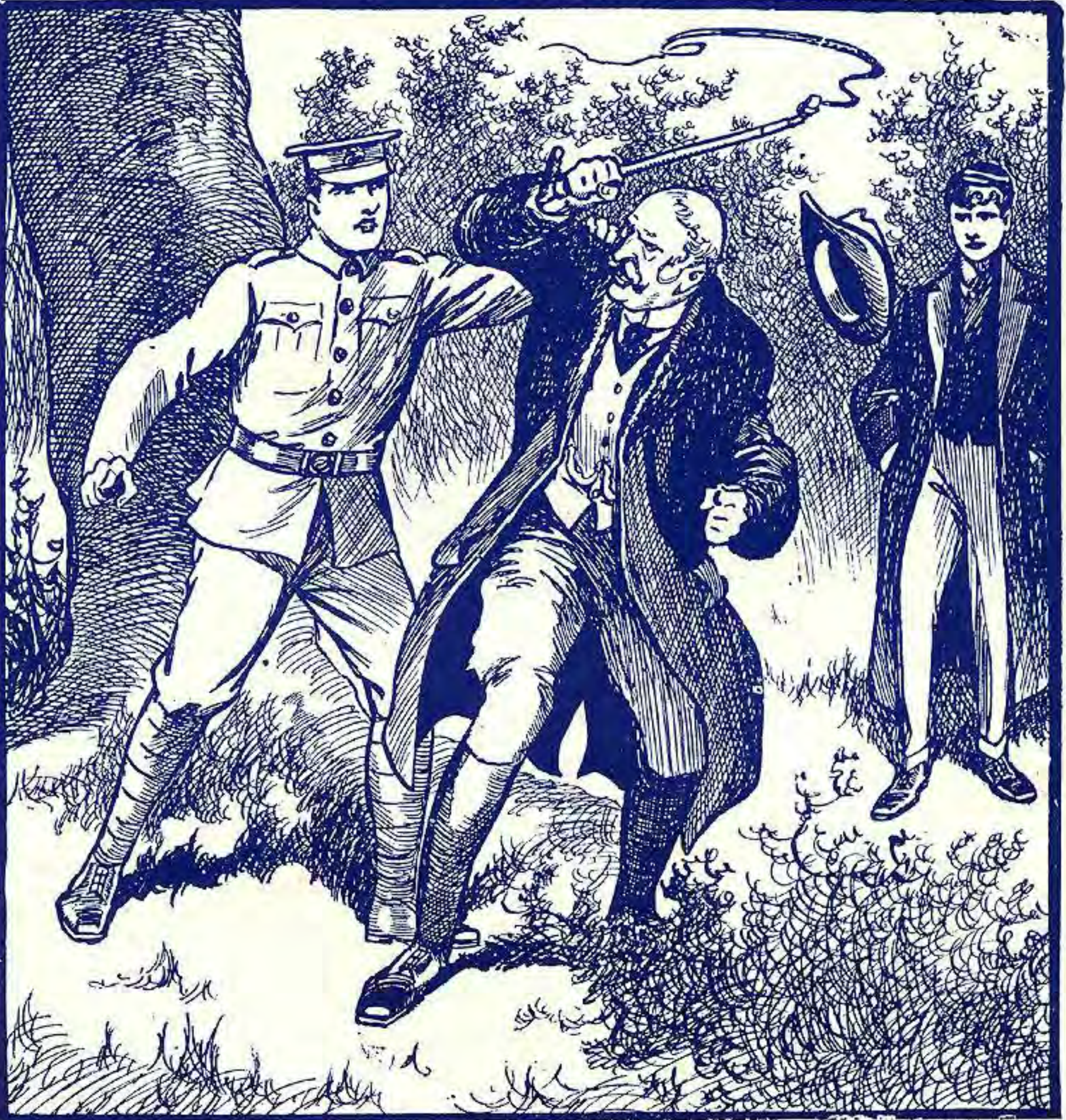


TOM REDWING'S RESOLVE!

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CLAVERING'S GUARDIAN!

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

TOM REDWING'S RESOLVE!

By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

A Catspaw Required!

"BUNTER, old chap!" Billy Bunter stood and stared.

Skinner of the Remove was addressing him in the most affectionate tones, with the friendliest of smiles upon his thin, hard face.

Skinner, as a rule, did not display affectionate friendliness towards anyone. Billy Bunter was naturally surprised. His round eyes grew rounder behind his big glasses.

"Not in a hurry, dear boy?" inquired Skinner.

"Nummo!" gasped Bunter.

"Step into my study for a minute, then."

"Wha-at for?"

"I've got some toffee."

"My hat!" ejaculated Bunter.

It was more and more surprising. Skinner was seldom known to give anything away. Indeed, Bob Cherry had humorously observed that Skinner would never give away anything but a pal.

But Bunter accepted the invitation at once. Skinner had surprised him, but toffee was toffee, especially in war-time. The fat junior rolled into Skinner's study readily enough.

Vernon-Smith, who shared Skinner's study, was not there. But Snoop and Stott of the Remove were there.

They smiled at Bunter in friendly greeting.

Bunter blinked round.

"Where's the toffee?" he asked.

"Here you are Billy, old scout!" said Snoop.

It was almost the first time Sidney James Snoop had ever called the Owl of the Remove "Billy." Bunter was almost too much surprised to take the toffee. However, he took it.

"Sit down, old fellow!" said Skinner, pulling out the Bunder's most comfortable armchair for Bunter.

Bunter sank into the well-padded armchair, almost overcome. Mechanically he crammed toffee into his capacious mouth.

He simply could not understand it.

Of course, a really engaging fellow like Bunter ought to have had hosts of devoted friends to share toffee with him, and make a fuss of him. But he hadn't. His engaging qualities were visible only to his own eyes. This sudden new cordiality on the part of Skinner & Co. was astounding.

Billy was not very bright, but after the first few minutes of astonishment he began to suspect that Skinner & Co. had an axe to grind.

He would have suspected them of wanting to borrow the postal-order he was expecting by the next post, only he knew that Skinner did not believe in that postal-order. It had been anticipated too long!

"Like the toffee?" asked Skinner.

"Ripping!"

"Have some more."

"Thanks!"

Bunter's mouth was quite full.

"By the way, we want to ask your opinion, Bunter," said Skinner smoothly.

Bunter blinked at him, inquiringly. He could not speak for the moment. If it was only his valuable opinion that was wanted, he was quite willing to give that in return for Harold Skinner's unwanted hospitality.

"About Clavering of our Form, you know," remarked Snoop.

Bunter nodded.

"You know how the matter stands about Clavering, old chap," pursued Skinner, in the same affectionate way.

"In fact, it was you who really spotted the fellow as a spoofer. You're a keen chap, Bunter."

"Keen isn't the word," observed Snoop. "Regular Sheffield steel!"

Billy Bunter purred. He liked flattery, and he liked it in chunks. He was getting it now.

"Of course, you're down on Clavering, as a high-minded, honourable chap," continued Skinner.

"As a fellow of high principles," remarked Stott.

Bunter nodded again. His jaws were too busy for him to speak. He fully concurred that he was a high-minded, honourable chap, with high principles. He had, in fact, often told the Remove fellows so, though they had not believed him.

"We're all down on him," went on Skinner, watching Bunter's fat face. "He's a swindler. Who is the fellow, anyway? He comes here from nowhere. Supposed to have lived in South America, but he always gets off that subject if a fellow speaks. He has a pocket Horace he always carries about with him, and the initials in it are 'T. R.', not 'L. C.' Ponsonby of Highcliffe said he had seen him somewhere, using another name, and I believe Smithy chipped in to prevent Pon giving him away. Old Shepherd, who used to tutor Clavering, comes here to see him, and Clavering contrives to be kidnapped by Highcliffe fellows and kept away till the parson's gone. He's supposed to be the son of an Army captain killed at the Front, but he talks like a sailorman from Pegg—or did when he first came here. We don't believe in him."

"He's down on a fellow smoking a fag in the study!" said Snoop.

"Never touches a card!" jeered Stott.

"Regular rotter!" continued Skinner. "And a spoofer, too! I'm jolly sure his name isn't Clavering, for one! He's borrowed that name!"

"False pretences," agreed Snoop.

"Naturally, we're down on him, same as you are, Bunter. We follow your lead entirely in this matter."

Snoop and Stott nodded assent.

Billy Bunter purred like a fat cat. He was very flattered at the idea of Skinner & Co. following his lead.

"But, as it happens, we can't show the cad up—he's too jolly clever!" said Skinner. "We ought to, of course—it's our duty—What are you sniggering at, Stott, you fathead?"

"N-n-nothing! Go on!"

"We're justified in stretching a point to show up the spoofing cad—don't you think so, Bunter?"

"You bet!" said Bunter, having negotiated the toffee at last, and recovered the use of his speech.

"Now, you know the way detectives bowl out criminals," said Skinner. "They get at their letters and open them secretly."

"Pretty mean," remarked Bunter.

"Ahem!"

"The censors do it," remarked Snoop. "That's the way they bowl out food-hogs, and pacifists, and pro-Germans, and things."

"It wouldn't do for Greyfriars," said Bunter, shaking his head.

The Owl of the Remove had a glimmering now of what Skinner & Co. wanted of him. As a matter of fact, Bunter had often been kicked for nosing into other fellows' correspondence. But it suited him to take an extremely high-minded view of such things at the moment. He didn't intend to play the catspaw for Skinner & Co.

The three young rascals exchanged glances. Skinner went on smoothly:

"Circumstances alter cases, Bunter, don't you think? For instance, there's a letter for Clavering in the rack downstairs now. He's gone out with Smithy, and he hasn't come in yet."

"Oh!" said Bunter.

"It's likely enough that there's some evidence in that letter to convict him," explained Skinner. "Now, you know what a detective would do. He'd collar that letter and open it with steam, and read it, and put it back, without letting Clavering know. Don't you think it would be justified—under the—the circumstances?"

"Well, it might," said Bunter cautiously. "I shouldn't object to reading the letter on—on principle—if you fetch it up, Skinner."

"What I was thinking was that you might get it, Bunter, old chap."

Bunter grinned. He had finished the toffee now.

"Not good enough!" he remarked. "A fellow would get it pretty hot for a trick like that if he was found out."

"But you are such a keen chap, you could do it on your head," urged Skinner.

"Rather too keen to try it, if you ask me!"

Skinner looked baffled. He had wasted sixpennyworth of toffee, and a large amount of blandishment, apparently for nothing. William George Bunter was not quite such a fool as he looked.

Snoop and Stott gave Bunter very ugly glances. The fat junior extracted himself from Smithy's armchair, and moved towards the door.

"Hold on, Bunter!" said Skinner, repressing his wrath. "We—we want you to stay to—to tea."

"Oh, good!" said Bunter. "I'll stay with pleasure, old chap!"

"But we want that letter first."

Bunter hesitated.

He had had one tea, but he was quite ready for another—or a third, for that matter.

"I'll get it after tea," he said finally.

"Clavering may come in."

"I'll chance that!"

Skinner muttered something under his breath. He turned to Snoop.

"Did you get in the jam, Snoopey?" he asked.

Snoop looked surprised for a moment; then, as he saw Skinner's left eye close, he understood.

"Oh, yes!" he answered cheerfully.

"Both kinds—raspberry and strawberry."

"Plenty of it?"

"Three-pound jars."

"And the saveloys?" asked Skinner.

"Yes; three pounds."

"Good! We may as well have tea, then. Sorry you can't stay, Bunter."

Billy Bunter's eyes glistened behind his spectacles.

"I—I say, you fellows, I—I don't mind getting the letter!" he exclaimed. "I—I think it's justified under the circumstances."

"Right you are!" said Skinner at once. "Don't lose any time! Careful, you know, not to be spotted!"

"I'll open the jam while you're gone," remarked Snoop casually.

"I won't be two minutes," said Bunter, and he rolled out of the study in haste. And Skinner & Co. chuckled softly when he was gone.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Nothing for Bunter!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! Where are you barging to, fathead?"

Bunter was barging downstairs in a great hurry when he ran into Bob Cherry and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, who were coming up. Bob caught him playfully by one fat ear, and stopped him.

"Leggo!" howled Bunter. "I'm in a hurry!"

"Has your postal-order come?" grinned Bob.

"Yes—exactly! Leggo!"

Bunter jerked his ear away, and bolted downstairs. He was anxious to get back to Skinner's study, and the saveloys and the two kinds of jam. On the lower landing the short-sighted Owl of the Remove ran into Harry Wharton and Nugent and Johnny Bull, who were following their chums up the staircase.

"Yow!" gasped Bunter, as Johnny Bull shoved him unceremoniously off.

"You beast, Bolsover!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, it's you, Bull, you beast!"

"Why don't you look where you're going, fathead?" demanded Wharton.

Bunter did not reply. He rolled away downstairs in a hurry. Arrived in the lower hall, he blinked about him very cautiously.

Billy Bunter was not plenteously endowed with sense; but he knew that it would not do for him to be seen taking another fellow's letter from the rack. Like Moses of old, he looked this way and that way, to see whether anyone was nigh.

"Hallo! Looking for anything, fatty?" asked Squiff, stopping good-naturedly on his way to the Common-room.

"Yes—no!" stammered Bunter.

"Yes and no?" inquired the Australian junior.

"Oh, rats!"

Squiff gave him a look, and passed on. He had been good-naturedly willing to help the short-sighted junior, if he was looking for something. But Bunter evidently did not want any help.

Bunter approached the letter-rack when

Sampson Field had disappeared. But to his exasperation Temple and Dabney and Fry of the Fourth strolled round a corner, and stopped near the letter-rack to chat. Bunter blinked at them in annoyance.

"I say, you fellows——" he began at last.

Cecil Reginald Temple gave him a lofty look.

"Scat!" he snapped.

"Roll home!" said Fry.

"Oh, all right!" said Bunter. "I thought I'd tell you that Coker of the Fifth was ragging Scott in the Cloisters. But if you don't want to know——"

"Oh, is he?" exclaimed Temple, in great wrath. "We'll teach him to rag the Fourth! Come on, you chaps!"

Temple & Co. dashed out of the School House at once. Billy Bunter grinned a fat grin of satisfaction. Where Coker of the Fifth and Scott of the Fourth might happen to be he had not the faintest idea; but his yarn had served its purpose. For the moment the coast was clear, and he nosed over the letters in the rack in a great hurry.

It did not take him more than a few moments to find the letter addressed to Leonard Clavering, the new boy in the Remove.

He jerked it down, and was turning away with it, when Ogilvy came along with Russell.

"Hallo! Your postal-order at last, Bunter?" grinned Ogilvy.

"Eh? Oh, yes!" stammered Bunter.

"Good! Let's see it!" said Russell.

"Oh, really, Russell——"

"Bother him and his postal-order!" said Ogilvy. "Look if there's anything for me! I'm expecting a letter from the Front!"

Ogilvy of the Remove had the rare distinction of having six brothers in khaki, and he had quite a crop of letters marked "On Active Service." The two chums began looking over the letters, and Bunter rolled away, greatly relieved that they did not suspect what he had been doing.

He hurried up to the Remove passage, and as he stopped at No. 4 he found Peter Todd looking out of the doorway of No. 7.

"Tea's ready, tubby!" called out Peter.

"I'm going to tea with Skinner!" said Bunter loftily. "You can keep your measly sardines, Peter Todd!"

"Jolly glad to!" answered Peter cheerfully, and he turned back into his study.

Bunter threw open the door of No. 4 and rolled in. Skinner and Snoop and Stott eyed him eagerly.

"Got it?" breathed Skinner.

Bunter held up the letter.

"Good!" Skinner closed the door hurriedly, and locked it. "Give it to me!"

The kettle was already boiling, and steam poured from the spout. Skinner held the envelope over the steam.

"I say, you fellows, ain't we going to have tea?" asked Bunter, observing that there were no preparations so far in Skinner's study.

"Afterwards," said Skinner.

"I say, let's have tea first——"

"Rats!"

"Look here, Skinner——"

"Oh, shut up!"

The sweet friendliness of Skinner's manner was quite gone now. Bunter had served his purpose, and there was no need to butter him further.

Billy Bunter blinked at the trio in great wrath. But they took no notice of him. Skinner watched the letter carefully, and when the flap was sufficiently loose he turned it deftly back. His thin fingers drew out the missive from inside.

He unfolded it coolly. Skinner had no

scruples on a point like this. He was quite a Prussian in some things.

Stott and Snoop looked over his shoulder to read the letter; and Bunter, not to be left out, blinked under his arm. The letter was written in pencil on a thin sheet of paper, and dated from Wapshot Camp, near Friardale. It ran:

"Dear Clavering,—I have been given a day's leave to-morrow (Wednesday), so if you want to see me again, come to Popper's island in the afternoon—say about three.—Yours, T. R."

"It's from a soldier," murmured Stott, with something like shame in his face.

"I—I say, I wish we hadn't——"

"Oh, don't be an ass!" interrupted Skinner. "It's from a recruit at Wapshot Camp right enough. You remember Clavering speaking to a soldier outside the gates a few weeks ago! This must be the chap. 'T. R.' You know those initials. They're in Clavering's pocket Horace."

Snoop whistled.

"That looks as if he simply borrowed the book from this soldier chap, and it's not his at all," he remarked.

"He said he bought it second-hand," said Stott.

"Yes, that's so. It's jolly queer!"

"I don't quite understand it," confessed Skinner. "But I'll bet you this soldier-man knows Clavering's secret. They're meeting secretly, you see. If this 'T. R.' was an ordinary friend, why couldn't he come to Greyfriars and see Clavering? What are they meeting at an out-of-the-way place for? Popper's island, too, after all the fuss Sir Hilton Popper makes about fellows going on his island! It's fishy, on the face of it."

"Jolly fishy!" agreed Snoop.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Oh, dry up, Bunter!"

"But what about tea?"

"Cheese it!"

Skinner replaced the letter in the envelope, which he carefully resealed. He held it out to Bunter, who blinked at it.

"Better put that back," remarked Skinner.

"You can put it back yourself, you rotter!"

Skinner shrugged his shoulders.

"Please yourself," he said, throwing the letter on the table. "If Clavering doesn't get it, it'll be inquired after, and you may get into a row. It's a pretty serious thing, taking a fellow's letter."

Bunter stared at him speechlessly.

"Why, you—you—you," he stuttered at last—"you told me to! You——"

"Tell that to the marines!" replied Skinner pleasantly. "I advise you to put the letter back where you found it. I advise you as a friend. Personally, it doesn't matter to me what you do with it."

With a face that was quite extraordinary in its expression, Bunter took the letter and rolled away from No. 4. Skinner & Co. chuckled softly.

"Fat idiot!" was Skinner's comment. "Of course, Bunter's off in this game. I know what we're going to do to-morrow. Clavering and the soldier chap get on the island about three. We're going to be there before that."

"Oh!" said Snoop, with a whistle.

"Nothing easier," said Skinner. "I fancy we shall learn something about the cad this time that he won't be able to crawl out of. Clavering's going to be shown up to all Greyfriars!"

"I say, old Popper makes a regular fuss if a fellow goes on that island," said Stott uneasily. "We might get reported to the Head for trespass."

"We'll keep our eyes open, of course. Popper isn't likely to come on the scene. We'll chance it, anyway."

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The door opened, and Bunter came back into the study.

"Put it back?" asked Skinner.

"Yes," growled Bunter.

"Good! Better say nothing about it. Clavering might kick up a row if he knew you'd been meddling with his letter," remarked Skinner blandly.

Bunter snorted.

"Isn't tea ready?" he demanded.

"Tea! We've had tea."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Snoop and Stott.

"But—but you said—you asked me!" stuttered Bunter.

"Oh, I asked you to tea, didn't I?" said Skinner reflectively. "Saveloys and two kinds of jam—what?"

"Yes!" said Bunter wrathfully.

"Well, don't forget to come, when it comes off—after the war, of course."

"After the war!" yelled Bunter.

"Certainly. Can't stand study spreads in war-time."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you—you spoofing cad!" howled Bunter.

Skinner chuckled.

"My dear chap, it can't be helped. Food-hogging in war-time may be in your line, but not mine. But I'll tell you what, after the war I'll stand you a first-class spread out of my old-age pension!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter glared at Skinner & Co. with a glare that almost cracked his spectacles. He realised, rather late, that his fat leg had been pulled. There was no spread for him in No. 4.

He rolled out of the study at last, leaving the black sheep of Greyfriars chortling, and slammed the door after him with a terrific slam. With a lugubrious face he presented himself in No. 7, his own study. He found Peter Todd and Tom Dutton finishing their tea.

"I'm ready," said Bunter, with a hungry look at the table.

"Ready!" repeated Peter. "Haven't you had tea with Skinner?"

"Nunno! The beast was spoofing!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Peter. "Well, you told me I could keep my measly sardines, and I've done it. I've also scoffed your whack in the war-bread. Ha, ha, ha!"

"I want my tea!" howled Bunter.

"Want away, old chap! No harm in your wanting anything!"

"You skinny beast—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Peter Todd.

"I say, Peter, old chap, I've only had tea in Hall," said Bunter pathetically. "I'm famished—starving, you know."

"Starve quietly, then," said Peter Todd heartlessly.

"Look here, you rotter—"

Peter Todd grinned, as he finished the last fragment of sardine, with the last chip of war-bread. Billy Bunter gave him a look that spoke volumes, and rolled away dismally, to seek hospitality in some study more hospitable than his own—and, alas! to seek in vain.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Burden of a Secret!

"LETTER for you, Clavering!"

Vernon-Smith and Clavering of the Remove came in as the dusk was falling. The Bounder glanced at the letter-rack, and called to his companion.

"For me?" repeated Clavering.

"Yes. Here you are."

Smithy took the letter down, and tossed it across to the new junior. Clavering caught it.

"You didn't expect any letters?" asked Vernon-Smith, with a smile.

"N-no!" said the new junior hesitatingly.

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Clavering held the letter in his hand without opening it. The colour was flushing in his cheeks.

He went up the staircase with Smithy, the letter still unopened in his hand. In the Remove passage the Bounder paused, and looked at Clavering curiously.

"Why don't you open your letter?" he asked.

Clavering's flush deepened.

"I—I—"

He paused.

There was an amused look on Vernon-Smith's face.

"You ass!" he said in a low voice.

"It's for you right enough. Can't you see that the postmark's Wapshot?"

"Oh!" exclaimed Clavering.

"It's from your soldier pal, of course."

"Of course," said Clavering, in great relief.

He opened the letter.

The Bounder was grinning. He alone at Greyfriars knew that Clavering of the Remove was really Tom Redwing, the sailorman's son, of Hawkscliff, though Skinner & Co., and many other fellows, suspected that the new junior was not what he seemed. He knew to what to attribute the new junior's hesitation in opening the letter—the thought that it might have been sent to Greyfriars addressed to the real Leonard Clavering.

Clavering's face brightened a little as he read the missive, which he little dreamed had already been perused in Skinner's study that afternoon.

"Good!" he remarked.

"Soldier chap all right?" asked Smithy.

"Oh, yes! I'm seeing him to-morrow."

"Right! I wouldn't leave that letter about, if I were you."

Clavering smiled.

"I shall burn it," he answered. "I—If you don't mind, Smithy, I won't come on that spin to-morrow afternoon that we were talking about. He—this chap—wants to meet me on Popper's island."

"Right you are! Any time will do for our spin," answered the Bounder. "Mind your eye when you go on the island, though. Old Sir Hilton Popper is wrathful if he finds Greyfriars chaps going there. Of course, his being your guardian might make a difference; but he would be rough on the soldier chap if he found him there."

"He's not likely to."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry came along the Remove passage with Harry Wharton. "You fellows coming to-morrow?"

"That depends—where?" asked the Bounder.

"On the ice," said Wharton. "The Sark's still frozen as hard as a rock. We're going on a skating run up the river."

"Good idea! I'll come," said Vernon-Smith. "Clavering's got another engagement, I believe."

Clavering nodded, without speaking.

"We're going to borrow your spirit-stove, Smithy," went on Bob.

"Eh? Do you want a spirit-stove on a skating-run?"

Bob laughed.

"No; but we're going to stop on the island for coffee and buns."

"Popper's island?"

"Yes. There isn't any other island, is there, duffer?"

Clavering started.

"I—I say, isn't that out of bounds?" he asked.

"Exactly," assented Bob. "That's why we're going."

"Oh!"

"Old Popper will make a row if he hears of it," remarked the Bounder.

"Old Popper's always making a row,

the old hunk!" answered Bob. Then he added quickly: "Excuse me, Clavering. I forgot he was your guardian. I withdraw the hunk."

Clavering smiled, but it was a rather troubled smile. He was thinking of his appointment on the island for Wednesday afternoon—which was likely to be interrupted if the chums of the Remove carried out their intention. He did not want the Famous Five to meet his soldier friend—the real Leonard Clavering, whose place he had taken at Greyfriars, to allow Clavering to realise his daring ambition of joining-up without the knowledge of his guardian.

"Sir Hilton Popper's at home now, I believe?" the Bounder remarked.

"I dare say," answered Bob indifferently.

"May be better to keep clear of the island, then."

"My hat! You're not funky, Smithy, surely?"

"I hope not; but he will complain to the Head, if he spots us there, and you know what a prying old cad he is."

"We're chancing that," said Wharton, with a smile. "We're bound to drop in on the island sometimes, to keep up our claims. It's public land, really. Old Popper has collared it because he's a land-hog. The Head's placed it out of bounds for the sake of peace; but we're not so gone on peace as the Head is."

"Ha, ha! Not quite!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Right-ho! I'll come!" said the Bounder.

Clavering went into his own study.

He found his study-mates, Snoop and Stott, there. They grinned a derisive grin as he came in, but did not speak.

The new junior was not on good terms with his study-mates. Snoop and Stott wanted others to believe—perhaps wanted to believe themselves—that they were down on Clavering because they suspected him of being an impostor. As a matter of fact, it was the new juniors' unconcealed contempt for their shady manners and customs that had earned their dislike and enmity.

They left the study, after Clavering came in and sat down to work. Clavering had his books out, but he was not working. There was a deep shade of thought upon his brow.

A tap came at the door a few minutes later, and Vernon-Smith came in, carefully closing the door after him when he saw that the new junior was alone.

"Rather a fix, old chap," he remarked.

Clavering nodded.

"You can't put off your appointment, or ask the soldier to meet you somewhere else?"

"Not very well," said Clavering slowly. "I don't think there's time for a letter, and I don't know his regimental number, either, to write."

"Then that's no good. But Greyfriars fellows can't be allowed to meet him or see him," said Vernon-Smith. "If they did, they might put two and two together. You haven't told me, but I know well enough that this soldier chap is the real Clavering, and that he got you to turn up at Greyfriars in his name, so that he could join up."

The new junior was silent.

"I shouldn't have guessed it, of course, if I hadn't recognised you as Tom Redwing, the chap who pulled me out of the sea at Hawkscliff," said the Bounder. "Nobody else is likely to guess it; but the less Greyfriars fellows see of him the better, so long as this game is going on."

Clavering rose restlessly.

"It—it can't go on!" he exclaimed at last. "I—I never foresaw all it would lead to. I was glad enough of the chance

of coming to Greyfriars—and it was doing him a good turn. But—but I never foresaw. It was easy enough with his guardian, who had never seen him; but—but I might have guessed that there were bound to be suspicions in the long run—"

"You might," agreed the Bounder.

"His old tutor came here last week—old Shepherd—and you managed that he shouldn't meet me. But he might come again. And then, when the holidays come—"

Clavering moved restlessly about the study. "I was a duffer to begin it; but—but Clavering keeps me to the bargain. And—and how—"

He broke off.

"It's an awkward position," said Vernon-Smith slowly. "You were rather a reckless duffer; though I can understand that you were glad of the chance. Something was bound to leak out sooner or later. But you've got to stick to it now you're in for it!"

"I want to," said Clavering frankly. "I don't want to leave Greyfriars; though, of course, I'd give his place up to Clavering if he wanted it. But he doesn't. He's only afraid of his guardian getting on his track before he gets into a draft for Flanders."

"Stick it out, then!" said the Bounder. "You're bound to, after your bargain with the real owner of the name. He gave you his name, and I suppose you gave him yours. Stick it out, and I'll help! You can rely on me to keep those fellows off the island. I shall be with them, and I'll manage it somehow."

The new junior looked relieved.

"You think you could, Smithy?"

"Rely on me," answered the Bounder confidently. "I can manage that." And he left the study, and Clavering began his work with a more cheerful face.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

On the Ice!

"I SAY, you fellows—"

"Roll away, Bunter!"

"I'm coming!" said Bunter.

The Famous Five had come out of the School House in a cheery body after dinner on Wednesday afternoon. Vernon-Smith was with them, and Squiff and Tom Brown. They were carrying their skates, and Bob was also carrying a bundle, which contained the spirit-stove and other supplies for refreshments on Sir Hilton Popper's island.

Billy Bunter joined them at once, with greedy eyes on the bundle. Whenever Bunter saw a bundle he suspected that it might contain tuck.

"Oh, you're coming, are you?" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Certainly, Bull! Will you lend me your skates?"

"Eh? What am I to skate on, if I lend you my skates?" demanded Johnny Bull.

"If you're going to be selfish, Bull—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Perhaps you'll lend me your skates, Inky?"

"The perhapsfulness is terrific, my esteemed and fatheaded Bunter!" replied Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh affably.

"I say, Squiff—"

"Hallo!" said the Australian junior.

"You're not so selfish as these chaps," said Bunter. "You—"

"Yes, I am," grinned Squiff. "More, in fact!"

"Same here!" chimed in Tom Brown.

"Don't ask me, Bunter: I'm too selfish to lend you my skates when I want them myself."

"Look here, you rotters!" roared Bunter, as the juniors chuckled. "I'm jolly well coming to the picnic!"



The downfall of the nuts! (See Chapter 3.)

"What picnic?" demanded Harry Wharton.

"Do you think I don't know what's in that bundle?" snorted Bunter. "I've a jolly good mind to mention it to Quelch that you're sneaking out of school to break the grub rules!"

"You silly duffer! There's only a spirit-stove and coffee and some sandwiches in the bundle."

Bunter winked.

"Tell us another!" he suggested.

"By Jove! I'll—"

"Hold on!" said Bob Cherry. "If Bunter wants to skate, he can come. Run and fetch the skates off the table in my study; you can have them if you get them. Buck up!"

"Right-ho!" said Bunter, and he rolled into the School House.

"Come on!" said Bob.

"Aren't we going to wait for Bunter to fetch the skates?" asked Frank Nugent.

"What's the good? There's no skates in my study that I know of," said Bob cheerfully. "Bunter can have them if he can get them; but I don't see how he's going to get them as they're not there. We can leave him to work out the problem!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors started at a good pace, and left the school gates. They had reached the frozen river by the time Billy Bunter rolled out of the School House again, with fury in his podgy face. He had discovered that the skates were not there—but the skaters were gone!

Clavering was sauntering on the towing-path when Harry Wharton & Co. glided out on to the ice. He gave Vernon-Smith a glance, and the Bounder smiled. Clavering went on up the river.

The skaters sped away up the ice, soon leaving the junior on the bank far behind.

It was a clear, frosty afternoon, and the run up the frozen river was enjoyable. Only Smithy was thinking of anything but the healthy exercise. The Bounder was debating in his mind how he was to keep the party from camping on the island.

It was already half-past two, and it was quite possible that the soldier from Wapshot was already at the place of his appointment with Clavering. Somehow, the juniors had to be kept from seeing "Private Tom Redwing of the Loamshire Rifles."

It depended on the Bounder—and Smithy was seldom at a loss.

But, as it happened, Smithy's sagacity was not to be called upon, as chance favoured him.

The skating-party were drawing near the island when a tall, angular figure was sighted on the bank. As he spotted that long, bony figure in shooting clothes, with the white moustache and the eyeglass, Bob Cherry uttered an exclamation.

"Old Popper!"

"Rotten luck!" growled Squiff. "He's seen us, too."

The baronet looked round, and his eye glistened behind his eyeglass as he spotted the party of juniors, evidently making for the island.

Harry Wharton & Co. slowed down. Their right to camp on the island was unquestionable—in their own eyes, at least. But Sir Hilton Popper was a governor of the school, and a fussy and autocratic old fellow. They did not want to be hauled over the coals when they returned to Greyfriars, on complaint by the baronet.

"Better keep on," remarked the Bounder, smiling a little. The appearance of Sir Hilton on the bank had taken the trouble off his hands.

"I suppose so," growled Wharton.

"Hallo, he's calling to us!"

The sharp voice of the baronet rapped over the ice.

"Stop!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" replied Bob Cherry affably.

"Boy!" snorted Sir Hilton.

"Man!" replied Bob.

"I do not want your impertinence, boy!" exclaimed the baronet. "You are going upon the island, I presume. I have caught you there before."

"Well caught, sir!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"Nice afternoon, isn't it, sir?" said Bob. "Nice weather for the time of year, considering."

"Are you going upon the island?" thundered the baronet.

"We intend to spend the whole afternoon on an island, sir, if you don't mind."

"I do mind! I forbid you to do anything of the kind!"

"Can't be helped, sir."

"Do you dare, boy, to trespass upon my island against my express orders?" shouted Sir Hilton.

"Is it your island, sir?"

"I do not intend to argue with you, Cherry! I order you not to go upon that island."

"But we're bound to spend the afternoon on an island, sir," objected Bob Cherry. "We can't help it."

"What? What do you mean?"

"You see, sir, we can't get passports in war-time, or we'd go on the Continent," explained Bob Cherry. "Under the circumstances, we've got no choice but to spend the afternoon on an island. Good-bye, sir!"

The skaters sped on, chuckling. Sir Hilton Popper stared after them with a red face, understanding at last that Bob was playfully alluding not to the island in the river, but to the island of Great Britain.

The Co. shot on past the island, leaving the baronet striding angrily along the towing-path and snorting.

"Did I cheek him too much for a governor of the school?" grinned Bob, as they sped on towards Highcliffe round the bend of the river.

"I fancy so, a little," said Harry, laughing. "Arrogant old hunks! No good doubling back after he's gone; he's bound to come and spy at the place later on to see if we're there; that's the kind of Hun he is. We'll keep on past Highcliffe, and camp on the bank."

"Good!" said the Bounder.

The skaters sped on merrily. As they came round the bend, and Highcliffe School came into view, they spotted three Highcliffians on the ice—Ponsonby and Gadsby and Monson.

"Bowl 'em over!" chuckled Bob. "Down with Highcliffe!"

"Ha, ha!"

Ponsonby & Co. viewed them with their usual lofty, supercilious smiles as they came sweeping up. The smiles vanished suddenly, however, and the Highcliffians yelled as they were bowled over.

The Greyfriars party sped on, leaving Pon and Gaddy and Monson sitting on the ice, looking dazed, and using expressions that were certainly not taught them in the Form-room at Highcliffe.

They were a good three miles from the island in the river when they camped for coffee and buns on the bank at last, much to the Bounder's satisfaction. So far as Harry Wharton & Co. were concerned, the interview on the island would not be interrupted. Of Skinner & Co.'s knowledge of the appointment, and their intention to be present at it, the Bounder, of course, knew nothing.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Skinner Makes Discoveries!

"HERE he comes!"

Skinner whispered the words.

Skinner, Snoop, and Stott had left Greyfriars immediately after dinner, and lost no time in getting to the island in the river. They had been improving the shining hour by smoking

cigarettes and playing nap while they waited for three o'clock to chime.

From the cover of the frosty bushes they had seen Harry Wharton & Co. go sweeping by and vanish in the direction of Highcliffe. Somewhat to their alarm, they had spotted Sir Hilton Popper on the bank soon afterwards, and had seen that he stopped and stared towards the island. To their relief, the baronet kept on, however, and disappeared into the woods. It was a quarter of an hour later that Skinner observed a lithe, handsome figure in khaki on the ice, sliding merrily towards the island.

Then he made his announcement, and cigarettes and cards were hastily put away. From the screen of bushes the three spies watched the young soldier as he came on towards them.

"Keep out of sight!" muttered Snoop.

"He can't see us here."

"Shush!" murmured Stott.

The soldier reached the island, and tramped ashore through the frozen rushes. His clear voice rang out through the trees and thickets.

"Hallo! Anybody here yet?"

Skinner & Co. kept close in the bushes, and made no sound.

The soldier, satisfied that there was no one on the island but himself, stood by a tree near the water's edge and watched the bank opposite, whistling. He seemed to be in great spirits.

Skinner, keeping carefully out of sight, watched the bank also, through the openings in the thicket.

Before long Clavering came in sight from the direction of Greyfriars, following the towing-path. The soldier called to him, and Clavering answered, and stepped out on the frozen river, sliding towards the island.

He landed in a couple of minutes, and joined the lad in khaki. They shook hands cordially.

"Here we are again!" said the soldier cheerily.

"Let's get out of sight," said the junior. "We're not really allowed on this island."

"Right-ho!"

The two entered the leafless thickets. Skinner & Co. crouched as close as possible behind the sheltering trees. But Clavering and the soldier did not come very far.

The lad in khaki stopped, and leaned against a big trunk only a few yards from the tree behind which Skinner was skulking.

Clavering looked at him curiously.

"You look jolly chippy!" he remarked.

"I feel chippy, old scout. I'm in the next draft!"

"Already?" exclaimed the junior.

"Yes. I've had some training before, you know." The lad in khaki smiled. "I told you I ran away once before and joined up, and I was in the Army some time before Mr. Shepherd found me and got me out. It all tells, you know. Forming fours isn't much of a tax on the intellect, especially when you're keen. And I was always a good shot. I'm booked."

"And you're glad?"

"What-ho! Some fellows like to get into a draft, and some don't. Depends on how they take to the life. I ask nothing better. Next week I shall be out in the trenches killing Huns, I hope."

The junior looked very thoughtful.

"You're less than a year older than I am," he remarked. "You look two or three years older from your size, but—"

"Old enough to kill Huns. Why, there are chaps in khaki who squeezed in somehow at fifteen. I don't know how

they did it, but they did. It's a ripping life! You've only got to take the rough with the smooth, and take it cheerfully, and learn not to turn your nose up at anything. It's a good deal like being in a school—only it's open air instead of being shut up inside walls. I wouldn't change with you for your weight in gold!"

The Greyfriars junior smiled.

"You wouldn't rather be at Greyfriars, then?"

"No fear!"

"You want to stick to the bargain still?"

"Rather!"

Clavering was silent.

"But I'll tell you what," said the soldier. "If you're fed up, I can let you off the bargain. I shall be off for the Front to-morrow, and Shepherd won't be able to chip in when it's gone that far. After to-morrow, kid, you can suit yourself. I shall be safe then."

"Safe!" echoed Clavering.

"Safe from being hanked back, I mean," said the soldier, laughing. "Not safe in other ways, I suppose. We march in the morning."

Behind the trees Skinner & Co. exchanged glances of suppressed excitement.

They were learning something now.

"But are you fed up?" asked the soldier curiously. "When we had that talk in the train, you seemed keen as anything on going to a big school. You've nothing on your conscience. You gave me your name, and I gave you mine. It was a fair exchange, and mattered to nobody but ourselves."

"That is so," assented the junior slowly. "But—"

"You're fed up with school?"

"Not in the least. I like Greyfriars. It would hit me hard if I had to leave. But—there are lots of 'buts'!—I—I never foresaw all the things that would crop up. I've made a friend there—a splendid chap—who's pulled me through more than once. But for that I should have been hopelessly bowled out."

"But you've been lucky."

"Yes, as it happens. But"—the junior's face clouded—"I—I feel like an impostor!"

"You're nothing of the kind."

"I—I know. But I feel—I wish I could have gone to Greyfriars in my own name," said Clavering, with a sigh. "But that was impossible. The son of a sailor-man hadn't much chance of that," he added, rather bitterly. "But the school's doing me more good than it's doing some of the rich men's sons there. My study-mates now are a pair of sneaking, smoky slackers, but most of the fellows are the right sort, every way."

Snoop and Stott exchanged a furious look behind the trees.

"I don't see how you could be suspected," said the soldier. "Sir Hilton Popper has never seen me, and you missed seeing old Shepherd when he came. You had my clothes, my box—everything, as well as my name."

Clavering smiled faintly.

"It's spoofo," he said, "and I believe spoofo always comes out in the long run. There's no harm in it, but it's spoofo. It happened that I'd met a Greyfriars fellow only a few days before I met you. I'd pulled him out of the sea when he was wrecked at the Hawk's Cliff—a chap named Vernon-Smith. He recognised me at once as Tom Redwing."

"But—"

"He kept the secret, because I'd saved his life, and he is my friend. But there was a chap at Highcliffe School who'd seen me at Hawkscliff in the summer. He knew me, and he was going to denounce me. Somehow, Smithy prevented him, but it was a narrow shave. And—and

there were other things, too. With one thing and another, I was suspected, especially by some mean fellows who don't like me because I don't join in smoking and card-playing with them. I've been like a juggler, keeping my footing there, and as fast as one thing is done with another crops up."

The soldier knitted his brows. "You'd like to have it finished, then?" he asked.

"Yes," answered Clavering frankly. "If I could stay at Greyfriars under my true colours I'd ask nothing better. But I feel that I'm deceiving them, and a deception is a deception, whether there's any harm in it or not. When you're gone to the Front I shall do as you say. If it's too late to harm you, you won't mind my giving it up?"

"Not a bit. But what are you going to do?"

"Go back to Hawkscliff, I suppose. When I'm old enough I shall join up, if the war goes on till then. I've earned my bread almost ever since I could walk, one way or another, and I suppose I can do it again."

"It will be a change, after what you've known the last few weeks."

"I know."

There was a silence. Behind the trees, Skinner & Co. were almost bursting with suppressed excitement and glee. Clavering's secret, from beginning to end, was in their hands at last!

The silence was broken by a sharp, angry voice from the bank:

"By gad, trespassers!" Clavering started, and looked quickly through the bushes.

On the towing-path opposite the island the angular figure of Sir Hilton Popper could be seen. The baronet had returned, doubtless to catch Harry Wharton & Co. on the island, and he had caught others, at least. The glimmer of the khaki showed through the leafless bushes, and it had been discerned by the baronet's keen eyes.

Sir Hilton brandished his riding-whip towards the island.

"Come away from there, you scoundrel!" he shouted.

The soldier looked round coolly. "Who's that merry old johnny?" he asked.

"Sir Hilton Popper."

"My hat! My cheery old guardian, though he doesn't know it," said the lad in khaki, laughing.

"Yes."

"What is he so excited about?" "This island is his property—or he makes out that it is. The Greyfriars fellows maintain that it's public land. He's a land-hog, so the fellows say," said Clavering, his lip curling. "I know his father fenced in half the village green at Friardale, and he sticks to it, because there's nobody to go to law with him about it."

"Precious old hunks!" The soldier's handsome, sunny face grew dark as he looked at the baronet brandishing his whip on the opposite bank. "That's the old hunks who wrote to my pater in South America time and again, urging him to come home and join the Army, and undertook to look after me if anything happened, and acted like a mean rotter when I was left on his hands. You should see the letter he wrote to me when I was at Shepherd's vicarage—cold as ice!"

"You scoundrel, come off that island!" roared the baronet.

"Which of us is the scoundrel?" said the soldier, laughing again.

The Greyfriars junior laughed, too.

"Will you come off that island, or shall I come and lay my whip about you?"

roared Sir Hilton Popper. "I can see you, you scoundrel!"

"That's how he feels towards a chap in khaki, who's going out to fight for him and his sort," said the soldier, with a curling lip. "By gad, I'll talk to him, too!"

He strode out on the ice.

"Ah, I thought so!" exclaimed Sir Hilton. "I shall report this to your commanding-officer, my fine fellow!"

The Greyfriars junior followed the soldier. Sir Hilton's eyes glittered at him as he caught sight of the boy.

"You too, Clavering! My ward—trespassing! By gad!"

Skinner & Co. exchanged glances, and lay low. They hoped that the baronet would not suspect that there was anyone else on the island.

Private Tom Redwing marched steadily across the ice towards the bank. There was a grim expression on his handsome face. The junior followed him, alarmed a little by his look. It was evident that the real Leonard Clavering had no love for his dead father's faithless friend.

Sir Hilton's eyes glittered as the soldier came up the bank, with the Removite of Greyfriars at his heels. The junior caught the soldier's sleeve.

"Hold on!" he muttered. "What—"

"Leave him to me!"

The soldier shook off the schoolboy's detaining hand, and strode towards the angry baronet.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Thrashed!

SIR HILTON POPPER jammed his eyeglass a little more tightly into his fiery eye, and stared at the young soldier. The lad's cool bearing did not please the aristocratic baronet in the least. The soldier halted within a few paces of him, meeting his angry glance with one of disdain.

"You shall be punished for this, my man!" said Sir Hilton, biting his grey moustache savagely. "Your name?"

The soldier scanned him without replying.

"Do you hear me?" thundered the baronet. "Name, number, and regiment! Answer me at once!"

"You are Sir Hilton Popper?" said the soldier at last.

"I am; and you will see me again at your camp, my fine fellow! You will be taught to keep from trespassing on my property."

"I am glad to see you, Sir Hilton," said the soldier quietly. "I've often wanted to meet you, to tell you what I think of you!"

"What—what?"

"You are Captain Clavering's false friend—"

"What!" thundered the baronet, taken quite aback.

The soldier's eyes were gleaming now. That he was the son of Captain Clavering, slain in battle on the Western Front, the baronet had not the slightest suspicion. But it was as the son of the dead officer that the lad in khaki was speaking.

"You wrote to Captain Clavering, when he was in South America," he resumed. "You urged him and taunted him, though you knew that the reason he did not return to England was that his son would be unprovided for in case of his death. You made a promise—vague enough, but understood as a promise—that if Captain Clavering fell you would see that his orphan son did not want. He fell—and how did you fulfil the trust?"

Sir Hilton Popper stared blankly at the soldier.

He could not speak.

The unexpected address had quite taken his breath away. The baronet could only stand and stare and gasp for breath.

"You refused even to see the orphan," resumed the soldier. "You wrote to him at the time when his heart was almost broken by the terrible loss he had suffered, a cold, unfeeling letter, plainly showing that you regarded him as a burden thrown upon your hands which you would gladly have rid yourself of. You did not offer him a home or even a kind word. You grudgingly agreed to pay his fees at a school, so long as he remained there without troubling you, or making any claim upon you. You scoundrel!"

Sir Hilton Popper found his voice.

"What? You— By gad! You impertinent puppy!" he shouted, almost foaming with rage. "By gad! I'll have you put in the cells for this! I'll lay my whip about your shoulders—"

He grasped the riding-whip almost convulsively.

The soldier did not stir.

"Better not!" he said. "It is only because you are old enough to be my father that I do not thrash you like a dog, as you deserve!"

Slash!

The enraged baronet, unheeding, lashed out with the whip.

The soldier's arm came up quickly, and caught the blow. An exclamation of pain left his lips.

Before the blow could be repeated—and the baronet intended to repeat it—the lad in khaki had grasped him.

The riding-whip was torn from Sir Hilton's hand, and the soldier's left hand grasped his collar and twisted him round. Then the whip rose and fell.

Clavering of the Remove looked on with scared eyes. But he did not speak. He could not interfere—he would not have been allowed to interfere.

Lash, lash, lash!

Sir Hilton Popper, mad with rage and amazement, struggled furiously in the grip of the lad in khaki.

But he struggled in vain.

The young soldier's left hand, gripping his collar, held him as in a vice, while the whip lashed and lashed and lashed again upon the baronet's shoulders and broad back.

It was the first time in his life that Sir Hilton Popper had received a horse-whipping, though doubtless not the first time that he had deserved one.

His furious exclamations changed to yells of pain.

He struggled madly, and all the time the whip rose and fell, till he was foaming and shrieking for mercy.

"For Heaven's sake, stop!" exclaimed the Removite, in alarm.

The soldier paused.

With a twist of his arm he flung the gasping baronet away, and Sir Hilton Popper rolled in the frosty grass.

The soldier threw the whip out on the frozen river.

He looked down at the baronet, writhing in the grass, and spitting out curses and furious threats.

"That's what I've wanted to give you!" he said, between his teeth. "That's what you've asked for, you brute! You will think twice before you raise your hand again to a soldier of the King!"

He turned on his heel.

With a wave of the hand to the Greyfriars junior he strode away down the bank, his brows still knitted, and disappeared.

Sir Hilton Popper was still writhing in the grass.

The Greyfriars junior stood looking at him helplessly. The sudden scene had

nonplussed him, and he did not know what to do. He advanced towards the baronet at last, and offered him a hand to rise.

Sir Hilton Popper struck savagely at his outstretched hand, and spurned it away. Clavering of the Remove stepped back, reddening.

He understood that the baronet would never forgive him for having witnessed his bitter humiliation.

Sir Hilton struggled to his feet at last, panting. The junior was moving away along the towing-path, when Sir Hilton's savage voice rapped out:

"Stop!"

Tom Redwing turned back.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Cast Off!

THE baronet stood unsteadily, his face white now, panting. He could hardly believe the evidence of his senses. That he, Sir Hilton Popper, county magnate and great landowner, justice of the peace, and Terrific Panjandrum, so to speak, had been horse-whipped—actually horsewhipped!—and by a common soldier! When such things happened it was time for the skies to fall. But for the smarting of the lash on his shoulders, Sir Hilton would really have thought that he had been the victim of an hallucination.

His look was bitter as it dwelt on the Greyfriars junior. The boy whom he believed to be Leonard Clavering had witnessed his thrashing—and there was no forgiveness for that.

"So these are the friends you make, boy?" he ground out at last. "You leave the school where I have placed you to make friends with a common soldier!"

The Greyfriars junior flushed.

"How dare you speak of a soldier like that!" he exclaimed.

"Wha-at?" stuttered the baronet.

"How dare you, I say! What would become of you, and all like you, but for the soldiers?" broke out Clavering, too angry and disgusted to measure his words.

Sir Hilton fairly stuttered. He glanced round for the whip, which had been used with such good effect on his own shoulders. But it was not to be seen—which was perhaps fortunate for the junior. He could not have handled the angry man as his soldier pal had done—even if there had been no other considerations.

"You young rascal!" exclaimed Sir Hilton furiously. "You have learned this impertinence from the other young ruffian. Is this the way you address your guardian—the only man whose bounty stands between you and beggary?"

Clavering was silent.

"I have had impertinence from you before, young Clavering!" resumed Sir Hilton, glowering at him. "This is more than enough. Take care, or I will cast you off, as you deserve! It was by no will of mine that you were thrown upon my hands."

The junior still did not speak.

"Now, since this ruffian is a friend of yours, you doubtless know who he is, and where he comes from," continued Sir Hilton. "What is his name?"

No answer.

"His regiment?"

Silence.

"Will you answer my questions, Clavering?" roared the baronet.

"I cannot," answered the junior quietly. "You want to have him punished, I know that. You cannot expect me to give information against my friend!"

"Your friend, after what he has done!"

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"You struck him first!"

"Struck him first!" repeated the baronet, almost dazedly. "So you justify the young ruffian in what he has done—in an assault upon your benefactor! Take care!"

Clavering held his tongue.

"You have been complaining to him of my treatment, from what the ruffian said," continued the baronet. "What does he know of the matters he referred to, but from your complaints and misrepresentations?"

Clavering smiled slightly.

"So it is a laughing matter to you!" exclaimed Sir Hilton furiously. "Well, I command you, boy, to give me his name! Will you give it?"

"No!"

"Where can I find him?"

"Before long where you are not likely to go and look for him!" retorted the junior. "At the Front!"

Sir Hilton gasped.

"Take care—take care! This from the beggar I have befriended!"

"I am no beggar," said the junior calmly. "What little you gave you gave grudgingly, and I asked nothing of you, and I ask nothing now."

The baronet made a stride towards him.

Tom Redwing backed away.

But the gleam in his eyes showed so

*Eat less
Bread*

plainly that he would return blow for blow, if he received one, that the enraged man paused. He was aching all over from the castigation he had received.

"For the last time," he said hoarsely, "I order you to tell me that man's name and regiment, so that I can report him to his commanding-officer!"

"I will not!"

"Then," said Sir Hilton Popper, between his teeth, "from this moment you are nothing to me! You were thrown upon my hands against my will. I wash my hands of you. Go your way, and make no claim on me in future!"

The Greyfriars junior smiled contemptuously.

"I am quite willing to do that," he answered. "In any case, I should be leaving Greyfriars soon."

It was upon the schoolboy's lips to tell the whole truth—that the lad who had thrashed the baronet was in reality his ward, the son of the man he had failed to keep faith with. But he held back the words. That secret was not to be told yet.

Sir Hilton Popper waved his hand.

"You can go, then. I shall write to Dr. Locke, and inform him that I have cast you off, and that after the present term's fees are exhausted I shall pay nothing further for you. As for that young scoundrel, I shall find him. I shall punish him. Go!"

Without a word the junior turned and walked away.

The baronet strode into the woods, fuming.

Clavering did not look back. He walked away in the direction of Greyfriars, troubled in mind. The quarrel with the baronet did not distress him. That mattered little. But he was anxious for his soldier friend—the brave-hearted lad whom he liked and respected. He wondered whether Sir Hilton would succeed in tracking Private Redwing to Wapshot Camp, and whether the C.O. would listen to the angry man's complaints. Surely the soldier lad was safe; surely no man in the King's uniform could be expected to take a blow without avenging it upon his insulter! But the junior was anxious.

As for himself, he was cast off! He smiled at the thought. Already it had been borne in upon his mind that he could not remain at Greyfriars. Much as he loved the old school, much as he had learned to like his friends there, he felt that it could not continue. The deception, such as it was, was innocent enough—at least, in intention. He was wronging no one. But it was a deception, and it must lead in the long run to deceit and trickery—and that, he was determined, should never be.

After the river-bank was deserted Skinner & Co. appeared from the thickets on the island, and slid across the ice to the shore.

They were greatly excited. They had witnessed the horsewhipping of the baronet, and enjoyed it exceedingly. It made them, in fact, feel quite friendly towards the unknown soldier. But towards Clavering their intentions were as hostile as ever. And now they had him in their power!

"What a yarn for the school to hear!" grinned Skinner, as they sauntered home to Greyfriars. "The blessed spoofer won't be able to crawl out of this—what?"

"Smithy can't help him this time!" grinned Snoop.

"No fear!"

"Let's get in!" said Skinner, with a chortle. "We'll have it all over the school by the time Smithy comes in! Ha, ha!"

And the three young rascals hurried on to Greyfriars.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Betrayed!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. came back as the dusk was falling, ruddy and tired from their long run up the frozen river, and in great spirits. As they came into the School House, carrying their skates, Billy Bunter met them, with a fat grin on his face, and several juniors glanced rather curiously at Vernon-Smith. Some of the fellows had been puzzled by his loyal championship of the new junior, for Smithy was not the kind of fellow to form hasty friendships, or, indeed friendships at all. But Harold Skinner's yarn, already spread in the Remove, accounted for what had mystified them.

Clavering of the Remove was in his study, little dreaming of the excited discussion that was going on below. As yet he knew nothing of Skinner's spying on the island.

"I say, you fellows——" began Billy Bunter.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! You never came out with those skates!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"There weren't any skates in your study, you beast!"

"Go hon!"

"I say, you fellows, have you heard

"I've heard that it's tea-time," remarked Harry Wharton. "Come on, you fellows!"

"Haven't you heard about Clavering?" exclaimed Bunter.

"Hallo, Clavering again! What yarn have you got hold of this time?" exclaimed Johnny Bull gruffly.

"I told you all along that the fellow was a spoofer!" chortled Bunter triumphantly. "I knew he was no class! The cad refused to cash a postal-order for me!"

"Is that evidence against him?" asked Nugent. "I rather think that proves that all the Remove is no class, too."

"Oh, really, Nugent! Don't you understand? It's come out now!" said Bunter. "His real name's known!"

The Bounder started violently.

"What do you mean, you fat fool?" he exclaimed, seizing Bunter by the shoulder and shaking him angrily.

"Yaroooh!" roared Bunter.

"What do you mean, you silly porpoise?"

"Yow-ow! Don't sh-sh-shake me like that, you beast!" howled Bunter. "If you make my gig-gig-glasses fall off—Yow-ow!"

"Shake, shake!"

"You'll have to p-p-pay for them—Yaroooh!"

"Don't burst him, Smithy!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "It's only another of his fat-headed yarns."

"It isn't!" howled Bunter. "I tell you the chap's name is known! Yow-ow!"

"Well, what's his name, then?" asked Wharton, laughing. "Is he the Crown Prince of Prussia in disguise?"

"Yow-ow! His name's Redwing!" yelled Bunter.

"What?"

"Tom Redwing!" hooted Bunter, jerking himself away from the Bounder, and blinking at him furiously. "And Smithy knew it all the time! Smithy's been helping him to spoof the school!"

The Bounder stood rooted to the floor. The Famous Five looked at him in wonder.

"There's nothing in that, I suppose, Smithy?" asked Harry.

"The nothingfulness is terrific!" said Hurree Singh, with a shake of the head.

The Bounder did not speak.

"Smithy knows!" hooted Bunter.

"That's why he stood up for the spoofer—because he's Tom Redwing!"

"Why should Smithy stand up for him if he's a spoofer?" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Because Redwing saved his life when he was wrecked at Hawkscliff!" said Bunter triumphantly. "That's the reason!"

"Redwing!" said Wharton. "Tom Redwing! Why, that's the name of the fellow who rescued you at Hawkscliff, weeks ago, Smithy, when your boat went down!"

Vernon-Smith nodded without speaking. His face was pale now. More than once he had fended off danger from the junior who had come to Greyfriars under another's name, but the game was evidently up now.

"I say, you fellows, somebody ought to tell the Head!" grinned Bunter. "He ought to be shown up, you know! An awful spoofer! The real Clavering is at Wapshot! He's joined the Colours!"

"Gammon!"

"It's true! Smithy knows, too!"

"Who told you that yarn, you fat idiot?" snapped Johnny Bull.

"Skinner! He heard 'em!" grinned Bunter. "Skinner heard Clavering—I mean, Redwing—talking to the soldier on the island—the real Clavering! It's all out now!"

"Oh, the spying cad!" muttered the Bounder.

"A fellow who would spy and listen would tell lies!" said Harry Wharton contemptuously. "I don't believe a word of it!"

"It's true!"

"Rats!"

The Famous Five went upstairs, with Squiff and Tom Brown. The Bounder followed them slowly, his brows knitted.

In the Remove passage Harry Wharton turned to the Bounder.

"Is there anything in that yarn, Smithy?" he asked directly. "You know whether there is or not."

"Better ask Clavering," answered the Bounder; and he went on to No. 11. He found Clavering alone there, immersed in his books.

Harry Wharton & Co. went into No. 1 to tea, much perplexed. They liked Clavering, and hitherto had refused to listen to the whispers about him. But it was easy to see that there was now something more than a slanderous whisper due to Skinner's malice.

"What on earth does it mean?" said Bob Cherry. "Clavering seems a decent sort. He can't be an impostor, can he?"

"Blessed if I know!" confessed Wharton. "Hallo, Skinner!"

Harold Skinner grinned into the study.

slowly. "If you've really got anything to say, anything more than your rotten malice, Skinner—excuse my speaking plainly."

"I know the fellow's name!" said Skinner. He's Tom Redwing, a sailor's son, and he lived at Hawkscliff till quite lately. Smithy knows it, because it's the same Tom Redwing that pulled him out of the sea. That's why he's stood up for the spoofer, and prevented Ponceonby from giving him away. That's how the initials 'T. R.' came to be in his Horace."

"Hawkscliff," murmured Nugent, recollecting. "He wouldn't come with us the day we were going to Hawkscliff." He paused.

Wharton frowned.

"He's got to be shown up," pursued Skinner, "and he's got to get out of the school. We don't want swindling impostors here! We——"

"Sorry to interrupt," Nugent minor of the Second looked in. "Is Clavering about?"



Trouble in the Remove-room! (See Chapter 11.)

"Waiting for you to come in, dear boy," he said. "There's a job for you, as captain of the Remove, Wharton."

"Well?" rapped out Wharton.

"Clavering, you know——"

"Can't you give Clavering a rest?" snapped Johnny Bull.

"No, fear!" answered Skinner coolly. "I've got my duty to do. When a fellow comes to Greyfriars in a false name it's a chap's duty to show him up! I suppose you fellows don't hold with a low cad coming here, passing himself off as a gentleman's son, under an assumed name?"

"That description fits you, Skinner, excepting for the assumed name!" said Johnny Bull, in his slow way.

Skinner scowled angrily.

"I'm not talking to you, Bull! I'm talking to Wharton! Wharton's bound to take this up, as captain of the Form. I want the fellow called up before all the Remove, to face me, and answer me, if he dares!"

"That's right enough," said Wharton

"In his study," said Skinner. "Is he wanted?"

"Head wants him."

Skinner whistled as the fog went on up the passage.

"Looks as if it's out!" he remarked. "If the Head's sent for him, it's got out, I should say."

"Well, now get out yourself!" growled Bob Cherry. "Whatever Clavering may be, he's a better chap than you are, any day. And if he's the fellow who risked his life to save Smithy, he's a fine chap, and I'd say so anywhere!"

"He's a swindler——"

"Oh, get out!"

Bob pushed the cad of the Remove out of the study, and slammed the door after him. Bob's rugged face was troubled.

"I—I suppose there's something in this, you fellows," he said, looking at his chums. "But—but it's not fair to be down on Clavering till a fellow's heard what he has to say for himself. There may be some—some explanation. Smithy wouldn't have backed him up if he

wasn't square. And Skinner's down on him not because he's a spofer, but because he's decent—that's Skinner's style."

"The esteemed Bob speaks with unusual common-sensefulness," remarked the Nabob of Bhanipur. "As the esteemed and ludicrous political bigwigs say, let us wait and see."

And the chums of the Remove decided to wait and see; and meanwhile they had tea.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Before the Head!

VERNON-SMITH'S brow was sombre as he entered Clavering's study. But the new junior greeted him with a smile. The events of the afternoon had lifted a weight from Clavering's mind; and, save for his anxiety for his soldier friend, he was feeling a sense of relief.

"Do you know what's happened?" asked the Bounder abruptly.

"What is it, then?"

"Skinner spied on you this afternoon, and he knows the whole game—and he has told the whole Remove!"

Clavering started.

"The cad!" he muttered.

"He's a rotten cad!" growled Vernon-Smith. "But the fact remains. I'm afraid the game's up, Clavering."

To the Bounder's surprise, the new junior only smiled.

"You don't seem to mind that?" exclaimed the Bounder, in amazement.

"The game's up, anyway," said Clavering quietly. "I saw Sir Hilton Popper this afternoon. The soldier chap—you know who I mean—horsewhipped him, and I was there. Sir Hilton has cast me off. I am not to remain at Greyfriars in any case. And—I'm sorry to go, but I'm glad it's come to an end! I couldn't have played the game out much longer."

The Bounder looked thoughtful.

"That settles it, with a vengeance," he said slowly. "But—it mayn't be necessary for you to leave Greyfriars, old fellow. You might stay—in your own name."

"Not likely!" said Clavering, laughing.

"I mean, my pater would see you through," said the Bounder eagerly. "I told my father, of course, about you—about your saving my life at Hawkscliff. He's been trying to find you ever since. He's got a man now inquiring after Tom Redwing of Hawkscliff. He would be glad to see you through—and he would not grudge it like old Popper. Let me tell him the whole story, kid—"

"You're awfully good," said Clavering gratefully, "but it can't be done, Smithy. I could not take alms; and that's what it amounts to."

"But—"

"I know what you're thinking. Sir Hilton Popper has paid a term's fees for me here grudgingly, and I allowed that. But it's different. The fees were paid for Clavering, and I took Clavering's place, at his own request. It was a good turn for him, and a good turn for me. Even so, I felt that it could not last. I know you mean kindly, Smithy, but it's impossible. I can go back to what I came from."

"But—but—"

The door was thrown open, and the Bounder was interrupted. Dicky Nugent put his head into the study.

"Head wants you, Clavering!"

"All right."

Nugent minor went his way, whistling. Clavering stood for some moments in thought.

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"Has Skinner been to the Head, I wonder?" he muttered.

"Hardly. But—the yarn is all over the school, it seems, and it may have got to Dr. Locke."

"Well, it's only a little sooner. I intended to make a finish next week, when my friend is in the draft for the Front. But I've thought that out. After that horsewhipping, Sir Hilton isn't likely to trouble his head about Leonard. Mr. Shepherd couldn't interfere without his authority. Leonard Clavering isn't likely to be taken out of the Army this time."

"Then you'll tell the Head?"

"I suppose so, though it looks as if he knows already."

Clavering made his way to the Head's study with a thoughtful wrinkle in his brow. He was feeling much lighter of heart now that the strange state of affairs was coming to an end.

He was stared at on all sides as he went downstairs.

With Skinner's accusation fresh in their minds, the Remove fellows were keenly interested in Clavering, and wondering how he would take it.

"Hallo, here's Redwing!" called out Snoop. And there was a laugh.

"What price boats this afternoon?" squeaked Billy Bunter.

"All hands on deck!" grinned Stott.

"Belay there!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The sailorman's son flushed slightly, but he neither looked to the right nor to the left, but went steadily on.

He tapped at the Head's door, leaving the excited juniors in a buzz behind him. Dr. Locke's deep voice bade him enter.

Clavering's step was firm as he entered the Head's study.

Dr. Locke's face was very grave. A letter lay on his desk before him. His glance was very severe as it rested on Clavering.

"I presume you know why I have sent for you?" he said, in a stern voice.

Clavering's colour deepened a little.

"I think I can guess, sir," he answered, in a quiet voice.

"This note has been sent to me by hand from Sir Hilton Popper," said the Head, with a gesture to the letter on his desk. "It appears that you have failed to treat your guardian with the respect due to him, Clavering."

The junior drew a quick breath. It was only a complaint from the baronet that he had to answer for now, it seemed. Skinner's story was not known to the Head.

"Sir Hilton tells me that he has cast you off, and that he will be no longer responsible for your maintenance at Greyfriars," said the Head, knitting his brows. "Your offence must have been very serious, Clavering."

"May I explain, sir?"

"I am waiting for you to do so."

"I was a witness to Sir Hilton being horsewhipped by a soldier whom he had insulted," said the junior firmly. "I have committed no other offence—that Sir Hilton knows of, at any rate."

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Dr. Locke, in astonishment.

There was a pause.

"This is—extraordinary," said the Head at last. "Of course, it is my intention to communicate with Sir Hilton, and point out to him that he can scarcely throw you aside, as you have no other resources—"

"I beg you not to do so, sir!" exclaimed the junior.

"It is my duty, Clavering. I cannot send you away from Greyfriars to face the world alone, at your early age—"

"I have a confession to make, sir," muttered the junior.

The Head looked at him sharply.

"Proceed!" he said.

"My name is not Clavering, sir—"

"What?"

"I am not Sir Hilton's ward!"

"You—you are not Sir Hilton's ward!" repeated the Head dazedly. "Your name is not Clavering! Have you taken leave of your senses?"

"No, sir! My name is Tom Redwing, and I am the son of a sailor!"

There was a silence, the Head staring at the calm, quiet junior in utter amazement.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

The Confession!

TOM REDWING stood silent, waiting for the Head to speak. His face was a little pale now, but calm.

Dr. Locke found his voice at last.

"Clavering! Are you mad?"

"I have told you the truth, sir."

"But this is incredible!" exclaimed the Head. "Do you dare to tell me that you are an impostor—a lawless swindler, boy?"

The junior crimsoned.

"No, sir! I have done wrong, I fear; but it did not seem like wrong when I did it. May I tell you how it happened?"

"I command you to do so!"

"I—I am the son of a sailorman, sir, and I have lived most of my life at Hawkscliff, about ten miles from here. I—I—Clavering's colour deepened—"

"I—I suppose I had ideas above my station. It was always my greatest wish to educate myself—to get the advantages that poor boys can't often get. I had a little help sometimes, and I worked hard in my cabin at study. That is how I came to be able to take my place in a Form here as a Greyfriars fellow. I was the only sailor-lad in Hawkscliff who knew any Latin or French. I—I always hoped, in a way, that a chance might turn up; but I never expected it till I met Leonard Clavering."

He paused.

The Head was watching the handsome, flushed face keenly, but he did not speak.

"We met in a train, sir," resumed Redwing. "I was returning from a job in the country, Clavering was coming to Greyfriars. We got talking, and we made a bargain. Clavering did not want to come to school—he wanted another kind of life—and I would have given anything for his chance of spending some terms at Greyfriars. It seemed fair enough to make an exchange when both of us wanted it—it harmed no one."

"Bless my soul!" murmured the Head. "I remember Mr. Shepherd told me that Leonard Clavering had once run away while in his charge to join the Colours. Is it possible that— But go on!"

"We came to an agreement, sir. Clavering gave me his clothes, his books, his name. I came to Greyfriars in his place, leaving him free to follow his own way. I saw no harm in it—neither did he. But—but afterwards—"

"Afterwards, I presume, you realised that you had been guilty of a deception?" exclaimed the Head.

"I—I did not foresee it all, sir. I thought it a fair exchange. But—but afterwards I found there were difficulties; but I never willingly deceived anyone. I came to the conclusion that it could not go on; and yet—the junior's voice faltered a little—"I did not want to leave Greyfriars. I—I wanted to stay—I wanted it so much! But— He broke off.

"You have seen Clavering since?"

"Yes, sir. And it was agreed that I should be free to give up the part I was playing as soon as it was too late for him to be interfered with in his new life."

It is too late now, and so I intended to tell you all.

The Head frowned.

"I conclude, Clavering—I mean, Redwing—that that foolish boy has carried out his reckless desire to join the Colours at his early age?"

The junior was silent.

"And, by your saying that it is too late for him to be interfered with, I can only conclude that he is in a draft for the Front?" went on the Head.

No answer.

"You need not speak, Redwing—it is quite clear! This must be stopped! I shall communicate with Sir Hilton Popper at once, and he will take steps to remove the boy from the Army."

Tom Redwing smiled slightly.

"He will not, sir, I am certain of that, or I should not have spoken until to-morrow."

"Why should he not, Redwing?"

"Because it was Clavering who horse-whipped him this afternoon!"

"What?"

"Clavering resented Sir Hilton's treatment of his father and of himself." Tom Redwing's eyes gleamed. "Sir Hilton acted like a grudging, hard-hearted brute!"

"Boy!"

"It is true, sir. He undertook to take care of Captain Clavering's son if he fell in the war—and on that promise Mr. Clavering came home from South America and joined. He trusted his son to Sir Hilton. You know, as well as anyone, how the man fulfilled the trust. Captain Clavering did his duty—but Sir Hilton did not do his. What little he did he grudged."

The Head was silent. He was well aware of the truth of that. He had had a strong opinion of the baronet's line of conduct himself, though he had not expressed it to Sir Hilton.

"They met to-day," continued Redwing. "Sir Hilton, without knowing who Clavering was, insulted him, and struck him with his riding-whip. Clavering did what any fellow would have done—he took the whip away and thrashed him with it. After that, I am quite certain that Sir Hilton will not take the trouble to remove him from the Army, when he knows that he is there. Even if he did, it would be too late. But he will not."

"Bless my soul!" murmured the perplexed headmaster.

There was a pause.

"I—I hope you will forgive me, sir," went on Redwing, in a low voice. "I—I suppose it must seem to you that I have done wrong—"

"You have assuredly done wrong, Redwing."

"I never meant to, sir! I agreed to the bargain with Clavering, and it never occurred to either of us that there was anything really wrong in it. What he gave me was his to give, if he chose—we thought so, at least. By accepting his offer I made it possible for him to do what he wanted—I thought it a fair exchange. I know, of course, that I must leave Greyfriars now. I am ready to go."

"Are you not aware, Redwing, that you have broken the law by coming here under an assumed name?"

The junior started.

"I was not aware of that, sir! I harmed no one."

The Head smiled slightly.

"The law does not always take cognisance of good intentions, Redwing. However, I acquit you of any intentional wrongdoing. This is a very extraordinary story. You cannot, of course, remain at Greyfriars. But I shall see you later on that subject. You will not leave until you receive my permission."

"Very well, sir."

"Meanwhile, I must communicate at once with Sir Hilton Popper, so that he may take what measures he deems fit with regard to his ward. You may go."

The junior left the study, and the Head took up the telephone-receiver. In a few minutes he was through to Popper Court.

"What—what—what is it?" came a testy voice over the wires.

"This is Greyfriars—Dr. Locke speaking."

"Ah! You have received my note?"

"Yes, Sir Hilton."

"I trust, sir, that you have no intention of making any appeal to me on behalf of that rascally boy. I shall be deaf to it."

"That is not my intention," said the Head drily. "I have just received a very remarkable explanation from the boy you have supposed to be your ward, Sir Hilton."

"Supposed! Supposed! What do you mean?"

"You are aware, Sir Hilton, that Captain Clavering's son once ran away to the Colours—he desired very much to become a soldier—"

"Yes, yes! What of it?"

"It appears that he has done so after all."

"Huh!"

"The boy you supposed to be your ward, sir, is not in reality Leonard Clavering. Clavering seems to have induced him to come here under that name in order to make it secure for him to join the Army unsuspected."

"Begad!"

"The real Clavering, I learn, is now a soldier—in fact, a young soldier whom I understand, you met this afternoon."

"What?" roared Sir Hilton over the wires.

"So this boy informs me."

"The—the young scoundrel who assaulted me!" spluttered Sir Hilton. "That, you tell me, is the son of Captain Clavering?"

"It appears so."

"Then the boy I have supposed to be my ward is an impostor—a rascally impostor! Ah! I understand now why he refused to take an allowance from me—he did not dare to carry the imposture to the extent of theft! Well, sir, I recommend you to give the young scoundrel a flogging, and turn him out of the school on the instant!"

"I was not asking advice on that subject, Sir Hilton," said the Head drily.

"I have to inform you that your ward is now with the Colours, and if you wish to take any measures, there is no time to be lost—"

There was a snort on the telephone.

"I gather that the boy is now under orders for the Front," continued the Head. "There is therefore little time—"

"Huh!"

"Mr. Shepherd, his former tutor, intervened on the previous occasion under authority of Clavering's father. Now he can only do so with your authority, as the boy's guardian. Unless you take measures, therefore, Clavering will certainly go to the Front."

"Let him go, sir!" rasped the baronet.

"You do not desire to intervene?"

"Intervene in favour of the young scoundrel who assaulted me on my own estate!" spluttered the baronet. "Let him go, sir! I cast him off. I refuse to stir a finger for him. He may come to beg his bread, but if he came to me I would have him turned from my door like a beggar. That is all I have to say, sir!"

"You make your meaning quite plain, Sir Hilton. You do not wish me to make any effort—"

"You will do so upon your own re-

sponsibility, sir! I refuse to stir a finger in the matter!"

"Upon my own responsibility, of course, I can do nothing. I have no right to interfere."

"And I have no wish!" came the growling reply. "The boy was thrown upon my hands against my will; and, by gad, he has assaulted me—me! Let him go, sir. Let him go to the deuce. As for the other young rascal, I recommend you to give him in charge of the police. I wash my hands of the whole matter."

And with that Sir Hilton rang off, evidently desiring to hear nothing further on the subject. The Head replaced the receiver. There was a thoughtful frown upon his kind old face.

Leonard Clavering was destined to remain a soldier in the King's khaki. Sir Hilton Popper was the only one who could intervene, and he refused to do so. But the other? Tom Redwing's strange yet straightforward story had moved the Head. What was to become of the sailorman's son who had so queerly come to Greyfriars?

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Skinner's Reward!

"HERE'S Redwing!"

Skinner called out the words with a chuckle as Tom—so long known as Clavering of the Remove—entered the Common-room.

The Bounder came in with him. It was plain that Herbert Vernon-Smith was sticking to the new junior, right or wrong, through thick and thin.

Redwing's face was calm enough, even as fifty pairs of eyes turned upon him in wonder and curiosity.

The Famous Five were in the Common-room. Most of the Remove and the Fourth were there.

All eyes were on the new junior.

"Heave-ho, my hearties!" chorled Snoop. "You chaps remember how he used to say 'Ay, ay, sir!' to Quelch in class. I wonder we never guessed then."

"So he did, by gum!" remarked Bol-sover major. "I begin to think that even Skinner is telling the truth this time."

"I guess it's a cinch," remarked Fisher T. Fish.

Harry Wharton & Co. were looking at Redwing, but they did not speak. They were feeling extremely uncomfortable.

Lord Mauleverer, the dandy of the Remove, addressed him.

"Clavering, dear boy, why don't you punch Skinner's nose? I'd have done it for you if it wasn't too much fag."

"He knows he's bowled out," sneered Skinner. "I've shown him up to all the school as a swindler."

"That's a lie!" said Redwing quietly.

"The whopperfulness is terrific," said Hurree Singh. "I am sure that there is no swindlefulness."

"Thank you!" said the new junior, with a smile.

"Look here, Clavering!" exclaimed Harry Wharton abruptly. "You know what's being said about you. You'd better answer it, for your own sake."

"I don't mind."

"Skinner confesses to having played the sneaking spy this afternoon—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He says he listened to you talking to a soldier chap. I can believe that of Skinner. He would—"

"Look here, Wharton—" began Skinner furiously.

"Oh, shut up!" said the captain of the Remove disdainfully. "On your own showing you acted like a spy and an eavesdropper."

"It was justifiable to show up a spoofing swindler."

"It's never justifiable to act like a cowardly spy, and you know it. I thought you'd had a lesson about that. But lessons are wasted on you. Whether you've found out the truth or not, you've disgraced the Remove!" retorted Wharton. "And whatever Clavering may be, I know he wouldn't do such a thing as you did."

"Hear, hear!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "Let him answer it!" hissed Skinner. "Let him say it's not true. I tell you Leonard Oswald Clavering is a soldier at Wapshot, and this fellow Redwing came here under his name. Smithy knew it all the time, and he dare not deny it."

Vernon-Smith set his lips hard. "Let him answer!" howled Snoop. "I'm ready to answer," said Redwing. "But first of all let Skinner answer. He says he was on the island and heard me talking to a soldier this afternoon."

"Yes, I did."

"I did not see you there."

"You admit you were there?" grinned Snoop.

"Yes, I admit I was there," said the junior calmly. "But I did not see any of you three. Were you in hiding?"

"Naturally," said Skinner.

"Naturally for you, perhaps!" snorted Bolsover major.

"And how did you know I was going to meet a soldier on the island this afternoon?" continued Clavering. "You went there to spy and listen. How did you know?"

Skinner was silent.

"Yes, that's a fair question," said Harry Wharton. "Clavering certainly never told you so that you could go and spy, Skinner. How did you know?"

"There's only one way he could have known," said the new junior contemptuously. "Yesterday I had a letter from my friend making the appointment. Skinner must have spied into that letter."

"Phew!"

"I found it on the rack when I came in," continued Redwing. "I burnt it immediately after reading it. Skinner did not see it after I had opened it. It was on the rack some hours before I came in. Skinner has called me some pretty names. What do you think of a fellow who takes another fellow's letter secretly and reads it?"

"Did you do that, Skinner?" asked Harry Wharton very quietly.

Skinner's face was pale now. Snoop and Stott looked rather alarmed, and Billy Bunter rolled behind Bolsover major, as if to get out of sight.

"Well, Skinner?"

"I—I didn't—" said Skinner haltingly.

Ogilvy uttered an exclamation.

"Bunter! Bet you it was Bunter! He was messing about with the letters yesterday, I remember. He said he'd got his postal-order at last, and I know jolly well he hadn't, either!"

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "Oh, really, you know—"

"He took a letter out of the rack," said Dick Russell. "I saw him. I thought it was his own. But we all know Bunter."

And Temple of the Fourth chimed in: "You bet! We were standing by the rack, and he sent us off to the Cloisters with a yarn that Coker was ragging a Fourth-Form chap there. There was nobody there. He was just clearing us off to steal Clavering's letter."

"I—I say, you fellows—"

"You fat toad!" roared Bob Cherry. "Did you open another chap's letter? Where are you going, Bunter?"

"I—I've got to take some lines to Mossos!" gasped Bunter, rolling hurriedly towards the door.

Bob Cherry rushed after him, grasped his collar, and swung him back.

"Mossos can wait a bit," he remarked. "Now, then, did you get a postal-order yesterday, you fat spoofer?"

"Yes," gasped Bunter.

"Where is it, then?"

"I—I've spent it. I—I cashed it with Mrs. Mumble—"

"Right-ho! Cut off to the shop, Franky, and ask Mrs. Mumble whether Bunter cashed a postal-order yesterday."

"Hold on!" stammered Bunter. "I—I mean I didn't cash it with Mrs. Mumble!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You mean you never had one?" growled Bob.

"Ye-es," stammered the Owl of the Remove. "T-t-that's what I meant to say all along, old chap!"

"And it was Clavering's letter you took from the rack?"

"Nunno!"

"Why did you send Temple away with a whopper, then?"

"I—I didn't."

"What?" shouted Cecil Reginald Temple.

"I—I mean I did!" gasped the dismayed Owl.

"You fat porker!" said Peter Todd. "Tell the truth, if you can. Skinner asked you to tea yesterday, so it's pretty clear who put you up to stealing the letter. Tell the truth, you fat Hun!"

"I—I say, I didn't know you knew, Toddy—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"So Skinner got you to steal Clavering's letter, Bunter?" asked Harry Wharton grimly.

Bunter gasped.

"You—you see they know all about it, Skinner," he mumbled. "You—you must have let it out, you know. I—I say, you fellows—leave off shaking me. Bob Cherry, you beast!—Skinner said it was all right, you know, to bowl out that spoofer, and—and he said he had saveloys and two kinds of jam—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" There was a roar of laughter in the Common-room.

"So I—I took the letter to Skinner's study," gasped Bunter. "He opened it with steam, and they read it, and—and I put it back. No harm done, you know! I really hadn't anything to do with it. It was all Skinner!"

"So that's the way you get your information when you want to play the spy on a chap, Skinner?" said Harry Wharton, with gleaming eyes. "I fancy if the Head knew that you would have to face something worse than Clavering."

Skinner gritted his teeth.

"It was justifiable in dealing with a swindler," he said sullenly. "It was the only way to bowl him out. And I've bowled him out—he can't deny that!"

"Gentlemen," said Bob Cherry, "here's four precious mongrels, who opened a fellow's letter secretly and read it! I vote that we let them know what the Remove thinks of that kind of thing!"

"Hear, hear!"

Skinner & Co. made a wild rush for the door.

But there was no escape for them. The Removites seized them on all sides; and the next ten minutes seemed like a series of compressed earthquakes to the black sheep of the Remove.

When they were kicked out of the Common-room at last, Skinner and Snoop, Stott and Bunter, crawled away, looking—and feeling—as though they found life not worth living.

Whatever the result of Skinner's discoveries, the Remove left no doubt in their mind as to how their methods were regarded. The Remove had more than enough reason to feel fed up with the Hunnishness of Skinner & Co.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

The Parting!

TOM REDWING stood by the fire chatting with Vernon-Smith. But after the ignominious ejection of Skinner & Co. the Remove fellows gathered round him. Harry Wharton spoke out with plain directness.

"The Remove expects you to speak up, Clavering. We all know what to think of Skinner. We only want your word that it's lies he's told about you."

"Yaas, begad!" remarked Lord Maulererer.

"Yes or no?" said Bolsover major.

Redwing smiled patiently.

"What do you want to know?" he asked.

"Is your name Clavering, or isn't it?" demanded Johnny Bull.

"No!"

"Wha-a-at?"

Johnny Bull was fairly taken aback by that direct answer to his question.

"It's not?" exclaimed Wharton.

"No!"

"Then—then who are you?"

"Tom Redwing, of Hawkscliff."

"My hat!" stuttered Wharton.

There was a buzz of astonishment.

"Then you're really a spoofer?" exclaimed Bob Cherry blankly.

"I hope not."

"This wants jolly well explaining," said Bolsover major. "You've come here under another chap's name. That's a swindle!"

"It isn't a swindle, Bolsover, and I'm quite prepared to explain, if the fellows want to hear," said Tom Redwing quietly.

"Well, of course we want to know the facts," said Harry Wharton.

There was silence as Tom Redwing went on to speak, in a low, quiet tone.

He disguised nothing. His career at Greyfriars was over, but he did not want to go away leaving the Greyfriars fellows believing that they had had to do with a common impostor. He was glad of the chance of clearing himself of that imputation.

He was not interrupted once, as he told, briefly and calmly, of the meeting in the train, and of the strange bargain he had made with the soldier's son, and how it had been carried out.

He ceased at last.

Then there was a buzz.

"Well, my hat!" said Harry Wharton, in utter amazement. "What a yarn! And—and young Clavering is with the Colours now?"

"Yes; he goes to the Front to-morrow."

"Good luck to him!" said a dozen voices.

"And you?" asked Harry.

"I leave Greyfriars to-morrow. I should have left this evening, but the Head did not permit it. I go to-morrow."

And—and—the sailorman's son flushed a little, and there was a tremble in his voice—"I—I hope you won't think too badly of me. I was glad to come here,

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ing's letter, Bunter?" asked Harry Wharton grimly.

Bunter gasped.

"You—you see they know all about it, Skinner," he mumbled. "You—you must have let it out, you know. I—I say, you fellows—leave off shaking me. Bob Cherry, you beast!—Skinner said it was all right, you know, to bowl out that spoofer, and—and he said he had saveloys and two kinds of jam—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" There was a roar of laughter in the Common-room.

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and I never meant to deceive anyone. I gave Clavering my name when I took his—it seemed fair play to me. But I knew afterwards that it wouldn't do, and I'm glad it's over. The Head knows it all. I've told him. I should have told him to-morrow, in any case, without Skinner chipping in. I only waited for Clavering to give me leave—when it was too late for him to be taken out of the Army. That's all!"

"And—and where are you going?" asked Bob Cherry.

"To sea, I hope."

There was a silence. Wharton broke it.

"It was a queer trick, and no mistake," he said. "But I don't see you've done anything wrong. It was a fair bargain between you and Clavering, if it comes to that. And I, for one, shall always think that you were square. I—I wish you could stay at Greyfriars!"

"And you knew, Smithy, and never said anything!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Tom Redwing saved my life at Hawkscliff," said the Bounder simply, "and I knew he was square. I stood by him, and I stand by him now! I want

him to let my pater keep him at Greyfriars. I'm sure the Head would consent."

Tom Redwing smiled, and shook his head.

The next morning the new junior was gone from Greyfriars.

When the Remove went into their Form-room one place was vacant—the place once filled by the so-called Clavering of the Remove.

And while the Remove—many of whom regretted his going—were grinding at the morning's round, Tom Redwing of Hawkscliff was climbing the hill, his back to Greyfriars.

It was all over—that brief, happy period of his life was over and done with! He was once more Tom Redwing, the sailorman's son, with his bread to earn by the labour of his own hands. He had had his troubles at Greyfriars, but he had been happy there. It was bitter to have to throw it all behind. But he faced the future with calm cheerfulness.

He looked back from the hill at the distant school, half hidden by the trees. It

was his last look at Greyfriars, and his eyes were dimmed for a moment. The sudden rattle of a drum caught his ears, and he glanced down at the road that wound along the foot of the hill. Along the road, in the winter sunlight, came a marching column, to the stirring sound of the drum. Gallant lads in khaki, with healthy, cheerful faces, marching to the railway depot to entrain for the Front. And in the khaki-clad ranks Tom Redwing's eyes fell upon a youthful, active form, a handsome, sunburnt face, and he waved his hand. Leonard Clavering smiled back at the boy on the hillside.

And so they parted, and the sound of marching feet died away in the distance, and Tom Redwing turned once more to face the world.

But at Greyfriars there was one fellow, at least, who thought of him. The sailorman's son was not likely to be forgotten by the Bounder of Greyfriars!

(Don't miss "HUNTING FOR TREASURE!"—next Monday's grand complete story of Harry Wharton & Co., by Frank Richards.)

THE GREYFRIARS GALLERY.

No. 58.—Miss CORA QUELCH.

MR. QUELCH is rather a lonely man. Matrimony seems never to have appealed to him, and his family life is a thing of the past. One is almost inclined to wonder what he does with his holidays, and to fancy that he is happier at Greyfriars than away from it.

But he is not entirely without relatives, for, as Miss Cora Quelch is his niece and bears his name, she is presumably the daughter of his brother; and one seems to remember something about another brother in one of the stories.

The fair Cora herself is not as well-known to Greyfriars as the Cliff House girls. She has only been there on brief visits. But on each of those visits she did something really notable. Peter Todd, a very determined character, animated by the best intentions, has quite failed to make a man of Billy Bunter. Cora did it twice, without an effort; and she could do it again!

Would it last? Well, that is another matter. One fancies not. Anyway, it has not lasted on the two occasions which have become history. (They are not likely to get into Mr. Quelch's "History of Greyfriars" but I should say there will be many less interesting things in that learned work.)

A very Bunterish trick preceded the first meeting between William George and the lady of his heart. He had discovered that Mr. Quelch's niece was coming. As Mr. Quelch had mentioned the fact only to the Head, Mrs. Locke, and Mr. Prout, Bunter's knowledge might have seemed mysterious—if displayed by anyone but Bunter. But everyone knows his little ways.

Bunter nobly offered to meet Miss Cora at the station. He had no prophetic vision of the effect she was to produce upon his heart; he merely wanted to get off an afternoon's classes. But the Form-master snubbed Bunter, and sent Harry Wharton instead.

Harry went. He was surprised. Miss Quelch did not take after her uncle at all in build. He is tall and slim; she is shortish and—well, one must say stout! Plump would be more polite, but far less descriptive.

Miss Cora had plenty of parcels, and she was gracious enough to let Wharton carry them. She confided to him the fact that she was hungry, and they went to Uncle Clegg's. There Miss Cora revealed herself as the possessor of an appetite not far short of Billy Bunter's. She said that she had a wretched appetite—could hardly eat anything—but did her best, for the sake of her health. Wharton thought she was succeeding admirably, and wondered whether she would be able to walk to the school after her snack. The bill was no trifle; but he paid it.

Harry had had enough of Miss Cora before they reached Greyfriars. She was a little snappish because he had crushed the hat

which was in one of the parcels; and altogether he was rather fed up.

"What a ripping girl!" said Bunter enthusiastically. "I've never seen anyone like her!"

"I haven't, either—and jolly well don't want to!" snapped Wharton.

Bunter was struck all of a heap—plunged fathoms deep in love. He sighed—he lost his appetite—he even refused tarts!

He heard Skinner speak slightly of Miss Cora, and he promptly slapped Skinner's face. He got up early, and he washed himself—



starting early-rising and personal cleanliness on the same morning, as Bob Cherry was amazed to observe. He had luck. He met Cora. She regretted that the tuckshop was not yet open, and promised to come and watch Bunter play football that afternoon. He explained to her that he was not captain, owing to personal jealousy, and nobly offered to escort her to the ground instead of playing. But she would not have that.

The Remove had a match on with the Third that day. Bunter asked for a place. Wharton said him nay. The Third might not be difficult to beat; but no side cares about carrying such a passenger as Bunter. But Wharton gave way after the Owl had distinguished himself by going for Coker, who had been so disrespectful as to allude to Cora as Bunter's twin. Coker had seen them in the tuckshop together. Miss Cora had footed the bill in the most generous manner. She had been tipped by her uncle, whereas William George had had another disappointment in the matter of a postal-order. If anything had been needed to make Bunter more hopelessly the fair and fat

Cora's slave, that generosity would have done it.

So he played, and Cora watched. She had brought a little refreshment with her—a dozen sandwiches or so. And she did not know a lot about football, one must assume, for there is no evidence that she regarded Bunter's performance as unsatisfactory!

But in spite of having seen in Bunter a kindred spirit, in spite of his bucking up in the most amazing fashion, Miss Cora played the coquette. She went with Skinner for a walk, leaving Bunter blinking in dismay.

Then came Bunter's chance! A bull came for the two. Skinner ran. Bunter played the hero!

No one could believe it at first. But it was true. And Peter Todd started a Remove Hero Fund, and the proceeds were devoted to a feed in No. 7, and Miss Cora honoured the feed with her presence, and William George was in the seventh heaven of delight.

If only it could have lasted! But, of course, it couldn't; and, of course, it didn't. Clouds rolled over the sky of Bunter's existence. The sun ceased to shine, for Miss Cora departed. And within three days Bunter was himself again—his old greedy, untruthful, grubby self!

It all happened over again when she returned for another visit. The incidents were not the same; but the effect was. Bunter was a good deal disappointed to find that Miss Quelch's memories of him were not so rose-coloured as his of her; she seemed almost to have forgotten him, indeed. But they were soon the best of friends once more; and once more Bunter registered vows to live a less evil life, to speak the truth, and not to funk, to wash his neck, and not to scoff the grub of others. Not only registered them, but kept them!

For a time! For just so long as the stay of Cora at Greyfriars and the day or two afterwards during which the glamour still held. Then he relapsed, but not before he had shown that at a pinch he could again be really courageous. His courage was not the less real because he had horrible fear to conquer; he conquered it, and that proves that somewhere deep down in Bunter there are better things than he is in the habit of showing.

Would the third time mean a complete cure? One does not see much hope. Would the permanent residence of Cora Quelch at Greyfriars mean a lasting reformation? This, too, one doubts.

There is more about Bunter here than about Cora Quelch, it must be admitted. But then, Miss Cora—as far as Greyfriars is concerned—is much more important for her effect upon the Owl than for anything she did or said. Plump, and very well satisfied with herself, carelessly good-natured as long as her remarkable appetite can be ministered to—quite an ordinary young lady apart from her size and her capacity for putting away tuck—so would one sum up Miss Cora Quelch.

But to Bunter she is much more than that—nothing far short of a wingless angel. Indeed!

THE MAGNET LIBRARY—No. 522.

Extracts from "THE GREYFRIARS HERALD" and "TOM MERRY'S WEEKLY."

GETTING RID OF PONGO!

By HARRY NOBLE.

"**W**HERE'S my towel?"
"And my sponge?"
"And my soap?"

These queries were placed before the House—perhaps I should say dorm—almost simultaneously, and in very loud tones, by Messrs. Scrope, Crooke, and Racke respectively.

They had tumbled out of bed a little in advance of Baggy Trimble, only to find that towel, sponge, and soap had vanished into thin air—or elsewhere.

"Is this one of your rotten games?" growled Crooke, scowling round at those whom he considered his enemies—about nine parts of the dorm. "I suppose you think it deuced funny. Hallo! What the dickens is that row?"

The whine of a dog floated along the passage, ceasing abruptly with the closing of a door.

A sudden thought seemed to strike Crooke, and with a muttered "Why, I'll—!" he flew out of the dorm. The same thought seemed to biff Racke and Scrope, too, for they followed a second afterwards, travelling at the same furious rate.

Not being actually present in the Third Form dorm, I can't tell exactly what occurred there, of course, but by the state of Crooke & Co. when they emerged, and what I heard of the yarn afterwards, I can pretty well guess.

As Crooke had feared, there was the shaggy-haired Pongo splashing in a basin of water, with Wally and Frayne and a swarm of fags scrubbing from his coat what appeared to be a mixture of soot, gum, sardine-oil, and treacle. And they were using Scrope's towel, Crooke's sponge, and Racke's soap to do the job with!

"You cheeky little rotters!" roared Crooke. "That's my sponge!"

"Yes, and your soot and treacle, too!" exclaimed Wally quickly. "Collar the cads, you fellows!"

"It—it isn't— Yaroooh!"

That latter word, though not to be found in Johnson's or any other dictionary, seems to be a favourite of Crooke & Co.'s, for they all gave vent to it loudly and long.

"And now to answer for your sins!" said Wally, when he had seated himself comfortably upon Crooke's head—Racke and Scrope being sat upon by Wally's cheery pals. "What do you mean by putting poor old Pongo into that state?"

"The rotten little beast!" spluttered Crooke. "I'll skin him! Gerroff my head! He got into my study, somehow, and wolled the grub, and—and—"

"And smokes!" finished Wally deliberately. "The poor old chap was nearly poisoned with the rotten things!"

"I'll poison him!" moaned Crooke. "Oh, my head! You inky little imp! How— What made you think we had anything to do with the beastly mongrel's—"

"Enough of that!" ordered Wally sternly, seating himself more majestically upon the unfortunate Crooke's cranium. "You see, my fine old blade, there was a trail of soot from Pongo's kennel to your study window, and it was easy enough for me to guess what rotters had had a hand in it." Wally rather prides himself upon his powers as a detective. "You and these two measly rotters have been pretty thick lately, and— But ne'mind that. Joe, shove the shovel up the chimney, and when it's full of soot bring it here."

"You—you— I'll—"

"There's sure to be a few old bloaters chucking about," said Wally reflectively. "We'd a midnight spread of them the other night, and the maids never wasted much time or care cleaning out our dorm. Queer how some people don't care to stay long in a

room which whiffs of fish—ain't it, Crookey? Oh, good! Hand 'em over, Franky!"

Young Levison had managed to collect—select, would be a better word—four of five very odourous specimens of the herring tribe, and Wally promptly commenced to treat Crooke to a kind of shampoo and hair-drill.

"Don't bring that thing near me, Frayne, you Cockney guttersnipe!" yelled Racke. "If you— Oooch!"

Frayne slapped the bloater over Moneybags' mouth, and tied it there.

"Good notion, Joe!" said Wally heartily. "Gagged by a bloater! Sounds desprit, don't it, Scropey? Serve these dear little chaps likewise!"

That done, the heroes of St. Jim's (?—Ed.) were anointed with soot, and despatched with their hands tied behind them.

Apparently nobody noticed that Pongo, who had a dislike for towel, sponge, and soap, not to mention water, had hopped out of the basin and mizzled. He left traces of wet paw-marks along half a dozen passages, but before he reached a final harbourage his paws had dried and left no trail. Though Wally & Co. searched high and low, they found nothing of the elusive Pongo. ('Scuse poetry.) (Easier 'scused than found!—H. W.)

Crooke, Racke, and Scrope were subjected to many chortles before they were released, had a bath—one apiece—and repaired to Crooke's study for a healthy morning smoke in very ill humours.

"If," said Crooke, showing his teeth, "I only had that dog in one hand, and a stiff dose of pruss— Why, my hat! If the little brute isn't under your chair, Scrope!"

Pongo was crouching away in terror lest the bathing operations should be resumed. Racke dragged him out by the collar.

"Tie him to the table-leg!" hissed Crooke savagely. "And give him something to eat to keep him quiet. You're going with us for a nice, quiet walk to-night, you mangy little cur!"

Scrope was a bit wavery, but Crooke and Racke exchanged looks of mutual significance.

A little later the three left the study—(sure they didn't take it with them?—H. W.)—and locked the door, leaving Pongo munching biscuits, and probably thinking what rattling good fellows the three were for giving him so much grub!

II.

"**B**ROKE?"

"To the wide!"
Glyn and I gazed at each other despondingly as we met on the grub-less side of Dame Taggles'.

"I can stand rations when there's plenty of them," said Glyn moodily; "but I draw the line at nothing at all. This blessed fog is a pretty effective substitute for peasoup. But I don't want peasoup. I want some cake! And I think the dame shuts up shop in a few minutes. She's done it at five o'clock lately. Hallo! What have we here?"

Something like an exaggerated tank rolled up out of the fog, and appeared to be making full speed for the tuckshop.

"Out of the way!" gasped Baggy, for it was he. "I simply must— Oh, dear!"

He uttered what heavy novels call a sepulchral groan as the door slammed. I quite believe that the sound of the bolts being shot was like a death-knell in his ears.

"Too late!" I grinned. "The door of doom has closed upon thee, Baggy!"

"Ten bob!" groaned Baggy. "A whole ten-bob order, and not a crumb—I mean." Baggy hastened to correct himself, remembering that he was not altogether free from liabilities, "if I had a ten-bob order—"

"A ten-bob order, have you?" said Glyn. "You owe me three—"

"And me two!" I put in.

"I—I haven't!" protested Baggy desper-

ately. "I said if I had! I was going to ask Dame Taggles to cash it in advance. I'm expecting one, you know."

"Never mind that one, Baggy, old son," we said, as we linked arms with him affectionately. "Come for a nice evening stroll with us, say, as far as the post-office at Rylcombe."

"Look here—"

"Just think of the birds singing in the trees!" we urged temptingly. "And the soft and fragrant breeze, and the moon and the stars and all that—"

"I'm not going down to the village in this beastly fog!" roared Baggy, struggling to get free.

But our affection for Baggy was not to be damped by his struggling, and we strode along through the thickening fog arm-in-arm.

"Shouldn't think there'll be anyone besides us along the road to-night, Kangy," remarked Glyn, when the interest we had experienced in watching Baggy puff out great volumes of fog began to flag.

"There's somebody ahead, though," I pointed out. "Looks like a couple of our fellows to me, but this blessed fog—"

"Herries and Dig, perhaps. They have a dog with them, I can see. But why on earth they're taking Towser out on a night like this beats me! Let's catch up to them! Step out, Baggy!"

"I c-c-can't!"

Whether he c-c-could or c-c-couldn't was never ascertained, for the pair in front suddenly left the main road, and struck off along the path leading to the moor.

"What the dickens!" exclaimed Glyn. "There's something fishy here! I don't believe they're those chaps at all. Let's do a little Herlock Sholmes bizney, Kangy!"

We left Baggy and his postal-order (which he said was from a doting grandmother of his living near the Natural History Museum; the Lords of Trimble Hall being ignorant of the existence of such trivialities as ten-bob notes)—I was going to say, before this rotten parenthesis shoved itself in, that we left Baggy and his order to their own devices in the main road.

By the time we reached the bleak moor we were in a fog, both literally and metaphorically. We knew well enough that nobody but a candidate for Bedlam would dream of crossing Wayland Moor, except by the road, on a night like that, for it is pretty bad going even in the day-time.

But we were putting things together as we groped our way along, scarcely able to see the furze beneath our feet, and guided only by the squelching footsteps ahead. The poodle, we guessed, was Pongo. And as the rotters' brigade had shared a good deal of limelight with Pongo lately, we had some idea of who his two companions were.

They stopped now and then as if uncertain of their way, till at last an audible "Here we are!" in the voice of Crooke, told us that they had found their objective.

Then we heard something about "over a hundred feet deep!"—the grating tones of Aubrey Racke were unmistakable—and after that came some doubtful muttering.

I don't quite believe they really intended to drop Pongo down a quarry. Even out-and-outers like Racke and Crooke find a difficulty in doing such things when the time comes. But Glyn let out such a yell as he rushed upon them that they let go of poor old Pongo, and he vanished into the blackness with a howl.

The two frightened rogues also attempted to vanish, and for a good many minutes the bleak moors resounded with their howls and groans as they stumbled into swamps and ditches.

We peered anxiously over the edge of the opening. The fog and darkness prevented our gaze from penetrating more than a foot or so below the top. But the fog and dark-

ness had also caused the pair of rascals to come to the wrong hole, for this one was no more than three feet deep. It had been made by a dubious German bomb in one of the recent raids.

Pongo bounded out like a Jack-in-the-box, and, greatly relieved, we collared him and picked our way back to the main road.

"I've got a little dodge to make those rotters sit up," said Glyn. (You will perceive that Bernard is doing all the talking in this yarn. I kept a profound silence purposely to make mental note of all his gracious remarks.) He said this as we entered the gates. "See, there they go across the hall!"

The big doors being opened for the moment, we had a distinct view of two mud-bedraggled objects crawling across the lighted hall.

About half an hour later Glyn strolled along to Study No. 7.

"I—I wish you'd left the beastly dog alone," Scrope was saying. "I'm feeling—"

Glyn strolled in with his hands in his pockets.

"Good-evening!" he said affably. "Nice night for a smoke, Crooke, ain't it?"

"What are you rotting about?" growled Crooke, with a scowl. "That cur Pongo's chewed up all the smokes here! If—if I

could get hold of him I'd give him a jolly good tanning!"

"Would you really?" smiled Glyn. "All the same, I fancy you won't be short of a smoke to-night. Pip-pip!"

With that he left them. They probably had doubts as to his sanity. I myself have long been free from doubts.

"The food-hogs are sitting down to a regular banquet!" he said, when he had joined me on the roof (surprised at that, hey?).

We located the chimney of Crooke's study, and Bernard promptly sat upon it. A short period in that position would have been ruinous to his bags, but we had not long to wait.

The sound of a window being violently flung open reached our ears, and Glyn rose from his seat.

"Phew! What's making all this beastly smoke?" floated through the midnight calm.

"Quick, now!" whispered Glyn. "The window's open!"

Pongo, with a noose under his arm-pits (Do dogs have arms?—Ed.) (No 'arm done!—M.L.), and his face daubed with phosphorus-paint, making him look the last word in ghastliness, was lowered from the

roof to the level of Crooke's window. (But I hope not to the level of Crooke!—M.L.)

The united yell of fear, which escaped the select triumvirate nearly caused us to release our hold on the rope. It wouldn't have made much difference if we had, for Pongo was tugging it through our grasp, and bolted on to the over-loaded table like a penn'orth of greased lightning.

As Pongo has a great contempt for every Food Controller who takes on the job, he wasn't troubled on the score of over-eating. And he had nothing to fear from the owners of the spread, for they had flown like larks at the approach of winter.

About an hour afterwards Pongo crawled away to his kennel with his tummy neatly touching the ground. He slept for close upon a week without once waking.

Crooke & Co. have recovered from their shock, and, although they don't exactly regard Pongo with affection, they forbear to cuff or kick him on sight as was their wont before.

And now I think I have said all there is to be said, save that if Lowther doesn't keep himself to his own rotten Comic Column in future he'll get smashed and boiled and pulverised and—

(Several pleasant remarks omitted here. —E.L.)

GREYFRIARS AT THE FRONT!

X.—A CONVERSATION. :: By PETER TODD.

FRITZ looked across the comfortable dug-out at Heinrich.

"There is that noise again!" he growled.

Heinrich nodded.

On the cool night air floated the strains of a wheezy concertina. It was a dreadful row. Even Fritz, who had played in a German band, had to admit that.

"I have listened to that noise all the evening, yes," Fritz remarked. "It is too much."

"I fight for the Fatherland," said Heinrich. "That is bad enough, for I do not like to fight and be hurt. But it is worse to listen to that."

"Ya, ya!" said Fritz. "It is terrible."

Johnny Bull, fifty yards away from them, continued to play. He had had a concertina when he first went to Greyfriars, and a kindly aunt, hearing that they wanted music in the trenches, had sent him another, quite convinced that he would be able to play it to the delight of his companions.

So Johnny Bull, no worse musician than he had been in the old days—for that was impossible—was drowning the noise of battle with his music!

Fritz looked across at Heinrich as a fresh tune struck up.

"These English are terrible," he muttered. "They inflict fresh horrors on us every day. Who would have thought that they would devise such a terrible thing as this?"

"Who would?" echoed Heinrich, groaning heavily.

"They send us worse shells than we send them," said Fritz.

"Ya, ya!"

"They stopped our advance with a silly little army!"

"Ya, ya!"

"They sent us the terrible 'tanks'!"

"Ach, himmel! Ya, ya!"

"And they keep on pushing us back!"

"Ya, ya! They do!"

Fritz groaned.

"Will they never be satisfied?" he groaned.

The concertina warbled an exhortation to let us all go down the Strand and have a banana, with cheerful abandon regarding time and time. Johnny Bull was going strong.

"I cannot stand this much longer!" muttered Fritz, who was looking white.

"It is terrible!" agreed Heinrich.

"I feel that it is paralysing me!"

"It is not war!" said Heinrich. "It is murder!"

The strains of the concertina seemed to grow louder. They were struggling to reproduce the melody of a song encouraging everyone to go to Dixie and see the piccaninies.

"Is there no escape from this?" muttered Fritz, beginning to writhe.

His companion shook his head hopelessly.

"These English are terrible!" he said.

"If we threw a bomb at them they would throw twenty back. And that noise does not seem to hurt them at all."

"They want Kultur!" said Fritz viciously.

There was another pause. From a medley of sound came a vague melody which suggested that Johnny Bull was thinking of winding up the watch on the Rhine.

"Could we abandon this place?" asked Fritz desperately.

"We should get shot," said Heinrich shortly.

"Ya, ya! I suppose we should," said Fritz. "But I am feeling ill. That noise is too dreadful for words."

"I wonder what fellow invented that new method of attack on us?" ejaculated Heinrich.

Wheeze! Groan! Wheeze!

"There it goes again!" howled Fritz.

"And we have got to stick it for another five hours!"

"I cannot!"

"How can we escape it?" demanded Fritz.

"We cannot go back. We cannot do anything to stop them."

"We must go forward!"

"What, surrender?"

"Yes; they will treat us well, and feed us better than our Army does. It will be much better. We shall escape that terrible noise."

Johnny Bull at that moment broke off from a tricky passage which demanded more keys than he had on the concertina, and burst forth into a disgraceful murder of "Rule, Britannia!"

"Come on!" shouted Fritz, pulling out a white handkerchief. "We will surrender!"

He leapt out on to the parapet and yelled "Kamerad!"

The concertina ceased abruptly, and Johnny Bull grinned over the trench.

"Come on, my beauties!" he shouted. "I've been waiting for you! I didn't think you'd stick it much longer!"

The Huns came over and surrendered.

"Nothing like fighting the Hun with his own weapons," said Bull cheerfully. "That concertina was made in Germany!"

Easy Conversation in English for the Instructfulness of My Esteemed Fellow Countrymen in London.

By HURREE JAMSET RAM SINGH.

POLICEGENTLEMAN: "You have troubled look. What is to do?"

ANCIENT LADY: "I have here sugar-card. Which is the wherefulness for esteemed registrating?"

POLICEGENTLEMAN: "The knowfulness is not great."

ANCIENT LADY: "The instructfulness on esteemed card is to ask policeman."

POLICEGENTLEMAN: "It is so. But the askfulness and the answerfulness are the different proposition, and not in same street."

ANCIENT LADY: "After the registrating of esteemed card, there is perhaps sugar?"

POLICEGENTLEMAN: "The perhapfulness is terrible!"

INQUIREFUL TRAVELLER: "Bright-eyed and beautiful conducting miss, goes this handsome 'bus to Clapham Common?"

CONDUCTING MISS: "Yus!"

INQUIREFUL TRAVELLER: "Is there roomfulness among excellent ladies and gentlemen for my unworthy self in esteemed 'bus?"

CONDUCTING MISS: "No!"

INQUIREFUL TRAVELLER: "What is then to do?"

CONDUCTING MISS: "'Op it!"

RURAL PERSON: "Is this Tube station?"

POLICEGENTLEMAN: "Where's your blinking eyes? This is esteemed Tube station!"

RURAL PERSON: "The crowdfulfness is great."

Is it that in war-time the esteemed Londoners indulge in terrific amount of travelling by esteemed Tube?"

POLICEGENTLEMAN: "Can't you 'ear the guns? It's a hair-raid!"

RURAL PERSON: "It is necessary to proceed homefulness. Where do I take esteemed ticket?"

POLICEGENTLEMAN: "Get inside!"

RURAL PERSON: "But the esteemed ticket is the requireful desideratum."

POLICEGENTLEMAN: "Are you waiting there for the shrapnel, pieface?"

RURAL PERSON: "Ah! The comprehension is great. It is attack of esteemed and disgusting Huns?"

(Continued on page 16.)

POLICEGENTLEMAN: "Oh, crimes! Just found that out, features?"

RURAL PERSON: "I catch on! I run! I fly! I sling my hook!"

YOUNG NEWSPERSON: "Hawful hair-raid! Hawful results!"

OLDPUL GENTLEMAN: "Is it that the resultfulness of terrific air-raid is given in that esteemed paper?"

YOUNG NEWSPERSON: "All the winners! All results of hair-raid! Penny, please!"

OLD GENTLEMAN: "I am anxious to know extent of damagefulness. I will take esteemed paper. Here is penny."

YOUNG NEWSPERSON: "Ere yar, sir!"

OLD GENTLEMAN: "Ah, here is announcefulness of terrific air-raid! But there is no descriptfulness. The shockful resultness is not given in this esteemed paper. I demand return of penny. Where is boy? Alas! he has disappeared."

FORRIGNER IN LONDON: "I hear terrific screech of police-whistle. What is the meaning of this screechfulness?"

POLITEFUL STRANGER: "It's a warning that the disgusting Huns are coming."

FOREIGNER (one hour later): "Again I heard terrific screech of police-whistle. What is the meaning of this screechfulness?"

POLITEFUL STRANGER: "It's a warning that the disgusting Huns are gone."

FOREIGNER: "But if esteemed signals are samefully similar, how shall honourable public know the whichfulness?"

POLITEFUL STRANGER: "Ask me another!"

TELEPHONIC CALLER: "Hallo! Is that the exchange?"

TELEPHONIC MISS: "I saw her that evening with Bertie—"

TELEPHONIC CALLER: "Hallo!"

TELEPHONIC MISS: "She had one of those latest blouses, made up entirely—"

TELEPHONIC CALLER: "One-double-two-double-one Coketown."

TELEPHONIC MISS: "—of ribbon—you know—yards and yards—"

TELEPHONIC CALLER: "Can I have my number?"

TELEPHONIC MISS: "—of the beautifullest rose-pink ribbon—"

TELEPHONIC CALLER: "I am terrifically sorrowful to interrupt esteemed conversation, but can I have number before evening?"

TELEPHONIC MISS: "—The very latest thing, you know, and she looked a perfect dream! Bertie thought—"

TELEPHONIC CALLER: "Hallo, hallo, hallo, hallo, hallo! Yah! Hallo!"

TELEPHONIC MISS: "Oh, dear! Number, please?"

TELEPHONIC CALLER: "One-double-two-double-one Coketown, please."

TELEPHONIC MISS: "Did you say 'One-double-one-double-two Colchester'?"

TELEPHONIC CALLER: "Oh, my hat! I said One-double-two-double-one Coketown."

TELEPHONIC MISS: "Don't be impatient!"

TELEPHONIC CALLER: "Hallo! Are you there? Are you one-double-two-double-one Coketown?"

VOICE ON TELEPHONE: "No. I'm one-double-two-double-three Gerrard."

TELEPHONIC CALLER: "M-m-m-m-m! Ring off, please! Wrong number! Hallo, hallo, hallo! Exchange! Are you the exchange? Hallo! Are you—"

TELEPHONIC MISS: "Did you ring?"

TELEPHONIC CALLER: "You gave me the wrong number!"

TELEPHONIC MISS: "I gave you the number you asked for. Repeat the number, please!"

TELEPHONIC CALLER: "One-double-two-double-one Coketown."

TELEPHONIC MISS: "One-double-one-double-four Kingsland."

TELEPHONIC CALLER: "No, no, no! 'One-double-two-double-one Coketown.'"

TELEPHONIC MISS: "It is unnecessary to shout on the telephone."

TELEPHONIC CALLER: "Can I have my number?"

TELEPHONIC MISS: "Number engaged! Shall I call you?"

TELEPHONIC CALLER: "Oh, crumbs!"

TELEPHONIC MISS: "Tiresome old frump! Bertie thought her blouse was simply—"

THE END.

SPOOKS!

By Frank Nugent.

I've found out the reason some chaps love to gorge,

Or feel really glad when they've lied;
It's simply because they have managed somehow

To get a small spook down inside.

The war, as it happens, has banished our spooks,

And loudly for vengeance they call.
For all of our own spooky gang have found out

That the Kaiser's the cause of it all!

So—never mind how—they have crossed to Berlin,

And, finding the Kaiser in state,
They lined up before him to ask, as a right,
Redress for their piteous fate.

"Now, I," said the first, "am the Spirit of Greed,

And in Bunter I once had my fling.
But shortness of food has cast me out thence."

Said Wilhelm: "A jolly good thing!"

The next one stepped up, and said: "Kaiser, in me

You see a most treacherous elf.
In Britain I can't find a place anywhere."
Said Bill: "I'll engage you myself!"

The Spirit of Lies next appeared, with a bow.
The war, he said, had brought him low.

"Cheer up!" said the Kaiser. "The right place for you
Is the Berlin Newspaper Bureau!"

The Spirits of Theft and of Cruelty and Vice
Were likewise delighted to hear

That now they'd arrived in the home of the Hun

They were welcome, and had nought to fear.

The last of the spooks came along with a grin.

"I am sure, honoured Kaiser," he said,
"You'll have room for me now that in Britain I find

No rest for my foot or my head!"

But, to his surprise, the All-Highest sprang up,

And sternly he bade the spook go.
"For you," said the Kaiser, "there's no welcome here.

Why couldn't you stay with my foe?

"If you had stayed there, oh, most senseless of spooks,
You could have done something to please!
The Spirit of Selfishness might long ago
Have brought Britain down to her knees!"

The spook left the palace, forlorn and alone.
Once more on the world he was loosed.

Now, if you're determined on winning the war,
Don't let him come home here to roost!

THE END.

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FROM SCOTLAND.

A Scottish reader—not a fair specimen of his race—wrote me a little while ago a positively abusive letter about the Greyfriars Gallery dealing with Donald Ogilvy. "You don't give Ogilvy a very good character," he complained. That made me open my eyes. As I remembered the article, Ogilvy was given a very good character indeed. He was described as a loyal and staunch fellow, able and practical, and with plenty of pluck. All of which was no more than he deserves, of course. But our Scottish reader is put out because it was stated that Ogilvy had been licked by Temple and others, and was not quite among the foremost fighting-men of the Remove.

Well, he isn't! He was licked in the stories, and that's good enough. There is no disgrace in being licked—the disgrace is in not doing one's best, in finking, or in swanking. And I am afraid our young Scot—not Ogilvy, but the anonymous reader—is an inveterate swanker. "Any Scotsman," says he, "could beat any Englishman!" This would be an offensive assertion if it were not so absurd that one cannot help laughing at it. Its absolute untruth calls for no demonstration.

The Scottish nation is easily one of the first among nations. The Scot has qualities that will carry him anywhere; and in every branch of human effort he is near the top, if not actually there. Explorer, pioneer, missionary, statesman, lawyer, soldier, writer—the Scot has shown his greatness in all these roles, and in many more. To me there is none of all the illustrious dead dearer than Sir Walter Scott. I could take off my hat to an old coat of that man's for the sake of what he did and what he was. Haig is a Scot. General Gordon was a Scot. David Livingstone, Colin Campbell, the leal and true Cameron of Lochiel, the good Lord James of Douglas, Robert the Bruce, Robert Louis Stevenson—I am mixing them, I know, but all were Scots, and all good ones. No Englishman claims them as English, but every decent Englishman thinks as much of them as though they had been.

And no decent Englishman ever talks of the Irish and the Scots as all too many Irishmen and some few Scots—but they are mostly foolish kids, like my correspondent—do of the English. We are not jealous. We don't want to claim for ourselves all the wisdom and the courage. We are ready enough to regard Scot and Irishman alike as brothers—if they will only let us. Mostly the Scot will: too often the Irishman won't. This will probably be considered by some of my hot-headed Irish readers what they elegantly call "another dirty slur on Ireland!" If the truth is a slur, the fault is with the person or the party or the nation slurred; and this is the truth.

Americans share to some extent in this silly habit of assuming an enmity over here towards them. Who cares that Washington won? It was quite right and proper that Washington should win; he was on the right side. No Englishman feels any resentment because the Americans licked our troops and broke away from the mother-country.

I wish "Stars and Stripes"—a genuine patriotic American youth who appears to me to labour under absurd delusions—would send me his address. I cannot think why he does not, for I don't for a moment imagine he fears to. But I cannot afford space in the paper to answer him at length.

NOTICES.

Back Numbers, Etc., Wanted.

By Jack Gregory, 119, Devon Street, Ardwick, Manchester—any numbers of the companion papers—also members for Exchange Club.

By S. Barnett, Gadlys, Menai Bridge, Anglesey—"Bob Cherry's Barring-Out" and other back numbers of MAGNET—double price offered.

By V. Brooke, 21, North Moor Street, Sunderland—back numbers of "Gem" and MAGNET, 1-400; "Penny Popular," 1-200; and any "Boys' Friend" 3d. Library issues containing Greyfriars or St. Jim's stories.

Your Editor