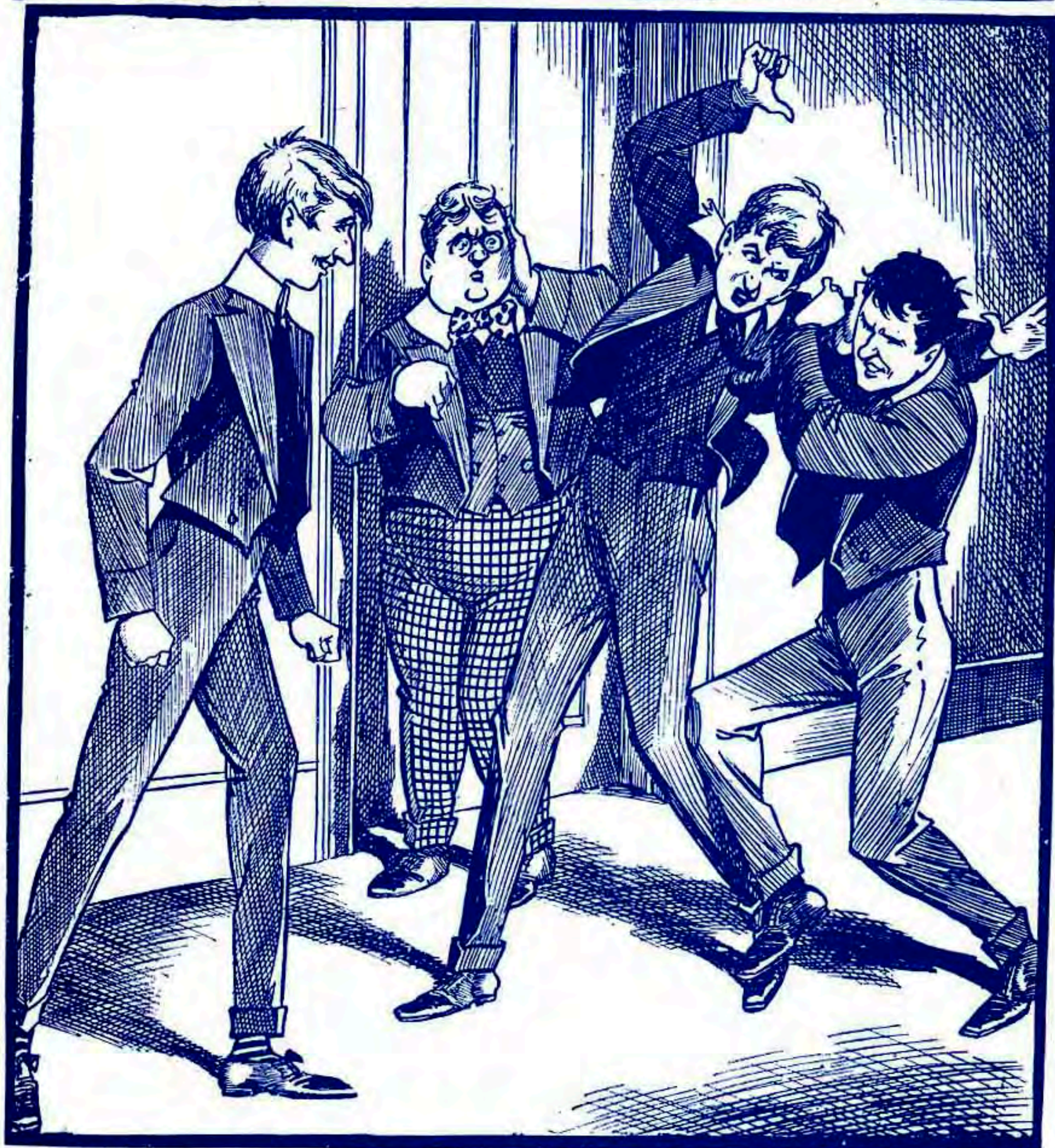


TWO OF THE SIXTH!

A Grand Long Complete School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co.



SKINNER AND SNOOP AS THE SIAMESE TWINS!

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A Magnificent
New Long
Complete Tale of
Harry Wharton
& Co. at Grey-
friars School.

TWO OF THE SIXTH!

By
Frank
Richards.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Smithy and Snoop Reap as They Have
"Sewn"!

"SMITHY here?"

Harry Wharton looked into Vernon-Smith's study in the Remove passage.

There was a startled exclamation as he did so.

The Bouncer was not there; but Skinner, his study-mate, was, and Snoop of the Remove was with him.

"Who the dickens—" ejaculated Skinner. "Oh, all right! It's only Wharton, Snoopey."

"The silly ass startled me!" growled Snoop.

Harry Wharton looked curiously at the two. They were very busy, and their occupation was most peculiar. A heavy grey overcoat was stretched on the table between them, and Skinner and Snoop were industriously sewing up the sleeves at the ends. Whoever put the overcoat on when they had finished with it was likely to meet with a surprise.

"What on earth are you up to?" exclaimed Wharton.

"Killing time, you know!" said Skinner. "Must do something to keep off war-worry—what?"

"Buzz off, Wharton!" said Snoop. "It's not your overcoat, and you needn't worry! You came here for Smithy, didn't you?"

"Yes."

"Well, Smithy's gone down to Friar-
dale! Take a run yourself!"

Harry Wharton did not take a run. He came into the study.

"Whose is the overcoat?" he asked.

"Not yours!" said Skinner, still sewing.

"I know that—it's a senior's," said Harry. "In fact, I know whose it is. It's Gwynne's."

"Possibly!" yawned Skinner.

Wharton knitted his brows.

"What are you playing a trick on Gwynne for, Skinner? Gwynne is a good chap, and one of Wingate's best chums."

"Blow old Wingate and his best chums!" said Skinner. "I'm not so fond of them as you are!"

"The rotter's given us lines," growled Snoop—"a hundred lines each, because he happened to catch us smoking behind the wood-shed! Now we're sewing up his sleeves for him. He'll be pleased when he finds his new overcoat sewn up—I don't think!"

"He won't find it sewn up, Snoop," said Harry quietly. "If it were Loder, or Carne, or even Walker, that's all right; but Gwynne is one of the best, and if he gives you lines for smoking, that's your lookout! Let that coat alone!"

"Rats!"

Skinner pointed to the door with his needle.

"Clear!" he said.

"I'll take that coat with me," said Wharton.

"You won't!" howled Skinner. "Mind your own business, blow you! What does it matter to you if we sew up a beastly prefect's overcoat?"

"Gwynne isn't a beastly prefect," said Harry. "Why, you worn, Gwynne interfered only the other day when Carne was giving you socks!"

"He gave me lines this afternoon," growled Skinner.

"And he's going to referee for us in the Form match," said Harry.

"Blow the Form match!"

"Nuff said!" exclaimed Wharton. "You can keep your tricks for Loder and Carne. Just let Gwynne alone! Give me that coat!"

"Sha'n't!"

Wharton strode forward and caught up the coat. Skinner and Snoop held on to the sleeves.

"Let go!" rapped out Wharton.

"Tug-of-war!" grinned Skinner.

"This will improve your precious favourite's coat! Go it!"

"He, he, he!" chortled Snoop, dragging at the coat.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry looked into the study. "Going to be all the afternoon, Harry? What's the merry game?"

Johnny Bull, Nugent, and Hurree Janset Ram Singh were behind Bob. The Famous Five of the Remove were going out for a bike spin, and they had intended to ask Vernon-Smith to come along. The Bouncer was out; but, as it happened, the visit to the study was lucky—from Wharton's point of view, at least. Gwynne of the Sixth was the most popular prefect in the school, next to Wingate, and Wharton did not mean him to be victimised by the black sheep of the Remove.

"It's Gwynne's coat," explained Harry. "These rotters are sewing it up, and I'm stopping them."

"You mean you're trying to pull it in two!" grinned Skinner. "This sleeve won't keep on much longer at this rate."

"Let go!"

"Rats!"

Bob Cherry grinned, and came to Wharton's assistance. He did not seize the coat, however; he seized Snoop and Skinner, one in each powerful hand. There was a loud concussion as the two Removites' heads came together.

"Crack!"

"Yarough!" roared Skinner.

"Yooooop!" howled Snoop.

They released Gwynne's coat, and clasped their heads instead.

"Have some more?" asked Bob affably.

"Yow! You rotter!"

"Ow, my napper!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Skinner and Snoop did not want any more. They rubbed their heads and scowled like Huns.

"This blessed rat has got to be undone," growled Wharton. "Anybody know how to unpick stitches?"

"I'll do it with my pocket-knife," said Bob.

"Fathead!" Wharton jerked the coat out of reach. "Gwynne will wish we'd left it to Skinner, if you start carving it. You have to pull the cotton out somehow."

"Let Skinner do it," suggested Frank Nugent.

"Good! Go it, Skinner!"

"I'll see you hanged first!" howled Skinner. "What do you want to chip in for, you rotters?"

"The chipfulness is our esteemed custom, my excellent Skinner," said Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "You had better proceed unpickfully."

"Go and eat coke!"

"Oh, I can do it," said Johnny Bull. "I've seen Marjorie do it. You just take it like this, and go like that, and—my hat! That only seems to make it tighter. I suppose that idiot Skinner hasn't sewn it properly!"

"Will you undo it, Skinner?" demanded Bob Cherry.

"No, I won't! And you can't, you clumsy asses!"

"Then we'll give you something else to unpick," grinned Bob. "Collar them, my infants, and I'll sew them up."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Skinner and Snoop made a rush for the door. But Johnny Bull and Hurree Singh seized them at once, and jammed them together. Bob Cherry took up the needle and thread Skinner had left on the table. Amid fierce expostulations from Skinner and Snoop, he sewed the right leg of Skinner's trousers to the left leg of Snoop's lower garment.

"You rotter!" yelled Skinner. "Leg-go!"

"Keep still! This needle might run into you if you move!"

"Yarooooop! It is running into me!"

"I warned you. It might again if you dance like that!"

"Yow-ow-ow! Yah!" shrieked Skinner.

"Well, why don't you keep still?"

Skinner kept still after that. Two hinges of the needle were quite enough for him; and Snoop, with a face like a Prussian Hun, kept as still as a mouse, also. He did not want to sample the needle at all.

"There!" said Bob, when all the thread was expended. "Now you can do a double-turn, you know. Come on, you chaps, or we shall never get out!"

Wharton had been working on the sewn sleeves, and he succeeded in getting most of the threads out at last.

"I'll cut off with this to the prefects' room," he said. "I suppose you took it from the peg there, Skinner? You wouldn't have had the nerve to go to Gwynne's study!"

"Find out!" growled Skinner savagely. "Look here, you're not going to leave us like this, you silly clumps!"

"Your mistake! We are!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "Ta-ta!"

And the chums of the Remove followed Wharton from the study, leaving Skinner and Snoop glaring after them with Hunnish glares.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Carne Has No Luck!

WHARTON!

"Oh, crumbs!" growled Wharton.

The captain of the Remove had left his chums to run into the pre-

fects' room with Gwynne's coat. The room had looked empty as he glanced in; but as he was crossing to the pegs, coat in hand, Carne of the Sixth rose from an armchair, the high back of which had hidden him till that moment.

Wharton stopped, and the unpleasant glance of the bully of the Sixth travelled over him and the light-grey overcoat.

With the solitary exception of Gerald Loder, Carne was the most unpopular senior at Greyfriars. He was Loder's chum, and both of them were very much down on the Famous Five.

"What are you doing with that coat?" he demanded. "It looks like Gwynne's new overcoat!"

"That's what it is," said Harry.

"Well, what are you doing with it?"

"Bringing it back to hang up."

"What trick have you been playing with it, you young rascal?"

"None."

"Don't tell lies!" growled Carne.

"You didn't take it away for nothing."

"I'm not telling lies," snapped Harry, his eyes flashing. "And it's nothing to do with you, anyway, Carne. You're not a prefect."

"You can come along and explain to Gwynne," grinned Carne. "Gwynne's a prefect, since you're so particular, my pippin!"

Wharton set his teeth hard; but there was no help for it. The big Sixth Former had grasped him by the collar, and he marched him out into the Sixth Form passage, and opened the door of Gwynne's study.

Gwynne of the Sixth was chatting with Wingate, and both the seniors looked curiously at the flushed junior as he was marched in by Carne.

"Hallo, what's the trouble?" asked Wingate.

"Why, that's my coat, intirely!" exclaimed Gwynne.

"I caught this young rascal monkeying with it," explained Carne. "I thought I'd bring him to you, Gwynne. He'd taken your coat away, and brought it back. I suppose he's damaged it."

"There'll be trouble for him if he has," said Gwynne. "Sure, it's my new coat. Give it to me, Wharton!"

The junior handed over the coat, and Gwynne examined it, and uttered an exclamation.

"The slaves have been sewn up intirely, you young rascal! Chuck us over that cane, Wingate!"

"Here you are!" said Wingate.

"Now, then, Wharton!"

"But I haven't done anything to it," protested Wharton. "I was only bringing it back to hang up. Another chap took it away."

"What chap?" sneered Carne.

Wharton did not reply to that.

"Sure, it was mighty obliging you were, Wharton," said Gwynne, eyeing him. "And what was the other chap doing with it?"

"Sewing up the sleeves."

"The thafe of the world! And you stopped him?"

"Exactly."

"And who was it?"

"I'm not going to tell you, Gwynne," said Wharton quietly. "We don't tell tales in the Remove."

"Ye cheeky little baste—"

"You can lick me if you like," said Harry. "I've done you a good turn really, but, of course, I've only got my word to give you."

"And a lot that's worth!" sneered Carne. "I advise you to give the cheeky young hound a good licking, Gwynne!"

Gwynne tossed the cane on the table.

"All serene! I'm after takin' your word, Wharton," he said. "You can get out."

"You're letting him off?" exclaimed

Carne, as Harry Wharton left the study, smiling.

"Yes. I think he's told the truth."

"Then you're a silly ass!"

"Thanks!" said Gwynne. "The same to you, Carne, me bhoys, and many of them! Shut the door after yez!"

Carne slammed the door after him as he strode out. He overtook Wharton in the passage, and scowled at him.

"You lied yourself out of that!" he snarled.

"I didn't lie," said Harry quietly.

"And you know I didn't, Carne. I've no need for lies—as some chaps have who sneak out of bounds at night, for instance."

Carne started back.

"You spying young rotter!" he hissed.

Harry Wharton's lip curled.

"I haven't spied, and you know it," he said contemptuously. "You can't keep that kind of game up for whole

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Famous Five scuttled away, leaving Arthur Carne gathering up cigarettes in frantic haste.

"Bless my soul! What is that?"

Carne, panting, his hand full of cigarettes, looked up with a crimson face as Mr. Quelch stopped in the passage and looked at him. The Remove-master's eyes were like gimlets.

"I—I—ah—" stammered Carne.

"Are those articles cigarettes, Carne?" asked Mr. Quelch.

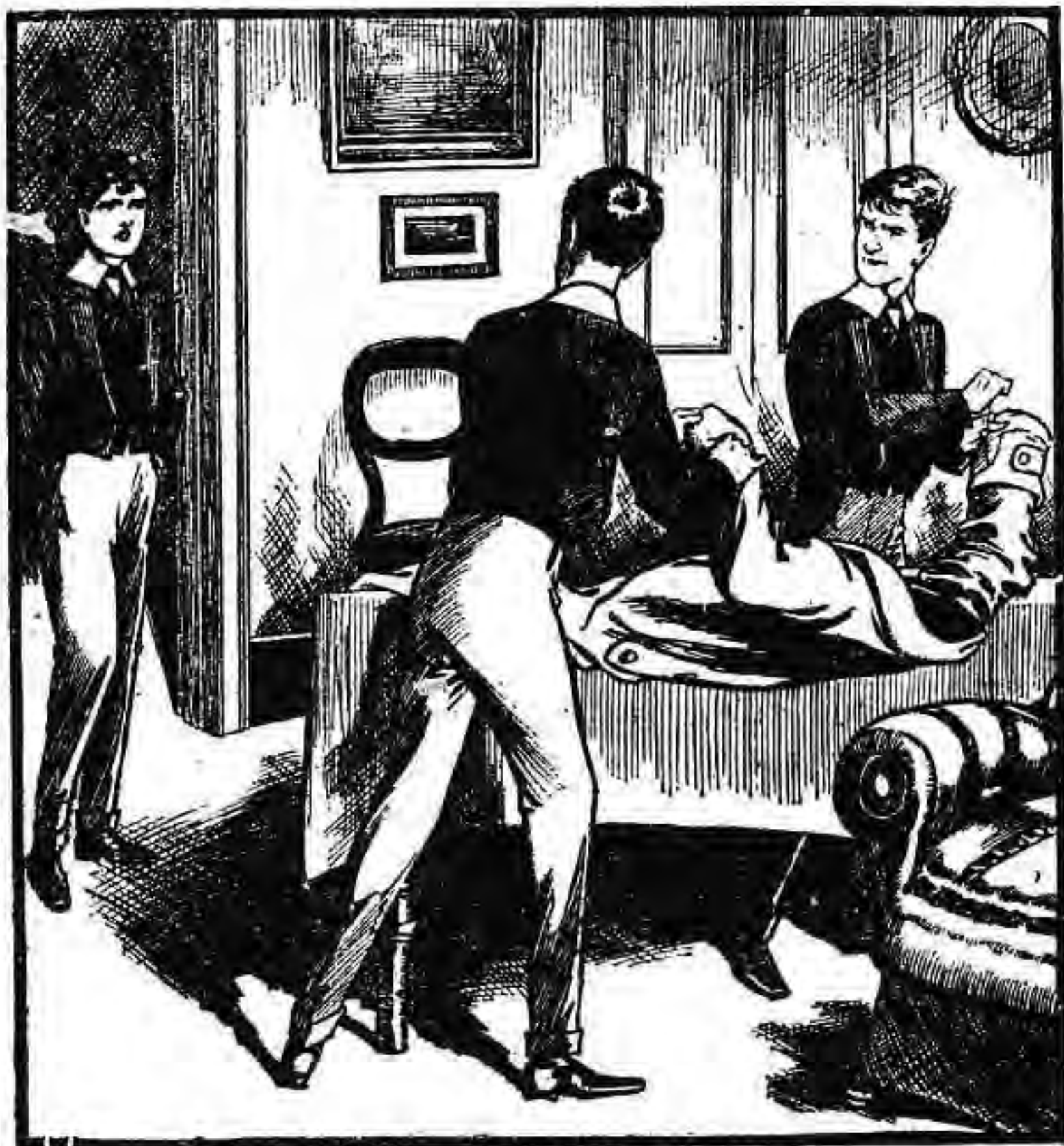
"Ye-es, sir."

"Really! I am surprised to see cigarettes in the possession of a Greyfriars senior!" exclaimed the Remove-master.

"They—they're not mine, of course," stammered Carne. "You could—could hardly suspect me of smoking, sir! I have taken them from a fag."

"Very well."

Mr. Quelch passed on, with a dubious



Tailoring operations! (See Chapter 1.)

terms without fellows suspecting something."

"It's a lie! I—I—"

"Oh, rats!"

Wharton walked away. But he was dragged back by a savage grip on his collar. Then Carne's open hand smote his ear, and he roared:

"Take that—and that—and that!"

"Yaroo! Rescue!" yelled Wharton, struggling with the big senior.

There was a rush of feet, and four juniors dashed up. They grasped Carne of the Sixth without ceremony, dragged him off the captain of the Remove, and sat him down in the passage. It was Carne's turn to roar then, and he roared heartily. As he rolled over on the floor a packet of cigarettes fell from his pocket and scattered round him.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "Better gather up that little lot before they're seen, Carne!"

expression on his face. Carne clutched up the rest of the cigarettes, and returned to the prefects' room, his face crimson, his eyes glittering. He wondered whether Mr. Quelch suspected anything. And he had an uncomfortable feeling that it was very probable, for the Remove-master was as sharp as Sheffield steel. The black sheep of the Sixth realised that it behoved him to walk very warily, unless he gave up his shady relaxations. And that he had no intention of doing.

Harry Wharton & Co. hurried out of the School House, and went down for their bicycles. They had dealt quite effectually with Carne; though when they came in after their spin they rather expected to have further trouble with the Sixth Form bully. But, as Bob Cherry cheerily remarked, sufficient for the hour was the trouble thereof. And they rode away in great spirits.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

"Hop it!"

"WHAT the merry thunder—"
Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, uttered that exclamation as he came into his study.

An extraordinary scene met his gaze.

Skinner and Snoop were there, and they seemed to have been turned into an imitation of the Siamese Twins. Skinner's right leg was fast to Snoop's left, and they were struggling in vain to free themselves.

"My hat!" exclaimed the Bounder. "What's the name of this funny game, Skinney?"

Skinner glared at him.

"Help us get loose, you silly chump!" he howled. "Can't you see we've been sewn up? It was that rotter, Bob Cherry. Help me get loose!"

"Ha, ha, ha! I'm not going to spoil a good joke," chuckled the Bounder. "I dare say you asked for it."

"Let me loose, you rotter!" yelled Snoop. "Undo it for us, you beastly, sniggering cad!"

"Are you always as polite as that when you're asking a favour?" grinned the Bounder.

"You rotter! You cackling jackanapes! You—you—you—" Skinner spluttered with wrath. "Here, leg-go! Wharrer you at?"

"Outside!" said Vernon-Smith tersely. "Mustn't call a chap names in his own study. Besides, why shouldn't the other fellows see the merry show? Don't be selfish!"

"You—you—you— Yow-ow!"

The Bounder, chuckling, pushed the precious pair out of the study, and closed the door after them. Skinner and Snoop hopped up the passage. Their legs had to go together like clockwork to keep them afloat, as it were.

"Don't drag me over, idiot!" howled Skinner.

"You're dragging me over, you fool!" snarled Snoop.

"He, he, he!" It was Billy Bunter's fat chuckle. "I say, you fellows, what are you up to? He, he, he!"

The Owl of the Remove stood and blinked at them through his big spectacles, chortling. Evidently he regarded their plight as funny.

"Help us get loose, Bunter!" gasped Skinner. "We're sewn up!"

"He, he, he! So I see!"

"You fat, cackling idiot!"

"Help us, you fat duffer!" howled Snoop.

Billy Bunter came a little closer, his eyes glistening behind his spectacles.

"I'd do anything for a pal," said Bunter. "I suppose you're my pal, Skinney?"

"Yes—no—certainly! Lend me a hand!"

"Right-ho! I say, Skinner, I'm expecting a postal-order to-morrow morning," said Bunter confidentially. "Ten bob, you know."

"You—you—"

"I suppose you could lend me a couple of bob on it?" suggested Bunter. "Of course, I shall settle up immediately the postal-order comes. You can rely on me for that. You know I'm a fellow of my word!"

"Will you get us loose?" panted Snoop. "You can hack at it with your penknife, you blinking owl!"

"Certainly. Did you say you could lend me two bob?"

"I—I—yes," stammered Skinner. "Certainly, old chap! Get us loose first. There'll be a crowd round us in a minute."

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"Where's the two bob, old chap?"

"In—in my pocket! I—I can't get at it now. As soon as I'm loose—"

"I'll get it out for you, old scout. Which pocket?"

"You—you—you—"

"Which pocket did you say, Skinner?"

"Come here, and—and I'll show you!" gasped Skinner.

The Owl of the Remove rolled nearer, and Skinner fastened a sudden grasp upon his fat ear. Billy Bunter gave a fiendish yell.

"Yow-ow! Leggo!"

"Now get us loose!" hissed Skinner, grinding his knuckles into Bunter's fat ear. "I'll have your ear off if you don't!"

"Yaroo! Help! Murder! Rescue!" shrieked Bunter.

"What's the merry row!" exclaimed Peter Todd, coming out of No. 7.

"Hallo! What are you doing with my porpoise?"

"Yow-ow! Rescue! Dragimoff, Teddy!" yelled Bunter.

Peter Todd grinned, and rushed to the rescue. Billy Bunter was yanked away from Skinner. He stood and rubbed his reddened ear, and roared.

"Toddy," gasped Skinner, "we're sewn up!"

"Ha, ha, ha! It looks rather like that!"

"We—we can't get at it to undo it! Undo it for us somehow, old chap!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Peter. "Roll up, Remove! This way to see the new Siamese Twins! Oyez, oyez, oyez! Roll up!"

Remove fellows were already gathering in the passage, and at Peter's stentorian shout juniors came up in all directions. A howl of laughter rang through the Remove passage, but no one seemed inclined to rescue the two black sheep of the Remove from their uncomfortable position.

"Can't you help us?" roared Skinner furiously. "Maufy, you grinning ass!"

"Sorry, dear boy!" said Lord Mauleverer. Haven't I told you before that I wouldn't touch you with a barge-pole?"

"Squiff—Browney—Hazel—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hop it!" roared Bolsover major.

"Hop it, you bounders!" Bolsover major was rather pally with Harold Skinner usually, but he had rather rough ideas of humour, and he was not likely to miss a chance like this. "Hop it! I'll help you!"

"Yaroo!" shrieked Skinner. "Leave off kicking me, you villain!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hop it, then! What did you start the game for, if you don't want to play it?" chortled Bolsover major.

"I didn't—we didn't—we— Yaroo! Oh, my hat! Yah!"

Skinner and Snoop hopped frantically away down the passage, helped from behind by Bolsover major's heavy boot. A yell of laughter followed them. They paused at the stairs, and Skinner turned a savage glance on his companion in misfortune.

"Come on, Snoop! We'll go to Mr. Quelch like this, and tell him Bob Cherry fixed us up like it. Come on!"

"Sneak!" howled Bolsover major.

But Skinner was too furious to care whether he was called a sneak or not, and Sidney James Snoop shared his feelings. The unfortunate couple hopped their way downstairs, and hopped away to Mr. Quelch's study. Wingate and Gwynne of the Sixth came along, and stopped to stare at them.

"What are you two up to?" gasped

Wingate. "Where are you going like that?"

"I'm going to Mr. Quelch!" howled Skinner.

"You—you—you're going to Mr. Quelch? You'd better not! Why—"

But Skinner did not heed. He hopped on with Snoop to Mr. Quelch's study, and thumped at the door. Without waiting to be told, he opened the door, and the two dishevelled, crimson-faced juniors hopped into the study.

Mr. Quelch started to his feet in surprise and wrath.

Mr. Quelch had a somewhat unruly form in the Remove of Greyfriars, and he was accustomed to some unruly ways. But certainly he had never expected the most reckless practical jokers in the Form to come hopping into his study like this. He stared at Skinner and Snoop with a brow like thunder.

"Sir!" gasped Skinner. "We—we've come here—"

"Skinner!" thundered Mr. Quelch, with a petrifying glare. "How dare you! How dare you, I repeat! This is unheard of!"

"We've been—"

"Silence! Upon my soul, I have never heard of such astounding impertinence!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. He made a jump for his cane. "I will try to teach you that you must not play absurd practical jokes upon your Form-master!"

Whack, whack, whack, whack!

It was not surprising that Mr. Quelch was angry, regarding the matter in the light of an unusually daring practical joke on the part of the two juniors. Skinner and Snoop had no time to explain. Mr. Quelch's cane sang round them, and all their energy was expended in wild howls.

"Go!" thundered the Form-master. Whack, whack, whack! "Go! And learn to restrain your impudence within bounds!" Whack, whack, whack!

Skinner and Snoop hopped out of the study faster than they had hopped into it. They hopped away frantically to the stairs. Mr. Quelch, with a stern brow, closed his study door. The two unfortunate juniors succeeded in hopping at last into the Remove dormitory, where they contrived to get the sewn garments off. And for the rest of that evening Harold Skinner and Sidney James Snoop were like unto bears with sore heads.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

An Unexpected Accusation!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

Billy Bunter met the Famous Five as they came in glowing, and cheery from their bike-ride. The fat junior was grinning.

"Scat!" said Bob Cherry.

"Loder wants you," grinned Bunter.

"Oh, blow Loder!" growled Johnny Bull. "What does he want?"

"Licking, I expect," said Billy Bunter cheerfully. "He told me to send you to his study as soon as you came in. Carne's been with him, and he was looking awfully ratty."

"Oh, rotten!" groaned the Famous Five in chorus.

There was no help for it; they had to report themselves to Loder. Loder of the Sixth was a black sheep, a little blacker than Arthur Carne, perhaps, and the chums of the Remove happened to know something about it, skilful though Loder was in keeping his little secrets dark. But what the juniors suspected the Head was very far from suspecting, and Gerald Loder was still a prefect, with powers of authority over the Lower School.

"Of course, Carne's fixed it with Loder to rag us," said Nugent, as they made their way to the Sixth Form corridor. "He wouldn't report us to Wingate or

Gwynne—they're decent. He can depend on his precious pal to rag us!"

The chums of the Remove had expected to hear more from Carne, and they had not been kept waiting. They were looking grim as they presented themselves in Gerald Loder's study.

Loder looked grim, too. He had his own reasons for disliking those five exceedingly independent juniors.

"Bunter says you want us, Loder," said Harry Wharton curtly.

"You've been reported to me for attacking a Sixth-Former," said Loder, taking up his cane.

"Carne went for me first," said Harry. "The other fellows only yanked him off."

"The yankfulness was terrific, my esteemed Loder!" murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Loder smiled grimly.

"I dare say you've got heaps of excuses to make," he said. "But juniors are not allowed to rag the Sixth. You ought to know that by this time!"

"Carne ought to have reported us to our Form-master, or to the captain," said Nugent.

"Carne preferred to report you to me," said Loder. "I'm going to deal with the matter."

"Yes, and we know why he reported us to you!" growled Johnny Bull. "Because you're his pal, and glad of a chance of going for us."

"I shall give you two extra for that, Bull! Hold out your hand!"

Johnny Bull put his hands behind his back.

"I'm not going to," he said deliberately. "You've no right to cane us for handling Carne, when he was handling Wharton."

Loder's eyes gleamed.

"Do you want to be reported for disobedience?" he asked.

"Report and be blowed!"

"Wharton, hold out your hand!"

Wharton's face set, and he put his hands into his pockets.

"You refuse?"

"Yes."

"You all refuse?" asked Loder, with deadly quietness.

"Yes!"

"The yankfulness is terrific, my esteemed and ridiculous Loder!"

The prefect laid down the cane.

"Then you will follow me," he said.

"I shall take you to your Form-master."

"Follow in your father's footsteps, dear boys!" said Bob Cherry cheerfully; and the Famous Five marched after Loder out of the study.

Mr. Quelch looked surprised as the prefect led his flock into the Remove-master's study.

"Dear me! What is this, Loder?" he asked.

"These juniors refuse to be caned by me, sir," said Loder mockingly. "Under the circumstances, I judged it best to refer them to you."

Mr. Quelch frowned.

"Is it possible?" he exclaimed. "Boys—"

"It's not fair, sir," said Harry Wharton quietly. "Loder wants to punish us for nothing—"

"How dare you suggest anything of the sort, Wharton? You know very well that you are bound to obey a prefect's orders."

"Yes, sir. But—"

"I shall, however, go into the matter, as it is referred to me," said the Remove-master. "For what is the punishment inflicted, Loder?"

"Assaulting a member of the Sixth, sir."

"Bless my soul!"

"Carne went for me first, sir," said

Wharton, flushing. "These fellows came up and dragged him off."

"Please call Carne here, Loder!"

"Certainly, sir!"

Loder left the study, and the juniors waited—Mr. Quelch frowning the while. Mr. Quelch was strong on discipline; and an assault upon a Sixth-Former by juniors was a serious matter in his eyes. But the Remove-master was just; he intended to sift the matter fairly.

Carne followed Loder into the study a few minutes later. His manner to Mr. Quelch was very meek and respectful. Harry Wharton & Co. were relying upon the Form-master for justice; but justice was not exactly what Arthur Carne wanted.

"Kindly tell me precisely what happened, Wharton," said Mr. Quelch. "Carne will hear your statement."

"Yes, sir. Carne collared me in the passage, and began boxing my ears, as I was coming away from Wingate's study. These chaps came up and pulled him off. We rolled him over on the floor."

"For what reason did Carne box your ears?"

"None, sir."

"Come, Wharton—"

"Well, sir, he had reported me to Gwynne, and Gwynne decided that I hadn't done anything, and Carne was ratty, I suppose."

"Do you endorse that statement, Carne?"

"Certainly not, sir," said Carne. "It is true I boxed Wharton's ears, but only because he resisted when I was taking his cigarettes from him."

"Cigarettes!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch thunderously.

Wharton could only stare.

"Yes, sir. Although not a prefect, I considered it my duty to take them from him and destroy them."

"Quite right, Carne! It was your duty."

"Mr. Quelch—" burst out Wharton.

"Silence, Wharton, till I give you leave to speak! Were those the cigarettes I saw you gathering up in the passage some time ago, Carne?"

"Yes, sir. I told you at the time I had taken them from a fag."

"You did not mention that it was Wharton."

"No, sir. I intended to report the matter to a prefect, and did not think it necessary to trouble you with it. I know your time is valuable."

"Quite so, Carne! It was a matter a prefect is perfectly competent to deal with. However, it has been brought before me. Wharton, I am surprised and shocked—"

"It's not true, sir!" almost shouted Wharton.

"What?"

"The cigarettes weren't mine, sir."

"If you had them in your possession, it amounts to the same thing."

"I didn't, sir! They were Carne's!" panted Wharton.

"Wharton!"

"They dropped from his pocket, sir, while we were handling him. All these chaps can tell you it was so."

"I saw them drop out of his pocket, sir!" shouted Bob Cherry.

"The yankfulness was terrific, sahib!"

"Yes, rather! We all saw it!" exclaimed Johnny Bull and Nugent, in a breath.

Mr. Quelch's frown grew darker, but he looked perplexed. It was evident that someone was lying.

"One moment, sir," said Carne, with perfect calmness. "What these four juniors say is quite correct. Carne had realised at once that four witnesses testifying against him made his case shaky. The cigarettes did drop from my pocket. I had put them in my

pocket after taking them from Wharton, before these four juniors came on the scene."

"Oh!" gasped Bob Cherry.

With a cunning worthy of a Prussian Hun, Carne had coolly discounted the evidence of the four—by admitting it!

"It's false!" exclaimed Wharton. "I had not even seen the cigarettes before they fell out of Carne's pocket, sir. These fellows know—"

"Your friends know nothing about it, Wharton!" rapped out Mr. Quelch. "Carne admits their statement that they saw the packet fall from his pocket. Their evidence is, therefore, of no value in your behalf. Carne states that he took the packet from you—"

"He lies, sir!"

"You must not use such expressions, Wharton!" said Mr. Quelch severely.

"Well, sir, what he says isn't true," amended Harry.

"I give you my word, sir!" said Carne.

And there was a long, long pause

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Catching It!

MR. QUELCH was clearly perplexed.

The dispute lay between Carne of the Sixth, and Wharton of the Remove. It was word against word. Naturally, the Form-master attached more importance to the serious statement of a senior than to the hasty denial of a junior. On the other hand, he knew Harry Wharton very well, and he had never known the captain of the Remove to deflect from the straight line of the truth. Many masters would have taken the senior's word as a matter of course, and decided against the junior. But Mr. Quelch, though a somewhat severe master, was strictly just. It was a case that might have puzzled Solomon himself to decide on its merits, however.

Carne evidently expected to be believed. But it was difficult to look at Wharton's flushed and indignant face, and imagine that he was telling an untruth. One side was plainly lying in the most deliberate manner. But which?

The pause was a long one. Carne and Wharton waited with equal anxiety for Mr. Quelch's decision. The Remove-master spoke at last.

"You assure me, Carne, that you took that packet of cigarettes from Wharton?"

"Yes, sir."

"You tell me, Wharton, that the cigarettes belonged to Carne?"

"Yes, sir."

"I hope, sir," ventured Loder, "that you will not take a junior's word against that of a fellow in the Sixth. If a young rascal's denials are taken as gospel, there is an end to discipline."

"I am a better judge of that than you can be, Loder!" said Mr. Quelch severely. "You were not present, I understand?"

"No, sir. But Carne made his report to me, and I had not the slightest doubt of it. I know Carne to be the soul of honour."

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry involuntarily.

"Wharton, you understand that you are accusing a senior of indulging in the foolish practice of smoking, which is strictly forbidden both to seniors and juniors in this school?"

"I understand that, sir," said Harry. "I never intended to say so; but I know he smokes."

"Have you ever actually seen Carne smoking, Wharton?"

"Not that I remember, sir; but all the fellows say—"

"Mere foolish hearsay among the juniors. I presume!" said Mr. Quelch. "I am surprised that you should mention it to me, Wharton, or attach any importance to it yourself. I cannot believe anything of the kind. You are probably acquainted with Carne's habits, Loder, as I think you are his friend?"

"I am absolutely certain, sir, that Carne has never smoked a cigarette in his life," said Loder calmly. "I regard the suggestion as infamous!"

"Oh, crumbs!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Will you be silent, Cherry?" Mr. Quelch knitted his brows. "Wharton, if I had not always known you to be a very truthful and honourable lad, I should have no hesitation in accepting Carne's statement. On the other hand, it is quite impossible for me to believe that a senior of this school would make a false statement to me. Under the circumstances, I shall reflect upon the matter, and deal with it later. I cannot, however, excuse you for having refused to be caned by Loder, who was acting according to his duty after receiving Carne's report. I shall cane you myself for disrespect to a prefect. You may leave the matter in my hands, Loder."

"Yes, sir."

Loder left the study with Carne. Mr. Quelch rose to his feet, and took up his cane.

"But, sir—" began Johnny Bull.

"Did you, or did you not, refuse to be caned by Loder?" rapped out Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, but—"

"Then hold out your hand."

For some minutes there was a steady sound of swishing in Mr. Quelch's study, to an accompaniment of gasps and grunts. Then the Remove-master pointed to the door with his cane, and the juniors departed.

They made their way to their own quarters, squeezing their hands, and with black looks on their faces.

"Licked?" grinned Billy Bunter, meeting them in the Remove passage. "I say, you fellows, you do look a sulky set of— Yaroooh!"

Billy Bunter sat down with a bump. And the Famous Five went into Study No. 1. There they rubbed their hands, and looked at one another. Harry Wharton's eyes were glittering under his bent brows.

"Carne wins!" said Bob Cherry, with a feeble grin. "You see, he had us, anyway. Mustn't disobey a dear prefect."

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!" said Nugent.

"But what an awful Prussian! Yow-ow!" mumbled Johnny Bull.

"The lying hound!" Wharton gritted his teeth. "To say the smokes were mine. I never expected that, even from Carne! It seems that Quelch saw him picking them up after we left him. So he was glad of a chance of fixing them on me. The shady, smoky blackguard, to make out that I'm a fellow of his kidney!"

"Quelch doesn't quite believe it," said Nugent.

"He doesn't know what to believe, of course," said Harry savagely. "I don't mind the licking. After all, we did cheek Loder. But to be made out to be a silly, smoky, shady rotter like Skinner or Snoop—" He gritted his teeth.

"And the best of it is that Carne's a smoky rotter!" growled Johnny Bull. "We know he smokes in his study, and breaks bounds at night. But naturally he doesn't ask us to come and see him doing it. Quelch's an ass!"

"We could catch him out easily enough if we took the trouble," said Harry.

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"All the fellows know the kind of blackguard Carne is, though Quelch doesn't. It would be as easy as falling off a form to show him up."

"That is a wheezefully good idea, my esteemed Wharton. Let us show up the ludicrous Carne in his true colours, which will be a tit for a tat!"

Wharton's eyes gleamed.

"Good old Inky! He's accused me to Quelch of being a smoky cad. Well, I'll let Quelch see what Carne is. That's a Roland for an Oliver."

"Yow! I've had enough for one day!" mumbled Nugent.

"Who is saucy to the goose must be saucy to the gander, as your English proverb remarks," said the nabob sagely.

"The catchfulness of the esteemed Carne will be easy, and then the honourable Quelch will have to admit that Wharton is not a lieful Prussian."

"I'm going to do it," said Harry. "It's up to us! Carne's made me out a shady rotter—and a liar! Unless I prove it against him, Quelch will never know whether I lied or not. And I'm not going to have that hanging over me. Carne's called me a liar, and I'm going to prove him to be one! You fellows can back me up if you like."

"Any old thing!" said Bob Cherry. "Let's catch him out of bounds and tie him to the knocker of the door. Then he can explain to everybody how he came there."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Easy as falling off a form," grinned Nugent. "We know he sneaks out at night sometimes. We've only got to keep our peepers open, and catch him at it, and when we've caught Carne in the act—"

"Shush!" murmured Bob Cherry, as Harold Skinner looked into the study.

Skinner looked at them suspiciously.

"What's that about Carne?" he asked.

"Find out!" said Johnny Bull politely.

"So you've got away from your loving twin, Skinner?" grinned Bob Cherry.

Skinner shook his fist into the study.

"Yes, you rotter! And I'll make you sit up for it somehow! That's what I've come to tell you."

"Better give us a licking all round," suggested Bob Cherry. "You can begin with me. Franky will hold your jacket, won't you, Franky?"

"Pleased!" said Nugent.

Skinner did not accept the offer. He walked away rather hurriedly, scowling. The Famous Five sat down to a somewhat dismal tea. Their hands were aching from the severe caning, and it was a long time before they felt comfortable. But they found some consolation in planning the campaign against the bully of the Sixth.

Meanwhile, a much more cheerful tea proceeded in Carne's study. Loder and Carne were there, and in a cheery mood. And when tea was over, the door having been duly locked, cigarettes were produced, and the two sportive youths lighted up. Mr. Quelch was still in doubt as to the ownership of the cigarettes. If he could have looked into Carne's study at that moment he would not have been left in much doubt—as Loder and Carne were smoking them.

"Those cubs have got it in the neck," Loder remarked. "All the same, I'd be a bit careful, if I were you, Carne, for a time. Quelch doesn't exactly believe that young hound; but he may keep an eye open on you—might even speak to Wingate about it—or the Head! Better to go easy for a time."

"I've got an appointment to-night," grinned Carne.

"I'd advise you to chuck it, then."

"Can't be did."

"You'd better be jolly careful, then,"

said Loder. "In your shoes, I wouldn't go near the Cross Keys again for a week at least."

"I shall be careful," said Carne.

But Loder's friendly warning was not lost on him; and when the cigarettes were finished, and Loder left the study, Carne remained in a very thoughtful mood. He would have had still more food for thought if he had known of the plan of campaign that was being discussed in Study No. 1 in the Remove.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Plan of Campaign!

"WHAT'S the programme, mighty chief?"

Bob Cherry asked the question.

The Famous Five had met in the junior Common-room after prep. They were in a group by themselves, near the window. Skinner was regarding them curiously across the room; but he could not hear what was said.

Harry Wharton's brows were knitted. The accusation made against him by Carne had rankled in his mind. To be accused of being a "smoky rotter" like Skinner or Snoop, or like Carne himself, was bad enough, but to be accused of telling a deliberate lie was still more bitter. Mr. Quelch, it was true, had not adjudged him a liar—the matter was left in doubt. Wharton felt more than justified in taking measures to place the matter beyond doubt. And that could only be done by showing up Carne in his true colours. The blackguardly proceedings of Arthur Carne did not concern the juniors as a rule, and they would not have thought of giving him away. But Carne's false accusation altered all that. Wharton had to show him up in order to clear himself, and his chums were prepared to back him up to any extent.

Wharton had thought over the matter coolly and carefully, and he had decided upon the steps to be taken.

"It won't be so jolly easy, you fellows," he said. "Mind, I'm not asking you to take a hand if you'd rather not."

"Rats!" said Johnny Bull.

"Well, this is the programme. We know that Carne breaks bounds at night. All the school knows or suspects it. He's too jolly careful to be caught. But he hasn't had to deal with us yet. We're going to catch him!"

"Hear, hear!"

"He clears off at least once a week—oftener, for all we know. We've got to spot him out of bounds, and keep him there! When he's caught out, it will be pretty clear to whom the cigarettes belonged. They belong to the kind of chap who does that kind of thing, you see."

"A Daniel come to judgment!" grinned Bob Cherry. "But how are we going to catch his smoky majesty out of bounds? He won't tell us when he's going."

"There's only one way. We know how he will get out."

"His study window," said Bob. "We use the box-room window; so may the Sixth sometimes, but not always. They have their studies nicely placed for dropping into the quad. Very thoughtful on the part of the builders, I think."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You remember we spotted Loder sneaking out of his study window once, when we were out of bounds ourselves," said Harry. "Carne will go the same way, I fancy. He may go to-night, or any night. One of us will have to scout in the quad after lights out."

"Oh, my hat!"

"That's the only way. If he goes, it will be eleven at the latest, I should say."

Somebody's got to keep watch in the quadrangle till eleven every night, and see when he goes. And when he's gone, the chap on the watch calls the others, and we all wait for him to come in, and collar him as he comes in. Then we tie his wrists to the big knocker on the door, and leave him there. He can kick on the door till they let him in, and explain how he came to be out of bounds at midnight. That will show whether Carne or I was the liar to-day!" said Wharton, his eyes gleaming.

"Good egg!" said Bob Cherry. "It means sneaking down from the dorm, and kicking up our heels in the cold; but that's a detail. If we're missed from the dorm, we get a licking. That's another detail. He mayn't go for a week, and we shall have to keep it up all that time. But that's still another detail."

"The detailfulness is terrific!"

"Look here, Bob—"

"All serene, my son! I'll volunteer to begin to-night," said Bob.

"No! I'll start," said Harry.

"Bow-wow!—We'll toss up for it, and take it in turns afterwards."

"Better leave it to me!" said Harry.

"I don't mind—"

"Rats! We won't! Now, who's got a penny? Odd man to take first watch," said Johnny Bull.

The penny was produced, and Hurree Singh proved to be odd man.

"It's up to you, Inky."

"The upfulness is terrific, my esteemed Bob! I shall watchfully keep an esteemed eye open for the disgusting Carne to-night," said the nabob.

"Hallo! You fellows playing pitch and toss?" sneered Skinner, coming over towards the group of juniors.

"Not exactly," said Bob Cherry. "But we're just going to." He grasped Skinner by the shoulders. "Here goes! I pitch, and Johnny tosses. It's a Bull's work, you know. Go it, Johnny!"

Skinner gave a yell as he was pitched at Johnny Bull. The grinning Johnny promptly tossed him on to the floor, where Skinner sat and roared. The Famous Five walked away and left him there.

When the Remove came up to the dormitory that night, some of the juniors looked rather curiously at the Co. An impression had spread that something was on for that night—the rumour emanating from Skinner.

"You fellows up to anything?" Tom Brown inquired.

"Yes, rather!" said Bob Cherry.

"What is it, then?"

"Snuff!"

"Eh?" ejaculated the New Zealand junior.

"Up to snuff!" explained Bob Cherry. To which the youth from Taranaki replied: "Fathead!"

"Breaking bounds, I suppose," said Snoop, with a sneer. "Well, I jolly well hope you'll be caught!"

"Thanks awfully!" said Bob.

"I say, you fellows!" Billy Bunter blinked at the five. "I say, if you're going out on the razzle, I don't mind coming. I'm a bit of a sport myself, you know."

"You fat rabbit!" snorted Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull! I don't mind

coming with you to the Cross Keys," said Bunter fatuously. "I'm rather a blade, when I get going. I suppose one of you will lend me ten bob? You can have my postal-order for it in the morning."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! Look here, Wharton, are you going to the Cross Keys?"

"Shurrup, you ass!" muttered Squiff, as Gwynne of the Sixth appeared in the doorway, coming to see lights out for the Remove. But the short-sighted Owl did not see the prefect, and he went on:

"I don't see why Wharton can't own up if he's going to the Cross Keys for a little game. They're an awfully sporting set there. I—"

"Bedad, and what's that about the Cross Key—" exclaimed Gwynne, coming into the dormitory.

Billy Bunter spun round, and blinked at him, his little round eyes bulging behind his glasses.

"Nan-nan-nothing!" he stammered. "I—I didn't mention the Cross Keys, Gwynne."

"Why, I heard you!" exclaimed Gwynne.

"You—you're mistaken, I—I think," stammered Bunter. "I—I don't really know there is such a place, you know, and—and I wouldn't mention it if I did! I know Wharton isn't going there, and I—I didn't offer to go with him. All these fellows are witnesses that I never said anything of the sort."

There was a howl of laughter in the dormitory, and Gwynne grinned. Billy Bunter was a great hand at whoppers; but his whoppers were rather unfortunate in the way of hanging together. They simply didn't hang together. And they never found believers. The prefect took the Owl of the Remove by one fat ear, and Bunter yelped dismally.

"So you offered to go with Wharton to a pub?" he exclaimed.

"Yareeh! No. I—I was urging him not to go!" wailed Bunter. "Wharton's a witness. He—he will tell you I begged of him with tears in my eyes not to— Yareeh!"

Gwynne looked very sharply at the captain of the Remove.

"What does this mean, Wharton?" he asked.

Wharton gave an angry shrug of the shoulders.

"Only that Bunter's a fat idiot!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"The silly ass is talking out of his fat neck, Gwynne," said Peter Todd. "Wharton hasn't said anything about the Cross Keys."

"Of—of course he hasn't," said Bunter. "Nobody has—me least of all! It's—it's the acoustics of this dormitory, Gwynne—they're to blame—"

"Dry up, you fat duffer!" said the Sixth-Former. "I suppose there's nothing in it, Wharton? But I've heard about what was said in Mr. Quelch's study this evening. It seems that you had smokes about you—"

"It was a lie of Carne's!" said Harry, his face crimsoning.

"H'm! Well, never mind."

Gwynne let the subject drop. The lights were put out, and the prefect left the dormitory. Then there was a buzz of voices.

"Caught smoking, by gad!" said Snoop. "After all the seriousness we've had from Wharton! He, he, he!"

"I'm shocked at you, Wharton!" said Skinner solemnly, and there was a laugh.

"Too awful for belief!" chuckled Fisher T. Fish. "You were a howling jay to be caught, Wharton! You've been jolly careful up till now."

"He, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton did not speak. Very few of the fellows in the Remove were likely to believe the accusation Arthur Carne had made; but quite a number seemed to think it an excellent subject for jokes. Wharton listened to the remarks that ran from bed to bed, without speaking, but with burning ears. But his determination was stronger than ever to make the bully of the Sixth sorry that he had uttered that falsehood.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Out of bounds!

"HALLO! Who's turning out?"

It was a sleepy voice from Squiff's bed, about twenty minutes later.

"Quiet, my esteemed chum!" came the purring tones of Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh. "Do not wake the esteemed house."

"You're not going out, Inky?"

"I am going for a little pleasant promenade, my worthy Squiff, that is all. But the still tongue in time saves ninepence, as your English proverb says."

Squiff chuckled sleepily over the English proverb, and closed his eyes again. The Nabob of Blunipar finished dressing in the dark, and silently left the Remove dormitory.

The upper passages of the house were in darkness, and Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh glided along, unseen and noiseless, to the lower box-room. A few minutes later he dropped lightly to the ground, and scuttled round the School House.

The quadrangle was dark, and there was a slight mist from the sea. The dusky junior stopped under the nearest of the big elms to the Sixth Form study windows. Most of those windows were still lighted, though little light escaped into the quad, owing to the regulations. But a gleam here and there through the dark blinds showed that the Sixth had not yet gone to bed.

A keen wind sang through the trees, and whistled round the house. Summer was not playing up at all. It was not a comfortable vigil, especially for Hurree Singh, who felt the English cold very acutely. But he endured the discomfort with Oriental stoicism, as he stood motionless in the deep shadow and waited.

It was a quarter of an hour or more before the light went out in Carne's study. Several other windows darkened about the same time. Hurree Singh's black eyes were fixed on the row of windows. Now that the gleams of light were gone, he could not distinguish one from another at the distance. But he was not likely to miss a fellow dropping from one of them. If Carne did not appear by eleven o'clock the vigil was to be given up; to be resumed the next night—and every night till the breaker of bounds was caught! That was the programme.

The nabob drew a hurried breath as, in a hush of the wind, he heard the faint sound of a window opening.

There was a light footfall. Then a faint sound again, of a window that closed this time. Hurree Singh's heart beat hard.

His eyes were strained in the gloom. Someone—certainly a Sixth-Former—had dropped from one of the windows within a few yards of him!

It might be Gerald Loder, or perhaps Walker, or even Valence, or it might be Carne. With the other black sheep the

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Famous Five had no concern. Arthur Carne was their game. But how to distinguish the breaker of bounds in the darkness was a puzzle.

Hurree Singh caught a glimpse of an overcoated figure that flitted away in the gloom, and vanished through the elms.

As silently and cautiously as a Red Indian on the war-trail the Nabob of Bhanipur hurried after the dim form.

There was a faint click in the darkness ahead.

Hurree Singh stopped.

He knew what that click meant. It was a key turning in the side-gate. To that gate only the masters and prefects of the school had keys. And Carne, though in the Sixth, was not a prefect.

The dusky junior hesitated a few moments, and then went on to the gate. It was closed—the truant had gone! The nabob made his way back to the house. Silently he came close up to the dark windows, climbed on Carne's window-sill, and examined the window.

It was tightly closed; but whether the catch was fastened inside the junior could not tell in the darkness.

He could not test it by opening the window, for if Carne had been in the study the result would have been serious. A junior who burgled a Sixth Form-room at an hour when he was supposed to be asleep in his dormitory was certain of a flogging from the Head at least.

Hurree Singh had done all he could. He skirted the house, climbed in through the box-room, and returned with silent steps to the Remove dormitory. It was half-past ten.

"Are you awake, my esteemed chums?" murmured the nabob.

"I am." It was Wharton's voice.

"Anything to report, old scout?"

"The reportfulness is terrific!"

Harry Wharton slipped from his bed, and awakened the rest of the Co. They gathered to hear the nabob's whispered report. The rest of the Remove were deep in slumber by that time, with one exception. But that one exception kept very quiet, and the Famous Five did not know that Skinner was awake.

Skinner was both curious and suspicious, and he was aware that something was on; and Skinner meant to know what it was, charitably hoping that it would turn out to be something he could use to the disadvantage of the Co.

Hurree Singh explained in a whisper what he had learned. The whisper was not loud enough to wake a sleeper, but it was loud enough to reach a straining, wakeful ear, and Harold Skinner did not lose a word.

"Then you don't know whether it's Carne or not?" said Bob Cherry, when the nabob had finished.

"Looks more likely to be Loder or Walker, if he had a key to the gate," remarked Nugent. "Carne hasn't a key."

"He could borrow Loder's, though," said Bob.

"Yes, that's so."

"We don't want to catch the wrong bird," grunted Johnny Bull. "It doesn't matter to us what the other rotters do. Carne's our man."

"May I make a suggestive remark?" murmured the nabob.

There was a subdued chuckle from the juniors. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh's English was always entertaining.

"Go it, Inky!" grinned Bob.

"The esteemed moon will be rising soonfully. If we see the disgusting rotter come in, there will be light enough to know him recognisefully, perhaps. Anyway, we may know his esteemed clobber."

"That's so," said Bob. "Carne wears a chessboard overcoat, and if he's got

that on, we should know it if there's a glimmer of light."

"We'll chance it," said Harry quietly. "If necessary, we'll collar the rotter, and see whether it's Carne or not!"

"Phew! Collar a prefect, perhaps!"

"Not much risk in this case. Loder or Walker wouldn't like to report himself as being out of bounds at midnight. And he couldn't report us without reporting himself."

"Ha, ha! That's so! Let's get out, then!"

The juniors dressed quickly in the darkness. Having arranged dummies in the beds, on the chance of some suspicious eye glancing into the dormitory, they crept out into the passage.

Skinner laid his head on the pillow again, and chuckled softly.

"So they're going for Carne! I hope they'll catch the beast, and I hope he'll wring their necks, too!" Which was very impartial of Skinner, at least.

The Famous Five clambered down from the box-room window one after another, quietly and cautiously. They lost no time in going to the side gate on the road, though it was not likely that the black sheep would return yet. Close by the gates, in the deep shadow of the wall, they waited.

"The beautiful British climate is terrific!" murmured the nabob, as he beat his arms on his chest to keep up the circulation.

And the juniors chuckled. The beautiful British climate was too much sometimes for the son of India's torrid clime.

Midnight sounded dully through the mist. The moon was climbing higher in the sky, but the light was very faint, through the heavy bank of clouds and the dim mist that came in from the North Sea.

The Removites waited with what patience they could muster. All Greyfriars was sleeping now, with the exception of the watchful five and the senior out of bounds.

Wharton felt in his pockets to make sure that the whipcord was there in readiness to secure Arthur Carne to the knocker of the great door of the School House.

If Carne was discovered in that peculiar position after midnight, there would be no doubt left as to who had lied to Mr. Quelch.

With all his cunning, the blackguard of the Sixth would not be able to lie himself out of the scrape—his shady manners and customs would be shown up in the brightest limelight, as it were—and the junior he had accused would be vindicated.

"Shush!" murmured Bob Cherry, as there came a faint sound at the wall.

The Sixth-Former was returning.

The juniors waited, with hearts beating a little more quickly than usual. Was it Carne? They were almost certain. But they would soon see!

The key clicked in the lock. The gate opened. A figure in an overcoat came through, and the gate closed again. The Removites strained their eyes to see.

Dim as the light was, they could see that it was not Carne's chessboard overcoat, as Bob had called it, that was before them. It was a light grey overcoat, and it struck Wharton's eye as familiar.

"Collar him!" he whispered suddenly.

The juniors sprang forward.

There was a startled gasp from the figure within the gate. Wharton's hands were about to fall on him. He could not see the face, which was shadowed by a cap pulled down almost to the nose. But he knew that light grey overcoat—the overcoat he had rescued that afternoon from Skinner and Snoop!

"Gwynne!" panted Wharton.

He staggered back in the shock of the discovery.

The Sixth-Former did not lose the opportunity. Whatever he thought of finding himself suddenly surrounded by juniors in the midnight darkness he did not stay to express. He pushed past Wharton, shoved Bob Cherry savagely aside, and dashed away at a run. He vanished almost in a twinkling towards the house.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

A Startling Discovery!

"G WYNNE!"

The juniors repeated the name in wonder and consternation.

They did not pursue the fleeing figure. They had no desire whatever to capture Patrick Gwynne of the Sixth.

"Gwynne!" said Wharton dazedly. Even yet he could scarcely believe it.

"Gwynne!"

"My hat!" breathed Bob Cherry.

"Not our game, anyway," said Johnny Bull. "Let's get back to the dorm!"

"But—but Gwynne!" Wharton simply stuttered. "Who'd have thought it? Old Gwynne!"

"That accounts for him having a key to the gate," said Frank Nugent, with a deep breath. "After all, we knew Carne hadn't one. Gwynne's a prefect!"

"Who'd have thought it of him?" muttered Wharton. "I always thought Gwynne was no end decent. He's easy-going, though. Loder or Carne has got him into this kind of thing. I'm sure of that."

"Well, he won't report us, that's one comfort!" said Johnny Bull. "He can't, under the circumstances. No wonder he caught on to what Bunter was saying in the dorm about the Cross Keys! He wouldn't have cared to meet you there, Harry. That's where he's been, of course."

"Blessed rotter!" said Bob Cherry. "I'd never have thought it of him!"

"Well, he isn't really a rotter," said Wharton. "He's been led into it. He's too easy-going. I—I wish we hadn't come out to-night!"

All the juniors wished that. The discovery had come as a painful shock to them.

They liked and respected Gwynne of the Sixth, almost as much as George Wingate himself. To find him out in this was a shock. They had never dreamed of such a thing, of course. Loder or Walker it might have been, possibly Valence—they had been prepared for that. But Gwynne!

"I—I say, a prefect has a right to let himself out if he likes, you know," said Nugent hesitatingly. "He—he may have been out for some good reason."

"Rot!" said Johnny Bull. "If he had a reason for going out that would bear explaining, he wouldn't go out by way of his study window. Inky saw him."

"The secretfulness was terrific!" said the nabob sadly. "I did not see which window, but it was a Sixth Form window."

"And if he dared let it be known that he'd been out, he wouldn't have scuttled off like that just now," went on Johnny Bull. "It's his duty as a prefect to report us for being out of the dormitory at midnight. Doesn't look as if he's going to do his duty."

The juniors were silent.

It was clear enough.

Some unexplained cause might have called Gwynne away from the school at that hour. It was possible, though not probable. But in that case he would

have gone out without concealment—with leave. He would have left by the door, not by the study window. And when the juniors rushed on him, he would have collared them, to be reported for punishment. That was his plain duty as a prefect. He had not done it; and the only reason could be that he dared not let it be known that he had been out—in a word, that he had been breaking bounds. And there was only one explanation of his breaking bounds at that hour of the night—an explanation he certainly could not make to the Head—that he had taken up the shady practices of the black sheep of Greyfriars.

"Let's get back," said Wharton miserably.

The juniors made their way back in dismal silence. They would have given a good deal not to have made that discovery.

If it had been Skinner or Snoop who had made the discovery, he would probably have considered what use he might turn it to, for his own advantage. No thought of that kind came to the Famous Five. They were only thinking how rotten it was that an honest, honourable fellow like old Gwynne should have fallen a prey to the tempter—for that, they felt certain, was the explanation. The Irish Sixth-Former was easy-going and good-natured to a fault. The Removites had often received kindnesses at his hands, and he was more lenient than was really quite consistent with his duty as a prefect. Such a fellow might easily have fallen a victim to some cunning and unscrupulous knave—Loder or Carne, very likely. His undignified flight when they found him at the gate touched the juniors with a sense of the humiliation he must have felt.

They crept back into the dormitory in a glum mood.

In silence they removed their clothes to return to bed. The dormitory was silent, save for the steady breathing of the sleepers. The juniors did not see a pair of greenish eyes that watched from Skinner's bed. Skinner was very curious to know the result of the expedition.

"Not a word about this, of course, you fellows," whispered Wharton, at last.

"Not a syllable," said Bob.

"It's rotten enough, but we're not going to be the ones to start any talk about Gwynne. I dare say it's the first time he's ever played the fool like that, and after the scare he's had to-night it may be the last, too."

"Shoudn't wonder!"

"Anyway, it's no business of ours. We went out for Carne, and we found out Gwynne by accident. I wish we hadn't gone!"

"Same here!"

"The sameness is terrific!"

"It's up to us to keep it dark," went on Harry, in a low voice. "Gwynne has always been decent to us, at any rate. And—and he mayn't have been to the Cross Keys; we really don't know that he has."

"Ahem! No!" murmured Bob.

"Anyway, it's a secret."

"The secretfulness is terrific!"

"What about to-morrow night?" said Bob dubiously. "Are we going to try for Carne again?"

Wharton shook his head decidedly.

"I—I think not. I—I'd rather let it go. I'd give anything not to have found out what we've found out to-night."

"Might catch old Wingate on the hop next!" murmured Bob. "Blessed if I should be surprised, after Gwynne!"

"We'll find some other way of dealing with Carne. We—we might see Gwynne again, and—and we'd better not. The less we know about it the better."

"Right on the wicket, old chap! Mum's

the word, and we'll boil Carne in oil instead of catching him out of bounds! Nobody need know this but us, and we'll forget all about it."

"Good-night, you chaps!" said Harry, as he slid into bed.

"Good-night!"

"Good-night!" added another whispering voice, with a mocking intonation, and the Famous Five jumped.

"Skinner!" breathed Bob.

"Skinner!" Wharton's voice trembled with anger. "Skinner, you cad, are you awake?"

"Wide awake, dear boy!" chortled Skinner.

"You wretched cad! You've been listening!"

"I've certainly heard your little jaw," chuckled Skinner. "What a merry surprise! So old Gwynne goes on the randan of a night, does he? Blessed if I'd have thought it of him! Awful shock for you good boys!" And Skinner chuckled again.

"You—you worm!" said Johnny Bull, breathing hard. "If you say a single word about it I'll hammer you to a jelly!"

"Will you?" yawned Skinner. "Then I'll call on Gwynne to keep you in order, Bull, my pippin! I dare say he would, if I hinted what I know."

"You worm!" breathed Johnny.

"Good-night, dear boys!" chuckled Skinner.

The Famous Five made no reply. They settled down to sleep; but it was some time before their eyes closed. Skinner knew! What use the cad of the Remove would make of his knowledge they could not guess. But the fact that the unscrupulous fellow knew was enough to dismay them.

Skinner laid his head on the pillow, and went to sleep very contentedly. Skinner felt that he had been very well repaid for the trouble of keeping awake and playing the spy.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The Whip-hand!

HARRY WHARTON & Co. turned out less promptly than usual at the clang of the rising-bell in the morning.

Their night's adventure was weighing upon their minds.

Much as they wished to get even with Arthur Carne for his rascality, they would have given a good deal not to have thought of that plan of campaign. It was too late to regret it now. They had the secret to keep. And worst of all was the knowledge that Skinner shared that secret.

They half expected Skinner to retail the whole story to the dormitory when the Removites turned out of bed.

But the cad of the Remove made no reference to it. He grinned at the Co., and gave Johnny Bull a friendly nod, which very nearly caused Johnny to explode. He did not like friendly nods from Skinner. When the Famous Five were ready to go down, Harry Wharton paused. Skinner was not ready yet.

"Coming down, Skinner?" asked Harry.

One or two fellows glanced round. It was the first time the captain of the Remove had shown any predilection for Harold Skinner's society.

"Oh, yes, in a few minutes!" said Skinner airily.

Wharton followed his chums downstairs. In the quadrangle they looked at one another glumly.

"What's that rotter going to do?" asked Johnny Bull.

"I'm going to ask him."

Johnny gave an expressive snort.

"That means you're going to be civil to the cad?"

"Well, I suppose so. I wouldn't for my own sake; but it's through us he's spotted Gwynne."

"Must hold a candle to the Kaiser, you know," remarked Bob Cherry, slightly altering the old proverb.

"Better give him a jolly good hiding, and promise him another if he jaws!" said Johnny Bull.

"Fathead!"

Skinner came sauntering out of the School House with his hands in his pockets. He did not come towards the Famous Five. If they wanted him, they could come to him, Skinner considered. So they came.

"Just a word with you, Skinner," said Wharton abruptly.

"Two if you like, old scout!"

"You heard what we were saying in the dorm last night?"

"Oh, yes!"

"I won't say anything about the dirty trick you played—playing the spy on us. Never mind that. But you found out—"

"That you'd spotted Gwynne breaking bounds at night," said Skinner coolly.

"Quite correct, dear boy!"

"We're keeping it secret," said Harry.

"Is that strictly in accordance with the high moral principles of No. 1 Study?" asked Skinner, with a serious air. "Gwynne is a prefect, and called upon to set us fags a good example. Oughtn't you to show him up, or at least to preach him a neat little sermon pointing out the error of his ways?"

"Look here—"

"I should suggest the sermon," said Skinner calmly. "A few words of rebuke and encouragement, in your well-known, high-toned style, Wharton—"

Harry Wharton clenched his hands hard. The captain of the Remove was not in the least given to preaching to anyone, as Skinner well knew. But if any fellow acted decently Skinner chose to regard it as humbug.

"It was really your ripping homilies, I think, that saved the Bounder from the downward path," continued Skinner. "You are, in fact, a youth with a high moral influence, Wharton. Why not spring the high moral influence on Gwynne? It might buck him no end, and help to bring him up in the way he should go."

"Look here, Skinner—"

"He might think it cheeky at first, certainly; but then, you could point out that you are the moralist chap at Greyfriars—"

Bob Cherry chuckled slightly, and Wharton glared at him.

"What are you chortling at, you ass?"

"N-n-nothing! Shall I punch Skinner's nose?" asked Bob amicably.

"I will, if you like."

"Look here, Skinner! We want the whole matter kept dark, and no scandal started about Gwynne," said Harry, controlling his temper. "He's a good sort, though he seems to have played the fool once. It's not our business to get him talked about as Carne and Loder are talked about. He's not a fellow of their kidney, really. You must see that it's only decent to keep the matter quiet."

"I'm not going to shout it from the roof of the house," said Skinner. "I'm shocked at Gwynne, of course—"

"You shocked!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Yes, awfully! But I don't want to be hard on a sinner. Perhaps he will repent, and in time become a saint, like Wharton."

"You silly ass!"

"Who knows?" said Skinner cheerfully. "You remember about Good Little Georgie in the story, who loved his

kind teachers. His moral influence spread over the whole school, from the boots to the headmaster. It might be the same with you, Wharton. The atmosphere of virtue emanating from Study No. 1 may reach the Sixth Form passage and transform it—"

"Shut up, you silly chump!" said Bob Cherry, suppressing another chuckle. "Don't play the giddy ox, Skinner! Look here! Are you going to keep your mouth shut?"

Skinner appeared to reflect.

"I'm going to think about it," he replied.

"What is there to think about?" demanded Wharton savagely.

"The moral aspect of the case," said Skinner calmly. "I'm not at all sure that I can let Gwynne go on the road to ruin like this."

"You cheeky idiot!"

"You never know what it may lead to," said Skinner, with the same owl-like seriousness. "A chap who begins by breaking bounds and pub-haunting may grow up to become a convict or a Cabinet Minister, or something of the kind. Think of Gwynne's parents in that case—his poor old father, with his grey hairs brought down in sorrow to the cemetery! I think you're rather unfeeling, Wharton. I'll think the matter over, and if my conscience—"

"Your what?" ejaculated Bob Cherry. It was the first he had heard of Skinner's conscience.

"My conscience," said Skinner. "If my conscience is easy about it, I'll keep it dark. But conscience comes first—same as with those objector chaps, you know. I've got a conscientious objection to anything of a shady nature—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"But in Gwynne's case, I'll see whether I can temper justice with mercy," said Skinner. "That's all I can say at present. Ta-ta!"

Skinner strolled away, smiling. Johnny Bull made a furious stride after him, but Wharton caught him by the shoulder.

"Chuck it, Johnny!"

"Better hammer him, you ass! It's the best way!"

"And then he'll blab out the story to the whole Form. Let him alone!"

"Does the rotter mean to keep it dark, or not?" asked Nugent, in perplexity.

Wharton set his teeth.

"I think he does. But his game is to keep us on tenterhooks, and make us sit up. He's going to worry us as much as he can."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There's Gwynne!"

Gwynne of the Sixth came out into the quadrangle with Wingate. The two seniors strolled away, with the eyes of the Famous Five upon them. They did not even glance at the juniors.

"What a nerve!" murmured Bob. "Gwynne must know that it was us in the quad last night. He heard our voices."

"He must know we know," said Harry. "I suppose he will see us on the quiet and ask us to keep it dark."

"Most likely."

The chums of the Remove went in to breakfast. They found Skinner and Snoop in the hall, talking in low tones and chuckling. Skinner gave the Co. a leering look. Whether he was telling Snoop the secret, or whether he was enacting a little scene to make the chums uneasy, they could not guess. It was certainly the amiable Skinner's intention to keep them on tenterhooks.

It was the first time Skinner had ever had the upper hand, so far as the Famous Five were concerned, and he evidently

enjoyed the experience, and meant to make the most of it.

Sidney James Snoop joined the Famous Five as they came out after breakfast. Snoop was grinning.

"I've heard all about it," he remarked.

"So Skinner's told you?" said Bob savagely.

"He, he! Yes."

"What has he told you?" asked Harry Wharton quietly.

"About you fellows going out of bounds last night," grinned Snoop. "Was it nice at the Cross Keys? He, he, he!"

Snoop walked away chuckling.

"He hasn't told him," said Wharton.

"It was only a dodge to worry us. We've got a lot of that to expect now."

"My idea is to hammer the beast!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Oh, bow-wow!"

The chums of the Remove were in a somewhat troubled state of mind that morning. Skinner, on the other hand, was very cheery. Somebody, at least, was enjoying himself through that unlucky nocturnal expedition.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Visitors in Study No. 1!

"HAVING tea?"

Skinner put a cheerful face into Study No. 1. It was tea-time, and the Famous Five had gathered there. They gave Skinner expressive looks as he stepped in, with Snoop following him.

"There's the door!" snapped Nugent. Skinner smiled.

"What a ripping spread for war-time!" he remarked. "You must be in funds. The fact is, I'm stony to-day."

"Glad to hear it!" granted Johnny Bull.

"I rather expected you to ask me to tea, Wharton," said Skinner reproachfully. "It was a bit neglectful of you, wasn't it?"

Wharton controlled his feelings with an effort. He understood what Skinner meant. Unless the hospitality of Study No. 1 was extended to him he was going to blab.

Wharton gave his companions a quick look.

"You can come in if you like, Skinner."

"May I bring a friend to tea?" asked Skinner affably.

"Oh, ye-es."

"Thanks awfully!" said Snoop grinning.

The two guests drew chairs to the table. Skinner was smiling genially, but Snoop was in a state of astonishment, which showed that he did not know the secret yet. Snoop could see that they were not welcome in the study. That was plain enough; and the invitation to tea instead of the order of the boot was astonishing. But Sidney James was prepared to make hay while the sun shone, and he piled into the good things with great gusto.

Harry Wharton & Co. were silent. They did not feel inclined to chat with their unwelcome guests. But Skinner and Snoop did not mind. They had not come there for the pleasure of Study No. 1 conversation.

The juniors were half through tea when there was a tap at the door, and Gwynne of the Sixth came in.

The five chums coloured up consciously. They did not doubt that Gwynne had called in to see them, and ask them to keep the incident of the previous night a secret. They had expected that. It was awkward that Skinner and Snoop were in the study at the moment.

"Hallo, I see you're busy!" said the prefect, with a smile.

"N-n-not at all," stammered Wharton.

"You—you want to speak to us, Gwynne?"

"Yes; that's what I've come for."

"I understand. But—"

"You understand?" repeated Gwynne, staring at the captain of the Remove.

"Yes, yes. Perhaps you'd better speak to me outside the study," said Harry, rising from the table as he spoke.

"No need for that. I can speak to you here, I suppose?"

"B-b-better not, I think," stammered Harry.

"Eh? Why not?"

"Well, these two fellows—"

"What two fellows?" asked Gwynne, staring.

"S-S-Skinner and Snoop, I—I mean." Wharton hardly knew what he was saying in his astonishment. Surely Gwynne was not going to blurt the matter out before Skinner and Snoop!

"What do they matter?" asked Gwynne. "Are you going poshy, Wharton? What are you as red as a beetroot for?"

"I—I—I'll come outside," said Harry.

"You needn't do anything of the kind. You don't suppose I've come to tell you any secrets, do you, you young ass?" exclaimed the prefect.

"N-n-no. But—but, you see—"

"Is this a game?" asked Gwynne. "You mustn't try to pull a prefect's leg, Wharton. He's liable to kick."

"Nunno; but—but—"

"I came here to ask you—"

"Shut up, for goodness' sake!" gasped Bob Cherry, interrupting the Sixth Former. "Do you want it to be jawed all over the school, Gwynne?"

"Eh? What?"

"Look here, Skinner and Snoop, you can get out for a bit," said Bob.

"Don't mind me!" grinned Skinner.

"What am I to get out for?" exclaimed Snoop, staring. "Do you want me to believe that you've got secrets with Gwynne? Gammon!"

"What do you mean, you young duffer?" roared Gwynne. "What are you driving at? Do you want a licking?"

"Nunno; but—but—"

"I came here to see you, Wharton, and to ask you—"

"Do have a little sense, Gwynne!" exclaimed Wharton. "Can't you speak to me in private without those two fellows hearing?"

"Why should I?" ejaculated Gwynne. "What does it matter if Skinner and Snoop hear me?"

"Doesn't it, then?" said Harry.

"Of course it doesn't, you young idiot!"

"Well, if you don't mind, I don't see that we need," said Wharton, quite bewildered.

"Why should I mind? I came here to ask you to go down to Friardale for me—"

"Wha-a-a-at?"

"And get my new footer-boots from the outfitter's," said Gwynne. "As you Remove kids don't fag now, I'm asking you instead of telling you. But if all this rot means that you don't want to go, I'll send Nugent minor."

"I—I—I'll go with pleasure!" said Wharton dazedly. "I—I thought it was something else, Gwynne."

"Eh? What did you think it was?"

"Oh, n-n-nothing!"

Gwynne looked at him hard.

"I'm not quite after catching on, Wharton. I suppose this is humour of the Remove brand? Still, I won't lick you as you're going down to Friardale for me. Here's the note."

Gwynne dropped an envelope on the table, and left the study. Skinner burst into a chuckle, and Snoop stared blankly.

"What on earth does all that mean?" asked Snoop.

"Find out!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"You haven't got any secrets with Gwynne, have you?"

"Go and eat cake!"

"Thanks! I prefer cake!" said Snoop. "Pass it this way!"

The tea-table was quite clear when Skinner and Snoop left the study at last. The Famous Five were lost in astonishment.

"What does Gwynne mean?" said Bob, when the unwelcome guests were gone. "Is he off his rocker? He must know it was us last night. He knows our voices, even if he couldn't recognise us in the dark."

"I suppose his game is to let the matter drop entirely, and act as if it never happened," said Harry. "It's the best idea, perhaps. We jolly nearly gave it away ourselves to Snoop. We'd better be more careful. It would have been all right if those rotters hadn't been here."

"Are you going to stand this kind of thing—those cads shoving themselves into our study?" demanded Nugent.

"I—I don't see what we can do, if we want Skinner to keep quiet."

"Let him come into my study, that's all!" said Johnny Bull, in a rumbling voice. "I know what I shall jolly well do!"

Perhaps Skinner realised that Johnny's temper was not to be relied upon too far, for he did not pay any visits to Study No. 4.

After tea Harry Wharton cycled down to the village to fetch Gwynne's boots. He took them to the prefect's study when he came back. He passed Carne in the passage as he came away. Carne gave him a sharp, hard look, and paused.

"You came here to see me, I suppose?" he muttered.

"No, I did not," said Harry. "I've been to Gwynne's study."

"Gwynne! What for?"

"To take him his footer-boots," said Wharton, astonished at the Sixth-Former's inquisitiveness.

"Oh! Nothing else?"

"No. Why?"

Carne did not answer that question, but went into his study and closed the door after him. His look and manner had been full of uneasiness, and Wharton could not help noting it; but as to the cause of his uneasiness Harry could not even make a guess.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Skinner Is Ambitious!

"ROT!"

Half a dozen voices made that remark to Skinner the next day. Skinner had made a statement which called it forth, and his statement was that he was going to play in the Remove Eleven on Saturday against St. Jude's.

"Rot!" said Sampson Quincy Ifley Field of New South Wales. "If Wharton put you in we'd scalp him! But we know he won't."

"What are you talking out of your neck for, Skinner?" asked Bolsover major. "You can't play footer!"

"Perhaps I could play as well as some of the chaps who swank on Little Side if I had a fair show!" sneered Skinner. "Anyway, I'm playing on Saturday."

"Gammon!" grunted Rake. "Why, I'm not in the team, and if Wharton left me out and put you in—my hat!"

"Yes; give us a milder one, Skinney," said Vernon-Smith. "We can't swallow that!"

"You'll see!" said Skinner defiantly.

"Bob Cherry!" called out Bolsover



"You kids are wanted!" said Dicky Nugent. (See Chapter 13.)

major. "Is Skinner playing on Saturday?"

"I dare say he is," said Bob, stopping.

"He generally does play on a half-holiday—he plays the giddy ox."

"Is he playing in the St. Jude's match, fathead?"

"Ha, ha! This is the first I've heard of it if he is!"

"I say, you fellows, if Wharton plays Skinner, he'll have to play me!" said Billy Bunter indignantly. "I'm a better footballer than Skinner any day!"

"Well, you're not much worse," said Mark Linley, laughing. "But it's gammon. Skinner won't play."

"You'll jolly well see!" snapped Skinner, and he walked away. He went to Study No. 1, where Wharton was busy with lines.

The captain of the Remove frowned as Skinner came in. Since he had known Gwynne's secret, Skinner had assumed airs of familiarity which made Wharton writhe, though he managed to control his feelings.

"Hallo, old scout! Nearly done?" said Skinner cheerily.

"Yes," said Harry curtly.

"Good! I want to talk to you about the match on Saturday."

"Nothing to interest you in that, is there?"

"Well, yes. I think it's about time I had a chance in the Form Eleven," said Skinner coolly. "I've been passed over long enough, goodness knows."

"You haven't been passed over," said Harry. "You're left out of the games because you're a slacking, smoky shirker, and can't play. If you mean that you want to take up footer, I'll keep an eye

on you, and give you a trial next time we play the Third."

"Thanks! But I'm not looking for a chance of distinguishing myself in a fag match. I'd rather play against St. Jude's."

"Is that a joke?"

"Not at all. I want to play on Saturday."

"Well, you can't!"

"I think you'd better put my name down on the list, Wharton. I've done you a good turn, you know. One good turn deserves another."

Harry Wharton drew a deep, quick breath. He understood now.

Skinner was a slacker of the first water, and he did not care for games. He would never take the trouble to keep himself fit; but he had, at the same time, a desire to swank as a member of the Form Eleven. A fellow who hardly ever turned up at practice could scarcely ask for a place in the Form team under ordinary circumstances. But Skinner was in possession of a secret Wharton wanted him to keep, and that altered matters.

"It can't be done!" said Harry at last. "I understand you, Skinner, but it can't be done! I can't risk a licking from St. Jude's to please a lazy and ill-conditioned slacker."

"Thanks!" said Skinner. "You're jolly polite! Well, I'm going into the team on Saturday. I've told several fellows, in fact, and I'm not going to be shown up as a gas-bag!"

"That's your look-out!"

"Yours, too, and Gwynne's," said Skinner coolly. "If you can't oblige

me in a little matter like this, you can't expect me to keep your secrets."

"You had better think it over," said Harry. "You've got no proof against Gwynne, and we shall hold our tongues in any case. If you start a yarn about Gwynne, it will get to his ears sooner or later, and you'll be called upon to prove what you say. You may find yourself in Queer Street."

"Start a yarn!" repeated Skinner, with a grin. "Not at all! I shall simply repeat what I've heard from you."

"What?" exclaimed Wharton.

"If the story's not true, that's your look-out, not mine. I shall simply say that I had it from you," said Skinner. "I had it from you, hadn't I?"

Wharton was silent. It was true enough; if Skinner spread the story he would give the Famous Five as his authority for it, and if called to account they could not deny their own words. Skinner grinned as he watched the face of the captain of the Remove.

"You see, I've got you in a cleft stick!" he explained. "You'd better think again about keeping me out of the eleven, Wharton!"

Wharton rose to his feet.

"Get out of my study!" he said, between his teeth.

Skinner did not stir.

"Am I going into the eleven?" he asked.

"No; you're going out of this! I suppose it's no good appealing to you as a decent chap, Skinner; but I'll tell you this—if you say a word about Gwynne, I'll hammer you till you can't wriggle! And if you don't clear off I'll begin now!" exclaimed Wharton, with a blaze in his eyes.

Skinner stepped rather quickly into the passage.

"Look out for trouble if I don't play on Saturday, that's all!" he said.

And he walked away.

A chuckle from a dozen juniors greeted him as he came downstairs.

"Well, has Wharton put you in?" asked Hazeldene, laughing.

"You'll see on Saturday!" growled Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You're wanted, Skinner!" called out Temple of the Fourth. "Carne's calling you."

"Oh, rats!" growled Skinner.

And he went to Carne's study.

The Remove were not supposed to fag for the Sixth; but it suited Skinner to make himself useful to Carne at various times.

"Well, here I am!" said Skinner, with a familiarity of manner he would not have ventured to use towards any other member of the Sixth.

"Shut the door," said Carne. "You are a sharp young rotter, Skinner! I believe precious little goes on in the Remove that you don't nose out."

"Right on the wicket," said Skinner calmly. "I'm up to snuff."

"Some of the juniors were out of bounds the night before last, I believe?"

"Oh!" said Skinner, eyeing the senior narrowly.

"You weren't one of them?"

"No fear!"

"You know who they were?"

"Perhaps I do," said Skinner. "But it's no good asking me, Carne. My life wouldn't be worth living in the Remove if I gave a fellow away."

"I'm not asking you to sneak, you young ass! I don't care twopence who went out. They saw somebody else out of bounds, I think—perhaps a senior?"

"My hat!"

"I see you know all about it," muttered Carne.

"You seem to know all about it yourself," said Skinner, in astonishment. "Have you heard them talking about it?"

"Perhaps. You know about it, Skinner. Does that mean that they're spreading the yarn about the school?"

"No fear! They're keeping it a deadly secret," grinned Skinner. "I happened to hear them, that's all."

"And the senior they saw. Who was it?" asked Carne.

The junior shifted uncomfortably.

"I'd rather not tell you, Carne. It's a fellow you don't like. Not one of your pals."

Carne drew a very deep breath.

"I don't see how you knew anything about it, either, unless you spotted him,

too," said Skinner. "In that case, you know who it was, Carne."

The senior gave him a peculiar look—a look which Skinner did not understand till afterwards.

"All serene!" he said. "I won't ask you any more, Skinner. You can cut."

Skinner left the study.

Carne smiled when he was gone. The black sheep of the Sixth seemed to be relieved in his mind by that talk with Skinner.

That evening Skinner paused before the notice-board in the hall, where the list for the Remove match with St. Jude's was posted up. He read the names down carefully; but the name of Harold Skinner did not appear there.

Skinner glared at the list for a moment or two, and gritted his teeth as he went into the junior Common-room. He came up to Harry Wharton with a greenish glitter in his narrow eyes.

"I see the St. Jude's list is up," he observed.

Wharton nodded without speaking.

"My name isn't there, Wharton!"

"Your name isn't going to be there, Skinner!"

"Look out, then!"

Harry Wharton turned his back and walked away. There was a howl from half a dozen juniors in the Common-room.

"Playing on Saturday, Skinner?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Skinner opened his thin lips. The secret trembled upon them. Johnny Bull rose from his chair, and pushed back his cuffs quietly and in a business-like manner, his eyes on Skinner. It was in the Remove cad's power to betray the secret, if he chose. But there was nothing to save him from a terrific thrashing the next moment. Skinner faltered, and his thin lips closed again, and he walked out of the Common-room.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Skinner Tries It On!

"A BRAH! You young rascals!" Gwynne uttered that sharp ejaculation after lessons the following day. The prefect had come up to the box-room for a bag,



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and as he pushed open the door a smell of tobacco-smoke smote his nostrils. Skinner and Snoop were seated upon a trunk, and they had cigarettes going full blast.

There was no time to conceal the cigarettes. The two blades of the Remove sat petrified as the prefect strode in, the cigarettes still between their lips. Snoop gave a gasp.

"So I've caught yez!" said Gwynne grimly.

"I—I—I—" stammered Snoop.

Skinner's face hardened. To be caught smoking by a prefect meant a caning, as a rule. But Skinner did not see why it should mean a caning this time—considering who the prefect was, and what Skinner knew about him. Skinner had kept his secret so far—chiefly from a wholesome dread of Johnny Bull's big fists. He was glad of it now. It placed power in his hands to bargain with Gwynne of the Sixth.

"Yes, you seem to have caught us, Gwynne," he said, with a coolness that astounded Sidney James Snoop. "Clean howled, by Jove!"

"You'll come to my study, both of you," said Gwynne curtly.

And he looked round for the bag he had come for, and picked it up.

"Ye-es," stammered Snoop.

"I'd rather not, thanks," said Skinner. Gwynne, who was turning to the door, turned back.

"What's that?" he exclaimed, doubting whether he had heard aright.

"I'd rather not," said Skinner, though his heart was beating a little faster. "I'm quite comfortable here, thanks."

"Is it dotty ye are?" exclaimed the prefect, in utter astonishment.

"Not at all. Have a smoke, old chap!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"Have one with me," said Skinner.

"They're quite good."

Snoop stared at his comrade open-mouthed. Skinner was not supposed to be a fellow with much nerve; but certainly no other member of the Remove would have ventured to speak to a prefect like that.

"Shut up, you silly ass!" whispered Snoop.

Gwynne was striding towards Skinner. He took the cad of the Remove by the ear, with finger and thumb, and Skinner squealed.

"Let go, hang you!"

Gwynne did not reply, but he led Skinner from the box-room by the ear. Snoop followed, with his knees knocking together.

Half a dozen fellows spotted Harold Skinner being led to Gwynne's study by the ear, and there was a general grin. They guessed that the blade of the Remove had been caught out at last.

Skinner's face was furious.

Considering what he knew about Patrick Gwynne, he wasn't going to be treated like this, he told himself savagely. Smoking in the box-room wasn't quite so bad as breaking bounds at midnight, anyway. But the iron grip on his ear led him onward, and he was marched into Gwynne's study.

There the prefect released his ear and picked up a cane.

"I don't quite know what's come over

you, Skinner," said Gwynne. "But you're going to learn that you can't cheek a prefect." He beckoned to Snoop. "You first, Snoop."

There was a swish, and Sidney James Snoop retired from the study squeezing his hand.

Something a little more serious was in prospect for Skinner; partly because the prefect believed that he was the worse of the two, and partly because he had added defiance of authority to his other sins.

Skinner faced the Sixth-Former, his thin lips set, his eyes glinting. He waited till Snoop was out of the study before he spoke.

"You're not going to cane me, Gwynne?"

"I'm going to give you six," said the prefect. "Two for smoking and four for cheek. Hold out your paw!"

Skinner kept his hands down at his sides.

"You'd better think first!" he said. "Smoking isn't quite so bad as pub-haunting at night, Gwynne, is it?"

"Faith, no!" said Gwynne, staring at him. "Is that another of yer little amusements, you young blaggard?"

"Not mine," said Skinner. "Yours!"

"Phwat!" yelled Gwynne.

"You let me alone, and I'll let you alone," said Skinner. "You're not coming the prefect over me, when you do worse yourself! I've held my tongue about it so far, and I'll go on holding it—but no lickings, please!"

Gwynne looked at him fixedly, seeming to find some difficulty in breathing. His face was a study.

"You didn't know I knew?" grinned Skinner.

"Faith, it's draming, I am!" murmured Gwynne.

"Can I go?" asked Skinner smiling.

"Can ye go?" said Gwynne. "Yes, you young rascalion, you can go when I've given you the licking of your life, and not before!"

"Look here—" began Skinner uneasily.

"Hold out yer hand!" rapped out the prefect.

"I won't!" said Skinner, putting his hands behind him. "And if you touch me I'll yell out for Wingate, and tell the whole yarn, and show you up—Yarrah!"

Skinner had no time to say any more.

The angry prefect seized him by the collar, spun him round, and lashed him across the shoulders with the cane. The cane came down half a dozen times with great vim, and Skinner howled and roared.

"There!" panted Gwynne, releasing him. "That's to begin with, Skinner!"

"You-ow-ow-ow!" howled Skinner.

"And now," said Gwynne, with a dangerous gleam in his eyes, "you'll tell me what you meant just now! Have you got a bee in your bonnet, or has somebody been stuffing you with a yarn? Out with it!"

Skinner clasped his hands together, and gave him a deadly glare.

"I'll go to the Head!" he panted.

"I'll make you sorry for that! I'll go to the Head, and tell him, now—"

"Faith, and you will, then," said Gwynne, taking him by the collar, "and I'll take you to the Head myself intirely!"

"Mind, I can prove it!" howled Skinner. "You think the Head won't believe me, and you can face it out! Wait till he hears what Wharton

and the rest can tell him, see if he won't believe them!"

"Do you mean to say that Wharton has said such a thing of me, Skinner?" asked the prefect, very quietly.

"Yes; and Bob Cherry and Nugent and Bull, and Inky!" said Skinner savagely. "And they'll have to own up to the Head when he asks them, and admit that they saw you, though they've been keeping it dark since Tuesday night—"

"They saw me! Where?" shouted Gwynne.

"Sneaking into the school at mid-night!" roared Skinner. "I heard 'em arranging to keep it dark; but they can't deny it if the Head asks them. You think the Head won't believe me, but five witnesses—"

"Stay where you are!" said Gwynne quietly.

He stepped to the door and opened it, and called "Fag!"

Nugent minor came scudding up the passage.

"Yes, Gwynne?"

"Find Wharton, Cherry, Bull, Nugent, and Hurree Singh, and bring them here at once, kid!" said Gwynne.

"Right-ho!" said Dicky. And he scuttled off.

Gwynne turned back into his study. Skinner was eyeing him with savage uneasiness.

He could not in the least account for the prefect's action, unless—it was a dismaying thought—unless the Famous Five had made a mistake that night! If that was the case, Skinner had put his foot in it with a vengeance.

But how could they be mistaken? They had said that they had seen Gwynne; they had planned to keep it a secret for the prefect's sake; they couldn't be mistaken! But if it was true, what did Gwynne's conduct mean?

Harold Skinner was in an unenviable frame of mind, and he waited for the Famous Five to arrive.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Brought to Light!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. had just finished tea in No. 1 Study, and were chatting over the St. Jude's match of the morrow, when Dicky Nugent arrived. All the Co. agreed that Wharton was right in resisting Skinner's demand to be played in the eleven, and they did not think that the result would be serious.

Skinner had held his tongue so far, at all events.

Johnny Bull confidently predicted that the dread of a big thrashing would keep Skinner quiet. He had just expressed that opinion, when Nugent minor of the Second put his cheeky face into the study.

"You kids are wanted!" said the fag.

"Cut along with you—Gwynne's study!"

"What does Gwynne want, Dicky?" asked Nugent major.

"You, dear boy! Skinner's with him—been licked, I think. Gwynne looked awfully ratty. Better put some exercise-books in your bags!"

And Dicky Nugent departed chuckling. "Skinner with him!" said Bob Cherry.

"My hat! The silly chump can't have been blabbing to Gwynne himself?"

"We're in for it, anyway!" said Johnny Bull. "Come on! If it's all come out, Gwynne can't very well go for us!"

"We were out of bounds that night."

"So was Gwynne!"

"Yes, that's so. It would be a thumping cheek of him to go for us for that, I must say!"

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The Famous Five lost no time in getting to Gwynne's study. They anticipated trouble there; and as soon as they entered they saw that their anticipations were not ill-founded.

Gwynne was frowning darkly, and Skinner was squeezing his hands and looking like a Hun.

"Shut the door!" snapped Gwynne. "Now, Wharton, I want you to explain what Skinner's just told me!"

"Sneaking cad!" growled Johnny Bull, with a savage look at Skinner.

"Skinner's got an idea in his head that I've been breaking bounds, and so on," said Gwynne. "I've licked him for his cheek, but I want to get to the bottom of the story. He had it from you."

"He heard us speaking, when we thought he was asleep," said Harry.

"Then it's true that you did say so?"

"We didn't exactly say so. We were simply discussing it, and arranging not to mention it to anybody."

"Not to mention what?" shouted Gwynne.

"About your breaking bounds."

Gwynne jumped.

"You thumping little idiot, do you dare to stand there and tell me to me face intirely that I've broken bounds at night?" he thundered.

"What's the good of that?" exclaimed Wharton, his anger beginning to rise.

"You know we saw you!"

"You—you—you saw me?" stuttered Gwynne.

"Yes, and you know it!" said Bob Cherry hotly. "Wharton spoke your name when he ran into you at the gate."

Gwynne's face was almost purple with anger, and he seemed on the verge of an explosion. But he calmed himself with an effort.

"If this rested on Skinner, I should know what to think of it," he said quietly. "But I think you kids are not the fellows to invent such a story. You seem to have made some queer mistake. You all say that you saw me out of bounds late one night?"

"Tuesday night," said Nugent.

"At what time?"

"About midnight."

"And what were you doing out of your dormitory at midnight on Tuesday night?" demanded Gwynne sternly.

"I'm ready to explain that," said Harry. "You know how Carne lied to Mr. Quelch about me? We were going to catch him, and show him up, to prove that he lied."

"You accuse Carne—"

"I'm not accusing anybody! I'm telling you why we were out of bounds. Carne made out that I was a liar, and we were going to prove that it was he who lied. We found you by mistake; and then we dropped the game. We didn't want to make any more unpleasant discoveries."

"You think you found me, you mean? Do you mean to say that you recognised me there?" exclaimed Gwynne.

"We couldn't recognise you in the dark, of course. But we knew your coat well enough—the same coat I brought to you the same day."

"Oh!" said Gwynne, with a peculiar expression. "I think I begin to understand. I noticed on Wednesday that somebody had been wearing my coat—there was mud on it—but I never learned who had borrowed it without asking permission."

"Great pip!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

The Famous Five simply jumped. That explanation, simple as it was, had not occurred to them.

"Now, tell me exactly what occurred, from beginning to end," said Gwynne.

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The story was told in full, and the prefect listened without interrupting.

"I—I think I see now," faltered Wharton, at last. "It was Carne, after all, just as we supposed, but—but the rotter took your coat in case he was seen. I suppose you had gone to bed."

"And my coat in the prefects' room, intirely," said Gwynne. "But why haven't you said anything about this before?"

"We were keeping it secret," said Harry, flushing. "We—we didn't want to give you away, Gwynne. You've always been decent to us. If Skinner hadn't spied it out you'd never have heard a word."

Skinner gave the chums a bitter look. He realised now that there had been a mistake, and that he had put his foot in it badly. It had never occurred to him at the time that the Famous Five had reached their conclusion without adequate grounds.

"So some senior cleared off and came back at midnight?" said Gwynne. "That wants looking into."

"I—I say, we didn't mean to sneak about Carne," said Bob Cherry, in dismay. "You made us explain, Gwynne; you can't report Carne to the Head now! We're up against him, but we're not sneaks. It isn't fair—"

"Dry up!" said Gwynne. "I'm not after taking this matter to the Head. If it was Carne who went out of bounds that night, it's pretty clear that it was Carne who lied to Mr. Quelch about the cigarettes, Wharton, and not you. Under the circumstances, I sha'n't say anything about your going out of bounds; but don't let it occur again. Cherry, go and ask Carne to step here. Tell him it's important."

"Yes, Gwynne."

Bob left the study, and returned in a few minutes with Carne of the Sixth, who was looking surprised and unquiet.

"Come in, Carne!" said Gwynne grimly. "I want to ask you a question. Did you use my coat on Tuesday night out of bounds?"

Carne started violently.

"If these young rotters—" he began furiously.

"Never mind them. Did you, or didn't you?"

"You've no right to ask such a question," said Carne sullenly. "Of course, I did not go out of bounds at all."

"Do you ever borrow a prefect's key to the gate—say Loder's?"

"Certainly not!"

Gwynne looked at him steadily.

"One of the Sixth went out on Tuesday night in my coat," he said. "I don't say it was you, Carne. I only say that I'm going to know who it was. If the matter can be settled without a fuss, so much the better for the party concerned. But, if necessary, I shall call in the Head and ask him to make a strict inquiry."

"I—I know nothing about it!" muttered Carne thickly.

"You know best whether you've got anything to risk by an inquiry. But it will be pretty strict, and may bring all sorts of things to light—if it once begins. The Head won't let such a matter rest if he once gets on the track. You've nothing to say?"

"N-nothing!"

"Very well. You juniors can stay here till you're called. I'm going to the Head now." Gwynne crossed to the door.

Carne's face was almost livid. Well he knew that the result of a far-reaching inquiry would probably be the discovery of a dozen shady secrets he was very intent upon keeping.

"I—I say, don't be in a hurry."

Gwynne!" he stammered. "I—I don't want the Head bothered in the matter."

"Why not?" said Gwynne coolly.

"The—the fact of the matter is, I—I did happen to go out that night. I—I couldn't sleep, and—and I thought a turn up the road would do me good."

"And the quadrangle wasn't big enough to take a little stroll in?" asked Gwynne.

"I—I—"

"I thought it would come out," said the prefect contemptuously. "What you did when you went out is pretty clear to me; as clear as it is that those cigarettes belonged to you, and not to Wharton."

"I—I—"

"And you took my coat by mistake, I suppose, when you went out for that little stroll?" asked Gwynne sarcastically.

"I—I happened to take it—"

"And happened to forget that you'd done so when I was asking up and down the Sixth on Wednesday who'd been using my coat?"

Carne was silent. It was not much use to lie further. It was plain that he had taken Gwynne's coat, because it was an easily recognisable one, in case he was seen—when he would have been taken for Gwynne, as had actually occurred. And, after all, it was not much use saying that he had gone out for a harmless stroll.

"I'm not going to the Head," said Gwynne quietly. "I don't want to get a Sixth-Former sacked from Greyfriars; and I think this may be a bit of a lesson to you, Carne. But you lied to Mr. Quelch about Wharton, and that's got to be set right. Those cigarettes were yours?"

Carne nodded sullenly. He was too glad to hear that Gwynne was not going to the Head to care for anything else.

"Mr. Quelch will have to know the truth," said Gwynne. "Go and tell him, and I'll let the matter drop here, Carne!"

Carne started.

"Go and tell Quelch I lied to him?" he panted.

"Yes!"

"I—I can't! I won't!"

"If you don't, I shall!"

Carne gritted his teeth with rage.

"Look here, Gwynne—"

"If I tell him, he will want to know how I know," said Gwynne. "I shall have to tell him the whole story. But if you prefer to tell him yourself, you've got a chance. But he's got to be told. You made Wharton out to be a liar and a smoky rotter, and it's going to be set right."

"Hear, hear!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"I—I—I'll go!" mumbled Carne.

"Mind, unless Mr. Quelch sends for Wharton, and tells him the matter's cleared up, I shall take it that you haven't fully explained; and then I shall explain."

Carne almost choked. The thought had come into his mind at once of deception; but that was evidently impracticable.

"How—how can I tell him?" he muttered. "I—I can't!"

"You can and must—and think twice, next time, before you make a false accusation," said Gwynne coolly. "I'm not sure whether it isn't my duty to report the whole matter to the Head; but I know it's my duty to see justice done to a junior you have lied about, and I'm going to do it! And I've no time to waste, either. Make up your mind!"

"I—I'll go."

With a look of hatred at Wharton, the blackguard of the Sixth left the study. Gwynne turned to the silent juniors.

"You can cut!" he said.

The Famous Five left the study, followed by Skinner. In the passage, they gave the cad of the Remove grim looks.

"You jawed, after all?" said Johnny Bull, doubling his fists.

Skinner scuttled away without replying. Wharton caught Johnny by the shoulder.

"Chuck it, Johnny! It's a good thing it all came out, after all. We made a rotten mistake, and—and I'm glad it's come out."

"Same here!" said Nugent. "I don't envy Carne his interview with Quelch."

"Ha, ha!—No fear!"

The juniors were near at hand when Arthur Carne came out of Mr. Quelch's study. His face was quite white. Exactly how he had put it to the Remove-master they did not know; but evidently the interview had been very unpleasant indeed. Mr. Quelch had a bitter tongue sometimes; and on such an occasion it was certain that he would let it go.

"Mr. Quelch wants you, Wharton," said Carne, in a choking voice; and he went to his study and shut himself in—perhaps to meditate upon the remarks Mr. Quelch had made to him on the subject of prevarication.

Wharton tapped at Mr. Quelch's door

and entered. The Form-master greeted him with a kind look.

"I have somewhat surprising news for you, Wharton," he said.

"Yes, sir?" said Harry. It was not such a surprise to him as the Remove-master supposed.

"Carne has been here, and he has stated that he spoke untruthfully on the subject of the cigarettes. He explained that he spoke hastily, and did not like afterwards to admit the truth; but the matter has troubled his mind so much that he felt bound to come to me and acquaint me with the facts," said Mr. Quelch. "I have talked very severely to Carne. But for the fact, indeed, that he came to me of his own accord to make the confession, I should feel it my duty to report the whole matter to the Head."

Wharton was silent. Carne had evidently made out the best case possible for himself, but it was not for the junior to make any comment on that.

"You are quite cleared, Wharton," said the Remove-master kindly. "I can say that I did not doubt your word—but neither could I suppose that a senior was speaking falsely—and I was very much puzzled and troubled. The matter, indeed, seemed inexplicable to me. I

am glad to say, Wharton, that you are quite cleared, and I am very glad indeed that the truth has come to light!"

"Thank you, sir!" said Harry.

And he quitted the study in quite a satisfied mood.

"It was a jolly good scheme, after all," he remarked, as he rejoined his chums. "It didn't work out as we intended—"

"Not quite!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"But it's made Carne own up, and cleared me, and that's all we wanted," said Harry. "So we can count it a success. We did make a bit of a bloomer about Gwynne; but all's well that ends well. Carne won't find it so easy to play his rotten games after this, with Gwynne's eye on him; and that's all to the good. So—"

"So the Famous Five win all along the line," said Bob Cherry. "Three cheers for us! Hurrah!"

And Hurree Jaiwet Ram Singh remarked "That the hurrahfulness was terrific!"

(Don't miss "**PETER TODD'S VENGEANCE!**"—next Monday's grand story of Harry Wharton & Co., by FRANK RICHARDS.)

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R. Waldron, 34, Elsenham St., Southfields, S.W.—members wanted for a local cycling club.

Imperial Correspondence and Exchange Club (R. Shepperd, 15, Pfrwryll St., Taibach, Port Talbot, South Wales)—more members wanted. Amateur magazine run, members all over the world.

Laurence Murphy, 142, Stanley Rd., Liverpool—more members (age 14 upwards) wanted for "Gem" and "Magnet" League.

H. Brooks, 40, Gloucester Terr., Hyde Park, London, S.W.—members anywhere British Empire for "Gem" and "Magnet" League is forming.

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(Signed)

Your Editor

THE GREYFRIARS GALLERY.

No. 21.—WUN LUNG.

WUN LUNG is certainly not faultless. He has no regard at all for the truth. It is to him a thing that does not matter. He is disposed to be revengeful, and in his desire for revenge will go to lengths that would be thought excessive in a British boy.

"Me velly bad boy—tellee whoppee. All Chinees tellee whoppee! No tellee tluth like English boy. Allee samee in China. Wun Lung velly solly. No wantee make handsome Mr. Quelch angly."

That is how he excuses himself to Mr. Quelch, with the little wheedling touch that makes one smile and like him, though one knows that a compliment cannot mean very much when it comes from a boy who admits his inability to tell the truth. But, as a rule, when Wun Lung calls anyone handsome, the person is one whom he holds in honour. For the queer little chap is sincere in his friendships. Much has been made of the bad qualities of his race—a good deal of it told by people who know that race but indifferently. But the Chinese have many solid good qualities, and the average standard of loyalty is certainly not lower among them than in many Western nations.

At the outset Wun Lung was ragged cruelly by Bulstrode. He also incurred the dislike of Loder. Later on he came to be on good terms with Bulstrode, but his enmity for Loder has never died down. He was put into Russell's study to start with, though he used to hang round No. 1 a good deal, having found friends there. Later on he shared No. 14 with Billy Bunter and Alonzo Todd—a queerly assorted trio!

But he settled down best when Bob Cherry, Mark Linley, Hurree Singh, and he came to be partners in No. 13; Bunter and Alonzo having removed to No. 7. Wun Lung counts all the Famous Five as friends; but Bob Cherry is his idol. There is nothing he would not do for Bob. Mark Linley comes second in his esteem, perhaps. When Mark was put in Coventry, Wun Lung would not "savvy."

"No savvy" is the little yellow man's great dodge for getting out of difficult corners. It means, of course, "I don't understand." It must have worn a trifle thin by this time, however, for everybody knows that Wun Lung can understand plain English just as well as anyone else if he chooses.

We have not had many of Wun Lung's japes of late. They were plentiful in the stories which dealt with his early days at Greyfriars. His countrymen have notions about cookery that scarcely fit in with our ideas. Some of Wun Lung's schoolfellows who enjoyed the delicious stews he made, but were angry when they discovered what those stews were made from, failed to realise that puppies seem to the Chinese far better meat than rabbits! They were not only angry, but ill—and probably we should have been ill in their places—yet it is all a matter of habit. One can hardly say of taste, for Wun Lung's stews tasted all right. And there are races which hold the eating of pork disgusting.

The dragon which scared Temple and Mr. Capper—the kite over which Loder came to grief—the stain which Wun Lung put in the face lotion fetched for Ionides, the dandified Greek senior—the

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manner in which he and his minor, Hop Hi, routed Bulstrode and Snoop with Uncle Clegg's eggs, scarcely in the first blush of their youth, to say the best of them—his shutting up of his uninvited and unwanted guests in No. 14, with something stifling and choking burning in the fire—his pretending he has poisoned Loder & Co.—his admitting having administered "velly fatal poison" to Mr. Prout, when what he has given is really only Alonzo's marvellous mixture, confessing untruthfully just to please Mr. Quelch, who he thinks wants him to confess—rat-poison admitted, quite untruly, in the pie which Bunter had stolen from No. 13, and Bolsover had helped Bunter to eat—these things one remembers with amusement.

There have been more serious episodes, though even in them the element of fun has seldom been entirely lacking.

Harry Wharton rescued Wun Lung when he was kidnapped by his uncle, the mandarin Yen Hai, who objected strongly to his becoming English in his ways. Bulstrode and Snoop did not rescue him when he had gone through the thin ice upon which he had ventured in desperation at the threat to cut off his cherished pigtail. They believed him drowned, and were in a terrible funk. But he was only playing a trick on them, and after a stay in hiding which drove them nearly to their wits' ends with fear, he showed up again. He got even with Bulstrode for that, enticing him into the crypt, and locking him up there. It was then that the underground passage leading to the old Priory was found.

The little Chinese displayed sterling pluck when he made the perilous journey along a narrow string-course of masonry, high up above the flags on which a tumble must dash him, so that he and Bob and Mark, who had been locked into their study, might get out and register their votes for Harry Wharton against Bulstrode.

He did Bulstrode one rare good turn, and between the two there has been better feeling ever since, for Bulstrode did not deserve it, and the knowledge that he did not shamed him. But for Wun Lung

he would have fallen a victim to Ponsonby's attempt to prove him a thief.

Wun Lung was with the Famous Five when they were shanghaied by the skipper of the tramp-steamer. The little fellow was a welcome addition to their fellowship; and they were all worried when he fell a victim to the vice of opium-smoking, tempted thereto by one Chung, a man he had known in Canton. So were others in the Remove worried; and the Form generally took him in hand, and tossed him in a blanket to show their disapproval. It may not have been this treatment which cured him; but cured he was eventually.

One of his biggest deceptions was the kite wangle. He had been making a huge kite. Loder smashed it up, and Wun Lung most thoroughly scared Loder and Carne—as well as Coker, Potter, and Greene—with what he said was a keg of dynamite—but it wasn't! He got into heavy trouble about this, and threatened to run away. And he was apparently carried off—carried right out to sea—by the mended kite. But it was a dummy that went; and Hop Hi, by cunning trickery, managed to get a hiding-place for his brother—whose "ghost" was seen by several people before he turned up alive and well! When Hop Hi was kidnapped, Loder was mixed up in the affair in no creditable way, and it was only Bob Cherry's intervention that prevented Wun Lung from puncturing Loder with a dagger! All the savagery in his nature came to the top then; but it was love for his young brother that brought it there, remember.

For one brief week Wun Lung strutted the stage as captain of the Remove! Wharton had to go away; a vice-captain was to be elected, and the little Chinese headed the poll. It was a joke; those who had voted for him had not taken his candidature very seriously. But Wun Lung did not take it as a joke. To show himself equal to his new dignity he appeared before Mr. Quelch in the full-dress costume of a mandarin—peacock's feather and all—and could not understand why the master was not pleased. He insisted on playing for the footer team, too, and actually won the match for them—though that was a fluke of the biggest kind.

Bulstrode is not the only fellow for whom he has done a good turn by foiling plots. In his methods he has a little too much of the Bunterish style, perhaps; his notions of honour are not exactly British. But if he has listened and spied it has been for good causes and with good intentions, which is more than one could say for Bunter. There was another time when Bulstrode owed a debt to him—when he discovered that it was Snoop who had written the anonymous letter to Mr. Quelch which Bulstrode was accused of writing. He spoiled the plot of Bunter and Skinner to steal Mark Linley's story. He cleared up the trouble brought upon Frank Nugent by his wayward young brother.

Do you remember when he lost his pigtail? It was Alonzo who, with the best intentions in the world, cut it off, though others were suspected. To a Chinaman his pigtail is something almost sacred; and Wun Lung's grief and indignation were great. But he lived that down, as he has lived down the rest of his troubles, like the cheery, essentially decent little chap he is, in spite of his faults!

IN A LAND OF PERIL!

By BEVERLEY KENT,

Author of "Officer and Trooper," "Cornstalk Bob," "A Son of the Sea," etc., etc.

SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS.

Bob Masters and Ted O'Brien, an Irish boy, escape from the clutches of Faik, a rascally adventurer who is in pursuit of a secret treasure in the African wilds. Faik is working in collusion with Jasper Orme, Bob's cousin, at Cape Town. The two lads are captured by the natives of the Inrobi tribe, who also surround Faik's party. Faik has done the chief of the tribe a bad turn in the old days, and tries to place the guilt on Bob; but, thanks to a Scotchman named MacGregor, and a friendly native—Mendi—he fails in his plot. Bob is acclaimed chief on the death of Kazna, the former leader. The comrades save Faik from the vengeance of the tribe, then push on after the treasure, but are waylaid by Mopo and a strong force. Mopo, who is Bob's deadly rival, is beaten off, with his braves, and Galza, a messenger from the Inrobi, comes to their camp.

He brings tidings of Mopo, who is in pursuit. By a desperate dive into the waters of the lake the little band elude their pursuers, and find themselves in a strange underground realm. MacGregor, who has made the venturesome journey before, explains to them how he came to make it. Ted becomes ill.

(Now Read On.)

Prisoners in the Depths.

"You've been working a bit too hard," MacGregor said. "Just jog on quietly."

All that afternoon the old Scotchman looked at Ted often, and was very silent. Before long they noticed that the stream had begun to run more swiftly. In two hours' time it was running madly, and in the distance they heard a rumbling that presently, gathering in volume, arose to a noise like distant thunder.

Bob stepped to MacGregor's side.

"Is that the river we have to go through?" he asked.

MacGregor nodded.

"Yes. There's a big waterfall and whirlpool," he said. "Tis an ugly sight when ye first see it. The whirlpool shoots into a tunnel, and it took us five hours in the dark ere we saw light again. 'Tis a nerve-racking experience, but as I survived it all, there's no reason why we shouldn't again. But we'll have to force Mendi and Galza into the boat, and tie them down. It will be the only way to get them on with safety to us all. In their terror they would jump out of the boat and swamp us all!"

The noise ahead rose to a tremendous intensity. The translucent lights of many colours gradually became fogged with spray, the effect being very beautiful and awesome. Mendi and Galza began to hang back, but MacGregor urged them on.

Ted had sat down again. He had become very pale, and his eyes were lustreless.

"I don't know what's come over me," he said, when Bob stepped to his side. "I feel I would like to lie down and sleep. I'm too lazy to move!"

Bob's heart began to sink. He looked at MacGregor, and read what was in his face.

"Is it the sickness that comes over white men down here?" he asked.

The old Scot nodded.

"He's got it," he said. "But we may be able to save him. It all depends on how long it takes to make the boat. Dinna let him ken how bad he is!"

Bob took Ted's arm, and helped him to his feet.

"Lean on me, old chap, and you'll get along all right," he suggested. "We haven't far to go now, and then you can have a good rest. That's right; don't give in!"

Ted clenched his teeth and stood up, but he swayed slightly as he walked. His voice had become a trifle incoherent; he kept on mumbling, and a great fear surged over Bob's heart. Was this to be the end of all? Was he to lose the chum who had dared everything with him so bravely, just at the moment when they had made their fortunes, and when safety was in sight?

He bit his lip hard to keep down his feelings. It would never do for Ted to see what they were.

MacGregor, on ahead, walking quickly, turned a corner. As they turned it, too, they saw a huge waterfall. Below it was an immense whirlpool, and on beyond the whirlpool were huge, jagged rocks over which the water was thundering.

"The tunnel!" Bob gasped. "Where is it?"

He looked to MacGregor for an answer. The old Scotchman had grown ashen pale.

"It's gone!" he cried. "The tunnel has caved in! There is no escape! Here we must live or die!"

And at that moment Ted sank senseless to the ground!

MacGregor shook with fear as he stared ahead at the huge mass of tumbling water breaking in foam over the rocks. Ted had fallen, and lay with white face and closed eyes.

Bob clutched the old Scotchman by the arm.

"Look, look!" he said, pointing down at Ted.

But for a few seconds MacGregor did not stir. All the courage seemed to have gone out of him in face of this terrible and unexpected set-back. But it was soon evident that his fears were not chiefly for himself.

"Trapped at the end!" he muttered. "An' but for me ye lads would never have come here, for ye could not have found the way. I maun save ye some gait—I maun save ye!"

Bob shook him harder.

"Ted has fainted," he said. "I think he is dying."

The old man looked down. His face seemed on a sudden to have become very wrinkled, and his eyes had grown dull.

"Dying!" he repeated. "Oh, ay—oh, ay! We shall all die, an' the fault is mine!"

"All is not lost yet: it can't be!" cut in Bob eagerly. "We hoped to get through the tunnel, but since it has caved in there may be another way out due to the great upheaval. And, anyway, we've got to bring Ted round."

The old man started. Bob's fearless words had awakened some hope in his heart. He bent down and looked at Ted.

"Fetch water," he said. "That may bring the lad to himself."

Mendi and Galza, overawed by the grandeur of the scene, by the great sheet of foam pouring down from the high cliff above, by the swirling mass boiling over the rocks, and the awe-inspiring din of the falls, had stood together silent, ignorant of the danger in which they were. Now, at Bob's bidding, Mendi went and fetched some water.

Bob raised Ted's head and shoulders on to his knee. They splashed his face, and waited. Presently he sighed, drew a deep breath, and opened his eyes. He looked quite exhausted.

"He isna dying," MacGregor said, "but the sickness has him in its grip, and he canna recover till he gets fresh air. And we are trapped, and—"

He turned and gazed at the rocks. His mind was beginning to work clearly again. Bob laid Ted carefully down, and stepped to the old man's side.

For fifty yards or more the water was racing over the rocks, sharp edges of which protruded here and there above the foam. Beyond this the course of the river was hidden by a bend. Away to the right was a little hill with a tree on the top, the branches of which were bending as if in a strong wind. Yet they felt no wind whatever.

"A boat canna live in that whirlpool," MacGregor said dejectedly.

"No; there's no chance that way," Bob agreed. "But we can't be certain what lies ahead, unless we try."

"It's death, lad—death!"

"So is staying here—don't you see that? I'm going to chance it, anyhow. I'll die fighting, at least!"

The old man looked at him.

"Ye couldna live for three minutes in that whirlpool, lad; ye wad be smashed to atoms," he protested.

Bob sat down, and began to take off his boots.

"But I can get along the side. At least, I'm game to try," he said. "It's a ticklish job, but there's an unyeen ledge running nearly all the way."

"If ye're resolved to go—and aiblins there's nought else for it, seeing I'm too auld for the venture—then keep to the right," MacGregor said. "The way is better, and if ye can get to the hill ye'll be safe, and can find out what the bend hides. I hae a notion that—" He broke off. "Time will show," he finished vaguely. "Aiblins ye're right, and the game is no' up yet."

Bob rolled his trousers up to his knees, and walked towards the whirlpool. Mendi hurried after him.

"O, master," he said, "why go to your death?"

"I go to seek a way by which we may leave this strange land," Bob replied. "Am I not thy chief, and is not my duty plain?"

"And you dare to face those mad waters?" the black boy cried.

"Since I must—yes!"

"And you go alone?"

"Is it not enough that one should run the risk?"

Mendi faced him bravely.

"Master, I fear not the wind or the torrents or the thunder," he said. "My heart was stricken with fear here, for who before us ever faced evil spirits, or saw such sights as we have beheld? Gladly

have I faced death, as my people will tell, and why should I fear it now? I go where my young white chief goes. I have spoken!"

"No, Mendi, it is not wise that you go," Bob replied, touched by the black boy's faithfulness.

But Mendi would not give way. He appealed to MacGregor.

"O Barelegs, whose wisdom is great, are they not true words I have spoken?" he urged. "For if the young white chief can brave the mad waters, why cannot I, than whom the antelope is not more nimble? Are not my feet as steadfast as his?"

MacGregor came forward. His face had suddenly brightened, and he spoke more cheerfully.

"Mendi is right; ye had better let him go with ye," he said. "One can help the other, and he can climb like a cat. And there is a rope in the hand-cart. Tie yourselves together, and if the one loses his footing the other may be able to pull him up."

Bob still hesitated.

"And if he goes down, too?" he began.

"Don't forget what you've just said," MacGregor replied, patting his shoulder. "To stay is death—we ken that. Let Mendi gang. It will come near to double our chance."

"All right! Mendi, fetch the rope, and we will face the danger together," said Bob.

MacGregor fastened them securely together, leaving about four yards of the rope between them. They walked to the water's edge. The Scot and Galza watched them in a breathless silence. Ted, his eyes still closed, knew nothing of what was going on.

They reached the ledge, Bob leading, and began the crossing. Three feet below the water swirled. The din prevented all conversation between them. The foam splashed them from head to foot. With their backs to the cliff, they moved foot by foot, and when they had gone fifteen yards Bob stopped. MacGregor groaned. The lad was swaying slightly, and Mendi had begun to gather in the rope, as if anticipating that he might pitch head-first into the whirlpool. Then very slowly Bob turned. He stood with his face to the cliff.

"It's his een," MacGregor muttered. "The swirl of the water was dazing him, and he felt his head might begin to reel. Mendi doesna mind it; he hasn't the imagination."

Galza did not understand, nor, indeed, did he hear, so intent was he on watching. The old Scot, trembling with anxiety, became silent again.

Bob began to move along the ledge once more. He seemed now to be more confident. On they went, until they were twenty yards from the starting-point. There Bob stopped again.

He had come to where the ledge broke off, and it was impossible for MacGregor to guess how wide was the chasm across which he must jump. It might only be a yard in width, or it might be some impossible distance. And now Mendi, gathering in the rope and rolling it up as he went, was drawing up to him.

The old Scot could see that, though so close, they were shouting to make themselves heard, and in the booming of the water not a word came to him. For some minutes they stood thus, Mendi gesticulating. Then he began to climb up the cliff. At once MacGregor divined his object.

Three feet above there was a jagged, projecting rock. Mendi managed to reach it, and he threw the rope across it.

Bob now nerved himself for the jump. He brought his feet together, bent his knees, paused for an instant, and then sprang forward. MacGregor and Galza gasped.

For though Bob's feet touched the farther ledge, he was unable to get his balance. He poised himself for half a second, and then fell backwards. Over the chasm he swung backwards and forwards, Mendi clinging to the rope.

To the onlookers the suspense was appalling. Bob swung more and more slowly, and at last he hung in the centre of the chasm, the rope almost rigid, with Mendi holding on to one end for all he was worth.

Mendi shouted something. The rope ran out, and Bob disappeared into the swirling water. But it was only for a second. Carried by the onrush, he was brought against the far ledge, and clung to it desperately. MacGregor covered his eyes, in dread of the worst.

But Bob was not swept away. He managed to raise himself, and get a knee on the ledge, and after a hard tussle, to rise on it. He stood there, swaying unsteadily, but dauntless still.

And now, after a rest, he drew on the rope, and Mendi essayed the jump. He did not get clear across; but he caught the edge of the ledge, and Bob, tugging at the rope, helped him to climb up.

For the moment they were safe again, and they went steadily on. They came to a second chasm, and crossed it without difficulty, and to a third, which also they passed. And now they were near the small hill.

At last they had surmounted all danger. They stepped off the ledge, and hurried up the eminence. Suddenly Mendi stopped, threw out his arms, and began to dance, apparently in a very ecstasy of joy.

But Bob pressed on.

He got to the top, stood under the tree, and gazed across the bend in the river. Then he took off his hat and waved it around his head, and MacGregor, shaking with excitement, put his hand across his eyes.

"Brave lad! Gallant lad!" he said, his voice vibrating. "Ah, but it's he nas the courage! Noo I can die without regret, save for poor Ted, who maun die wi' me. Galza has a chance. And at worst—"

He stopped, and bent forward.

"Ha! What does that mean?" he asked.

For Bob had begun to signal with his arms.

Into Safety.

The news Bob had to tell was good, yet MacGregor could not see how it would avail him and Ted.

Bob said that he and Mendi were in the fresh air again, and, of course, it had been the realisation of this that had so delighted the black boy. The branches on the trees were shaking violently in a strong wind.

The spot where he and Mendi stood was encircled by a cliff, and high above they could see a patch of blue sky. Around the bend the river still broke over rocks right to a further turn about a quarter of a mile distant. Where he and Mendi stood was a fairly wide patch of stones and rocks, difficult to traverse, but not impossible. He could not discover more without going farther to explore.

"And now we're coming back," he concluded. "And we will fetch Ted and you along."

MacGregor began to signal for them to stay where they were. The lad's suggestion seemed wild in the extreme; it was impossible that they could rescue Ted. He begged of them to think of themselves, but Bob paid no heed. He and Mendi came down the hill together to the river, and the old Scot sat down, anticipating the worst.

But they had been safely along the ledge—once, and all nervousness had gone. They reached, without trouble, the broad chasm which had been the greatest difficulty. This time both jumped it with little difficulty. In another ten minutes the lad was walking towards MacGregor, his face flushed and smiling.

"Isn't it grand?" he asked as he advanced.

MacGregor had risen, but there was very little happiness in his answering smile.

"Why didna ye stay there?" he urged. "Ye hae to face the danger again, and ye canna help us."

"Can't we, though!" Bob replied cheerily. "I rather guess we can. But how is Ted?"

He quickened his pace, and looked down at his chum.

Ted's eyes were still closed.

"He's much the same, I think," said Bob sadly. "But when he's in the fresh air for a bit he'll come round, won't he?"

MacGregor sighed.

"Bob, we maun face facts," he began. "And I winna let ye throw away your life. Galza can gang wi' ye, but Ted maun stay here wi' me."

Bob stared in surprise.

"But you don't understand! I haven't had time yet to explain," he said. "There's nothing like the risk you think. We have the rope, and there's the hand-cart. Mendi and I have talked the job out."

"Then what do you suggest?" MacGregor asked, without a note of relief in his voice.

"It's not so bad getting along the ledge except for that one place where I got hung up," Bob replied. "And you may have seen that we crossed it all right coming back. And that's because the ledge is higher on the way out. Coming back, one jumps down from a higher ledge to a lower one."

"Ay, lad, ay. I ken your meaning," MacGregor agreed.

"We can take the cart to bits," Bob went on. "And out of the planks we can make a bridge. With the rope we fasten Ted by the feet and under the shoulders. I go first, holding one end of the rope, and Mendi follows, holding the other end. Ted will be lying on his back on the ledge. Of course, we will put down the bridge first. We'll have to be very cautious, I know; but we're sure we can get him across, and you, too, after him."

"It's unco' risky," MacGregor groaned.

"Well, mustn't we take a risk? Mustn't we chance anything to save Ted? Surely you don't suggest that I should go off and leave you two here? I would sooner go out with you than that. In fact, I won't budge an inch without you both. I shall just sit down and wait for the end!"

The old Scot turned and walked a few yards away. He wanted to think out what Bob had said. With much he could not but agree; the last thing he would do himself would be to leave others in the lurch. And Bob was right to have

(Continued on page 20.)



FRANK HENDERSON,
A Loyal Reader.



ELLIS COOPER,
Birmingham.



J. R. SPENCE,
Kirkcaldy.



A LOYAL READER.



A DERBYSHIRE
READER



A LOYAL READER,
Highgate.



J. PHILLIPS,
Whitechapel.



L. WALLACE,
N.S.W., Australia.



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BERT HENDERSON,
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A LOYAL READER,
Redditch.



JOSEPH PREGER,
Manchester.



A LOYAL JEWISH
CHUM.

IN A LAND OF PERIL.

(Continued from page 18.)

refused, if there was the least chance of success. But was there?

He stood irresolute. Certainly Bob had shown extraordinary nerve. After his last feat this one might not be impossible. But, on the other hand, the lad had all his life before him; and—

His thoughts were cut short. Bob had followed him.

"We must decide at once, Mr. MacGregor!" he said. "Ted may go out any moment, for all we know; and, in any case, a delay might mean his death, even when he gets to the fresh air. I'm not leaving here without you and him. That's flat! But if you like we'll face our doom together, only it seems a pity not to put up a fight to the last."

MacGregor wheeled round.

"Hae your own way, lad!" he said. "I canna oppose ye langer."

Bob called Mendi; and they began to take the hand-cart to bits. They joined some planks together, making certain that the bridge thus fashioned would easily span the chasm. They worked quickly, and before long were ready to take it along the skirt of the abyss.

This they succeeded in doing, with some difficulty, and then they returned for Ted. He was still unconscious, and they tied the rope around him as Bob had suggested. MacGregor saw them start, and then turned away, scarcely able to endure the agony of the suspense.

But he could not resist glancing at them from time to time. The sight was full of terror, for the foam splashed over the three. Yet on and on, very slowly, Bob and Mendi moved, with Ted borne between them. They got to the bridge, and crossed it successfully.

And now hope began to stir in the old man's heart. It really looked as if they would succeed. Often they stopped, showing signs of great exhaustion, and he realised how every muscle in their frames must be aching. And the least slip, and all might plunge in! But they won at last to the far side, and there they rested.

When they were somewhat recovered they carried Ted up the eminence, and laid him under the tree. They sat beside him, Bob often signalling, and MacGregor knew that the fresh air was having a good effect.

In about an hour's time Ted came round. They propped him up against the tree, and began to descend to the river again. The old man waved to them not to come, though in his heart he knew that the appeal was useless. Bob would not desert him. And once again they crossed the ledge.

"Now, Mr. MacGregor, it's your turn," Bob said.

MacGregor stood up.

"As ye winna leave me, I maun go," he said. "But I'm no' willing ye should carry me. I'm walkin', so mak' no error about that!"

Bob looked aghast.

"But at least you'll let us secure you with the rope?" he urged.

"And if I slipped we wad a' fall in together. I'm not agreein' to that," MacGregor answered firmly. "But ye twa can keep close on either side of me, and that will give me nerve. Noo come along! I'm ready!"

Bob strove hard to get him to agree, but he could not succeed. The old man had braced himself for the terrible

ordeal; he was perfectly calm. He began the crossing with his face to the wall, and he never spoke. Sometimes he paused to rest. His aged face was very pale, and the excitement and suspense and the drenching from the spray and the thunder of the waterfall all began to tell on him before long. Twice he swayed slightly, but Bob and Mendi were quick to put their hands on his shoulders and steady him at once. He got across, and sank down.

In half an hour more Galza was over, too, and all were saved.

It was a happy party that gathered together under the tree, though the prospect still before them was far from rosy. They were without food. There was none they could gather where they were. They had no idea what dangers lay ahead, and the treasure for which they had risked so much had perforce been left behind.

But at least the immediate danger was over. The fresh wind was like invigorating nectar, and Ted was quickly recovering. Some colour had come to his face, and he was able to speak, though with an effort. MacGregor, very tired, lay still.

Mendi and Galza, sitting some distance apart, had been whispering together, and after a time they walked away. Shortly afterwards MacGregor sat up.

"Are you feeling better?" Bob asked.

"Ay, lad! I'm just a wee bit stiff in my joints," the old man replied. "It's wonderful what we've come through to-day, and ye've to be thanked for that! And noo I'm puzzling over this wind that blows so hard. I canna make out where it comes from."

He stood up and looked around.

"There was none in the tunnel I went through the ither time until we got nigh to the end, and that is many miles from here," he continued. "It's coming from some strange quarter, and that's the way we maun get out."

"Then do you think we ought to make a start and search?" Bob asked.

"Whatever we found we wad hae to stop the night here, for Ted is not yet lit to travel," MacGregor answered. "And as we're all rather played out, I think it would be as weel to take a rest. There's one thing, though"—and he chuckled—"this knocks Faik's game on the head. He will be waiting for us where I came out last time, and he winna find us."

Bob had been gazing into the distance.

"Look at Mendi and Galza!" he said. "They're running back to us. Has anything frightened them?"

The two black boys were racing back, and Mendi came first, panting hard.

"Oh, master," he cried, addressing Bob, "lo, far away there is a great land and a high mountain, and the top thereof is white!"

Bob jumped to his feet.

"Then our troubles are over," he cried, "except for one thing. By hook or crook we must get the gold for which we have toiled so hard!"

The Open Country.

They hurried to the bend of the river. MacGregor gasped in astonishment.

"It's all changed!" he cried. "See! There is the tunnel to the right! And to the left is a river running into a plain!"

What had happened was at once evident. In the great upheaval—due, perhaps, to an extraordinary rush of water—the tunnel had collapsed for about a hundred yards. The rest was intact. It still ran for many miles.

But with the bursting of the walls the water had found a second exit, so that half still rushed through the tunnel, and the other half spread far out in the plain, to form a broad, slow-moving river. And when MacGregor had been swept along in the rushing water of the tunnel, he had no idea, of course, that only its walls separated him from the open country.

The plain was in a very deep hollow surrounded by high hills. When they climbed those hills they would again be on the level of the veldt, along which they had travelled pursued by Mopo and Faik. At last they were truly free.

From this on they could find food. They could return to civilisation. Their eyes shone with joy. In that moment of ecstasy all their past anxieties were forgotten.

But not for long. There were many things to be done yet, and Bob's practical mind soon turned to them.

"We're all right, in a way," he said.

"But we're just as poor as when we started, and for the want of a rifle and ammunition we may have to live on anything we can pick from the trees. That's not good enough!"

"What do ye propose, then?" MacGregor asked.

"All we want is left behind," Bob replied. "I'm going back for it, treasure and all!"

"But, lad—" the old Scotchman protested.

"Oh, that journey backwards and forwards across the ledge has no terrors for me now, nor for Mendi, either," Bob said. "We've been across so often that we've got over all that. In any case, we can't make a start from here for some days."

"No; we'll hae to build a raft," MacGregor replied.

"And that will take time, and we haven't the axe, even," Bob said. "I'll fetch that first thing to-morrow. You can get to work on the raft then, and Ted can help you a bit, though he won't be quite fit for a spell. And Galza will be very useful to you. And now I'll see if I can't get some grub for supper."

He went away by the bank of the river, and returned in an hour's time with some fruit. They ate, and then, tired out, they slept till morning.

Bob crossed back and fetched the axe, and MacGregor set to work. In five days the raft was ready. Meantime, Bob and Mendi had been carrying the gold across. A couple of rough-made small sacks had been in the hand-cart, and, filling these, they tied them to their backs. In the same way they brought over the ammunition. Many journeys were necessary; but at last everything had been carried over, and the morning came when they were ready to start.

They launched the raft, loaded up, and pushed out into the river. Ted had quite recovered, and was in the highest spirits; Mendi and Galza were beside themselves with joy. All that day they travelled with the sluggish current, guiding the raft with poles which MacGregor had fashioned from long, straight branches.

The river meandered continually, and at every turn some fresh scene presented itself. It seemed to be rolling towards the snow-clad mountain of which Mendi had spoken. But the mountain did not seem perceptibly nearer at the end of a long day's journey.

It was a very pleasant time. Occasionally they shot an animal and had a hearty meal; Mendi or Galza sometimes caught a fish; but they lived mostly on fruit. They were out in the open country again, enjoying the sunshine and balmy air.

(Next week's issue will contain another splendid instalment of this exciting story.)

