighting for them. What's a man doing, teaching in a school, when the Germans are trying to get at us? There wouldn't be a school to teach in if the other fellows weren't keeping the Huns from burning it down. I call it rotten!"



"You wanted conscription, and now you've got it!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "You're going to enlist, Skinner, or we won't leave you with a whole bone in your body!" "Yow-ow-ow!" gasped Skinner. (See Chapter 8.)

"Oh, shut up!" growled Bob Cherry uncomfortably.

The Famous Five turned away; they were not inclined to argue with Skinner. For once Skinner had the best of the argument. There were plenty of middle-aged men to take Mr. Lascelles's place if he went. And even if there were not, what did mathematics matter when it was a question of keeping out the barbarians?

Skinner, with scowling brow, took his way to Mr. Lascelles's study. Skinner was quite satisfied that he was justified in his proceedings, but his palms tingled in anticipation as he entered Mr. Lascelles's room.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Remove Means Business!

MR. LASCELLES was standing by his table with the offending paper in his hand. His face was quite calm. His clear, steady eyes turned upon Skinner with a glance that made him feel extremely uncomfortable. Skinner detested the mathematics master, chiefly because Mr. Lascelles made him work. But he could not maintain, even to himself, that Larry looked anything like a slacker or a funk. A generous-minded lad would have believed that Larry had powerful personal

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reasons keeping him from joining the khaki line. But Skinner never erred on the side of generosity.

Mr. Lascelles held out the paper.

"Did you write this, Skinner?"

Skinner drew a deep breath. He could see that his hand had been recognised, though he had attempted to disguise it. Larry's eyes were very keen.

"Yes, sir," said Skinner, as boldly as he could.

"You placed it in my study?"

"Yes, sir."

"Are you aware, Skinner, that such an action towards your master is exceedingly impertinent?"

Skinner looked sullen.

"I meant it as a good turn, sir," he explained. "Lots of the fellows are thinking——"

"You need not tell me what the boys are thinking," said Mr. Lascelles. "It appears that you have formed certain views concerning me, and you have felt bound to acquaint me with them. You should have known, Skinner, that I am perfectly aware of what is due from me to my King and country without any hints from a junior in the Lower Fourth Form."

"We all think——"

"Neither can I believe that your motive was good, Skinner. You have played ill-natured tricks upon me

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before, I presume, because I will not encourage or allow slacking among the pupils under my charge. I shall punish you for this fresh example of insolence, Skinner."

Skinner set his teeth.

"Very well, sir. I'm not afraid."

Mr. Lascelles's eyes gleamed for a moment. Skinner had laid stress upon the personal pronoun in a very significant manner. He felt that it was worth a caning to rag the mathematics master to his face.

"Hold out your hand, Skinner."

"Certainly, sir. If I were old enough I should be at the front now."

"I hope that statement is correct, Skinner, though I have my doubts. However, that need not be discussed."

Mr. Lascelles took up his cane.

Swish! Swish!

"Ow! Wow!" mumbled Skinner.

"You may go!"

Skinner went. His eyes were burning as he tramped down the passage with his hands tucked under his arms. The door closed after him, and then, when he was alone, the calmness was gone from Mr. Lascelles's face. He hung himself into a chair, with a troubled, harassed look.

"The boy is right!" he muttered. "He is insolent and mean, but what he has said is true—my King and country need me. And I cannot go! But—but how long shall I be able to endure this?"

He rose restlessly and began to pace his study.

Skinner, rubbing his hands savagely, rejoined the juniors in the Close. They gave him sympathetic looks. Their feeling was quite on Skinner's side.

"Licked?" asked Bolsover major.

"Yes," growled Skinner.

"It's rotten! If he wants to lick anybody why can't he go and help lick the Prussians?" said Ogilvy.

"Jolly good reason, he can't!" sneered Snoop. "He ain't afraid of Skinner, but he's jolly well afraid of the Huns."

"Funk!" said Bolsover major. "Why, my uncle's gone, and he's twenty years older than Lascelles, and was wounded in South Africa. Bob Cherry's father's at the front, and he's a regular old codger. Even Wharton's uncle has gone, though he's nearly as old as Methuselah. Everybody's gone, or going, and here's a young man sticking at home letting other men protect him. Shame!"

"Shame!" echoed the juniors.

"We'll jolly well let him know what we think of him, anyway!" snarled Skinner. "I call it a disgrace to Greyfriars, having a young man here teaching mathematics. He's disgracing the school. Ponsonby of Highcliffe asked me the other day whether he had gone. Ponsonby's got a brother at the front. I think the whole school ought to take the matter up and shame him into going."

"The Head ought to sack him," said Bulstrode.

"Oh, rats!" said Squiff, the Australian junior. "If he won't go, it's his own business. He may have family reasons."

"Rot! He's single."

"And an orphan, too," said Snoop. "We all know he's got no parents. He's got a sister, that's all."

"Just the man who ought to go," said Morgan.

"Hardly anybody to miss him if he got potted."

"The school ought to take it up," repeated Skinner.

"And the Remove ought to lead the way. Let's hold a meeting. We'll call on Wharton, as captain of the Form, to preside."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He backs the rotter up through thick and thin," growled Skinner; "but he can't back him up in shirking."

"Good egg! Let's make Wharton take a hand," chirruped Snoop delightedly.

"I guess something ought to be done," remarked Fisher T. Fish, the American junior. "I guess—"

"Oh, you shut up!" said Bolsover major. "You're only a rotten neutral."

"I guess if the Yewnited States were at war there wouldn't be any slackers," said Fisher T. Fish disdainfully. "We'd just wade in, sir, and wipe 'em out."

"Ever read your own history?" asked Mark Linley.

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"Yep."

"Then don't gas!" said the Lancashire junior coolly. "I've read the history of your civil war. You couldn't get your men to fight, and you had to get conscription to make them."

"I—I guess," said Fisher T. Fish, somewhat taken aback—"I—I guess it would be a bit different now. I guess the Americans, sir, would roll up in their millions and—and—"

"And gas!" said Bolsover major. "They wouldn't do anything else."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why, you jay—"

"They're rolling up in their millions now, and letting the Germans sink their ships!" grinned Skinner. "They roll up and send Notes. There isn't a blessed country in the world your President hasn't sent a Note to. I believe if the Germans bombarded New York they'd only get a Note sent to them in return. You can go and eat coke, Fishy!"

"I guess—"

"Oh, cheese it!" said Bolsover. "Let's go and see Wharton, and make him take the lead. He's captain of the Form, and he ought to."

The Removites crowded away to No. 1 Study. Skinner & Co. were greatly delighted at the idea of making Harry Wharton take the lead in a demonstration against Larry; and the other fellows, who did not agree with Skinner in anything else, agreed with him on this point. Even fellows who had always liked and admired Larry felt that he ought to go, and that if he wouldn't go, he ought to be made to go by public opinion. As Bolsover indignantly remarked, it was fellows like Lascelles who brought the danger of conscription upon the country—a rotten German institution in itself, but the only way of making the slackers buck up.

The Famous Five had gone to No. 1 Study to tea. They were at tea when the door was thrown open and the crowd arrived.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, looking at the new arrivals in surprise. "What's the row? Have the Germans landed?"

"They jolly well would if everybody were like your favourite Larry," sneered Skinner.

"Oh, ring off!"

"There's hardly a young man left in the village," said Skinner. "All the Friardale cricket club have gone. All the shop-assistants who were young enough. And here's Lascelles still hanging on."

"Have you come here to tell us that?" demanded Wharton angrily. "We're fed up with the subject. Clear off!"

Bolsover major brought his big fist down on the table with a bang that made the crockery dance.

"We want you!" he said emphatically.

"Eh?"

"You call yourself captain of the Remove, Wharton?"

"I am captain of the Remove," said Harry quietly.

"The whole Form is going to shame Lascelles into going, and we want you to call a meeting and preside."

"Hear, hear!"

Wharton flushed.

"Well, if you're captain, you've got to take the lead."

"Well, I won't do it!" he said tersely.

"Why not?"

"Because it's a rotten cheek to rag anybody into enlisting. If a man don't go, it's because—"

"Because he's a slacker or a funk."

"No! I don't believe there's a man in England who's afraid of the Germans," said Wharton. "That's all silly rot. If a man don't go, it's because he can't go. I don't say I know Larry's reasons. But I know they must be jolly good ones, or he'd go."

"Rats!"

"Rot!"

"Bosh!"

"I say, you fellows," piped Billy Bunter, blinking into the study through his big spectacles. "I'll preside at the meeting if you like. I think the beast ought to go. Why, if he went, that would be an end of extra toot."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And lots of us have got extra toot," said Bunter.

"And there are a lot of impots out. We shouldn't have to do them if Lascelles weren't here to ask for them. He ought to go."

"You silly ass!" shouted Bob Cherry. "Do you think Larry ought to enlist, so that you can slack at mathematics?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If I were old enough I'd jolly well go!" snorted Bunter. "I'd insist on being sent into the fighting-line immediately. I'd——"

"You'd be some use as a battering-ram," remarked Bob.

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"'Nuff jaw!" snapped Bolsover major. "Look here, Wharton, you're wanted, if you call yourself captain of the Form. Are you going to call that meeting?"

"No!"

"Then we'll jolly well do it without you."

"Rats!"

"So you're backing up that shirker, are you?" roared Bolsover.

"Go and eat coke!"

"Oh, come on!" said Bolsover savagely. "This study is fond of slackers. I'm not. Let's call all the fellows together in the Rag. We'll pass a resolution and send it to Lascelles."

"Oh!"

"You'll get licked," said Nugent.

"I'm not afraid of a licking. Let him lick me, and I'll tell him plain enough what I think of him," snorted Bolsover. "I'll tell him my opinion of a fellow who licks schoolboys when he ought to be licking the Germans. Come on!"

Bolsover tramped away, and the juniors crowded after him in great excitement. Bob Cherry kicked the study door shut.

"There's going to be trouble," he remarked.

Wharton knitted his brows.

"It's rotten to go for Larry like this!" he exclaimed. "I know he must have some jolly good reason for staying. It's cheek, and jolly mean, too!"

"The cheekfulness is terrific," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "But the esteemed duffers mean business."

"Silly asses!" growled Bob Cherry.

"Anyway, we're jolly well not going to take a hand against old Larry."

To which all the Co. assented. Their loyalty was being put to a severe test; but it stood the strain. Whatever reason might be keeping Mr. Lascelles at home, when he was needed at the front, they were prepared to believe that it was a good one, and they were ready to back up Larry as of old.

THE THIRD CHAPTER. Mucked Up!

NOW, then——"

"Order!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Shut up!" roared Bolsover major. "I'm speaking."

"Bow-wow!"

"Go it!"

Bolsover major jumped on a chair in the Rag. That celebrated apartment was crowded. Most of the Remove were there, and Temple, Dabney & Co., of the Fourth, had come in. They were quite in sympathy with the object of the meeting, though, as a rule, not much in agreement with the Remove.

Everybody seemed to be smitten with a desire to speak, but Bolsover's bull-voice dominated the meeting. The bully of the Remove was monarch of all he surveyed in the absence of Harry Wharton & Co.

"Gentlemen, there's no need for a lot of jaw!" shouted Bolsover. "You all know what we've met for——"

"Hear, hear!"

"There's a shirker in the school——"

"Shame!"

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ONE
PENNY.

"A man who stays at home while every fellow is wanted at the front, and licks juniors instead of licking Germans. Chap who teaches maths when he ought to be helping to teach the Kaiser manners."

"Bravo!"

"Quite eloquent, bedad!" remarked Lord Mauleverer. "Go it, Bolsover!"

"On the bawl!" grinned Skinner.

"Gentlemen, I put it to the meeting that this slacker ought to be made to go! If he went——"

"We shouldn't have to do our impots if he went at once," came Billy Bunter's voice from the crowd.

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"Oh, really, Bolsover——"

"We're meeting here from patriotic motives, not from any rotten wish to get out of doing impots!" roared Bolsover.

"Oh, are we?" murmured Skinner.

"And not because we're up against Lascelles on account of his being a nigger-driving rotter——"

"Ahem!"

"What are you mumbling, Skinner?"

"Applause, old chap. Get on!"

"All personal motives," went on Bolsover, "are set aside. It's merely a question of patriotism and duty."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Lascelles ought to go——"

"Hear, hear!"

"While he stays slacking at home it's a slur and a disgrace upon the good name of Greyfriars——"

"Well hit!"

"And if he won't go, we're going to make him go!"

"Bravo!"

"The force of public opinion will do it. Gentlemen, I put the resolution to this meeting: Resolved, that Lascelles has got to go——"

"Passed unanimously!"

"Nem con!"

"Hooray!"

"And I further suggest that this resolution be written down, signed by all our names, and handed personally

to Mr. Lascelles!"

"Great Scott!"

"Oh!"

"Catch me!" said Snop. "Why, we'd get the licking of our lives!"

"I say, you fellows, why not send it by post, without signing it——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I tell you it's going to be signed and presented to Lascelles by all of us, in a body!" said Bolsover major.

"Rot!"

"And I'll jolly well lick any fellow who objects!" roared Bolsover.

"I guess I'm off," murmured Fisher T. Fish, and he slid away for the door.

"Come back, Fishy!"

"I guess I've got an engagement."

"Will you come back, you funk?"

"Nope!"

Fishy's hand was on the door when Bolsover, jumping down from the chair, made a rush after him and caught him by the shoulder. The Yankee schoolboy was swung back into the room in Bolsover's powerful grip.

"You'll stay there!" said Bolsover grimly. "Nobody's going out of this room, without having a fight on his hands, till that resolution's signed all round."

"Look here——" began Temple of the Fourth, rather repenting him that he had attended the meeting. But the Remove bully interrupted the captain of the Fourth ruthlessly.

"You cheese it! You've got to put your name down with the rest!"

"I jolly well won't!" said Cecil Reginald Temple. "Not for Joseph! There's a limit, and that's the limit!"

"Do you want a thick ear, Temple?"



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"Oh, draw it mild, Bolsover!" said Ogilvy. "We didn't come here to be bullied by you, don't you know!"

"I guess I'm not standing it!" said Fisher T. Fish. "You can't bully a free American citizen. I guess I'll make potato-scrappings of you if you don't let me vamoose the ranch instanter!"

Bolsover major took the Yankee schoolboy by the collar and shook him. Fisher T. Fish felt his very teeth rattling in his head.

"Yaroo!" he roared. "Leggo! I guess I'll scalp you! Yow! If I get my mad up I guess there won't be a grease-spot left of you, you jay! Yurroooh! Leggo!"

"Are you going to sign?"

"Nope! Yow-ow-ow-ow! I mean yep!" gasped the unhappy Fish. "Yooop! Leggo! I guess I'll sign anything you like—any old thing! Oh, Jerusalem!"

"Now, you funky wasters—" began Bolsover.

"Rush him!" shouted Temple.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Here, I say, hands off! I'll—I'll— Oh, my hat!"

Bolsover major's high-handed proceedings came to a sudden stop. Temple & Co. of the Fourth rushed him over, and the burly Removite sprawled on the floor, with the Fourth-Formers sprawling over him.

"Bump him!" yelled Temple. "We'll show a Remove fag if he can bully us! Bump him baldheaded!"

"Oh, rather!" chuckled Dabney.

"Rescue!" shrieked Bolsover.

Bump! Bump! Bump!

"Oh, crumbs! Oh, ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Cave!" yelled Micky Desmond.

The door of the Rag was thrown open, and Wingate of the Sixth stepped in, with Courtney behind him. The two prefects had canes in their hands. Junior meetings in the Rag not infrequently brought prefects to the spot. And the din of this meeting could be heard all over Greyfriars.

"Stop that row!" shouted Wingate angrily. "Stop it at once! Now, what's all this about?"

Temple & Co. released Bolsover major, who staggered breathlessly to his feet. He was very dishevelled and very dusty.

"My hat, I'll smash 'em! I'll—"

"You'll keep order," said Wingate sharply. "Now, then, what's the trouble? Do you know it sounds like pandemonium here?"

"It's a meeting!" growled Bolsover major. "Those funky rotters objected to signing the resolution. I'm going to make 'em."

"Oh! And what's the resolution?" asked Wingate.

There was a pause. Then the gentle voice of Alonzo Todd, the Duffer of Greyfriars, was heard.

"My dear Bolsover, perhaps upon reflection you will realise that it is somewhat impertinent to send such a resolution to Mr. Lascelles. I am sure that my Uncle Benjamin would not approve of it. My dear Wingate— Yow-ow-ow!" concluded Alonzo suddenly as Cousin Peter stamped on his foot.

"Shut up, you silly ass!" growled Peter Todd.

"Yow! Oh, dear!"

The face of the captain of Greyfriars had become very grim.

"So you were going to send a resolution to Mr. Lascelles, Bolsover! Tell me what it was about—sharp!"

"You know jolly well," said Bolsover sullenly. "We think he ought to be at the front, and we're jolly well going to tell him so!"

"Oh!" said Wingate. "Well, I've never heard that it's the duty of a kid in the Lower Fourth to lecture a master. I suggest that you'd do better to mind your own business, Bolsover. To impress that hint on your mind I'll give you a licking. Hold out your hand."

"Look here—"

"Hold out your hand, sharp!"

The eyes of all the juniors were upon Bolsover. The bully of the Remove set his teeth, and put his hands behind him.

"You heard me, Bolsover?"

"I'm not going to be caned."

"Oh!" said Wingate.

He made a stride towards the burly Removite, and

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grasped his collar. Bolsover struggled, but burly as he was, he was an infant in the grasp of the big Sixth-Former. Wingate twisted him over the table, and laid on with the cane.

Swish! Swish! Swish! Whack! Whack! Whack!

The dust rose from Bolsover's trousers, and wild yells from Bolsover, as he wriggled under the castigation.

Wingate caned him till his arm was tired, the juniors looking on quite unsympathetically. The Remove bully's methods were a little too Hunnish to meet with their approval.

"Now," said Wingate, as he released Bolsover major, who scrambled off the table crimson and furious. "Let's have no more of this. Mind, if there's another cheeky word about Mr. Lascelles it means a licking, and a real good one. Just bear that in mind, all of you. And no more row here, please."

Wingate departed with Courtney. The meeting was over; the juniors crowded out of the Rag, leaving Bolsover major groaning. It was a long time since the bully of the Remove had received such a licking.

But when Wingate and Courtney had returned to the former's study, they looked at one another very queerly. Wingate threw his cane on the table, and whistled.

"Discipline must be looked after," he remarked.

Courtney nodded.

"They can't be allowed to cheek a master and rag him."

"Quite so!" agreed Courtney.

"But—" added Wingate.

"But—" grinned Courtney.

"It's jolly queer," said the captain of Greyfriars. "Bolsover is a cheeky rat, and wanted a licking badly; but—but there's something in the young rascals' point of view. Why doesn't Lascelles go, I wonder?"

"I wonder!" echoed his chum.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

A Visitor for Larry!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! Sawyer, by Jove!"

It was a couple of days after the meeting in the Rag.

Since that meeting Skinner & Co. had been lying somewhat low.

Their rancour against Mr. Lascelles was not appeased. But the meeting had been so lamentable a failure that they were discouraged. Bolsover major had taken the bit in his teeth, so to speak, and spoiled everything.

Even Skinner wasn't inclined to sign his name upon an insulting resolution, and present it personally to the young mathematics master. That was a little past the limit. Skinner had too much regard for his own skin.

It was agreed by the juniors that Bolsover major had mucked up everything. Temple & Co. of the Fourth refused to have anything more to do with the matter. They were fed up with Bolsover and his methods.

It was agreed, too, that Wharton ought to have taken the lead, and then matters would have gone well enough. The feeling was very strong in the Remove on that subject. Not only slackers like Skinner and Snoop, but much better fellows, were of opinion that pressure ought to be brought to bear upon Larry.

But as the enterprise had led to a "muck-up," the matter had dropped for the present, though it was certain to be revived.

Harry Wharton & Co. found themselves somewhat unpopular in consequence. They had set themselves against the current of public opinion in their Form, and that naturally was not liked.

The Famous Five were a little worried. They were backing up Larry, as they termed it, but they did not feel quite easy in their minds. They would have been immensely relieved if they could have seen their favourite master in khaki.

What reason could be holding him back? They knew he had plenty of pluck; they knew he was not a slacker. Was it that he did not care to give up his hard-won position at Greyfriars? Certainly it would have been a great sacrifice. Harry Wharton & Co. knew more than most of the fellows of Mr. Lascelles's affairs. They knew that he had had a successful and brilliant career at his university.

but that after he had left it he had had very hard times. Want of money and want of influence had prevented him from turning his gifts to account; in the over-crowded profession he had adopted there were many more candidates than posts.

Had he not been able to turn to account in the boxing ring his knowledge of the manly art, and his splendid physical fitness, his fate might have been very hard. But as Larry Lynx, the boxer, he had had great success, though he had thrown up a successful career in the Ring as soon as the offer of a position at Greyfriars came his way, through the influence of his old friend, Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove.

If he abandoned that position to do his duty to his King and country it would be abandoning what he had waited and hoped for for years, and barely secured at last. True, Dr. Locke would certainly have welcomed him back after the war, and reinstated him, only filling his place temporarily. That could not be doubted. In that he would be more fortunate than many a brave fellow, who had given up everything to fight for his country, only too certain that his "job" would be bagged when he came home.

But he might come back from the stricken field, incapacitated for his position—sorely wounded, perhaps crippled for life. That would be an end to his career as a public school master.

Was that why he hesitated?

It was a powerful reason certainly, but the juniors could not help feeling that it was not enough, if that was his reason. For in that he would be running only the same risk as thousands of others. After the war there would be many old soldiers who had lost their jobs—many, perhaps, who would find their places filled by Germans! The young master had no right to kick against risks that were taken every day by other men.

The chums of the Remove tried to dismiss the matter from their minds. Mr. Lascelles had always been a hero in their eyes, and they could not bear to think that he was influenced by small and selfish motives.

They were talking cricket in the Close that afternoon, when a broken-nosed gentleman, with a spotted muffler that could be seen across the Close, and a bowler-hat tilted rakishly on the side of his head, came in at the gates.

The Famous Five recognised him at once. They had seen that broken-nosed gentleman before.

"Sawyer, by gum!" said Nugent.

Mr. Sawyer nodded and grinned to the juniors as he came across the Close. He paused a moment, to fan his fat and perspiring face with a red handkerchief.

"'Arternoon!" said Mr. Sawyer.

"Good-afternoon, Mr. Sawyer!" said Wharton, with a smile.

Time had been when the chums of the Remove had been on the warpath with Mr. Sawyer. For that gentleman, with his remarkable nose, was an old "pug," and had been Mr. Lascelles's trainer when the mathematics master was a shining light of the Ring, under the name of Larry Lynx. And when Larry Lynx had thrown up the ring to take a position at Greyfriars, the old trainer had been quite desperate—to such an extent that he had tried to kidnap Mr. Lascelles, and by that drastic means to get him back to his old life. And at that time Harry Wharton & Co. had chipped in and extracted their favourite master from Mr. Sawyer's clutches.

Mr. Sawyer's grin showed that he was thinking of those past incidents as he greeted the Famous Five. He had been quite knocked out on that occasion, but the old pug did not bear malice.

"Larry at 'ome?" he asked.

"He's in his study," said Bob Cherry. "But——"

Mr. Sawyer chuckled.

"That's alright," he said. "I've come 'ere to see Larry on business."

And Mr. Sawyer marched on to the School House, where he was greeted with stares by all the fellows who saw him.

Bob Cherry whistled softly.

"Must be a duffer to come here to see Larry," he remarked. "Larry don't want it exactly shouted from the housetops that he used to be in the ring."

"There isn't much secret about it now, since Skinner nosed it all out," said Harry Wharton. "Sawyer's been here before, too. I wonder what he wants? He can't be after kidnapping Larry again."

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ONE
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"Ha, ha! I should say not."

"I say, you fellows——"

Billy Bunter rolled up to the Famous Five, looking very excited. His little, round eyes were gleaming behind his glasses.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"I say, have you seen him?" ejaculated Bunter. "Sawyer, you know; that old prize-fighter. He's just gone into Lascelles's study."

"Well?"

"Skinner says——"

"Blow Skinner!"

"He says that means that Lascelles is still boxing, you know," said Bunter, blinking at them. "He says it's disgraceful, you know, prize-fighters coming here to see a Greyfriars master. He says——"

"For mercy's sake, don't tell us all that Skinner says!" implored Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull, he says that somebody ought to go and tell the Head, so that the Head can catch Sawyer here."

"Rats!"

"And he says——"

But Billy Bunter had no time to relate all that Skinner had said. Bob Cherry sat him down in the quad, and flattened his cap over his spectacles, and the chums of the Remove walked away, and left him snorting.

Skinner met them near the door of the School House. Skinner was looking excited.

"You know Sawyer's come?" he began.

"Yes, you worm!" said Bob Cherry politely.

"You know it was understood that Lascelles had chucked boxing. Look here, if the Head could be told—— Yaroooooop!"

Skinner found himself bumped down upon the hard, unsympathetic ground. The Famous Five passed on, and Skinner scrambled up and shook his fist after them. But Harold Skinner was not to be beaten. He spotted Lord Mauleverer in the Close, and bore down on him.

"Mauly, old man, will you do me a favour?"

Lord Mauleverer yawned.

"How much?" he asked.

"Fathead, I'm not asking you to lend me any money!" growled Skinner.

His lordship looked relieved.

"Begad, ain't you? Good!"

"Will you buzz off to the Head's study and tell him Mr. Lascelles desires to see if, if he can come to his study?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"Too much fag."

Lord Mauleverer strolled away, and Skinner snapped his teeth. He wanted very much to get the Head to visit Mr. Lascelles's study while the old pug was there. It would mean trouble for Lascelles, he was sure. Although the Head had overlooked the previous career of his mathematics master, certainly he could not be pleased to learn that Mr. Lascelles was visited at the school by his old comrades of the ring. But Skinner, in his usual cautious way, did not wish to mix himself up in the matter. He preferred to find a catspaw.

"Bunter, old man."

Billy Bunter was dusting his "bags." He suspended that operation for a moment to blink at Skinner. Skinner's excessively friendly manner made him suspicious.

"I'm stony!" he grunted.

Skinner snorted. It was really very annoying that everybody should suppose that he wanted to borrow money when he happened to speak in a friendly way.

"Mr. Lascelles wants to see the Head."

"Does he?" said Bunter.

"Yes; and if you'll go to the Head——"

"What for?"

"Just to tell him that Mr. Lascelles would be obliged if he could step into his study for a few minutes."

Billy Bunter grinned.

"Try Alonzo!" he said.

"Eh? What do you mean?" demanded Skinner.

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"Alonzo's green enough, and I ain't!" explained Bunter.

Skinner scowled, but he took Bunter's advice. He looked for Alonzo Todd, and found him in the Close. Alonzo was seated on a bench under the elms, perusing the latest report on missionary effort in the Gooby-Booby Islands—a very interesting subject to the Duffer of Greyfriars.

"Will you take a message from Mr. Lascelles to the Head, Lonzy?" asked Skinner affably.

"Certainly, my dear Skinner!" said the unsuspecting Alonzo.

"Tell him that Mr. Lascelles respectfully requests him to step into his study, if he can spare a few minutes."

"With pleasure, Skinner!"

Alonzo tucked his book under his arm, and toddled away. Skinner chuckled. He had no doubt that the Head would accede to the supposed request of the mathematics master. He would find the weather-beaten, scarred, broken-nosed old pugilist in confabulation with Mr. Lascelles. And then, Skinner joyfully anticipated, there would be trouble for his old enemy.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Not a Success!

LICKED?"

Bob Cherry asked that question sympathetically as he spotted Alonzo Todd coming away from the Head's study.

Alonzo shook his head, with a look of mild surprise.

"Not at all, my dear Cherry! I have simply been to the Head with a message from Mr. Lascelles."

"A message from Larry!" exclaimed Bob.

"Yes. Skinner gave it to me."

"Skinner!" yelled Bob.

"Certainly!"

"Oh, you ass!" said Peter Todd. "Oh, you duffer!"

"My dear Peter," said Alonzo gently, "my Uncle Benjamin has always impressed upon me to be obliging and kind to my dear schoolfellows——"

"What was the message?" demanded Harry Wharton uneasily.

"Mr. Lascelles requested the Head to step into his study for a few minutes."

"Oh; crumbs!"

"And Sawyer's there!" ejaculated Johnny Bull.

The chums of the Remove looked dismayed. They, as well as Skinner, anticipated unpleasantness for the mathematics master if the Head found the scarred old pug in the study. They knew of the pledge that Mr. Lascelles had given Dr. Locke—that his old life was over and done with, that he had broken completely with his former associations.

"The cad!" muttered Nugent. "He's done this to cause Larry trouble. Sawyer was a silly ass to come here. What on earth will the Head think of him?"

"Shush! Here comes the Head!"

Dr. Locke came rustling down the passage, with a kind smile to the juniors as he passed them. He took his way to Lascelles's study.

"The fat's in the fire now!" said Wharton.

"The fatfulness in the fire is terrific!" said Hurree Singh. "But the bumpfulness of the caddish Skinner is the proper caper. The esteemed Head will be infuriated when he sees the estimable Sawyer."

"He will be ratty," said Nugent. "We'll skin Skinner!"

The juniors followed the Head down the passage at a safe distance. They were very uneasy for Mr. Lascelles. The want of tact on the part of his old trainer might have quite unpleasant consequences for him. They sighted Skinner in the passage, and several of his friends. They had come to see the result of the Head's visit to the mathematics master.

Bob Cherry shook his fist at Skinner, just as the Head stopped to tap at Mr. Lascelles's door and open it. The Head glanced round, and Bob Cherry's face became crimson. Dr. Locke elevated his eyebrows a little, as he saw Bob's unfortunate demonstration, and stepped into Mr. Lascelles's study.

Through the wide-open door, the juniors saw Mr.

Lascelles rise to his feet, and Mr. Sawyer detach himself from an armchair, and jump up, touching his straggling forelock to the doctor.

The Head looked a little curiously at the broken-nosed gentleman.

"Afternoon, sir!" said Mr. Sawyer cheerfully.

"Ahem! I have not the pleasure——"

The juniors held their breath.

"This is Mr. Sawyer, sir," said the mathematics master.

"Ah! How do you do, Mr. Sawyer?"

"Right as rain, barring a touch of the roomytiz," said Mr. Sawyer affably. "Which I'm proud and honoured to make your acquaintance, sir, and any little 'elp I can give in the affair on 'and, will be given willing and with a good 'eart."

"This is very kind of you, Mr. Sawyer."

"Don't mench, sir. I'd do anything for Larry, and for any friend of Larry's. 'Sides, ain't it a patriotic biz?" asked Mr. Sawyer. "Ain't we all patriots now? You put me down, sir, for anything I can do."

"I am glad you sent for me, Mr. Lascelles——"

Mr. Lascelles looked surprised.

"I was about to bring Mr. Sawyer to see you, sir," he replied. "But since you have kindly come to my study——"

"Did you not send Todd to request me to do so?" said the Head, frowning a little. "I have perhaps interrupted you."

"Not er tall, sir," said Mr. Sawyer, beaming—"not er tall. I was torkin' to Larry about the time when he downed the Bermondsey Chicken, sir, that's orl. We was 'aving a little tork about old times afore Larry intro-juiced me, sir."

"Quite so, quite so; and I regret I have interrupted you," said the Head. "This is very odd, for Todd certainly brought me a message which he stated came from you, Mr. Lascelles. You say you did not send him?"

"No, sir."

"Very well. I shall speak to Todd. You will, perhaps, bring Mr. Sawyer to my study when convenient to you to do so."

"Very well, sir."

Dr. Locke stepped out of the study, and closed the door. There was a frown of deep annoyance upon his face.

The juniors had been glued to the spot, as it were, in their anxiety for Larry, and their wonder as to how the interview would terminate. Its unexpected termination surprised and relieved them. Amazing as it was, Mr. Sawyer had evidently come to Greyfriars to see the Head as well as Mr. Lascelles, and in the "affair" he mentioned he was concerned with Dr. Locke.

Bob Cherry grinned cheerfully.

"Skinny's put his foot into it this time," he remarked.

"There's no trouble for Larry; but I fancy there is going to be trouble for Skinner."

"Or for Lonzy!" growled Peter Todd.

"My dear Peter——"

The Head paused in the passage and beckoned to Alonzo Todd. The Duffer of Greyfriars approached him without a tremor. The good Alonzo was quite unconscious of wrongdoing. Skinner made a desperate signal to him from behind the Head, but Alonzo was not very quick of wit, and he did not understand.

Skinner was very anxious that his name should not be mentioned, and if Alonzo had understood that he would have kept it dark. But the extraordinary faces Skinner was making conveyed no meaning to Alonzo. Supposing that the message had been given to him in good faith, he did not comprehend the uneasiness of the humorist of the Remove.

"Todd!" said Dr. Locke sternly. "You came with a message to me, purporting to come from Mr. Lascelles."

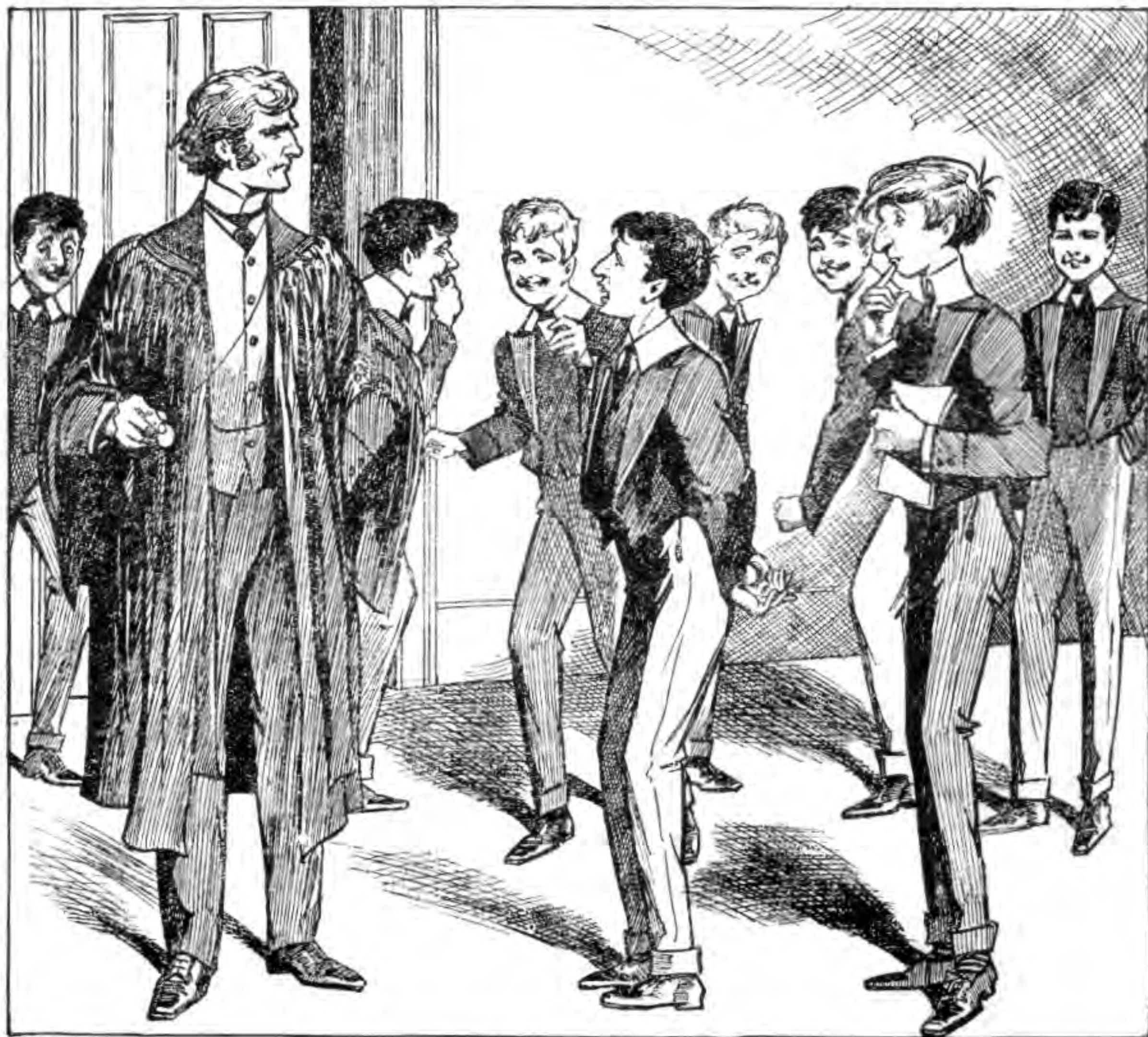
"Yes, sir."

"Mr. Lascelles did not send that message."

"Oh!"

"What do you mean, Todd, by manufacturing a message, to give to me the trouble of coming here?"

"I—I—I did not manufacture the message, I assure you, sir," said the dismayed Alonzo. "There appears to



The Head looked round sharply. "Why are you making faces at Todd, Skinner?" "I, sir?" stuttered Skinner. "I—I wasn't, sir. Not at all, sir. I—I was just smiling at him, sir!" (See Chapter 5.)

be some mistake. Mr. Lascelles certainly sent the message."

"What?"

"Skinner will tell you the same, sir."

Skinner made a perfectly horrible face at Alonzo, in his eagerness to impress upon the Duffer of Greyfriars the necessity of caution.

Unfortunately, it had quite an undesired effect upon Alonzo. He gazed past the Head at Skinner in great alarm.

"My dear Skinner, you are ill!" he exclaimed. "You must be going to have a fit, Skinner, your face is twisted so dreadfully."

The Head looked round sharply.

"Why are you making faces at Todd, Skinner?"

"I, sir?" stuttered Skinner. "I—I wasn't, sir! Not at all, sir. I—I was just smiling at him, sir."

Bob Cherry nearly exploded as Skinner made that explanation. There was a chuckle from down the passage. Dr. Locke looked round, frowning.

"Silence!" he exclaimed. "This is no laughing matter. Todd has been guilty of an act of great impertinence, and will be severely punished."

"Oh, dear!" mumbled Alonzo. "I assure you, sir——"

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"You came to me with a pretended message——"

"But—but Skinner said, sir—— Oh, dear, what is the matter with you Skinner? You quite alarm me!" gasped Alonzo.

The Head's face set grimly.

"Did Mr. Lascelles give you this message personally, Todd?"

"Oh, no, sir!"

"Then who gave it to you?"

"Skinner, sir."

"I thought as much," said the Head. "Skinner, you sent Todd to me with a pretended message, taking advantage of his simplicity——"

Skinner gritted his teeth.

"I didn't, sir! Todd is making a mistake."

"My dear Skinner," said Alonzo reproachfully, "surely you remember? I was seated under the elms, perusing the report of the missionary work in the Gooby-Booby Islands, when you told me——"

"Why did you send Todd with that message to me, Skinner?" asked the Head, his voice like the rumble of distant thunder.

"I—I didn't! It was a mistake," stammered Skinner.

"I—I might have said that—that—— I mean——"

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"I recall, Skinner, that some time ago you made a foolish and impertinent attempt to injure Mr. Lascelles in my estimation. Did you contrive to have me called to his study because Mr. Sawyer was there?"

Skinner bit his lips. The Head saw through him quite easily, and the junior felt that he was caught.

"Yes, sir, I did," he broke out. "I thought that that fellow Sawyer wasn't the proper kind of man to come to Greyfriars, and I thought you ought to know."

"Then why did you not come to me yourself, Skinner?"

The unfortunate Skinner was caught again, and this time he had no reply to make. It was very evident why he had put the risk of the proceeding upon Alonzo Todd's unsuspecting shoulders.

"You have been guilty of excessive impertinence, Skinner. Your opinion of Mr. Sawyer is insolent and quite uncalled for. As all the school will shortly be aware, Mr. Sawyer has come here to help in a work of great patriotic utility. Skinner, I fear that you are a boy of a very spiteful and unpleasant nature. It is my duty to correct these faults of character as far as possible. You will follow me to my study, Skinner."

"But, sir, I—I—"

"Not a word more, Skinner. Follow me!"

Skinner, with a face like a thundercloud, followed the Head as he rustled back to his study.

"I rather fancy somebody's going to get it in the neck," Bob Cherry remarked; and Hurree Singh observed that the "ratherfulness was terrific."

From the Head's study sounds of anguish were soon heard proceeding. When Skinner came out he was quite doubled up. He did not reply to any of the remarks of the juniors, save with deep groans. Evidently Skinner had been "through" it. He was learning that the way of the humorist is sometimes hard.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Bob Cherry's Idea!

BOB CHERRY burst into a sudden chuckle.

The chums of the Remove were unpacking a parcel in No. 1 Study. It had arrived by the carrier, and Harry Wharton & Co. had been keenly awaiting its arrival. For it contained a small model printing-press—a present from Nugent's father—upon which the school-boy editors intended to print the next issue of the "Greyfriars Herald." It was a neat little press, and the sight of it seemed to have brought an idea into Bob Cherry's mind, for he chuckled, and his chuckle developed into a yell, and the yell into a roar.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well?" said four voices at once.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "What larks!"

"Where does the lark come in, fathead? Nothing funny in my new printing-press, is there?" demanded Frank.

"There will be," said Bob. "I've got an idea—regular ripper—a scorcher—a gilt-edged stunt, as Fishy would say. We're going to catch Skinner."

"Oh, blow Skinner!"

"But it's a top-hole wheeze," said Bob. "Skinner's been asking for it. He won't give old Larry a rest, because old Larry won't go to the front, and he won't admit that Larry's got any good reasons. Skinner's awfully keen on other fellows going to the front—"

"Well, he's not old enough to go himself," said Wharton, with a stare. "They don't want fellows under fifteen in the trenches."

"But suppose they did?"

"The supposefulness is terrific! They don't," said Hurree Singh.

"But suppose they did!" shouted Bob. "Would Skinner go?"

"I doubt it," said Wharton, with a shrug of the shoulders. "The fellows who howl the loudest for others to go aren't the fellows who'd be most likely to go themselves if they could. But Skinner couldn't go—there's no opening for schoolboys in Kitchener's Army."

"But suppose there was?" persisted Bob.

"Fathead, there isn't! What are you getting at?"

"Suppose there was!" said Bob obstinately. "After

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all that Skinner has said about Larry he would be bound to volunteer, wouldn't he?"

"Catch him!" said Johnny Bull, with a snort.

"Well, he would have to eat all his giddy words if he didn't."

"But I tell you there's no demand for kids," said Wharton. "If there was a chance for boys we'd go, I suppose. But what's the good of talking rot?"

"That's where the giddy printing-press comes in," said Bob Cherry cheerfully. "You have heard of the power of the Press, of course. The chief business of the Press in war time is to show up the funks and the slackers. Well, that's what our press is going to do. We can let the 'Herald' stand over for a bit, and start by printing handbills."

"Handbills!" ejaculated Wharton.

"Yes. The great dodge for getting recruits is to advertise for them. That's our great method. In Germany, when they want a soldier, they take a man by the scruff of the neck and yank him away, whether he likes it or not. But the Germans are a nation of bullies and slaves, and that method suits them. It wouldn't suit us. We advertise—'Your King and Country Need You!'—and the young fellows roll up in their thousands and enlist. Well, then, why shouldn't we add another advert. to those already out?"

"What the thunder are you driving at?"

"Look at this!"

Bob extracted a stump of pencil from his pocket and sketched out a handbill on a sheet of impot paper. His chums watched him in wonder. Bob's sprawling hand soon covered the sheet to the following effect:

**"YOUR KING AND COUNTRY NEED YOU!
BOY BUGLERS WANTED! AGE OVER FOURTEEN!
BRITISH BOYS RALLY!"**

Apply at any Recruiting-Office. Recruits can rely upon being sent immediately into the firing-line!

IS YOUR CONSCIENCE CLEAR?

Ask yourself the following questions: Are you over fourteen? Are you ready to do your bit?

Have you expected others to go, and

Are you ready to go yourself?"

"You silly ass!" gasped Wharton.

"Oh, my hat!"

"That wouldn't be allowed!" ejaculated Nugent. "You mustn't parody recruiting-posters!"

"Not for general distribution," grinned Bob Cherry. "But we want only a single copy—for Skinner."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Poor old Skinner!" gasped Johnny Bull. "I believe he'd hide himself in the biggest trunk in the box-room at the bare idea."

"Then we will dragfully yank him out," said Hurree Singh. "I have heard the esteemed Skinner remark that what we need is conscription to make the slackers go. We will conscript Skinner."

"You see, we'll all volunteer, and call on Skinner to come with us," said Bob Cherry. "He can't refuse."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shush!" murmured Bob, as Billy Bunter's big spectacles gleamed into the study. "Hallo, hallo, hallo, Bunt! Are you going?"

Bunter blinked at him.

"I say, you fellows, we're thinking of sending a white feather to Lascelles. It's Skinner's idea, you know. If you want to have a hand in it—"

"Hold on!" said Bob. "Didn't you say you were anxious for a chance to get to the front, Bunter, if you were old enough?"

"Certainly!" said Bunter promptly. "I come of a fighting family. My ancestors, the Bunter de Bunters, have been distinguished as fighting-men for centuries. I wish I were a few years older, and I'd show some of the slackers an example."

"Bravo!" said Bob admiringly. "Then there's a chance for you. I suppose you've heard the latest news?"

"Nunno," said Bunter suspiciously.

"You haven't seen the handbills?"

"Eh? What handbills?"

"Boy-buglers wanted; to be sent into the firing-line at once," explained Bob. "Age over fourteen. You're over fourteen. You can depend on being under fire in Flanders at the end of the week."

"Great Scott!"

"I'll walk down to the recruiting-office with you if you like, Bunter— Hallo, hallo, hallo! Where are you going, Bunter?"

But Bunter was gone.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Chance for Skinner!

LOOK at this!" said Bolsover major.

The next day was a half-holiday at Greyfriars, and most of the fellows were thinking of cricket that afternoon. Bolsover major came across the Close with a handbill in his hand, and a curious expression on his face. Skinner & Co. were talking over the latest "dodge" for worrying Mr. Lascelles, but they looked round as Bolsover came up with his handbill. And the Famous Five—who had their eyes on Bolsover—bore down on them with smiling faces.

Bolsover major held up the handbill for all to see. He was looking very excited.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Where did you get that?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Just given to me at the gates," said Bolsover. "Young Trumper, of Courtfield, gave it to me. He asked me if I'd seen it, and I hadn't. Did he give you one, Cherry?"

"Eh? Oh, no!"

"I saw you talking to him in the road an hour ago," said Bolsover. "Didn't he tell you about it?"

Bob shook his head.

"Well, here it is," said Bolsover. "It's a chance for some of us, and it will give Lascelles one in the eye when he sees us going, when he's jolly well afraid to go himself. Just you read it."

The Removites were already reading the handbill. Capital letters sprawled over it in quite an effective manner. The Famous Five knew that handbill by heart—since they printed it the evening before on Nugent's model press, and Bob Cherry had handed it to Trumper, of Courtfield, so that it could reach the hands of Skinner & Co. from an unsuspecting source.

"Your King and country need you!" read out Ogilvy. "Boy-buglers—by Jove!"

"Age over fourteen!" said Bulstrode. "That hits the lot of us."

"British boys rally!" grinned Squiff. "Well, we're all British, excepting that neutral worm, Fishy."

"Recruits can rely on being sent into the firing-line at once," said Peter Todd. "That will suit you, Snecop!"

"Have you expected others to go, and are you ready to go yourself?" chuckled Mark Linley. "There you are, Skinner!"

"I'm going!" said Bolsover major. "If they'll take me I'll jump at it. I've said that Lascelles ought to go, and I mean it, and that means that I'm willing to go myself if they'll let me. Better than hanging about in school. My hat! Just think of being out there in Flanders, having a go at the filthy Huns!" And Bolsover major rubbed his big hands in great glee.

"Let's make up a party to enlist," said Bob Cherry. "Skinner, of course, you're coming?"

Skinner was looking very queer.

"I—I can't play a bugle," he said.

"Oh, you can pick that up in no time," said Wharton. "That's easy. Besides, they'll teach you that."

"It doesn't say that any previous knowledge of bugling is required," remarked Ogilvy. "I'm going, anyway. I've got a brother in the London Scottish now."

"Faith, and I'm on!" said Micky Desmond gleefully. "Sure it's the chance of a lifetime."

EVERY
MONDAY,

The "Magnet"
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ONE
PENNY.

"But—but we can't leave school," stammered Skinner. "The—the Head wouldn't let us go."

"Rot!" said Bolsover major. "The Head couldn't stop us if we wanted to go. Besides, we'll enlist before we ask him, and then he can't do anything."

"But—but our people—"

"Our people would be jolly proud of us if we got out there into the fighting-line," said Treluce. "I'm going."

"We'll make up a party to go," said Bolsover major. "We'll jolly well show them that Greyfriars ain't afraid of the Huns. We'll give the beasts one back for their filthy Zeppelins."

"But—but buglers don't fight," said Skinner. "You—you see—"

"They run the same risks as the soldiers, and they're needed," said Bolsover. "And they can be useful carrying in wounded men under fire, and that sort of thing. They wouldn't be advertised for if they weren't of use."

"I—I—"

"Look here, Skinner, you're coming with me."

"I've got an impot to do," muttered Skinner. "I—I—"

"Stop him!"

The juniors closed round Skinner as he was backing away. The unfortunate Skinner looked very white.

Bolsover major had been his heartiest supporter in the "chivvy" of Mr. Lascelles. But Bolsover major, though inclined to bullying, had plenty of pluck. He had said that he would go himself if the authorities would let him, and he meant it. And he did not mean to let Skinner escape. If he could volunteer, Skinner could. After all Skinner's talk on the subject of the duty of others, it was up to Skinner to go, and Bolsover was fiercely indignant at the bare idea of his backing out. It was not necessary for the Famous Five to "conscript" Skinner, as Hurree Singh had expressed it. Bolsover major took the trouble off their hands.

He glared at the wretched Skinner with the glare of a basilisk, and thrust the handbill under his nose.

"Look at that!" he roared.

"I—I'm looking."

"It says your King and country need you. That's what you wrote on a paper in Lascelles's study. Now it's come home to you."

"Go it, Skinner!"

"Fall in and follow me!" shouted Bob Cherry.

"Buck up, Skinner! You know what you've said about slackers. They ought to be dragged off by their necks if they won't go. You've said so yourself."

"Play up, Skinner!"

"Let me alone!" howled Skinner. "I—I'd go like—like anything, but my pater would object. Otherwise I'd go at once."

"We're going to tell our paters afterwards," said Bolsover major. "They won't object. How could they object? Patriotic paters don't object to their sons going to the front."

"No, but—but—but—"

"You're finking."

"I—I—"

"You're coming down to Courtfield with me this afternoon," said Bolsover major determinedly. "After all the things you've said about Lascelles—"

"Yes, but he's—he's a man!"

"Well, that's what you'll never be," snorted Bolsover. "But they want boys now, according to this handbill, and the Greyfriars Remove is going to play up. You're coming with me."

"I—I want to think first."

"You can think after you've put your name down."

"You silly ass!" gasped Skinner. "Once you've signed on you've got to go whether you like it or not."

"Well, haven't you been saying for weeks that every fellow who's needed ought to be made to go, whether he likes it or not?" demanded Bolsover major.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, I won't go!" yelled Skinner. "I don't want to, and I suppose I can do as I like."

"You said that slackers oughtn't to be allowed to

ANSWERS

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GREAT SUMMER DOUBLE NUMBER NEXT MONDAY. ORDER TO-DAY!

do as they like," grinned Bob Cherry. "You wanted conscription to deal with the slackers."

"I suggestfully propose that we conscript the esteemed funky Skinner."

"He's coming," said Bolsover major. "After all his gas, he's got to come. Why, he's been telling me all the things he'd do if he were old enough. Now it turns out that he's old enough. He's coming. Never mind the cricket this afternoon, you chaps. We're going to march down to Courtfield in a body and sign on. Then we'll come back and tell the Head."

"Hooray!"

"Here, stop him!"

Skinner made a sudden rush, and escaped from the circle of excited juniors. He sped across the Close at top speed.

"After him!" yelled Johnny Bull.

"Collar him!"

"Conscript, the esteemed funk!"

The juniors, whooping, broke into a wild rush after Skinner. Skinner was streaking for the house, with a wild idea of locking himself in his study, or hiding himself in a trunk. But the fleet-footed juniors quickly ran him down.

Bob Cherry's hand fell on his shoulder before he was half-way to the house.

"Got him!"

Skinner yelled.

"Let go! Yow! I won't come!"

"Yes, you will!" panted Bolsover, grasping his arm.

"Kim on!"

"Ow! Help!"

"Yank him along!"

"Hooray!"

Skinner, swept off his feet by the grasp of half a dozen pairs of hands, was rushed away to the gates and out into the road. Struggling furiously in the grasp of the excited Removites, Skinner was rushed away down the road.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER

Saved!

"LEGGO!"

"Come on!"

"I won't go!"

"Hold him!"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was a case of conscription, and Skinner couldn't help himself. The whole crowd of Removites were keen to "sign on" for war service, and the fellow who had been loudest in denouncing slackers was not to be allowed to escape. Bolsover major was simply bristling with indignation at the idea.

Skinner had led him on, by the nose as it were, in the attempted persecution of Mr. Lascelles. It was too much for Skinner to refuse to go himself now that he had a chance.

Skinner was carried bodily for the first hundred yards or so, and then he was dropped on his feet, with Bolsover major grasping one of his arms, and Bob Cherry grasping the other.

He was marched onward willy-nilly. The Removites were in a state of the keenest excitement. They were eager to sign on, and Skinner was not to be allowed to disgrace the Remove by hanging back. If that handbill had been a genuine production of the War Office, Greyfriars would have been deprived of very nearly the whole of its Lower Fourth Form at one fell swoop.

"I won't sign!" howled Skinner, as he was hustled forward. "You can't make me sign my name in the recruiting-office."

"Can't we?" snorted Bolsover. "You'll see. You refuse to sign your name and we'll give you such a ragging that you'll never smile again."

"Hear, hear!"

"I—I'll appeal to the Head."

"You rotten sneak! We'll give you another ragging if you do! We'll simply make your life a burden if you disgrace the Form by funking."

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"Where's Snoop?" asked Bob Cherry. "We've forgotten Snoop."

"We'll yank him along afterwards," said Bolsover major. "All the Removes going to volunteer. We've got to think of the honour of Greyfriars."

"I tell you I won't sign!"

"Bump him!"

"Yow-ow!" bellowed Skinner, as he descended forcibly into the dust. "Yooooop!"

"Will you sign on?"

"Groooh! Yooooop! Yes. Ow!"

"Mind, if you refuse at the office, we'll take you out and bump you till you haven't a bone left without a pain in it, and then we'll take you in again to sign!"

"Yow! You rotten bully! Ow!"

"It's only what you suggested yourself," said Johnny Bull. "Didn't you say that slackers ought to be taken to the recruiting-offices by force?"

"Yow-ow!"

"You wanted conscription, and now you've got it!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "You're going to enlist, Skinny, or we won't leave you with a whole bone in your body."

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"I guess it's up to you, Skinner," remarked Fisher T. Fish. "Don't be a funk! Why, if this was in Amurrica, every galoot would be rushing to enlist, some. I guess if this was my war I'd simply jump at it!"

"Let's make Fishy enlist, too," said Bob Cherry.

"Good egg!"

"Hyer, you jays, I'm a 'nootral'!"

"Neutrals are allowed to enlist," said Wharton promptly. "You can come, too, Fishy. You can learn to blow a bugle. There's no objection to neutrals, if they have any pluck—and possibly some of them have."

"Where are you going, Fishy?"

"I—I guess I haven't time to come to Courtfield with you fellows. I guess I've got another engagement."

"Collar him!"

"Hyer, you jays, you leggo! I guess I'm not going. I'm a 'nootral'!" yelled Fisher T. Fish, in alarm.

"Yank him along!" roared Bob Cherry. "Yank the Yankee!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fisher T. Fish made a jump to escape, and went speeding back along the road to Greyfriars as fast as his thin legs could carry him. Fisher T. Fish was a great warrior with his tongue, but his warlike attributes stopped short there. The bare idea of getting "signed on" and sent out to a battlefield made him turn cold all over. But the juniors did not pursue him, and Fisher T. Fish escaped. But Skinner was not so lucky. Skinner wasn't a "nootral," and Skinner had to enlist on his own principle of coercing the slackers.

The party of juniors tramped on towards Courtfield, the unhappy Skinner dragged along in their midst.

The Famous Five were chuckling gleefully. Their little scheme for "showing up" Skinner had worked like an oracle. But it was necessary to stop the enthusiastic recruits before they reached the office in Courtfield. The astonishment of the recruiting officials would have been great at an army of schoolboys marching in to enlist for the firing-line.

But the humorous juniors did not mean to let Skinner out of his misery until they were in Courtfield. He deserved his punishment, and he was going to get it.

"Will you let me go?" panted Skinner, as Courtfield town came in sight.

"No fear!"

"I won't sign—"

"Bump!"

"Yowp!"

"Now will you sign?" demanded Bolsover major.

"Oh, dear! Yes!" groaned Skinner. "Oh, crumbs!"

"Buck up!" said Bob Cherry consolingly. "We shall be out there with you, Skinner. If a shell blows your head off—"

"Groooh!"

"Or if you're suffocated by the poison gas—"

"Yurrrrr!"

"Or if they take you prisoner and starve you—"

"Help!"

"You'll know that we're all in it, you know. It's fair for one if it's fair for another, as you've said yourself."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Cave!" exclaimed Johnny Bull. "Larry, by Jove!"

"Oh, my hat!"

Mr. Lascelles was out that afternoon. But the juniors had not expected to meet him on the Courtfield road. But there he was—walking back to Greyfriars from the town—and he came round a bend in the road and came quite suddenly on the excited crowd of Removites.

The party halted, in some dismay, as Mr. Lascelles stopped, and his keen eyes were fixed upon them. But Skinner was glad to see the mathematics master. It was a chance of rescue. He yelled to the master at once.

"Mr. Lascelles, make them let me go!"

"Shut up, you cad!" hissed Bolsover major.

"Help! Help!"

Mr. Lascelles looked astonished.

"Release Skinner at once!" he commanded. "What does this extraordinary scene mean? Is this what you call a rag, you young rascals? Let Skinner go immediately!"

Skinner was released. He bolted towards Mr. Lascelles, and, in his terror, clung to the coat of the athletic young master. He felt himself safe there.

"Now what is this all about?" exclaimed Mr. Lascelles.

"We're going to enlist," said Bolsover major sturdily.

"And we're going to make that funk enlist too!"

"Oh, crumbs!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Now all the fat's in the fire!"

At that moment Harry Wharton & Co. began to wish that they had not printed that precious handbill. But it was a little too late.

Mr. Lascelles' eyes opened wide. The announcement that the heroes of the Remove were going to enlist astounded him, as well it might.

"Enlist!" he repeated blankly.

"Yes, sir! We're going to the front."

"Are you joking, Bolsover?"

"Look at that, sir!"

Mr. Lascelles took the handbill and looked at it in utter amazement. The humorous printers of that handbill waited for the storm to burst. They did not expect even Larry to see eye to eye with them in that matter.

And indeed Mr. Lascelles' brow was growing very stern over the handbill. The master, of course, knew at a glance that it could not be genuine.

"What is this nonsense?" he exclaimed.

"It ain't nonsense, sir!" exclaimed Tom Brown. "It's an advertisement for buglers for the Army."

"And we're all going, sir."

"Sure, it's the chance of a loifetoime, sir!"

"We're not slackers, sir. We want to go."

Mr. Lascelles' stern face broke into a smile.

"I commend your spirit, my boys. But is it possible that you believe that this absurd bill is genuine?"

"Genuine!" ejaculated Bolsover major. "Of course it is! Isn't it issued by the War Office?"

"Certainly not! Haven't you noticed that there is no name of a printer upon it?"

"Oh! I—I never noticed—"

"The thing is utterly absurd! This handbill has been printed for a practical joke by some unscrupulous person!"

The Famous Five turned very red.

"Oh, draw it mild!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"What did you say, Cherry?" exclaimed Mr. Lascelles, whose ears were very keen.

Bob Cherry crimsoned.

"Ahem! I—I mean, sir, it was only a joke—there wasn't anything unscrupulous about it. It was only a joke."

Mr. Lascelles fixed his eyes upon him.

"You probably know the author of the joke, then, Cherry?"

"Ahem!"

"You probably printed this yourself?"

"Ahem!"

"Why, you—you spoofer!" gasped Bolsover major.

Skinner drew a deep, deep breath of relief. He was safe now. That dreadful vision of a stricken battlefield in France, of gleaming bayonets and rolling clouds of poison gas, faded from his mind.

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ONE
PENNY.

Mr. Lascelles crushed the offending handbill in his hand.

"Cherry, you do not appear to be aware that this is a serious matter?"

"If you please, sir, we're all in it," said Harry Wharton meekly. "It was only a little joke on Skinner."

"On Skinner! How do you mean?"

"Skinner's been gassing about the duty of other chaps, sir, and about yanking off the slackers to the recruiting-offices by their necks, and so on. So—so we thought we'd give him a chance of going himself. He didn't jump at the chance, so—so we were helping him along. Of course, we shouldn't have let him go into the recruiting-office. We were going to explain—when we reached it."

"Faith, it's a beastly spoofer ye are!" growled Mick-Desmond. "Now we sha'n't be able to go at all—at all!"

"It is a very serious thing, Wharton, to print a notice in this style," said Mr. Lascelles severely. "As you do not appear to be aware of the seriousness of it, however, I hardly know what to say to you. You have transgressed the law in printing this handbill!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"I will now destroy it," said Mr. Lascelles. "I need not tell you that you must never do anything of the kind again. As for you, Skinner, you appear to have had a severe fright, and I must say you deserve it!"

Mr. Lascelles strode on without another word. The juniors looked at one another.

"Well, it was a good joke on Skinner," said Tom Brown. "But what about us?"

"Yes, what about us?" snorted Bolsover major.

"Well, that couldn't be helped," said Bob Cherry. "I never guessed you were all such fiery warriors. It was only meant for Skinner."

"I call it a rotten trick!" snarled Skinner.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Are you going to sign on, Skinner?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Let's rag those rotten spoofers," said Bolsover major.

"Rats! Let's rag that rotten funk!" said Bulstrode.

"I—I knew it was spoofer all along," stammered Skinner. "I—I mean I suspected it was. If it had been genuine, of course, I—I'd have been as keen as anybody to sign on for war service!"

There was a howl of indignation from the Removites. After Skinner's woeful exhibition of funk, this was a little too much. Bolsover major made a rush at him, and Skinner fled. He sped away down the road, and the whole troop ran in pursuit, and Skinner ran for his life.

The recruiting-office at Courtfield did not receive any volunteers from the Greyfriars Remove that afternoon. Those valuable recruits had to remain at Greyfriars, much to their disappointment. But Skinner wasn't disappointed. And for some days afterwards even Skinner had the grace to say nothing more on the subject of slackers.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Master and Boxer!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. had felt considerably curious on the subject of Mr. Sawyer's visit to Greyfriars. That that visit had not brought Larry into hot water was quite clear. Mr. Sawyer and Mr. Lascelles had been shut up with the Head in his study for some time, and Dr. Locke had been seen to shake hands with the old pug on his departure. And the following week Mr. Sawyer had called again, and had again seen the Head.

Most of the fellows wondered what it meant. The battered old pugilist was such a very extraordinary visitor for the Head of Greyfriars that they could not help wondering.

Billy Bunter, who knew everything—having his own private means of getting information—soon had some more news on that subject for the Remove. As Bob Cherry had remarked, Bunter would never be at a loss for information so long as keyholes were made to doors.

It came out—by means of Bunter—that Mr. Lascelles was visiting Mr. Sawyer pretty frequently, the old pug being established at an inn at a short distance from the school, with a couple of other men. It was plain that Mr. Lascelles was in training again, as in the old days when he had been Larry Lynx, an ornament of the Ring.

Sometimes he was seen in the gym with the gloves on, with Wingate or Courtney or other members of the Sixth. But his serious training was done with Mr. Sawyer & Co. at the Feathers Inn.

That this proceeding had the knowledge and sanction of the Head was amazing. But there it was.

The explanation came at last. It was Vernon-Smith who found it, in a copy of the local paper, and he brought it into the common-room one evening. The Bounder was looking very excited.

"Here you are!" he exclaimed. "Here's the giddy mystery revealed! Now we know what Lascelles is up to!"

"Has he enlisted?" jeered Skinner.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Still on that subject, Skinny?" asked Bob Cherry. "Have you tried your luck as a boy bugler?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Skinner subsided. His campaign against Larry had received a severe check. Even his own friends and backers received his remarks about Mr. Lascelles now with derisive grins. It might be Larry's duty to go to the front, but it certainly did not lie in Skinner's mouth to say so—after his pitiable exhibition when his own chance came.

"Yes; you cheese it, Skinner!" growled Bolsover major. "We know the kind of stuff you're made of. If Lascelles is a funk, he's not so big a funk as you are!"

"I tell you I knew it was spoof."

"And I tell you that's a lie!" said Bolsover. "Shut up!"

Skinner shut up.

"But what's the news about Larry?" asked Harry Wharton.

The Bounder held up the paper. There was a large advertisement in it, and the Removites read it easily:

"IN AID OF THE SERBIAN RED CROSS."

"A match has been arranged between Corporal Cutts, the 'Slogger,' and Larry Lynx, the Gentleman Boxer, to take place at the Luxford Stadium. Larry Lynx, whose disappearance from the ring was a great disappointment to all lovers of the 'Fancy,' has consented to appear, for this occasion only, to aid the fund for our Serbian Allies. The match will be for a purse of two hundred guineas, and Larry Lynx has intimated that, in case the victory should be his, the whole sum will be handed to the Serbian Red Cross."

There was a cheer in the junior common-room.

"Just like Larry!" said Bob Cherry. "Isn't he he a brick?"

"It's ripping!" said Harry Wharton.

"Larry's almost sure to pull it off. Even if he doesn't, the takings will swell the fund. There's sure to be a tremendous crowd to see the match."

"Might raise three or four hundred quid for the Serbians," said Johnny Bull, "even if Larry is licked. It's topping!"

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"The topfulness is terrific!" said Hurree Singh. "Even our Skiunnerful chum must admit that it is patriotic of the esteemed Larry."

"Easier to fight in the ring than in the trenches!" sneered Skinner. "Boxing-gloves ain't so dangerous as poison-gas!"

"We're jolly well all going," said Vernon-Smith. "It will be worth seeing, and it's booked for next Wednesday. That's a half-holiday. And it says further on that all the takings at the box-office are for the fund without deduction. The Luxford Sporting Club are paying the expenses."

"We'll make up a big party and swell the giddy fund," said Bob Cherry. "That's why the Head is backing up Larry. Jolly decent of him!"

The news was very exciting to the Removites. At least, it proved satisfactorily the patriotism of their favourite master, though it left unsettled the burning question why he did not "go."

Mr. Lascelles's popularity, which had suffered considerably of late, rose again at a bound. The juniors had never heard of the "Slogger" before, but from the description the paper gave of him, he was apparently a very tough antagonist. Certainly the boxer who faced him could not be wanting in pluck, even if he did not go to the front. Skinner pointed out the fact that the Slogger was in the Army, and did not confine his war-like propensities to the boxing-ring. Why didn't Larry do as the Slogger had done? But there was no answering that question.

The following Wednesday afternoon there was a Form match fixed between the Remove and the Shell, but the Form match was dropped by common consent. Hobson & Co. of the Shell, as soon as they heard the news, made up their minds to see the match at Luxford. Temple, Dabney & Co. of the Fourth had the same intention, and Coker of the Fifth was getting up a party in his Form. Wingate and a crowd of the Sixth were going. Indeed, so many Greyfriars fellows had determined to back up Larry on that occasion that the school was likely to be almost deserted that day.

The railway fare to Luxford was considerable, and fellows who were short of funds saved up very carefully for it, and there was a good deal of borrowing on all sides. Fortunately, the Famous Five were in funds. Billy Bunter, as usual, was stony, but he announced his

intention of coming along with his old pals.

His old pals could not decline the honour; Bunter did not give them any choice in the matter. However, he declared that he would reimburse them for the cost of his ticket when he received a certain postal-order he was expecting daily.

In the Remove only Skinner and Snoop and a few of their kind stood out. Skinner said he would pay his railway fare to anywhere to see Mr. Lascelles enlist, but until then he would keep his money in his pocket.

"There goes Larry!" said Bob Cherry, on Wednesday after dinner.

"Give him a cheerful salute!" suggested Hurree Singh.

The Head's car had come round, and Dr. Locke and the mathematics master and Mr. Quelch entered it. The Head and the Remove master were evidently going to see the boxing-match at Luxford.

**NEXT
MONDAY---**

"SCHOOLBOYS NEVER SHALL BE SLAVES!"

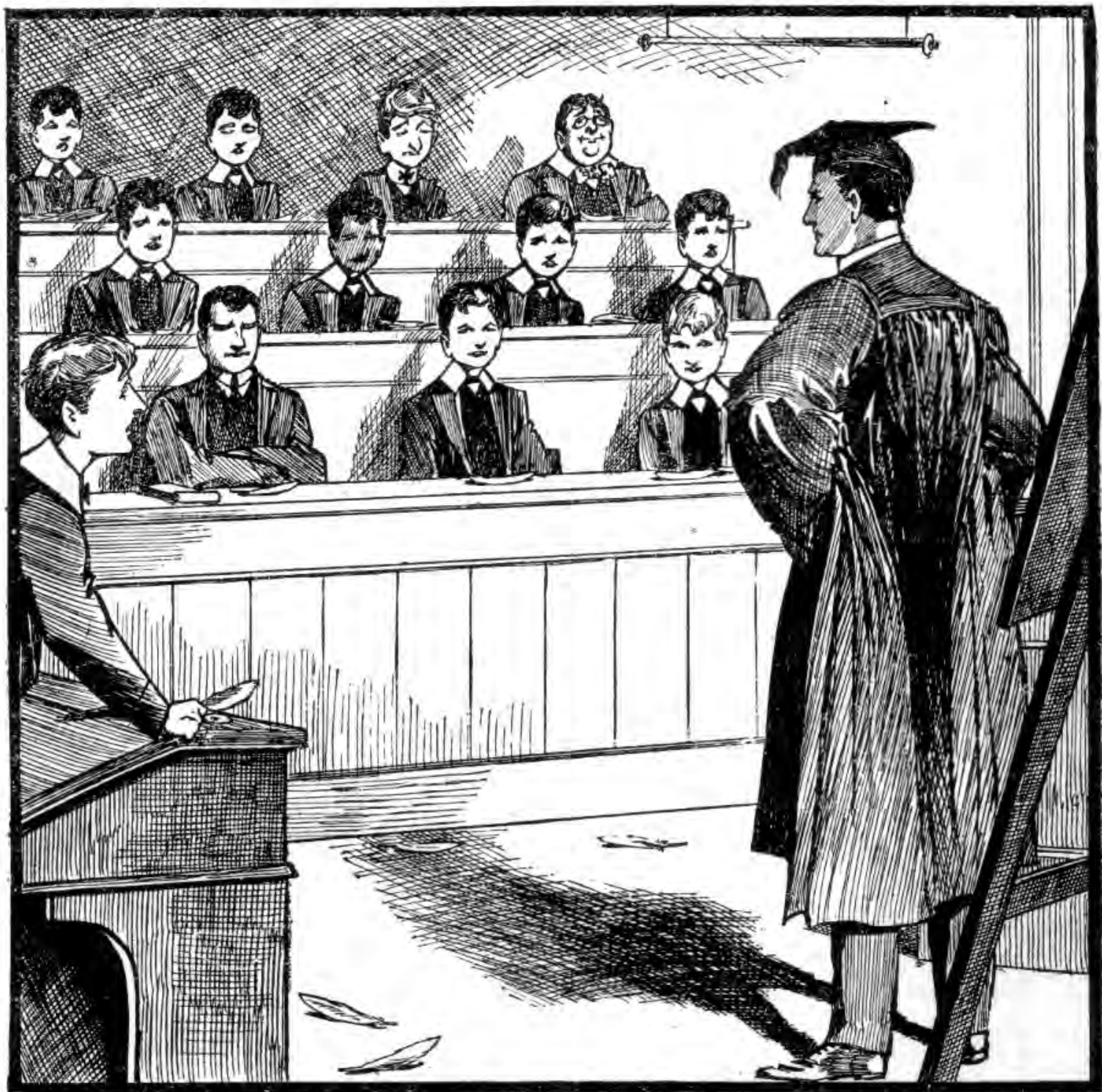
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Mr. Lascelles stood very still for a moment as his eyes fell upon a swarm of white feathers on the desks. "What does this mean?" he asked quietly. (See Chapter 12.)

The Head looked a little surprised as a rousing cheer burst from the crowd of Removites in the Close.

"Hooray!"

"Bravo, Larry!"

"Dear me!" said the Head. "What does that mean, Mr. Quelch? Who is the Larry about whom the juniors seem so enthusiastic?"

Mr. Quelch smiled, and the mathematics master laughed.

"Mr. Lascelles is sometimes alluded to by that name, I think," said the Remove master. "It is not meant disrespectfully."

"Bless my soul!" said the Head.

The car rolled away.

A crowd of Greyfriars fellows were already starting for the station. Billy Bunter joined the Famous Five and Squiff as they were starting.

"Walking to the station?" asked Bunter.

"Well, we're not going on our hands and knees," said Bob Cherry humorously.

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"I mean, can't you have a trap or something?" said Bunter peevishly. "You know I'm not a good walker."

"Go hon!"

"I say, you fellows, don't walk so fast!" growled Bunter, as the chums of the Remove started with long strides. "I'm not a long-legged camel like you, Bob Cherry! I say, you fellows, my postal-order hasn't come?"

"Which one?" asked Nugent. "The one you were expecting last term or the one you were expecting last year?"

"Oh, really, Nugent, I want one of you fellows to take a return ticket for me! I'll settle up to-morrow."

"Ask next door!" said Bob.

"You can whack it out among you if you like, then it won't come to so much," said Bunter generously. "I really don't mind who pays for it. Of course, it's only for a day or two. I shall settle up out of my postal-order. I say, I dare say you haven't heard that Lascelles's sister is going to be there?"

"Lascelles's sister!" said Wharton. "How do you know?"

"I happened to hear him mention it to Mr. Quelch. She's an invalid or a cripple or something, and she lives at Luxford. I say, you fellows, don't walk so beastly fast! After pressing me to come with you——"

"What!"

"Lord Mauleverer was urging me to go with him, but I said I'd stick to my old pals."

"You needn't have troubled," grinned Bob Cherry. "Go and hang on to Mauly, if he will be bothered with you!"

"Ahem! I'll come with you chaps," said Bunter. "I don't mind a little joke! He, he, he! I say, you fellows, is there time to stop a bit at the tuck-shop? I'm getting hungry. Is there time for me to stop?"

"Lots!"

"Good!" said Bunter, as he halted outside the village shop. "Here, I say, stop! Where are you going?"

"To the station."

"But you said there was time for me to stop!" howled Bunter.

"So there is," said Bob Cherry affably. "Stop as long as you like. We're going to catch the train."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter blinked daggers at the humorous Bob, and did not enter the tuckshop. He rolled on after the chums of the Remove to the station, and there his ticket was taken, and he occupied most of the run to Luxford by complaining of hunger, and the selfishness of fellows who didn't bring a single sandwich with them, though they knew he would be hungry. And when they arrived at Luxford, and entered the Stadium, Bunter's voice was heard once more on the subject of shilling seats, though he declined to take Squiff's advice to go and get a box for himself. In spite of their selfishness, Bunter was sticking to his old pals.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

The Fight!

THE Stadium was crowded.

Before the hour fixed for the boxing match the seats were getting full, a large crowd having awaited the hour of opening.

Harry Wharton & Co., however, had obtained pretty good seats, and over all the large building Greyfriars fellows were sprinkled.

"There's the Head," Bob Cherry remarked.

The juniors looked towards the box. Dr. Locke was there, with Mr. Quelch, but the mathematics master was not with them. Mr. Lascelles had become Larry Lynx once more, and was behind the scenes now, preparing for the glove contest. But there was a third person in the box. The juniors, who were quite near, could see her clearly; it was a woman. A girl with a somewhat pale and sweet face, and a fragile form—a pale and patient face which, contrasting as it did with the healthy countenance of Larry, was yet very like it in line and feature. They guessed at once that this was Mr. Lascelles' sister, of whom they had heard, but whom they had never seen before.

"There's a crutch behind her in the box," said Squiff, whose eyes were very keen. "It's right what Fatty said; she must be a cripple."

"I jolly well know it," said Bunter. "I heard Lascelles say so to Quelch. In fact, Quelch knew it—Lascelles just mentioned it, that's all—about her being lame, and too weak to make a journey as far as Greyfriars."

"Poor girl!" said Wharton. "What a contrast to old Larry! I suppose he must be very fond of her."

"She's older than he is," said Bunter; "a year older. Lascelles has always looked after her."

"You know all about it!" growled Bob Cherry.

"Yes, I happened to hear——"

"Oh, bow-wow!"

"Jolly near time," remarked Squiff. "By Jove, it's a full house. There'll be some handsome takings here to-day for the Serbian fund."

The audience were waiting eagerly. It amused the juniors to hear their comments upon Larry Lynx, and

their surmises as to the cause which had induced him to retire from the Ring in the midst of a successful career. The worthy patrons of the Stadium were far from being aware that the young boxer had become a master in a public school.

There was a cheer, especially from the Greyfriars section of the audience, when the boxers appeared. Larry Lynx, in the scanty garb of the ring, looked a picture of health and strength, glowing with vigour and fitness. Corporal Cutts, the Slogger, was a bigger man, and looked very fit, too, but the Greyfriars fellows favoured the chances of Larry Lynx.

They glanced at the Head several times when the boxing match began. It was probably the first time in his life that the reverend Head of Greyfriars had witnessed a glove fight. But the worthy cause for which the fight was being held caused the Head to support it, and he showed that he had the courage of his convictions by appearing in public to witness it.

The girl in the box was watching the ring with intent interest. It was evident that she took a great pride in her boxing brother.

"Seconds out of the ring!"

"Time!"

"Bravo, Larry!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Begad!" remarked Lord Mauleverer, who was sitting near the Famous Five. "Begad, dear boys, Larry is in fine form to-day! Bet you ten to one he pulls it off!"

"Bet you fifteen to one he does!" said the Bounder. "Fifteen to one in ginger-pops!"

The time was past when the Bounder booked bets in "quids." But Lord Mauleverer did not take his humorous bet in ginger-pops.

The first few rounds were watched eagerly. Larry Lynx was at the top of his form, but the corporal was a good man, and he gave him as good as he sent.

In the fifth round the corporal appeared to have the advantage, and Larry Lynx was severely punished, and the call of time came opportunely for him.

The Greyfriars fellows looked grave. They had pinned their faith to Larry Lynx, and they watched the fluctuations of the fight with intense keenness.

"Looks bad for Larry!" murmured Nugent.

"Oh, he'll pull round!" said Bob confidently. "Larry's going to bag that purse for the Serbian Red Cross."

"Look at the Head!" grinned Squiff. "Jolly keen on it, isn't he, for a reverend Johnny and a schoolmaster?"

The juniors chuckled. Dr. Locke, from his box, was not losing a single incident. His eyes never left the ring. It was a new experience for him, but it was plainly a very interesting one.

And it was, indeed, a fine sight to see the two splendid boxers standing up to one another, full of strength, courage, and determination, giving and receiving severe punishment without turning a hair. "Brutality" such as characterised the old prize-fights was eliminated. It was a contest of strength and skill and endurance, and well worth watching.

For two more rounds the corporal appeared to lead, and the anxiety of the backers of Larry Lynx grew keener. A shade could be seen on the Head's brow as the fortune of war seemed to turn against the Greyfriars champion. The girl beside him never took her eyes from the athletic form. Once, in a pause in the fight, Larry Lynx glanced up at the box where his sister sat, and he smiled—a smile that was very pleasant to see.

In the eighth round Larry Lynx gained ground again, in the ninth he was getting the upper hand, and in the tenth the corporal was going "all out" to hold his own. Bob Cherry rubbed his hands.

"What did I tell you?" he chuckled. "Larry is going to win hands down."

"Not hands down," said Wharton. "It will be a fight to a finish. The corporal is a good man."

"Time!"

"Go it, Larry!" chirruped the irrepressible Bob.

Fortune was evidently on the side of the schoolmaster boxer in the eleventh round. The Slogger looked

decidedly groggy when time was called. But he was full of pluck, and at the call of time he came up smiling.

"Good man, begad!" said Lord Mauleverer. "But he hasn't an earthly, deah boys. If I were a bettin' chap I'd offer twenty to one on Larry."

"I'm your man!" said a voice in the row behind the Greyfriars juniors.

Several of them looked round. Ponsonby and Gadsby of the Fourth Form at Highcliffe School were seated behind them. Harry Wharton & Co. glanced at their old foes, and then fixed their attention on the ring again. Ponsonby tapped Lord Mauleverer on the shoulder.

"I'll take you," he said.

Mauleverer stared coolly at the cad of Highcliffe.

"But I'm not a bettin' chap," he explained.

Ponsonby grinned contemptuously.

"You're afraid to back up your words," he sneered. "Well, I'll give you even money against Larry Lynx."

"You'd lose it."

"Do you think I don't know who he is?" jeered Ponsonby. "It's your precious Lascelles. Pretty occupation this for a public schoolmaster, I must say. I don't believe he's got any pluck."

"Why, you cad!" burst out Bob Cherry.

"Why don't he go into the Army?" said Ponsonby.

"That's not your business."

Ponsonby shrugged his shoulders.

"I know all about it," he grinned. "I've had it from Skinner. You Greyfriars fellows swank a lot, but you've got a master there who's afraid of the Huns. If we had him at Highcliffe we'd jolly well chivvy him into going!"

Harry Wharton & Co. sat silent, with burning ears. In the crowded Stadium they could not treat Ponsonby as he deserved. They had to sit silent and let him "rip." The cad of Highcliffe took full advantage of his safety.

"I say he's a funk," he continued, "and after the fight we're going to let him know our opinion of a fellow who stays at home to teach mathematics and box in the ring instead of fightin' the Germans—eh, Gaddy?"

"What-ho!" chuckled Gadsby.

Bob Cherry clenched his fists. He was longing to give Ponsonby "one" on his classic nose. But there and then it was out of the question, so Bob contained himself as best he could.

The two Highcliffians chuckled together. It dawned upon Harry Wharton & Co. that they had some scheme in their mind for "ragging" the Greyfriars master after the glove fight. That was probably what they had come there for. Anything "up against" Greyfriars was grist to Ponsonby's mill.

But it was impossible for the chums of Greyfriars to intervene. They could only make Ponsonby mental promises of things that should happen to him afterwards.

The twelfth round was fought out; but it was not fought to a finish. For the Slogger was at an end—he was down, laid on his back by a terrific drive, and the timekeeper was counting.

There was a breathless hush in the crowded stadium as the counting went on.

"One, two, three, four, five, six, seven——"

The corporal made a desperate effort. But he sank back again.

"Eight, nine—out!"

There was a roar in the crowded hall.

"Hooray!" yelled Bob Cherry. "Larry wins! Hooray!"

Larry Lynx had won the glove-fight, and won two hundred guineas for the Serbian Red Cross.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER:

The White Feather!

THERE was a storm of cheering.

There was no doubt about the popularity of Larry Lynx in that crowd. They cheered him and his victory to the echo.

In their delight at the victory of their favourite master the Famous Five had forgotten all about Ponsonby & Co. But the cads of Highcliffe were recalled suddenly to their minds.

Ponsonby was on his feet.

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ONE
PENNY.

His hand, with something in it, was in the air, and his arm swept forward. That "something" swept through the air and dropped at Larry Lynx's feet.

The young boxer gave a start of surprise.

Few in the excited audience had seen Ponsonby's action, but nearly everybody had seen the object fall at Larry Lynx's feet, and there was a buzz.

The young boxer picked it up.

It was a short piece of stick, and curled round it, and fastened to it, was a large white feather.

The white feather!

Almost every eye in the crowded hall could see what it was, and the buzz died away. Larry Lynx's handsome flushed face had become deadly pale.

It was not usual for the young master to be taken aback; but this time he seemed utterly so. He stood holding the white feather mechanically in his hand, his eyes fixed upon it, silent, motionless.

It was only for a moment.

Then he tossed it aside with a gesture of contempt.

There was a roar from a crowd of Larry Lynx's backers.

"Who did that?"

"Who threw it?"

Smack!

Bob Cherry's heavy hand came across Ponsonby's face with a smack like the crack of a pistol, and the dandy of Highcliffe fell to the floor with a yell.

"Here, cheese it!" gasped Gadsby.

Smack!

It was from Harry Wharton this time, and Gadsby received it, and he joined his leader on the floor.

There was a buzz of confused noise in the hall. Larry Lynx had retired from view. Wharton glanced up at the Head's box. Dr. Locke and Mr. Quelch were both looking grave and concerned, and Miss Lascelles was as pale as death. Her hands were holding to the box before her, as if she were almost overcome. A few minutes later she had left the box, however, and the juniors did not see her again.

They whirled out in the crowd, and in the street they gathered together, angry and furious.

"Let's look for Ponsonby," panted Bob Cherry, his eyes blazing. "We'll give him the hiding of his life!"

"Begad, it was too rotten!" said Lord Mauleverer. "Larry isn't a funk, whatever he is. It was a rippin' fight. He ought to go to the front, but——"

"Oh, rats! Where's that Highcliffe cad?"

"Seen Ponsonby?" exclaimed Wharton, catching Bolsover major by the arm in the crowd.

Bolsover major grinned.

"Yes—ripping idea, wasn't it, giving Lascelles the white feather? Perhaps he'll go now—hallo!—my hat! Yow!"

Bolsover went down on the pavement, bumped over by the indignant Co., and they pushed their way through the crowd in search of Ponsonby and Gadsby. That public affront put upon Larry had to be avenged, and the Famous Five of the Remove were prepared to avenge it.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here they are!" roared Bob Cherry.

"After them!"

Ponsonby and Gadsby had come out, and they were running for a taxicab. They were very anxious not to meet the Greyfriars juniors just then. But they had no choice about the matter.

"Collar the cads!"

With a rush the Famous Five were upon them.

Ponsonby and Gadsby were dragged from the cab.

"Now, then, you cads," shouted Bob Cherry, "now you're going through it!"

"Leggo!" yelled Gadsby. "Help!"

"Police!" shouted Ponsonby.

"What price the white feather?" exclaimed Harry Wharton, with bitter contempt. "You called Larry a funk! Where's your own pluck? You can pick which of us you like, and the rest will see fair play."

"Pile in, you funks!" said Squiff. "We haven't any white feathers to give you, but we'll give you a jolly good ragging if you don't put your hands up!"

"Help!"



"You yelling cads!" said Wharton. "What do you want help for? What do you mean by handing out white feathers, if you haven't the pluck to stand by it?"

"Are you going to put up your hands, Ponsonby?"

"No!" howled Ponsonby. "I—I don't want to have anything to do with you! Help!"

"Dr. Locke!" shouted Gadsby, catching sight of the Head of Greyfriars as he came with Mr. Quelch towards his waiting car.

The crowd was thickening round them, attracted by the disturbance. Dr. Locke glanced at them, and his brow became very stern.

"Wharton! Cherry! Release Ponsonby instantly! How dare you make a disturbance here! I am ashamed of you!"

"You saw what he did, sir!" panted Bob.

"What! I did not see—"

"He threw that white feather to Larry—to Mr. Lascelles!" shouted Wharton.

"Oh! It was a disgraceful thing to do, Ponsonby!" said Dr. Locke sternly.

Ponsonby shrugged his shoulders. He was safe in the presence of the Head, and he knew it. All his cool insolence had returned now.

"It's the only way of making slackers buck up, sir," he said, with a sneer. "I've got a brother out there facing the Germans. Why should my brother be in danger while Mr. Lascelles is skulking at home in safety?"

The Head reddened with anger.

"You are insolent, Ponsonby! If I were your Headmaster I should punish you severely! Boys, I forbid you to molest those Highcliffe lads in any way. Let them alone at once!"

The Co. reluctantly obeyed. Ponsonby and Gadsby, grinning derisively, jumped into their taxi and whirled away.

Dr. Locke's car bore him away with the Remove master. Both were looking deeply troubled. They had a strong friendship for the young mathematics master, and they felt keenly the insult that had been put upon him. Perhaps, in their heart of hearts, they wondered why Mr. Lascelles had laid himself open to that insult, when he could so easily have avoided it by doing what, after all, it was his duty to do. It was not only the boys of Greyfriars who had wondered why Mr. Lascelles did not "go."

Harry Wharton & Co. remained in the crowd, angry and disappointed. Their loyalty to Larry did not waver. They were convinced that he must have some powerful reason for eluding what seemed to be his plain duty, and though they did not know what it was they trusted him, and expected others to trust him. They would have given a great deal to get to close quarters with Ponsonby and Gadsby. But the cads of Highcliffe had consulted prudence, and they were gone.

"This'll be the talk of Greyfriars," said Bob Cherry savagely. "If this goes on Larry will have to get out—he won't be able to hold his head up. But we're sticking to him, at any rate."

"Here he is!" murmured Squiff.

Mr. Lascelles—the quietly-dressed mathematics master once more, and little resembling the Larry Lynx of the ring—was crossing the pavement to a cab. A girl was leaning heavily on his arm, and the juniors recognised the lame girl who had been in the Head's box. She carried a crutch, which tapped lightly on the pavement as she moved. The juniors took off their caps respectfully, and Mr. Lascelles gave them a nod.

He helped the lame girl into the cab, followed her in, and they drove away, and the chums of Greyfriars made their way to the station, angry and sore and disappointed. They knew that on their return Greyfriars would be buzzing with the story of the white feather, and that they had not even been able to punish Ponsonby for his insolence. They felt, too, that matters were coming to a head. Unless some explanation was forthcoming, Mr. Lascelles would not be able to look the school in the face. And the question was renewed in their minds: why didn't he go?

If they could have followed Mr. Lascelles as he went, and heard what was said in the taxicab, they would

perhaps have been enlightened. The young master sat beside his sister, his handsome face pale, his brows knitted, grimly silent. The girl glanced at him timidly several times without speaking, but at last she broke the silence.

"Lawrence!"

Mr. Lascelles's face softened as he looked at her.

"Yes, Amy."

"You are— What is the matter?"

"You saw what happened in the stadium, Amy?"

The girl sighed.

"Yes."

"They gave me the white feather," said the young master bitterly. "It was a low and caddish thing to do, but—but I suppose whoever did it thought that I deserved it."

"It was mean and cowardly," said the girl quickly. "Lawrence! Has there—has there been anything of that kind at Greyfriars?"

"Not so bad as that."

"But there has been something?"

Mr. Lascelles was silent.

"Tell me, Lawrence."

"Well, Amy, there has been nothing definite; but—but I feel it rather than see it. There is a general feeling that I ought to go. None of the masters, of course, has said a word; but I know what they cannot help thinking. The boys think the same. They know I am young and fit—that I could go if I liked. They know I am single, and have no parents to support; they cannot see any reason why I should not go."

"They do not know about me?"

Mr. Lascelles's face set grimly.

"I am not likely to tell them, Amy."

The girl looked distressed.

"But—but—"

"It is nobody's business but our own," said the young man. "I cannot go, and that settles it. But I may have to leave Greyfriars. I keep up a face of unconsciousness; but it is hard. They think me a coward."

"You a coward, Larry!"

Mr. Lascelles laughed a little.

"I am not a coward," he said; "I want to go. But I cannot go, and there is an end! But I do not choose to make my private affairs the talk of the school. I certainly shall not make excuses to anyone. Anyone who knows me should know that I have good reason for not going—for the rest I care nothing; at least, I care as little as possible."

There was a long silence as the cab rumbled on.

"Lawrence," said Amy at last, "I—I don't want to stand in your way, if you think you ought to go. Others are suffering, and I am not afraid of suffering, too. If only I were not a cripple"—the tears welled into her eyes—"if only I could take care of myself, and did not need your care—"

"But you do need it, Amy," said Mr. Lascelles, quietly; "and I shall not desert you, if all the cads in the country give me white feathers. The fools! They think I fear death! It is not that. I suppose I could face it as well as another. But when I think of you, left friendless and helpless in the world, with no one to care for you, my dear, then I confess I do fear death. If I had money enough to provide for you decently in case I should fall, then it would be different; but the salary of a mathematics master does not provide sums so large as that."

"And I have always been a heavy expense to you," said the girl, with a sigh.

"Nonsense, Amy! But I have been able to save very little. My dear girl, you have always come first with me, and you will always do so. I know what my duty is, and I shall do it."

"I know you have never looked upon it as a sacrifice," said Amy wistfully. "But now—now that you have a call to another duty, it is a heavy sacrifice. But for me you would be fighting for England now."

Larry Lynx nodded.

"And I am keeping you back!" said Amy.

"Circumstances are keeping me back, my dear. And—and perhaps I am a little of a coward, in a way," said the young master moodily, "for I cannot bear the

thought of leaving you among strangers, who would not care for you as I do."

"But—but your friends—what do they think?"

"I suppose they despise me in their hearts," said Mr. Lascelles. "But it cannot be helped, Amy. You at least know me better."

"But if you told them——"

The young man laughed a little bitterly.

"I cannot make excuses, my dear. Besides, any explanation sounds only like an excuse. Many men in my place would go; but I cannot think they would do right in going. It is a matter for a man to settle with his own conscience, and my conscience is clear. But let us talk no more about it."

But the cloud was deep upon the girl's pale, patient face; and Mr. Lascelles's brow, when he returned to Greyfriars, was very dark.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER. The Opinion of the Remove!

"HA, ha, ha!"

"The white feather! Ha, ha, ha!"
Skinner & Co. were chuckling over the news in the common-room. The story of what had happened at Luxford was a sheer delight to the amiable Skinner.

"I guess that must have hit him just where he lived," remarked Fisher T. Fish. "It was a regular gilt-edged wheeze of Ponsonby's."

"Like his cheek, the Highcliffe cad!" growled Ogilvy.

"As a matter of fact, it was my idea," said Skinner coolly. "I'd have done it myself, only the Head would have been down on me. I put Ponsonby up to it."

"Jolly good idea!" said Snoop.

"Blessed if I know how Lascelles can have the cheek to show his face here again, after that," said Bolsover major. "I want to see him when he comes in. I should think he would blush, at least."

"Let's wait for him at the door," said Stott; "we can't say anything, but we can let him know that we know."

"Good egg!"

When Mr. Lascelles came back, later, to Greyfriars quite an army of juniors watched him come across the Close with his active, springy stride. But if they expected him to blush when he saw their eyes upon him, they were disappointed. The mathematics master was his usual cool and self-possessed self.

The incident at the Luxford Stadium seemed to have had no effect upon him—outwardly at least—and the juniors wondered at his nerve. The man who would not face the Germans seemed ready to face any amount of half-hidden disdain and scorn.

"Here he comes!" murmured Bolsover major. "Shall we give him a groan?"

"Shush!" said Ogilvy. "We don't want to be licked. But he can see what we think."

"You leave it to me," chuckled Skinner. "I've got a wheeze."

"Go it, Skinner!"

Skinner stepped out as the young master came up the steps.

"Excuse me, sir," said Skinner meekly.

Mr. Lascelles paused.

"What is it, Skinner?"

"I've just heard, sir, of a very unpleasant incident that happened at Luxford, sir," said Skinner blandly. "We want to express our sympathy, sir. It's an awful thing to get the white feather, isn't it, sir?"

The juniors caught their breath at Skinner's colossal cheek. A faint tinge of red crept into Mr. Lascelles's face.

"We feel very sympathetic, sir," went on Skinner, with cool audacity. "I'm sure you don't mind our expressing our respectful sympathy, sir. It's the first time a white feather has been handed out at Greyfriars."

"My hat!" murmured Bolsover major. "He'll skin him!"

But Mr. Lascelles showed no sign of anger. His face was expressionless.

"Thank you, Skinner," he said; "I am much obliged to you."

Then he went on to his study.

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ONE
PENNY.

Skinner's face fell a little. He had intended to "draw" the mathematics master, but he had not succeeded. His poisoned shaft had glanced from the young master, apparently without inflicting a wound.

"What a nerve!" growled Skinner. "He seems not to have any sense of shame at all. Anybody else would have crumpled up."

"We're not done with him yet," said Bolsover major. "He's not going to skulk here and disgrace the school. Won't those Highcliffe cads be chuckling over it! We've got to make him get a move on."

"He takes us to-morrow morning," said Morgan. "What price giving him a ragging in class?"

"Good egg! I'm on!"

"There'll be a row," said the cautious Snoop.

"Leave it to me," said Skinner. "He thinks he's done with white feathers. But he hasn't—not by long chalks. We'll give him a regular dose of them. What price taking white feathers into the Form-room with us, and trotting them out when Quelch is gone, and Lascelles comes in?"

"Hear, hear!"

"Keep it dark. Those cads in No. 1 Study would chip in if they knew."

Harry Wharton & Co. were accordingly left out of the secret. But nearly all the Removites had white feathers concealed about their persons when they went in for morning lessons on the morrow.

So long as Mr. Quelch was in charge of the class the Remove was quiet and orderly—it was "business" as usual. But when the Remove-master gave place to Mr. Lascelles for third lesson, Skinner made a sign to his comrades.

Bolsover major had suggested presenting the white feathers to Mr. Lascelles, but nobody was inclined for that exceedingly bold step. Skinner had a due regard for his valuable skin. But as Mr. Lascelles prepared to take the class, the feathers were drawn out into view, and laid on the desks.

They lay there, in full view of the mathematics master. Harry Wharton & Co. looked on with wrathful eyes. But there was nothing for them to do. They could only wait and see how Mr. Lascelles would take it.

Mr. Lascelles stood very still for a moment as his eyes fell upon a swarm of white feathers on the desks. There was a deadly stillness in the Form-room, and Skinner quaked a little.

"What does this mean?" asked Mr. Lascelles quietly.

There was no reply.

"Bolsover major, I observe that you have a feather on your desk."

"Yes, sir."

"Have you your Form-master's permission to bring such things into the Form-room?"

"I haven't asked him, sir."

"Collect those feathers, Bolsover major, and place them in the waste-paper basket," said Mr. Lascelles calmly.

Bolsover gritted his teeth. Contempt is said to pierce even the shell of the tortoise; yet it seemed impossible for the raggers to "get at" Mr. Lascelles. He seemed to be encased in an armour proof against their attacks.

"You hear me, Bolsover?"

There was an ominous ring in Mr. Lascelles's voice, and Bolsover unwillingly rose to his feet. The white feathers were slowly collected. But, instead of putting them in the waste-paper basket, Bolsover major brought them to the master, and there was a subdued chuckle among the Removites.

"Here they are, sir."

"Good old Bolsover!" murmured Russell.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" said Mr. Lascelles. "Put them in the waste-paper basket, Bolsover!"

"Oh! Very well, sir."

Bolsover major pulled the waste-paper basket out into full view, and stuck the feathers in it in such a way that they showed round the rim of the basket like an Indian head-dress. Then he went back to his place, greeted by an irrepressible chuckle from the juniors. Never

had the Removites admired Bolsover's astuteness so much. The white feathers were more in evidence now than when they had been on the desks.

Still Mr. Lascelles was not to be drawn. He picked up the waste-paper basket and dropped it into a cupboard and closed the door on it. Then he turned back to the class, calmly and quietly as ever.

"We will now proceed," he said.

Skinner & Co. bit their lips with wrath and disappointment. The mathematics-master was not even handing out punishment or reporting them to their Form-master. They would have been willing to have been reported to Mr. Quelch, for the pleasure of forcing Mr. Lascelles to tell the incident to the Remove-master. But Mr. Lascelles was letting the whole matter drop without a word.

The lesson was proceeded with, the Remove being in a very restless mood. They wanted to penetrate the master's thick hide, as Bolsover elegantly expressed it. His quietness bore out their opinion of him—that he was a funk. It looked as if he was afraid of the Remove, as well as of the Huns. When the lesson was over the Lower Fourth were dismissed, and Mr. Lascelles departed.

Bolsover major came back into the Form-room and collected the white feathers from the waste-paper basket. He came out with his big hands full of them, and Skinner & Co. met him eagerly.

"What's the little game now?" asked Skinner.

Bolsover snorted angrily.

"We're going to get through his hide," he said. "It suits him to pretend not to understand. I'm taking this little lot to his study."

"Hold on! He's there!" exclaimed Fisher T. Fish.

"I know he's there," sneered Bolsover. "That's why I'm going to take them. Get me a newspaper to wrap them in, and I'll tell him it's a present from the Remove."

"Great Scott!"

"You wouldn't have the nerve?" gasped Skinner.

"Wouldn't I? You'll see!"

Snoop fetched a newspaper, and the feathers were wrapped in it. Bob Cherry came along as Bolsover, with twenty pairs of eyes upon him, started for Mr. Lascelles's study. Bob caught him by the shoulder.

"No, you don't!" he exclaimed.

"Let go! Take him away, you chaps!"

"Hands off, Cherry!"

"Look here——!"

Bob Cherry was hustled aside by a crowd of angry juniors. If Bolsover major had nerve enough to carry out his scheme, certainly Mr. Lascelles's few friends in the Form would not be allowed to interfere.

Bolsover major marched on and knocked at the master's door. The Removites watched him breathlessly from the passage.

"Come in!" said the deep, clear voice of the mathematics-master.

Bolsover major opened the door wide and stepped into the study. Mr. Lascelles rose to his feet.

"A present for you from the Remove, sir," said Bolsover steadily, as he laid the parcel on the table.

"I do not receive presents from the boys, Bolsover," said Mr. Lascelles. "You may take that parcel away."

"But it's a specially suitable thing for you, sir."

"You may take it away."

"I'll undo it, sir, if you like."

Without waiting for permission Bolsover jerked open the newspaper, and the white feathers fluttered over the study table. Exactly how the persecuted master would take it Bolsover could not guess; but if he had been able to guess probably he would not have made Mr. Lascelles that little present from the Form. For the young master picked up a cane with one hand, and grasped Bolsover major by the other, and then there was a swishing that could be heard the whole length of the passage, accompanied by wild yells from Bolsover major. Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish!

"Yaroo-oo-oo-oo-oo-oooh!"

Bolsover major wriggled in the grip of the stalwart master as the cane lashed over his shoulders.

"Yow-ow-ow! Stoppit! Yaroooh! Go and lick the

Germans!" he yelled. "Yah! Oh! Lemme alone and go for the Germans!"

Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish!

Then Bolsover major was bundled headlong out of the study.

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

"Ow! Ow! Ow!"

"It was ripping," said Skinner. "That's fairly got home to him this time, Bolsover, old man. It was worth a licking."

To which Bolsover's only reply was:

"Yow-ow-ow-ow-ow!"

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Great News!

"THE coast's clear!" whispered Skinner.

Billy Bunter hesitated.

It was the day following Bolsover major's unlucky visit to Mr. Lascelles's study, and for the present the bully of the Remove was "off rags"—very much off. He was still feeling the effects of his licking. But the cheerful Skinner was still on the war-path. Skinner was implacable, and he had high hopes of making Mr. Lascelles's position at Greyfriars quite untenable.

He had only to peg away, the amiable Skinner reflected, and matters would be bound to come to a head. The more lickings that were administered, the better for Skinner's schemes, unless he got them himself. For it would soon—by means of Skinner—become the talk of the school that Lascelles was licking the juniors because they thought he ought to go and fight the Germans.

When that was the current opinion at Greyfriars, Skinner felt that the mathematics-master would be fairly "done." So, as far as the lickings were concerned, Skinner considered that the more there were the merrier it would be—excepting that he did not want any himself. He was absurdly particular on that point. He would, indeed, rather have risked the success of his schemes than have taken any of the lickings involved in it.

"I—I say," mumbled Bunter. "Suppose he comes back?"

"The coast's clear," repeated Skinner, looking along the passage. "He won't come back in a hurry."

"But—but——"

"Just you nip into his study and pin this white feather to his armchair, that's all you've got to do. Then you drop into the tuckshop, and I'll stand you half a dozen jam tarts," said Skinner temptingly.

"Tuppenny ones?" asked Bunter, showing signs of yielding.

"Penny ones!" growled Skinner.

"Then it's all off," said the Owl of the Remove firmly.

"Look here, Bunter——"

"Why can't you do it yourself?" demanded Bunter.

"You want me to take the risk."

Skinner coughed.

"Not exactly. You see, he'll suspect me, and he's bound to ask me if I did it, and I must be able to say that I didn't. Of course, I couldn't tell a lie."

"Why, you've told lots."

"Ahem! I—I mean I—I really couldn't tell a lie, Bunter. I—I feel like George Washington on that subject; you know he couldn't tell a lie."

"He was about the only Yankee who couldn't, then," snorted Bunter. "Look here, Skinner, if you make it tuppenny ones——"

"All right. I'll get Bolsover to—ahem!—I mean all serene, Bunter. It's a go."

"Gimme the feather, and mind you whistle if anybody comes along."

"Right-ho!"

Billy Bunter tucked the white feather into his pocket, and rolled down the passage towards Mr. Lascelles's study. Skinner kept an anxious look-out. He knew that Mr. Lascelles was not in his study, but he did not know when the mathematics master would return, and Bunter had wasted a good deal of time already before the schemer of the Remove could persuade him.

The fat figure of the Owl of the Remove had hardly disappeared into the study when the stalwart form of Mr. Lascelles appeared at the end of the passage. A still

more awe-inspiring form was with him—that of the Head. They were walking slowly together towards the mathematics master's study.

Skinner set his teeth. He dared not whistle under their very eyes; he could only scuttle away, and leave Bunter to take his chance—which he accordingly did. His own skin came first, in Skinner's estimation.

Billy Bunter had pinned the white feather to the back of the master's armchair, when he heard the footsteps in the passage and the voice of the Head.

"I will step into your study, Lascelles. I have something of some importance to say."

"Very well, sir."

Billy Bunter quaked.

He was fairly caught. There was no escape from the study excepting by dashing out under the noses of the two masters, which was not to be thought of for a moment. Without even stopping to reflect, Billy Bunter dived under the study table, with a wild hope that the cloth would hide him till the masters were gone.

A few seconds later the Head and Mr. Lascelles entered the study, and the door was closed. Under the table Billy Bunter palpitated.

He hardly dared to breathe, so great was his terror. What would happen if the Head found him there he hardly dared to think.

Dr. Locke sat down, and his foot, under the edge of the table, was within an inch of Bunter. Billy Bunter blinked at it as if mesmerised. Silently he anathematised Skinner and his schemes and his dozen tuppenny jam-tarts. It would have been worth all the jam-tarts in Mrs. Mimble's tuck-shop to be safely out of this!

"My dear Lascelles," said the Head, in a very kindly voice, "I am going to speak to you very frankly, and I trust you will excuse me if I touch upon private matters."

Bunter blinked, and pricked up his ears. He was almost reconciled to his own position by the prospect of overhearing private affairs that did not concern him in the least. The Owl of the Remove was not troubled by any scruples on the subject of eavesdropping.

"Certainly, sir!" said Mr. Lascelles quietly.

Perhaps his handsome face clouded a little. Surely the

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ONE
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Head did not intend to mention the matter which was, in a subdued way, the talk of Greyfriars.

"I have received a letter to-day," said Dr. Locke. "It came from Miss Lascelles."

"From my sister!" exclaimed the mathematics master, in surprise.

"Yes. Miss Lascelles felt it her duty to tell me what I might have guessed—that it was for her sake that you have remained at home, when your natural inclinations would have led you to the Colours."

Mr. Lascelles was silent.

"My dear Lascelles," said Dr. Locke, "I beg you to be frank with me in the matter. I am not a busybody, and I do not take pleasure in intervening in the affairs of others. But, as you know, I have a high opinion of you, and I think it was due to me that you should have told me this. True, I might have guessed for myself, but I am glad—very glad, indeed—that Miss Lascelles has opened my eyes. It is the case, is it not, that it is your natural concern for your sister that has kept you at home?"

"What else could keep me, when other men are out there fighting my battles for me?" said the mathematics master bitterly. "But, while you seem to have believed that I was closing my eyes to my duty, it was a more sacred duty that kept me at home. But I understand you. I am regarded here as a slacker, if not as a coward, and you do not wish me to remain—"

Dr. Locke held up his hand.

"Nothing of the kind, Lascelles. Pray do not be hasty. I should not have mentioned this matter, only, knowing your character as I do, I was convinced that you were not deaf to the call of King and country. I understand your difficulties clearly. I applaud your resolution to face misunderstanding rather than abandon that good and unfortunate young lady to an uncaring world. I am speaking solely for one purpose—to relieve you of your difficulty. If you had confided the matter to me in the first place, I could have done so then, but I understand that you consulted your pride and independence. Let that pass. Lascelles, I hope I have given you reason to regard me as a friend?"

"The best friend a man could have, sir," said the mathematics master, in a moved voice.

"Then I ask you to treat me as a friend. If you care to leave Greyfriars for the Army, your sister shall find a father in me. Mrs. Locke will welcome her to Greyfriars; she shall stay with us, as well cared for as if she were our own child. If you should fall—which Heaven forbid—she shall be provided for; you know that I am not a poor man. Meanwhile, it will be a pleasure to my wife and myself to care for her in every way. You need not have any fear for your and her independence, for the Governing Board will undoubtedly pay half your salary while you are in the Army."

"Dr. Locke!"

"I say this, Lascelles, because I believe you wish to go. But if I am mistaken we will let the matter drop and never mention it again. I hope I am not the man to meddle in the affairs of another who is old enough to know his own business."

"But you are not mistaken," said the mathematics master huskily. "If you knew what I have suffered during the past few months you would know that my one thought has been to join the brave fellows who are fighting for England out there. It has been my thought by day and my dream by night. It was my fear for my sister that has held me back. You know, she is a cripple, and she is used to tender care, which she would receive from no one but me."

"She will receive it here," said the Head gently.

"I know it—I know it; but I could not have asked you."

"If I had known your difficulty, Lascelles, I should have spoken at once. Surely you must have known; but no matter. Is it settled?"

Mr. Lascelles smiled.

"God bless you, sir! I shall apply at once for a commission, and if I cannot obtain one at once, I shall enlist as a private."

"And Mrs. Locke and myself will come with you to bring Miss Lascelles here," said the Head.

(Concluded on page 27, column 1.)

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who makes
the
whole world
laugh.



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THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

Dick Damer, an orphan, is invited by his uncle out to Australia. On arriving he hears of his uncle's death, from a man named Wesley Crane.

Wesley Crane, for some sinister purpose, has Dick drugged and smuggled aboard the Rainbow, a small schooner commanded by Captain Cripps.

The Rainbow sights a derelict. Captain Cripps and Dick, going aboard the vessel, find a youth, who is overpowered by gas fumes, has been left aboard her.

Dick and the youth, Barry Freeland, reach the Rainbow safely; but Captain Cripps, staying longer on the derelict, is apparently drowned, owing to a storm rising, which causes the vessel to founder.

Barry Freeland takes charge of the Rainbow, and, finding some papers relating to pearls on a mysterious island, decides to go in search of the treasure, which rightfully belongs to Dick.

On reaching the island, however, they find the pearls have been stolen.

While on the way to the Solomon Islands in search of Burke, a notorious scoundrel, who has visited the mysterious island and stolen the pearls, the comrades on the Rainbow pick up three of his colleagues, and one of them, Barstow, helps the comrades to recover the pearls, which have been hidden on the island of San Cristobal.

Dick hides the pearls in a sandy cove on the seashore; but then, together with Barstow and a Chinese member of the crew named Chang, falls into the hands of Burke and his gang.

Dick is rescued by Barry, and on taking the pearls from their hiding-place, the two friends encounter Burke, whom they overpower and take on board the Rainbow.

Suddenly the Rainbow is shaken from stem to stern by some unaccountable power, and the Chinese crew, putting the strange tremblings down to Feng-Shin (witchcraft), show signs of mutiny.

(Now go on with the story.)

Terms.

"Get back, you swine!" roared Barry to the Chinamen, and dashing through and past them, gained the stern.

Dick raced after. Ordinarily speaking, the Chinese crew of the Rainbow were the easiest in the world to handle. But now they were blind with panic, and, just as a cornered rat will fight like a fury, so they turned on their skipper, and, flinging themselves upon him, tried to pull him down.

Barry had no weapons except his fists, but of these he made such splendid use that at the very first rush he felled two of the men. Dick, who had managed to snatch up a belaying-

pin, caught a third man such a rap over the head as dropped him to the deck, and now there were only three to two.

"Get back!" shouted Barry again; and they hesitated an instant before renewing the attack.

"Come on, Dick," he cried, and dashed at them.

The remaining Chinks broke and ran. Feng Shin was bad, but this towering white boy with his fierce face and iron fists was worse. They dashed back towards the fo'c's'le hatch and scurried below.

Barry was for following them, but Dick checked him.

"Easy does it, Barry!" he cried.

"The cowardly swabs!" growled Barry, who was thoroughly roused. "They want the very stuffing hammered out of them!"

"No; much better go slow. They're not vicious, only scared. You let me talk to them."

Barry stared.

"Talk!" he repeated. "Talk all you've a mind to; but look out they don't knife you. I'd as soon trust a trapped cat as a scared Chink!"

But Dick stuck to his idea, and when the three damaged men had revived and been ordered forward, Dick went below into the fo'c's'le.

"You think that shaking Feng-Shin," he said. "I tell you it is nothing of the sort. Your joss angry because we no save Chang. Now you burn joss sticks, and to-morrow we go fetch Chang. Then sail away back to Sydney. All you fellows have one piece pearl. You rich for life. See?"

It was the first speech Dick had ever made, and Barry, who was listening, felt his lips twitch. But, for all that, it worked. Whether the men really believed what Dick said it was impossible to say. They were still very nervous. But, at any rate, they had got over their first blind panic, and at once began to burn strong-smelling punk-sticks before their big brass joss. Others pasted slips of red paper inscribed with mottoes on the foremast, and quiet reigned once more aboard the schooner.

All the same, the rest of the night was an anxious time for Dick and Barry, and both remained on deck ready for any emergency. They knew that if the queer antics of the schooner began again a second panic might prove worse than the first. Fortunately, however, the disturbance, whatever it was, seemed to have died down, and the schooner lay quietly at anchor without any more tremblings or jumping.

Dawn came at last, leaping up crimson at a bound, and Dick insisted on Barry going below for a sleep. Barry had had hardly any rest for forty-eight hours, and, as Dick warned him, they had a busy day in front of them.

One of the Chinamen brought Dick a cup of coffee, and he paced the deck, his head full of Chang and Barstow, and wondering how in the world they were going to be rescued.

He went down and peeped into Captain Kempster's cabin. Much to his relief, he saw that the latter was asleep. At the same time he could tell by the yellow colour of his skin that the fever had been very sharp, and he realised that it was out of the question for him to take charge of the ship for some days to come.

This left everything to himself and Barry, and once more he was driven to wonder how they were going to manage about rescuing the two prisoners on the island.

Barry came into the cabin to breakfast about eight. He seemed quite fresh after his short sleep.

"What are we going to do?" said Dick, as he helped himself to a second cup of coffee. "What about Chang and Barstow?"

"I reckon I'll take a couple of the Chinks and go along," Barry answered. "You'll have to stay by the ship."

"Three's not enough for this game," said Dick. "Pyke

and Wigram will see you coming, and lie up on the cliff and pot you."

"If they can pot three of us they can pot half a dozen, so far as that goes," replied Barry. "We'll have to sneak ashore somewhere close at hand, and cut across through the bush."

"At that rate it might be better to wait till night," suggested Dick. "In daylight everything is on their side, for they can see us, and we can't see them."

Barry frowned.

"I want to sail to-night. If we have any more of these shake-ups like we had last night there'll be no holding the Chinks. They're scared stiff as it is. Pah! The whole place reeks with their beastly punk-sticks!"

Before Dick could answer the door opened, and Sam appeared.

"Boat, him come off, boss," he said to Barry.

Barry sprang to his feet.

"Boat coming off. By gosh, it's those beggars come to offer terms!"

He ran up on deck, and Dick followed.

Sure enough a boat was pulling off from the shore, and two men in it. A white handkerchief was tied to a boathook stuck up in the bow.

"Told you so!" said Barry, with his glasses to his eyes. "It's Pyke and Wigram, sure enough! Gosh, I'm just itching to pump lead into 'em!"

"You can't do it, Barry! They've got a flag of truce."

"Much they'd care for that if it was the other way on. But just as you say. We'll hear 'em talk."

"Go slow with them, Barry," said Dick warningly. "Don't lose your temper. Remember, we want to get away from this place as quick as ever we can."

"Oh, I'll keep my hair on—if I can!" growled Barry.

Another few minutes and the boat was alongside.

"Good-morning!" said Wigram, an ugly grin twisting his thin lips.

"The morning's all right," returned Barry curtly. "You're the only blot on it! What do you want?"

"A drink and a smoke and five minutes' talk," was the cool answer.

"I won't drink with you, I don't smoke, but I'll hear what you've got to say," replied Barry curtly.

"You needn't be so darned rude about it!" snarled Wigram. "You don't hold all the trumps—yet!"

"All except one Chink. As for Barstow, he's your man, not ours."

Wigram scowled.

"Guess you passed your word to him he was to have his share of the loot—eh?"

"All the more for us if he doesn't turn up," Barry answered.

For a moment Dick, who stood by, was horrified, but he had begun to realise that Barry was playing a part.

"Well, I guess you want your Chink back, anyhow," said Wigram, trying to speak in a more conciliatory tone. "And as Pyke and me are pretty well fed up with this here island we're willing to come to terms."

"That's mighty kind of you! And what sort of proposal were you thinking of making?"

"We was thinking that you'd give us a free trip home and a share o' them pearls—that's what we was thinking," replied Wigram bluntly.

Barry burst out laughing.

"You're modest, aren't you? Why, the violet isn't in it with you. A free trip and a share o' the pearls! 'Pon my Sam, you do take the cake!"

"You'd better remember as we've still got Chang and Barstow!" said Wigram angrily.

"Oh, I'll admit that! And suppose we leave them to you, what are you goin' to do with 'em—eat 'em, or spend the time that's left you in watching them crocs chew them up? You said just now we didn't hold all the trumps. Well, we've got our ship, we've got the pearls, we've got Redstall and Dent, and—best of all—we've got Burke."

"Now, you know just as well as we do that Burke's been the only one of you that could handle your niggers. Suppose we leave you, how long's it going to be before they spear you in your sleep? And if they don't, how are you going to live? I've been aboard the Brant. I know there isn't a deal of grub left. What'll ye do when it's finished? Tell me that."

"As for any other ship coming in here—well, the chances are a thousand to one against it! For why—there's nothing to bring them."

Wigram's jaw dropped. Well he knew that every word that Barry spoke was literal truth, but he had never reckoned on Barry being so well posted.

Barry saw his advantage, and drove it home mercilessly.

"See here, if I did the right thing, I'd take you both now, and hang you. It's less than you deserve. I'd have shot you on sight if it hadn't have been for Damer here, who said we must respect your white rag. Now, I'll go this far. You go back and bring Chang and Barstow off at once, and

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I'll give you passage as far as the first port we touch in Queensland. Then I'll put you ashore, and you can take your chances. As for paying ransom, I'll not give you a red cent."

Wigram lost his temper.

"Then, by thunder, you can whistle for your men! We'll have the satisfaction of seeing them die, anyhow, before we get wiped out ourselves!"

Barry turned to Dick.

"Man a boat!" he ordered, and Dick sprang to obey.

"What's that for?" demanded Wigram.

"I'll tell you. I mean to follow you back to shore. Your safe conduct doesn't carry, once you're on land. And if you ever reach camp again, I guess you'll both be too full o' lead to do much harm to Chang or Barstow."

Pyke spoke for the first time.

"I told you these swine wouldn't play the game!" he said bitterly.

Barry, who had quietly slipped a pistol out of his pocket, and held it easily in his right hand, laughed outright.

"You're pretty folk to talk of playing the game! Now, I give you a last chance. What's it to be? Do you give up Chang and Barstow and take my offer? Or is it war?"

The pair of scoundrels exchanged glances.

"All right!" growled Wigram. "We'll fetch 'em!"

"Not the least need for that," answered Barry. "We can spare 'em another look at your ugly faces. Come right aboard, please, and we'll do the fetching."

Wigram saw how he had been caught. With an oath, he made a snatch at the pistol in the holster at his belt. Before he could reach it, Barry made a spring over the low side of the schooner, and came right on top of him.

Wigram tried to dodge, lost his balance, caught his heels against the thwart, and went over with a loud splash into the sea.

He came up again in an instant. His ugly face was a mask of hideous terror.

"Help! Help!" he screamed, and Barry, leaning over, made a snatch, and caught him by the collar.

It was too late. One of the great tiger-sharks which always hung about the stern on the look-out for offal, was already on the spot. One ghastly shriek, and the man was jerked back out of sight.

Next moment the clear water was clouded with a dull crimson stain, and that was the last of Burke's first mate.

"It was his own fault!" said Barry sternly. He swung round on Pyke, who was literally shaking with fright.

"Get aboard!" he said.

And Pyke, without a word of protest, scrambled hastily out of the boat on to the schooner's deck, where a moment later he was ironed and led below.

"Boat's ready, sir!" said Dick formally to Barry.

Barry nodded.

"You will stay aboard, and see that all is well. I am going off to fetch Chang and Barstow."

He stepped into the boat which was manned by two of the Chinamen.

"Take good care of the prisoners," was his last word, as he took the helm, and the boat shot away.

The Wave.

It was with a very anxious heart that Dick watched the boat rowing rapidly landwards across the glassy surface of the bay.

In spite of the fact that the last of Burke's precious crew were safe under hatches, he knew that there were still the natives to be dealt with. How many he had no notion, but there were evidently more than Barstow had fancied, and a nasty, treacherous, ugly lot as ever lived.

And Barry, if plucky as they make men, was rash, too; he had the true sailors' fault of despising all natives.

The boat vanished round the headland, and Dick turned to give his attention to the Rainbow. There was plenty to do. Barry, he knew, meant to sail that very night, and there was rigging to be tightened, sails to be looked through, and fresh water to be brought off. The latter business would have to wait until Barry's return, for he himself could not leave the ship.

Another thing that did not help to soothe his nerves was the fact that Burke was aboard. Dick had a dread of the man that was almost superstitious. There was no saying what Burke was planning in that great head of his, and, in spite of the irons and the locked door, Dick had always the feeling that he must be on the watch.

After giving the necessary orders to the four remaining Chinamen, he went below, and took food to his prisoners.

Redstall and Dent were both sulky, and scowled at him without speaking, but Burke, though still ironed, was perfectly genial.

"Good-morning, Mr. Damer!" he said, with his usual grin. "I was beginning to fear you had forgotten me. However, better late than never. And when do we sail?"

"I'm not captain. You had better ask Mr. Freeland."

"I should be rejoiced to do so, but I fancy he is not aboard at the moment."

Dick was startled, but he realised that Burke must have heard Barry's order to get the boat out.

"So you are left in charge, Mr. Damer?" continued Burke, with his evil smile.

"Yes, I am in charge," returned Dick. "And don't you go thinking that I shall be asleep, either!" he added warningly.

"Bless my soul, that is the last thing I should be guilty of supposing. No, Mr. Damer, I am already paying for the fact that I underrated your abilities. I am not likely to make the same mistake a second time."

He chuckled softly as he spoke, and Dick, as he left the cabin, felt that he would far rather have seen the man cursing and scowling. There was something much more ominous in Burke's smile than in anyone else's frown.

He went next to Captain Kempster's cabin, and found him awake and a little better. He gave him quinine and coffee, and told him the news.

Kempster's eyes gleamed as he heard of the fate of Wigram.

"The murdering villain!" he growled. "I'm glad he's gone. All I wish is that Burke was alongside him in the shark's belly. I'll never feel safe for a minute so long as we've got that son o' perdition aboard!"

His words agreed so well with Dick's feelings that Dick felt all the more uncomfortable, and he left the cabin and went on deck again to see that the Chinese were carrying out his orders properly.

The bay lay like a sheet of green glass under the molten sun glare. There was not a ripple, and the heat was terrific. The deck planks burnt his feet through his thin canvas shoes, and the pitch bubbled in the seams.

Dick glanced at the brassy sky, but there was no sign of coming storm, nor of wind, either, and he wondered, uneasily, if they would get a breeze that night, or if they were in for a long calm.

In spite of the awful heat, he stayed on deck, watching the shore constantly for any sign of Barry. But still there was no movement, or any sound, and as the hours passed he grew more and more uneasy.

Dinner-time came. He drank two cups of tea, but could not eat. Then he went back to his watch.

About two the sound of shots came faintly to his ears.

Two first, then half a dozen more in a rapid volley. They seemed to come from far up in the bush, and Dick's anxiety grew almost unbearable. It was cruel to have to wait and do nothing when—for all he knew—Barry was fighting for his life up in those sultry thickets on the inland hills.

Five o'clock came, and through the breathless heat a fresh sound came to his ears.

It was the rattle of oars in rowlocks, and a few minutes later a boat shot into sight around the point.

Trembling with eagerness, Dick focussed his glasses on it. He could have shouted with pure joy when he saw that there were five people in it, and that Barry himself was steering.

As the boat drew closer he got a speaking-trumpet and hailed:

"Is it all right?"

"All right!" came back Barry's voice, echoing faintly across the glassy bay.

All right it was, but when the boat came alongside Chang, as well as Barstow, had to be helped over the side. They were in miserable condition—covered with cuts and scratches, and with hardly a rag of clothes left on them.

"Niggers had collared 'em and carried 'em off," explained Barry briefly. "We had to follow 'em. More by luck than anything else that we caught 'em. And," he added, with a grim smile, "I guess there's half a dozen niggers less in San Cristobal than there was this morning."

"You've got them—that's the great thing," Dick answered, with a sigh of relief. "Now, all we need is a breeze of wind, and then I hope we'll see the last of this poisonous place."

Barry glanced round.

"Well, I see you've done your job all right," he said approvingly. "Now I'm going to have a wash and something to eat, and as soon as the land breeze comes we'll have the hook up and be off."

But half an hour later, when he came on deck, the bay was still like a sheet of glass, and although it was near sundown the thermometer had not dropped a degree. The

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air was heavy with a moist, sticky heat which was almost unbearable.

"Don't know what to make of it!" growled Barry, staring at the sky. "I'd think there was going to be a storm, but the glass is steady enough. It's as rum weather as ever I saw."

The sun went down, the stars came out, and still not a breath of wind broke the dead calm.

Barry was clearly worried, and as for Dick he could settle to nothing. He paced the deck, watching the sky.

It was about ten o'clock, and the night still almost as hot as the day, when Dick suddenly felt the schooner begin to quiver exactly as she had done the previous night.

Barry, who was close beside him, at the rail, started up.

"Feng-Shin again!" he muttered. "Get your gun, Dick! We shall have seventeen different kinds of trouble with the Clunks if this game starts up again."

The quivering was very slight. It passed, and both drew a breath of relief. The silence settled again. It was so quiet that they could distinctly hear the low roar of the brook which fell into the sea more than a mile away.

But the respite was short. A few minutes later, and the trembling started afresh. Then she began to lift. She rose by the bow, so that the whole deck was tilted at a steep angle—so steep that they both had to hang on in order to keep their feet.

It was just as if some sportive giant had put a finger under the bow, and was tilting her to see how far she could go without sliding right under.

The tension ceased. She dropped back to an even keel with such force that the masts quivered like reeds. The water surged away on either side into small waves.

"Look out!" said Barry sharply.

And as he spoke up came the Chinamen, shrieking like frightened children.

"Hold on!" roared Barry. "Steady, you yellow idiots! Nothing's going to hurt you!"

Remembering their lesson of the previous night, the terrified crew paused. Chang, newly dressed and clean, came dashing aft with his pigtail flying straight out behind him.

"What make 'um shake?" he gasped. "No likee! Heap afraid!"

"No use getting scared, Chang," said Dick. "Anyhow, we're due to sail as soon as there's any wind."

Up went the schooner as if heaved on the crest of a wave. And all the time she shook until down below they could hear crockery and other small objects falling with a clatter from their places.

Then down again to an even keel, the water splashing away from her sides.

And the worst part of it was the deathly stillness. There was not enough air moving to blow out a match. So quiet was it that they could hear the low splash as the ripple broke against the cliff-foot hundreds of yards away.

The Chinese were scared nearly out of their lives. They were quite beyond making any rush for the boat. Most of them were simply grovelling flat on their faces on the deck.

Suddenly Barry gave a yell.

"Look, Dick! For any sake, look at that!"

He pointed seawards, and Dick following the direction of the pointing hand, felt his very skin crawl, while his heart seemed to rise to his throat and choke him.

Out on the open sea, pouring in majesty through the mouth of the bay, came a great smooth wall of water. It glistened faintly in the starshine, and was sweeping in towards them at appalling speed.

One moment he stared in horror, hardly able to believe his eyes. Then he sprang for the nearest hatch.

"A tidal wave!" he shouted. "Batten down everything, or we shall be swamped!"

Barry rushed among the crew, lugging them to their feet.

"Up, up, you cowardly swine! Batten down the hatches! Make all fast! You'll be drowned, every mother's son of you, if you don't hurry!"

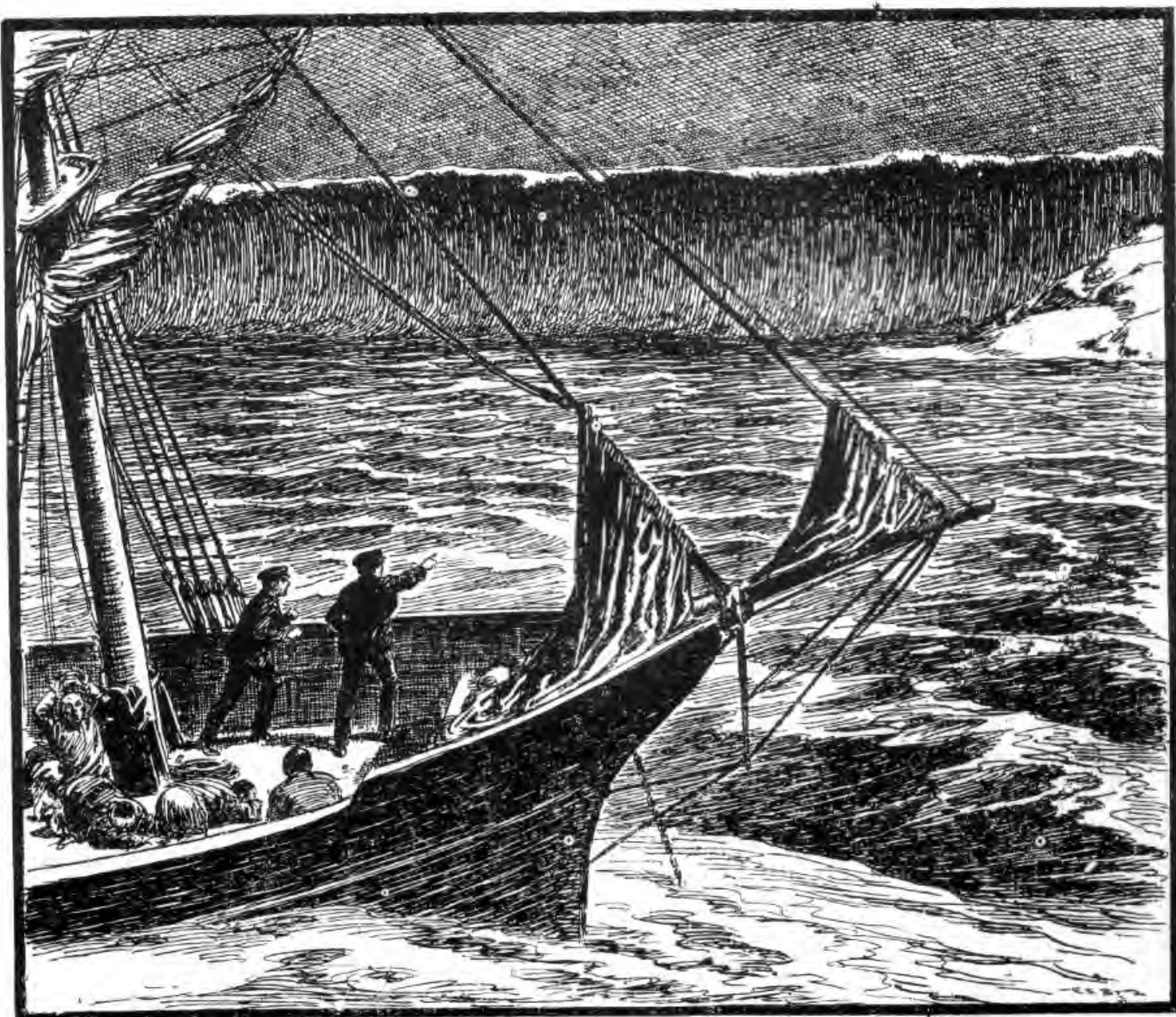
Chang and Sam had sense enough to see their peril, and sprang to obey. The rest were beyond helping themselves or anybody else. It was Barry, Dick, and these two who worked furiously during the few moments left them before the arrival of the wave.

On it rushed with no sound except a slight seething of the band of white foam which crested its mighty summit. Then it curled upon the little schooner, seeming as high as her main-mast.

"Hang on, Dick!" roared Barry.

There was no need for the warning. Dick had already got hold of a stay, and was clinging to it with both hands.

He felt the Rainbow rise suddenly under his feet. Then,



Suddenly Barry gave a yell. "Look, Dick! For any sake look at that!" One moment he stared in horror hardly able to believe his eyes. Then he sprang to the nearest hatch. "A tidal wave!" he shouted "Batten down everything or we shall be swamped!"

with a mighty roar, the crest of the wave came over her bow, washing aft in a solid mass of green water.

It struck Dick, and swung him out straight, so that his feet were on a level with his head. It tugged at him with such force that his arms felt as though they were being dragged out of their sockets. Deafened, buried, half-drowned, he knitted his fingers around the stay, and clung for dear life.

He felt the schooner sinking beneath him. He gave up all hope of her safety. It seemed to him that the gigantic weight of the wave was pressing her down to the very bottom.

Through the deep roar came a sharp spang! He felt the schooner rise and race away. Instinctively he realised that the anchor-chain had snapped.

His lungs were bursting, yet he still clung to his hold. The schooner was rising again. Another moment, and his head was above water, and he was able to take a long breath.

The sea was still streaming off the deck, and the schooner, caught in the rush of the wave, was flying onwards with the speed of a train. Suddenly came a heavy shock, and the Rainbow stopped with a jar that nearly tore Dick from his hold. There followed a series of sharp cracking sounds, then a heavy crash as the fore topmast snapped like a carrot and came down, carrying with it a whole raffle of rigging.

"We're aground!" gasped Dick; and then he struggled to his feet. "Barry!" he shouted. "Barry!"

There was no answer, and a horrible fear gripped Dick's heart. If Barry was gone all was indeed lost.

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The Black Tramp.

"Barry!" he shouted again, and went stumbling across the deck, which was cumbered with ropes and spars.

He caught his foot in something, and fell at full length across a body. For a moment he thought it was Barry, then found it was one of the Chinamen. The man was dead, his head hideously crushed by a broken spar.

A voice came out of the dimness:

"Am dat you, Mistel Dick?"

It was Chang.

"Yes, I'm here. Where's Mr. Freeland?"

"I tinkum gone ovel into sea."

Dick gasped.

"I tinkum you and me left and nobody else," said Chang.

At that moment Dick heard a groan from somewhere aft. He dashed in the direction, and saw a body wedged against a part of the after-rail which still remained.

He pulled out his torch, which was still serviceable, and flashed the light. It fell on Barry, lying at full length against the rail. His face was blue, and his eyes were closed, but he was still alive.

"Here, Chang!" shouted Dick. "Mr. Freeland is here! Give me a hand with him!"

They lifted him, and carried him into the deckhouse, which, by some miracle, still stood. Chang lighted a lamp; Dick found brandy, and forced some down Barry's throat.

Presently Barry gasped, spluttered, then opened his eyes.

GREAT SUMMER DOUBLE NUMBER NEXT MONDAY. ORDER TO-DAY!

"You, Dick?" he said hoarsely. "Gosh, I never expected to see you again!"

"Nor I you!" answered Dick. "It was pretty awful! Are you much hurt?"

Barry moved his arms and then his legs.

"Nothing broke, anyhow," he said. "Guess I was mighty near to drowning, though. Ugh! I feel as if I'd been through a thrashing-machine."

"Give me a lick more o' that brandy," he added.

The spirit brought some colour back to his cheeks.

"That's better," he said, and heaved himself up to a sitting position. "The stay I had hold of was carried away," he explained. "When it went I made sure I was overboard."

He climbed to his feet.

Dick watched him anxiously. Dick believed that he was more hurt than he would admit, but if he was he refused to allow it.

"Let's go and take stock o' the damage," he said. "She's aground, by the feel of her."

"She's aground fast enough," Dick answered bitterly. "And the fore topmast is gone. Looks as if we were going to be stuck in this sweltering hole for good and all."

"It don't look healthy, and that's a fact," admitted Barry grimly, surveying the scene of wreck. "If she ain't stove in it's a mercy."

"The first thing," he went on, "is to see whether we've got any crew left. It'll take more'n you an' me an' Chang to handle her, even if she can float."

"Guess ye can count me in," came a voice, and Barstow appeared limping up from below. "Snakes, but the schooner looks as if a hurricane had struck her! What was it, anyway? I was asleep below, and I reckoned the last trump had sounded."

"It was a tidal-wave," said Dick. "At least, that's what they call them. But really it must have been an earthquake wave. And those queer shakings and quiverings were the first shocks."

Barry gave a low whistle.

"Gosh, and I never had a notion of it! Dick, your books are some use, after all. But this isn't any time for talking. Let's get to work and see how much water she's lying in. And, Chang, you makee see how many of your chaps are still left in the old hooker."

The sea, now that the giant wave had passed, was calm as ever, but the air was noticeably cooler.

Barry himself heaved the lead, first in the bow, then the stern.

"Plenty o' water forrard," he said; "but her stern's hard and fast. Not rock, though, so far as I can make out. Seems to be sand. Now we'll try the well."

"I've tried it," said Dick. "She hasn't much water in her—only about ten inches."

"That won't hurt if she ain't making any more. And what about the Chinks? How many are left?"

Chang came forward and answered that only two were missing. That was not counting the unfortunate man who had been killed by the falling spar. But one of the survivors was badly hurt, his head being cut open.

Barry granted.

"That's three sound Chinks left. And there's us three, and Kempster. I guess, if we can ever get her off again, that's enough to work her home. Well, boys, we can't do a thing to her in the dark; we'd best stand watch and watch, and wait till morning."

"All right!" said Dick quickly. "Let me take first watch, Barry. And perhaps Barstow will stand it with me."

Barry hesitated.

"Do let me!" begged Dick. "You've had an awfully hard day, and you're badly knocked about. Go down and take a sleep. It'll do you all the good in the world."

"Guess I will, then," said Barry. "But mind and keep your eyes open for another of those ripples."

"We sha'n't get another," said Dick confidently. "That was the finish."

"Guess it came mighty nigh it," remarked Barstow dully. "All right, Mr. Damer, I'll keep watch along with you. Gee, I'd a sight rather be on deck than below if there's any more o' them catastrophes a-coming!"

In spite of his first meeting with Barstow, and the fact that the American had on that occasion as near as possible killed him, Dick had come, not only to tolerate, but rather to like the man. Barstow had a good deal of dry humour, and on the island he had shown the coolest possible pluck in the face of almost certain death. He was still very lame, but Dick fetched him a chair, and left him in charge while he himself ran below to see how Captain Kempster was faring. But he found that Barry had already been in and told him of the disaster, and that the old chap had gone peacefully to sleep again.

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He went back on deck, and sat yarning with Barstow and hearing wild stories of the cruise of the Brant and the exploits of Burke. Barstow, it seemed, had just the same sort of half-superstitious fear of the man that Dick owned to.

"I tell ye what, Mr. Damer," he said, in his queer drawl, "if you gets Burke back to Australia, and gives him up to justice, I guess you'll hev done something as you might be proud of. There's British warships and French warships been a-trying to lay him by the heels these seven years past, and nary one succeeded. I reckon Burke's the slippiest customer as has sailed the islands since Bully Hayes was finished up."

Dick was anxious that Barry should have his sleep out. It was not until the pink and crimson of dawn was showing in the east that he went below and called him. All he got for his pains was the rough side of Barry's tongue, but this no longer troubled him, and as Barry, though stiff, seemed himself again, he turned in, and was asleep himself inside sixty seconds.

It was ten when he woke, and a pleasant breeze was blowing through the open port. He hurried on deck, but was horrified at the scene of ruin and disaster shown by the brilliant sunlight.

The decks had been swept almost clean by the great earthquake wave, and broken rigging and a raffle of cordage hung in every direction. The Rainbow looked little better than a wreck.

Barry, busy helping his men to clear away the wreckage, looked up as Dick came towards him.

"Here's the breeze," he said bitterly; "but a fat lot of use it is! We sha'n't be able to shift till the next spring tide—if then!"

"But that will be only three or four days," Dick answered quickly. "Is she leaking?"

"No, thanks be, her hull's sound enough!"

"Well, it's bad luck," said Dick philosophically; "but it might be worse. It will take us some days to get that fore topmast fixed."

"Ay, and she's cracked. We'll need a new spar."

"Then we'll go ashore and cut one. There's plenty of good stuff. How's Captain Kempster?"

"He's a deal better. This cool air's doing him good. Get your breakfast, Dick, and come and lend a hand."

All that day they worked savagely, and by night things were beginning to look more shipshape. The breeze blew fresh all day, and Kempster improved rapidly.

Next morning he was able to be on deck; so, leaving him and Barstow in charge, Dick and Barry, with Chang and Sam, took a boat and pulled across to the nearest beach.

Shouldering their axes, they went up into the bush, and, after some trouble, found a tree straight enough to give them the spar they wanted.

All the trees in the Solomons are of the very hardest sort of wood, and it was no joke cutting and trimming the timber they wanted. Every few minutes they had to stop and sharpen their axes. And when at last the spar had been roughed down, it was all they could do to lift it.

They had to cut rollers to move it down to the water's edge.

They were still busy with this job when suddenly the crack of a rifle rang across the bay.

Barry sprang up, listening keenly, and almost instantly came a second shot.

"It's from the schooner!" he snapped out. "Gosh! I wonder if Burke's loose?"

He raced away down to the beach, Dick hard at his heels.

As Barry broke through the trees, which grew right down to the very edge of the sand, Dick heard him give a startled exclamation:

"Look at that!" he cried. "What is she? Where does she come from?"

Dick could hardly believe his eyes. A steamer had entered the mouth of the bay, and was heading straight for the Rainbow. She was a black, ugly-looking tramp of five or six hundred tons, and a trail of foul black smoke dragged from her funnel.

For a moment the two boys stood staring in silence, then Dick swiftly pulled his glasses from their case and put them to his eyes.

Barry heard him give a queer gasp.

"What's up?" he demanded.

"Look for yourself," answered Dick, handing over the glasses. "If that isn't Cripps himself on the bridge I'll eat him. And, if I'm not very much out, that sweet creature Wesley Crane is standing beside him."

(Another fine, long instalment of this thrilling serial story next week. Order your copy early.)

THE MASTER WHO STAYED AT HOME!

(Continued from page 21.)

"Heaven bless you!"

Dr. Locke rose to his feet, and the mathematics master grasped his hand. It would have surprised the Removites if they could have seen Larry at that moment. There were tears in his eyes; the usually calm, steady face was full of emotion.

After a few more words Dr. Locke left the study. The mathematics master drew a deep, deep breath. His eyes were shining.

"At last!" he muttered, aloud. "Amy will be safe; she will be cared for. I could not leave her in better hands."

He started. For the first time his eyes fell upon the white feather gleaming against the dark back of the chair. He burst into a laugh. Greyfriars would soon know how little he deserved the white feather.

When the mathematics master left the study to send a telegram to his sister at Luxford announcing his speedy arrival there, Billy Bunter crawled out from under the study table. He blinked cautiously out into the passage and fled. At top speed the Owl of the Remove rushed for the common-room. He had news to tell.

"Rats!" was Skinner's comment, when William George Bunter related his tale breathlessly in the common-room to a crowd of interested juniors.

"Bravo, Larry!" was Bob Cherry's remark.

"I don't believe it!" began Skinner.

But he was stopped suddenly, as Bolsover major grasped him by the scruff of the neck.

Bolsover shook him till his teeth rattled.

"Cheese it, you cad!" said Bolsover. "We've been mistaken in Lascelles, and we may as well own up. I'm going to beg his pardon."

"I'll do the same—when he goes!" sneered Skinner.

Bolsover major pitched Skinner into a corner, where he collapsed with a yell. But nobody heeded Skinner. Bunter's story had excited the Remove, and the Famous Five were triumphant. They had said all along that Larry had a ripping good reason for not going, and they had been proved to be right.

"I propose a vote of thanks to Bunter for clearing up the giddy mystery," said Harry Wharton.

"Hear, hear! Carried nem. con."

"And I further propose that Bunter be bumped for cavedropping!"

"Bravo!"

"Here, I say, you fellows—Yow-ow-ow-ow-ow-ow!"

Bump! Bump! Bump!

"Oh, crumbs! Beasts! Yow-ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

So Billy Bunter had his reward. The Removites waited eagerly for fresh news of Larry. Mr. Lascelles was absent that evening, and they could guess where he was. The next day he was seen to depart with the Head and Mrs. Locke in the car; and when the car returned there was a fourth passenger in it—the sweet-faced girl the juniors had seen in the box at the Stadium. Miss Lascelles was from that day an inmate of the Head's house; and when the juniors came to know her they came to like her immensely, and Amy Lascelles never tired of hearing Harry Wharton & Co. talk of Larry and his splendid qualities.

But by that time Larry was no longer at Greyfriars.

The whole school turned out to greet him when Lieutenant Lascelles came in khaki to bid them farewell before he left for the front. It was a great scene, and the Removites cheered themselves hoarse. Never had "old Larry" been so popular at Greyfriars as when the fellows beheld him in his Service uniform. And thunderous cheers accompanied Lieutenant Lascelles when he departed. And when he was gone there was much keenness at Greyfriars to hear news from the front of their old mathematics master, whom even Skinner regretted having presented with the white feather.

THE END.

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The Editor is always pleased to hear from his chums, at home or abroad, and is only too willing to give his best advice to them if they are in difficulty or in trouble. . . . Whom to write to: Editor, The "Magnet" Library, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.

GIGANTIC DOUBLE NUMBER NEXT WEEK!

My chums will rejoice in the fact that on Monday next a **SUPERB SUMMER NUMBER**

of "The Magnet" Library will make its welcome way into the market. Other Double Numbers have appeared before to-day, and rattling good numbers they have been, as a rule; but compared with them next Monday's issue stands out like a bright and gleaming star in the heaven of boys' literature. To begin with, famous Frank Richards has contributed a wonderful 50,000-word story of school life, entitled:

"SCHOOLBOYS NEVER SHALL BE SLAVES!"

From its amazing and unorthodox title, my readers will judge that the story deals with a most powerful subject, and is a tale of daring conception. The fact is, an obnoxious and brutal drill-sergeant is engaged at Greyfriars by the school governors, and the man openly states that there is too much slacking for his liking—a condition of affairs which he hopes to remedy by adopting methods of barbarism akin to those employed by the Prussians. Of course, Greyfriars does not take the situation lying down, and the excitement and discord which prevail at the old school is, in Hurree Singh's phraseology, "terrific." But through it all, the fellows, from Wingate of the Sixth down to the youngest fag, stand shoulder to shoulder for truth and justice, fully determined that

"SCHOOLBOYS NEVER SHALL BE SLAVES!"

The great story of which I have spoken is well worth the humble twopence asked for the complete issue; but there are other fine features beside, the chief of which is, perhaps, the grand summer number of

"THE GREYFRIARS HERALD!"

edited by Harry Wharton and his enterprising chums. This neat little amateur magazine contains many interesting items, written in the style peculiar to the Greyfriars Remove.

I shall also devote a column of next week's issue to the first of a series of popular lyric poems, entitled

"FAVOURITE FRIENDS IN FICTION!"

As is only fitting, No. 1 of these grand little effusions—which, by the way, will be found eminently suitable for recitation—will deal with the adventures of Harry Wharton & Co., the most famous schoolboy characters of the time.

An extra-special instalment of our great serial,

"DRIVEN TO SEA!"

By T. C. Bridges,

will appear; and, taking it all in all, I am honestly and genuinely proud of the number which will be placed in the hands of my chums next week. Not a page will be anything approaching dull; humour and entertainment abound in their truest form, and the absolutely greatest, best, and brightest treat I can recommend to my holiday-making friends and others is

NEXT MONDAY'S STUPENDOUS SUMMER NUMBER!

ORIGINAL DRAWINGS OFFERED TO READERS.

I have been asked at various times by certain readers who take an interest in art if I could supply them with the original sketches of those artists who have made the companion papers famous. In such cases I have been pleased

to allow my chums to have the illustrations they require at a very nominal sum, and it has occurred to me that other of my readers would like to enjoy the same benefit.

Accordingly, I have organised a scheme whereby my chums can obtain the original work of the following well-known draughtsmen:

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When applying for any of the above, readers are requested to state the number of the issue in which the drawing appears; and in the event of more than one reader requiring the same picture, the boy or girl who sends in the earliest application will be considered first.

Bearing in mind that each sketch is worth treble the value at which I offer it, I hope many of my chums will take advantage of this excellent scheme.

A QUESTION OF MOTOR-DRIVING.

An indignant Highgate reader has written to me on the subject of an incident which occurred in the "Magnet" story entitled "The Old Boys' Challenge."

It will be remembered that in this story Vernon-Smith, in company with several other juniors, availed themselves of the services of a motor-car in order to track down the scoundrelly Paul Tyrrell.

My correspondent is quick to point out that Vernon-Smith, being only fifteen years of age, would not be permitted, according to the rules and regulations which govern motor-driving, to take control of a car, especially as no licence is issued to boys of that age.

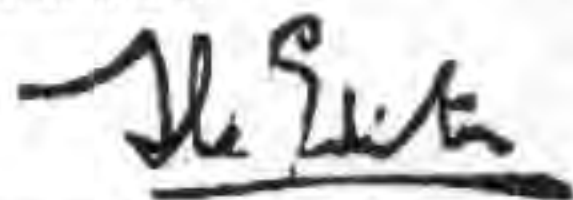
I hope my Highgate reader does not think that Mr. Frank Richards, who possesses a motor-car himself, was in ignorance of the subject. Nothing of the kind. Vernon-Smith knew, as many boys of his age would have known, that he was committing a breach of the law by driving a motor-car in public thoroughfares; but, bearing in mind the Bounder's reckless and daring nature, and the fact that the occasion was one of great urgency, he had no scruples in dallying with the law.

Considering that Vernon-Smith has driven a car at least a dozen times in the history of "Magnet" stories, it is surprising that my Highgate friend did not voice his complaint before.

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

"Gwen" (Leeds).—Your good-hearted remarks touched me very much. No, there are no Leeds boys at Greyfriars.

E. C. Jones (Carmarthen).—Sorry lack of space prevents me from publishing your excellent letter.



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