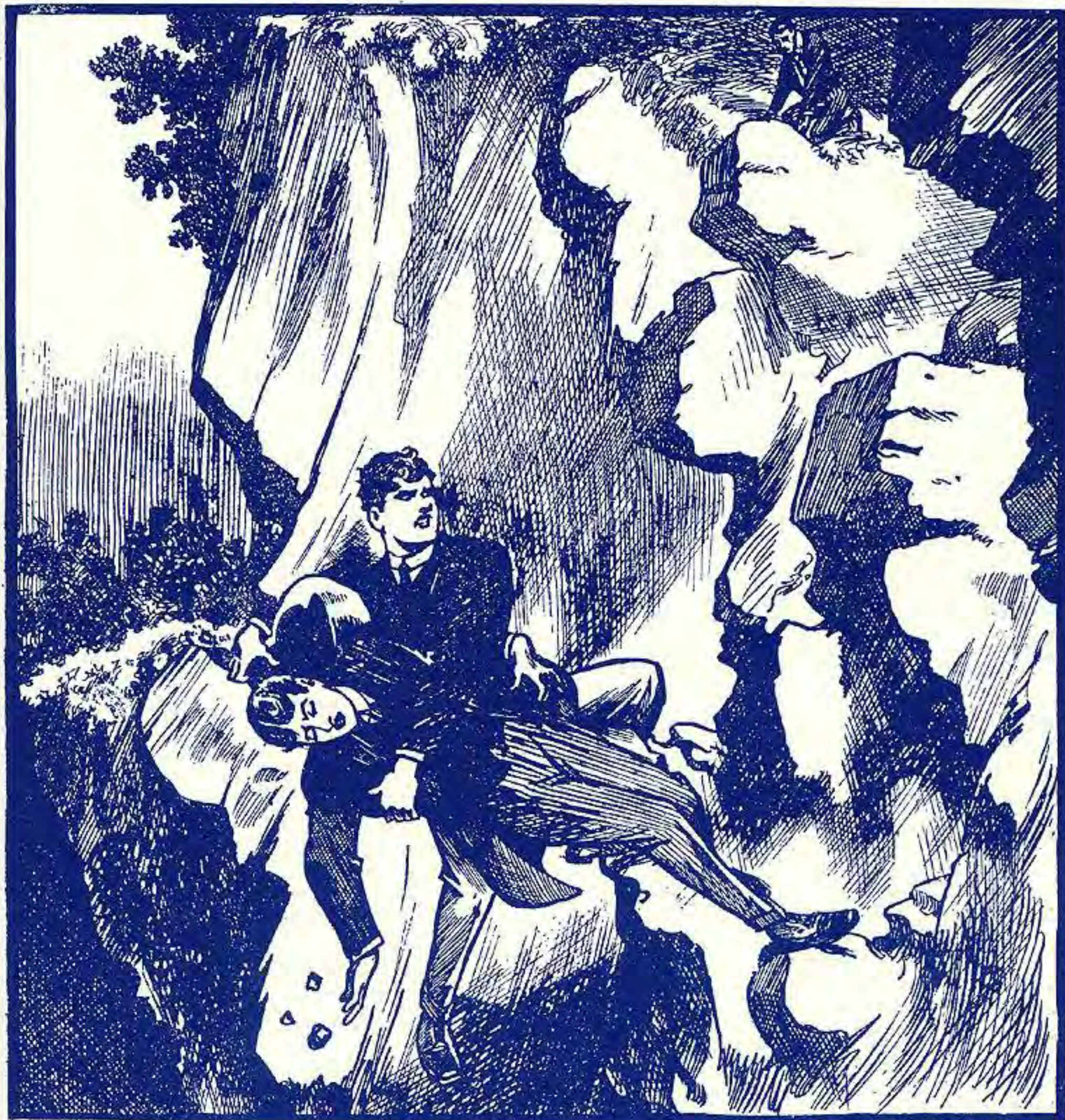


TOM REDWING—HERO!



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IN DESPERATE DANGER!

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

TOM REDWING— HERO!

By
Frank
Richards.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Wharton's Warning!

HARRY WHARTON, the captain of the Remove, looked into Skinner's study in the Remove passage.

It was Saturday afternoon—a fresh, bright afternoon in spring, when nearly every Greyfriars fellow who could get out was out of doors.

But Wharton quite expected to find Skinner indoors, and he was right.

Skinner was seated in Vernon-Smith's comfortable armchair, with his feet on the table and a cigarette between his thin lips.

He was evidently taking it easy that afternoon, in his usual slacking way.

Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, was not there. His relations with Skinner were rather strained at present.

Skinner glanced up through a little cloud of smoke, but did not move from his sprawling position, and did not remove the cigarette. He smiled as he noted the frown that came on Wharton's brow.

"Looking for Smithy?" he yawned. "He's not here. I believe he's leading the strenuous life somewhere."

"I came here to speak to you, Skinner," answered Wharton.

"So kind of you! Come in."

Wharton came in.

"There's some smokes in the box on the table," said Skinner, with a smile.

"They can stay there," answered Harry drily. "If you had the sense of a rabbit, Skinner, you would chuck up that silly foolery and come out of doors."

"Is that what you came to say?"

"Well no."

"You're simply chucking in the sermon from force of habit—is that it?" inquired Skinner blandly.

Wharton compressed his lips for a moment.

"Redwing's coming here this afternoon," he said abruptly.

Skinner removed his cigarette with a stained finger and thumb, and adopted a thoughtful expression, as if trying to recall the name.

"Redwing?" he repeated.

"Yes."

"I've heard that name somewhere."

Harry Wharton gave him a sharp and impatient look. Skinner knew who Tom Redwing was as well as Wharton did.

But it suited Skinner to appear to have forgotten so commonplace a person as Tom Redwing, the sailorman's son of Hawkscliff. That was Harold Skinner's variety of awank.

"Don't be an ass, Skinner!" said Harry. "He's coming here, to Greyfriars, this afternoon, and you know it."

"Oh! You mean that low cad of a longshoreman at Hawkscliff?" said Skinner. "I thought I'd heard the name."

"I mean Tom Redwing, Vernon-Smith's friend, and mine!" said Harry, with a gleam in his eyes. "And if you call him names again, Skinner, I'll have you out of that chair and ram your smokes down your neck!"

Skinner laughed, and blew out a little cloud of smoke.

"I'm sure I don't want to mention the person," he remarked. "I'm not accustomed to bother my head about my social inferiors. So he's coming here?"

"You know perfectly well that he is coming here, to see Mr. Quelch about entering for the Memorial Scholarship."

"Like his cheek!"

"That's why I've come to speak to you, Skinner—"

"Better speak to him, I should think. He may make a mistake, otherwise. Better give him the tip to go to the kitchen door," suggested Skinner.

Wharton did not heed that remark. He had not come there to lay hands on Skinner, and he wanted to avoid doing so if he could.

"The other day," said Harry quietly, "you went over to Hawkscliff to insult that chap, Skinner: 'ou've always spoken of him in a caddish way. It's occurred to me that you might think of doing something unpleasant while he's here this afternoon."

Skinner smiled. It was not a pleasant smile, and Wharton could see that his surmise was very near the facts.

"That's what I want to say," resumed Wharton. "Tom Redwing has as much right to enter for the Memorial Scholarship as anybody else—as yourself; for instance. More, in fact, as he needs it more than you do. He's got business here at Greyfriars, and he's got friends here, and he's going to be treated civilly."

Skinner yawned.

"Mind, I mean that," said Harry. "If any chap is uncivil to Redwing, he will get handled. There's such a thing as politeness, even if you don't like a chap. If you can't be civil to Redwing, keep out of his way."

"I'm not likely to waste much civility on a mender of nets and a caulker of boats!" sneered Skinner.

"Well, you couldn't mend a net or caulk a boat," said Wharton. "Don't be a silly ass, man. I'm not asking you to be civil to Redwing. If you can't get up any good manners for the occasion, keep out of his way."

"I may happen to come in contact with him."

"In that case, you'll happen to be perfectly civil, or else you will certainly happen to be knocked off your feet," said Wharton.

"So you're setting up as the Sailor's Friend and Longshoreman's Guardian?" sneered Skinner.

"Never mind that! Redwing is a sensitive chap, and his feelings are not going to be hurt. Bear it in mind."

"Rats!"

"Does that mean, Skinner, that you intend to insult the chap when he is here?"

"My dear man, I haven't thought about him. He's hardly worth my consideration."

"That's not true," said Harry directly. "I suspect very strongly you've been planning already to play some caddish

trick on him, because you're pleased to look down on him as a seaman's son."

Skinner yawned again.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry joined Wharton in the doorway. "You're a jolly long time having a word or two with Skinner!"

"The word or two is lengthfully terrific," remarked Hurrec Jamset Ram Singh, his dusky face glimmering into the study. "The esteemed Johnny is ready to start, and is snorting with terrific impatience."

"I'm coming," said Harry, laughing. "You'll keep in mind what I've said, won't you, Skinner?"

"Sorry, but I've quite forgotten it already," said Skinner urbanely.

"What?"

"Fact is, I was thinking about something else, and wasn't listenin' to you very carefully," said Skinner. "Sing it over again to me, will you, and I'll try to give you some attention. You'll excuse me for remarkin' that you are a bit of a bore, won't you, Wharton?"

Bob Cherry chuckled slightly, and Wharton frowned. Frank Nugent came along the passage with Johnny Bull.

"Staying here all the afternoon?" he inquired. "I didn't know Skinner's company was so fascinating."

"Lend me a hand," said Harry.

"What's on?"

"Skinner's got a scheme for insulting Tom Redwing when he comes here, and he won't promise not to. He wants a bit of a lesson."

Skinner jumped up from the armchair. He was alarmed.

"Look here, clear out of my study!" he said angrily. "I— Let go my collar, Cherry, you rotter! Leggo!" howled Skinner.

But five pairs of hands were fastened upon Harold Skinner, and five grinning faces looked at him as he was swept off his feet.

Bump!

"Yooooop!" roared Skinner, as he smote the hearthrug—not very hard, but hard enough to make him howl. "Yah! You rotters! Leggo!"

"Will you let Redwing alone, Skinner?"

"Yow! Yes! Yow!"

"Good enough!"

Skinner was released, and he sat on the rug and panted, giving the Famous Five of the Remove a deadly glare.

"You're jolly ready to handle a fellow when you're five to one!" he sneered.

Bob Cherry turned back from the door. "Skinner, old scout, if you're hungry for a terrific combat, here's your man!" he said, with a grin. "You fellows see fair play."

"Hear, hear! Go it, Skinner!"

Skinner would as soon have faced a savage Hun as Bob Cherry. He stayed on the hearthrug.

"I'll help you up, old man," said Bob, taking Skinner by one ear.

"Yaroo!" howled Skinner, staggering up furiously.

"Now off with your jacket, old scout!"

"I—I—"

"You prefer to fight with your jacket

on?" asked Bob gravely, while his chums chuckled.

It was only too clear that Skinner did not prefer to fight at all.

"Look here, I——"

"Better have it off," said Bob seriously. "I'll help you off with it. Here you are!"

"Let my jacket alone!" yelled Skinner, as Bob Cherry fairly dragged it off him. "You rotter, lemme alone!"

"But ain't you going to fight me?" exclaimed Bob, in surprise.

"No, you beast!"

"Which of us do you want to fight, then?" asked Bob, persisting that Skinner wanted to fight somebody, which was not the case at all.

"Go and eat coke!"

"Give him a chance, Johnny!"

Johnny Bull grinned, and advanced towards Skinner, who dodged round the table.

"Get out!" he yelled.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Perhaps it is my esteemed self with whom the honourable Skinner desires the scrapfulness?" suggested Hurree Singh.

"Get out, hang you!"

The Famous Five, laughing, crowded out of the study, leaving Skinner looking like a Prussian Hun. He sat down, scowling savagely, and lighted another cigarette.

He had some food for thought now. The cad of the Remove had fully intended to make matters as unpleasant as possible for Tom Redwing of Hawcliffe when he came to Greyfriars that afternoon. But Skinner realised that some change of plan was necessary now.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

A Catspaw Wanted!

"NOTHING doing!"

Snoop and Stott of the Remove made that remark simultaneously, grinning as they did so.

The two slackers were lounging in the window-seat at the end of the passage when Skinner joined them.

Skinner gave them a rather surly look.

"What do you mean?" he snapped.

"You know what I mean," answered Sidney James Snoop. "It's not good enough, Skinner!"

"Not nearly good enough!" declared Stott.

"I don't know what you're driving at!" exclaimed Skinner impatiently.

"Oh, come off! You were going to rag Redwing, and now you want us to do it. We heard those fellows in your study!" grinned Snoop.

"Oh! But——"

"No room for butting! We're not going to say a word to Redwing when he comes. If you want to rag him, rag away, and we'll give you a cheer—from a safe distance! We're not taking a hand."

"No jolly fear!"

Skinner looked morosely at his two associates. They were not bright youths, but they were quite sharp enough to spot Skinner's little game. Deciding that it was too risky to defy the Famous Five, Skinner had thought of passing on the task to Snoop and Stott, and those two youths most emphatically were not taking any!

They grinned at the expression on Skinner's face.

"Better look somewhere else for a catspaw, old top!" said Stott. "The fact is, we've been fed up with your precious rags! They land a fellow into a scrape. Look at the way Smithy made us walk home from Hawkscliff the other day; and we had a dickens of a trouble getting

our bikes home the next day. Better give the thing a rest, Skinner!"

"That cad's coming here this afternoon, as bold as brass!" said Skinner savagely. "A low, longshore cad, shoving himself in here as if he has a right to do it! He's got the cheek to enter for the schol, too—and I'm after that schol!"

"You wouldn't get it in donkeys' ages!" said Stott. "It means a lot of swotting."

"I'm going to try. Anyway, Redwing oughtn't to be allowed to enter. I put it to you fellows—ought a low cad like that to come to Greyfriars, in the Remove?"

"No fear!"

"When he comes along this afternoon he ought to be met, and made to feel what Greyfriars fellows think of him!" urged Skinner. "He is sensitive; I've noticed that; and feeling himself despised and unwelcome might make him sheer off——"

"And leave you a better chance for the schol!" grinned Snoop.

"Never mind that! You agree that the cad wants puttin' into his place?"

"Yes; and we'll watch you do it—from this window!"

"He, he, he!"

"I say, you fellows——"

Billy Bunter rolled along from the staircase, and joined the three slackers in the window.

Skinner was about to snap out "Buzz off!" when he checked himself, and said, instead, "Hallo, Bunter, old chap!"

"I say, you fellows, the postman hasn't brought me a letter," said Bunter, blinking sorrowfully through his big spectacles. "Isn't it too bad? I was expecting a postal-order——"

"The one you were expecting last term?" asked Snoop sympathetically.

"Or the one you were expecting the term before?" inquired Stott.

"Or the one you were expecting when you were a fag in the Second Form?" continued Snoop.

"Oh, really, you fellows——"

Skinner closed one eye at his chums.

"So the post's in," he remarked. "My letter must have come. I suppose one of you fellows could change a fiver for me?"

Billy Bunter jumped.

"A fiver, Skinner?" he exclaimed.

"Yes. Could you change it?"

"I—I've only got a ha'penny——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But—but I'll get it changed for you, Skinner," said Bunter. "I'll go down to Uncle Clegg's, if you like. I've got to get a few things for tea, and—and I could change it at the same time."

"That's really kind of you, Bunter!"

"I'd do more than that for a chap I really like," said Bunter affectionately.

"But it's a lot of trouble," said Skinner gravely; while Snoop and Stott strove to suppress their merriment.

They knew very well that Skinner was not going to receive a fiver, or anything like it, that afternoon.

"No trouble at all," said Bunter. "I'll just order my few things, you see, and pay for them out of the fiver, and—and settle up with you when I come back."

"Yes, that's all right."

Billy Bunter's eyes fairly beamed behind his glasses. He loved Skinner like a brother at that moment. This sweet trustfulness was quite a new development in Skinner's character. He had been heard to exclaim, on other occasions, that he would not have trusted Bunter with a brass farthing. It did not occur to Billy Bunter's fat mind that he had not yet seen the fiver.

"By the way, you know Redwing's coming this afternoon, Bunter?" remarked Skinner casually.

"Yes; rotten!" said Bunter. "He's an awfully low fellow! Cad, too! Mean!

Suspicious! He refused to cash a postal-order for me when he was here before!"

"It's really an insult to Greyfriars, that ruffianly longshoreman coming here, putting on airs of equality!" said Skinner.

"Disgraceful!" agreed Bunter.

Bunter would have agreed with anything that Skinner might have said that afternoon. He was thinking of the fiver.

"If I weren't going over to keep an appointment with Ponsonby, at Highcliffe, I'd certainly put my foot down!" said Skinner. "Somebody ought to speak out plain, and tell the cad he's not wanted here!"

"Certainly!" assented Bunter.

"A leading spirit of the Remove—a really representative chap—ought to take the thing in hand," remarked Snoop. "A fellow like Bunter, for instance!"

Bunter gave a podgy grin of satisfaction. He rather liked to be considered a leading spirit of the Remove.

"Well, I hadn't thought of that," said Skinner, with great frankness. "But, now you speak of it, Snoopey, it really is up to Bunter to put the thing plain to that low outsider. Bunter could meet him at the gates, or outside, in his—his stately manner——"

"His imposing manner!" said Snoop.

"Yes, that Grand Duke way Bunter has with him sometimes," said Skinner, without moving a muscle. "Looking at him scornfully. And when Bunter looks scornful it does make a fellow feel small——"

"It does, rather!"

"I've seen fellows fairly shrivel up under it!" said Stott.

"Looking at him scornfully, Bunter could tell him that he's not wanted here—that Greyfriars is contaminated by such low chaps coming to the place; and that all the Remove think he's a sneaking, greedy hound to come here hunting after one of the school scholarships——"

"But they don't!" remarked Bunter.

"Well, they ought!" said Skinner. "It comes to the same thing!"

"Yes—yes, of course," assented Bunter, thinking of the fiver again. "Quite right! The fellow's a greedy cad! Oh, yes! Rather!"

"Well, look here, Bunter, do it!" said Skinner. "You're the one fellow at Greyfriars that could make the cad feel really small. Tell him what you think of him, and a little over!"

"He, he, he!"

"Even if he didn't clear off, it would make him sit up," said Skinner; "and, really, it would only be kind. He's got mistaken notions—he doesn't understand that he's looked on as a low outsider here. It would be only kind to enlighten him. Go it, Bunter!"

"Go it!" said Snoop and Stott.

Bunter hesitated.

"I'll go down and see about my registered letter now," remarked Skinner. "Shall I see you when I come back from Highcliffe, Bunter? That is, if you're still willing to change my fiver for me."

"Certainly. Oh, yes!"

"Right you are, then. Come on, you chaps—Pon will be expecting me! You'll wait outside for Redwing, Bunter, and put it to him straight?"

"Yes, rather!"

"Good man!"

Skinner & Co. went downstairs, leaving the Owl of the Remove looking a little thoughtful. However, the task set him was not exactly distasteful. The fat junior was a good deal of a snob, in his podgy way, and he was not unwilling to put Tom Redwing in his place, as Skinner expressed it.

With Skinner's fiver before his mind's eye, Billy Bunter rolled away to the gates, and waited there for the sailor-man's son.

Vernon-Smith strolled down to the gates a little later, and glanced round. He would not have been surprised to see Skinner & Co. there.

But there was no sign of them, and he took no note of the Owl of the Remove. He walked away again, and Bunter breathed more freely. The Bounder's friendship for Tom Redwing was well known, and Bunter would not have ventured to carry out Skinner's programme with Smithy at hand.

He rolled out of the gateway, and watched the road through his big spectacles, and grinned a fat grin when he spotted a sturdy, sunburnt lad coming up the road.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Bunter Does His Duty!

TOM REDWING paused at the gates of the school.

The sailorman's son was neatly and quietly dressed, but not, of course, like a Greyfriars fellow.

He had evidently walked from Hawkscliff, a distance of ten miles or so, and he was somewhat dusty, though he did not look tired.

Billy Bunter blinked at him as he came up.

"Hold on, Redwing!" he called out.

Tom Redwing looked at him.

"Hallo Bunter!" he answered.

William George Bunter gave him a lofty look, raising his head as high as he could raise it to look down on Redwing. But it was a little difficult to look down on a fellow several inches taller than himself.

"So you've come here!" said Bunter.

"Yes, as you see."

"Calling on Mr. Quelch, our Form-master, I understand?"

"I don't know whether you understand or not, Bunter, but that is the case," said Tom Redwing quietly.

"Don't you think it's like your cheek?"

"No."

"Well, I do!"

"Do you?"

Tom's tone was very quiet, his look sedate. He did not seem angry. As a matter of fact, Bill Bunter, swelling with lofty importance, looked so absurd that it was not easy to be angry with him.

"Impertinence!" said Bunter. "That's the word. I'm speaking to you as a friend, Redwing. I'm shocked at you!"

"How have I shocked you, Bunter?"

"In the first place, don't call me Bunter. I don't like this—this Socialism," said the Owl of the Remove. "To you, and fellows of your station, I am Master Bunter."

"Oh!" ejaculated Tom.

"Of course, I should always be kind to you, and your sort," said Bunter. "I believe in being kind to the lower classes. But I don't believe in treating them on a footing of equality. That's nonsense."

Tom Redwing's quietness encouraged Bunter to keep on. It seemed quite safe to explain his peculiar views at great length to the sailorman's son.

"I hope I shall never be on an equal footing with you, Bunter," said Redwing.

Bunter did not quite know what to make of that.

"You're coming here after a Greyfriars scholarship," resumed Bunter. "Now, as a matter of fact, I'm going in for that schol."

"Oh!"

"I think it's jolly mean and jolly cheeky for a rank outsider like you to come shoving in!" said Bunter warmly.

"What do you mean by it? The schol's founded by a man connected with Greyfriars, in memory of Greyfriars men who

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have fallen in the war. It bught to have been confined to Greyfriars fellows."

"But it isn't," said Tom.

"It ought to be—and common decency ought to keep a low outsider from butting in! You ought to see that."

Tom was silent.

"Nobody wants you here," resumed Bunter, blinking more loftily than ever at the reddening face of the boy from Hawkscliff. "Smithy puts on some friendliness. He feels bound to, because you saved his life when his boat was wrecked. Other fellows are shocked—disgusted—at your want of proper feeling in trying to wedge in at Greyfriars!"

Sill Redwing was silent.

His cheeks were burning, and there was a gleam in his eyes. But more than anger, he felt a sense of bitterness and misgiving.

Vernon-Smith had assured him that if he won a scholarship at Greyfriars he would be welcome there. Harry Wharton & Co. had shown hearty approval of the idea.

But they were not all the fellows! What could he expect? Bunter was a fellow he hardly knew—and here was Bunter's opinion.

To be looked upon as an outsider, a nobody, "butting in" where he was not welcome—that was a bitter thought to the sensitive lad. For poor Tom was sensitive. The lofty Bunter was a rhinoceros in comparison.

Even Bunter's candid opinion was enough to wound him, and he could not help thinking that Bunter's opinion might be representative of a good many others.

He was reduced to silence; and Bunter felt more and more encouraged. The possibility of a punching would have warned him off; but so long as Tom Redwing was prepared to take insults quietly the genial Bunter was prepared to ladle them out.

"Now, be candid," said Bunter. "Are you fit for Greyfriars? Are you the kind of chap to come here and mix with gentlemen? Look at it plainly."

"Are you?" asked Tom.

Bunter jumped.

"I!" he exclaimed.

"Yes," said Tom. "How do they treat you, Bunter?"

William George Bunter spluttered with wrath.

"You—you—you cheeky cad!" he howled. "Do you mean to put yourself on an equality with me?"

"Certainly not," said Tom disdainfully. "Not an equality, certainly. If I came down to your level, Bunter, I should not care to show my face at Greyfriars, or anywhere else."

"Why, you—you cheeky ruffian!" shouted Bunter. "How dare you! By gad, I've a jolly good mind to kick you!"

"I shouldn't advise you to try," said Tom.

Bunter did not try. There was not much doubt which would get the kicking. Tom Redwing moved a pace or two from the fat junior, but it was not towards the gates of Greyfriars. The crimson had died out of his face, leaving it pale and troubled. Harold Skinner had gauged him well, and calculated well, when he laid this little scheme.

Billy Bunter followed him up.

"You sneak that schol!" he said, with biting contempt. "You bag it—you wedge in where you're not wanted, you outsider! See what you'll get! Nobody will speak to you! You'll be sent to Coventry, if you know what that means. You'll be looked down on by every chap in the school. Chaps will write home to their parents about it—I know I shall! Why, you cheeky cad—"

Tom Redwing made a sudden movement, and Bunter broke off and jumped

back still more suddenly. He realised that he was getting near danger-point. He retreated hastily towards the gates.

"The best thing you can do," he said loftily, "is to cut off! Keep to your own class, my good fellow!"

And with a contemptuous sniff Bunter rolled in at the gates and disappeared. He left Tom Redwing standing in the road.

For some moments Redwing stood there, and then he turned away and walked quickly down the lane. Billy Bunter blinked back from the gateway, and grinned. He had succeeded better than he had expected—and he had done his lofty duty—a duty, he felt, that he owed to the school and to society generally. He rolled towards the quad, and almost ran into the Bounder, who was coming down to the gates again.

Vernon-Smith caught him by the shoulder.

"Seen anything of Redwing, Bunter?" he asked. "He should have been here before this."

Bunter gave a fat smirk.

"I've seen him," he answered.

"Then he's come?"

"No. He's gone!" grinned Bunter.

"What? What do you mean?"

"I've put him in his place," said Bunter. "I've opened his eyes a bit, I fancy. We don't want that cad here, Smithy! I've sheered him off—"

Vernon-Smith's expression stopped the words on Bunter's lips. His look was terrible.

"You—you—" the Bounder panted.

"You—oh, you slimy reptile!"

"I—I say, Smithy— Oh! Ah!"

A swing of Vernon-Smith's arm sent Bunter whirling with such terrific force that the fat junior spun two or three yards helplessly and crashed to the ground. Without even a glance at him Vernon-Smith ran out at the gates.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Welcome to Greyfriars!

REDWING! Tom Redwing!

The sailorman's son stopped as he heard running footsteps behind him on the road, and looked round.

Vernon-Smith came up, panting.

Redwing, with a high colour in his cheeks, looked at Smithy somewhat uncertainly.

"You ass!" exclaimed Vernon-Smith.

"I—I—"

"You were going away?"

"No. I—"

"You came here to call on Mr. Quelch. Do you mean to say you were going away without keeping the appointment?" exclaimed the Bounder.

"No, Smithy. I—I was just going away a bit—to think it over," stammered Redwing. "I—I— You see—"

"You've let that fat fool's burbling make all that difference to you!" the Bounder exclaimed almost contemptuously.

Redwing's colour deepened.

"There was a lot in what he said, Smithy. I—I was doubtful myself, but you really talked me round, you know. It was kind of you, Smithy; but—but I felt all along that the other fellows wouldn't look at it as you did." Tom's voice faltered. "It's too big a thing for me. I couldn't stand being—being looked on as a cheeky outsider, Smithy."

"You'd be nothing of the sort!"

"I—I know. But the fellows—they'd think so; and I'd have to live among them. Sent to Coventry, most likely, by most of them—"

"Come with me," said Vernon-Smith, taking his arm

"But—but—"

"You can't disappoint Mr. Quelch, anyway, when he's set aside his time this afternoon to see you."

"I know. I didn't mean to do that. I—I wanted to think it over quietly."

"You think too much, old chap. You're touchy."

"I touchy?" exclaimed Tom Redwing.

"Yes!" growled the Bounder. "Don't I keep on telling you that the fellows won't and don't care a twopenny rap whether you're the son of a fore-castle hand or a Lord High Admiral? What sort of silly fools do you think we are at Greyfriars? Are you going to judge the school by Bunter and Skinner? Don't be a silly ass! Come with me!"

Redwing still hesitated; but the Bounder, with a grip on his arm, drew him away towards the school again.

"Leave it to me," he said. "I've got more sense than you, Redwing. Ask Mr. Quelch's advice before you put in for the schol. You don't think he'll give you bad advice, do you?"

"I'm sure not! But—"

"You're as full of butts as a blessed goat! Give up butting, and come along!"

Tom Redwing had little choice about coming along; unless he made a fight of it. The Bounder marched him in at the gates.

Billy Bunter was still sitting on the ground, breathless, and wondering what kind of an earthquake had happened to him. Vernon-Smith paused to give him a kick in passing, and Bunter howled dismally.

He squirmed out of the way in a great hurry, as Smithy drew back his boot for another kick.

"Don't, Smithy!" muttered Redwing.

"I feel as if I'd soiled my boot,"

growled Vernon-Smith.

"I say, old chap—"

"Oh, come on!"

They crossed the quadrangle.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry came racing up. "Here we are again, Redwing! You're late!"

"Glad to see you!" chimed in Harry Wharton, shaking hands with Redwing.

"The gladfulness is terrific, my worthy and ridiculous friend!" purred the Nabob of Bhanipur.

Redwing smiled.

This was a very different greeting from Bunter's. Skinner and Snoop hovered on the School House steps, and they sneered. But Redwing did not look at them as he was marched into the House in the midst of the Co.

Lord Mauleverer was in the hall, and he came up in his amiable way as he spotted Redwing.

"Glad to see you again, dear boy," said his lordship amicably. "You ought to have given us a look in before, begad! How well you're lookin'!"

"Caulkin' boats is a healthy occupation!" chimed in Skinner.

"Yaas, I dare say it is," said his lordship, not even noticing that Skinner was sneering. "How do you caulk a boat, Redwing? Just stick in the corks, I suppose—what?"

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

"Don't you caulk with corks?" asked Lord Mauleverer innocently.

"Not exactly," said Redwing, laughing.

"My mistake," said Mauleverer. "You don't learn everythin' at a public school, begad! You're goin' in for the Memorial Schol, Redwing—what? I wish you luck, dear boy. Go in an' win!"

"Thank you!" said Tom.

"I'd go in for it myself if it wasn't such a fag," said his lordship. "But I'll tell you what I'll do, kid. I'll help you!"

There was a roar of laughter at that



Trapped! (See Chapter 8.)

kind offer. Lord Mauleverer was an amiable youth, with innumerable good qualities, but his proficiency in any line of study was not remarkable. There were bright fags in the Third who could construe Mauly's head off.

"Fancy Mauly as a coach!" sobbed Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo, is that the sailorman?" It was Cecil Reginald Temple of the Fourth. He came up smiling.

Vernon-Smith looked grim for a moment. But it was clear at once that the lofty Cecil Reginald was quite friendly.

He shook hands with the flushed Redwing.

"Jolly glad to see you again, dear boy!" said Cecil Reginald. "I was goin' to give you a look-in at Hawkscliff, only it's such a jolly long way off. Bag that schol, my son! I'm standin' out to give you a chance."

"Oh, don't do that!" exclaimed Redwing.

"And, besides, I'm over the age limit."

"Oh!"

"Otherwise, I should mop it up," said Temple. "We're all so jolly hard up now that it would be worth baggin'."

"Hallo, here's the salt-water merchant!" exclaimed Squiff of the Remove, rushing up to greet Redwing. "How do you do, my hearty! Belay there—what? All a-tauto and tight—hey?"

There was quite a crowd round Redwing now in the hall, and all of them were giving him a cordial greeting.

Even Bolsover major, the bully of the Remove, came up to shake hands with him. Bolsover major had been licked once by Redwing, and, strange to say, it had made him like the sailor-lad of Hawkscliff. Hard hitting was the kind of argument Bolsover major could understand.

Skinner and Snoop looked on, sneering. But nobody cared what Skinner and Snoop thought or did.

"Time you got to Quelchy, kid," said the Bounder, smiling. And he led Redwing away from the crowd towards the Remove-master's study.

Tom was very flushed, and very happy.

"Does that look as if you'll be sent to

Coventry at Greyfriars, you ass?" asked Vernon-Smith, as they stopped outside the Form-master's door.

"No. I was rather an ass," said Tom. "They're all very kind. I—I oughtn't really to have taken any notice of Bunter—"

"I fancy that fat fool was put up to it," said Vernon-Smith. "I'm going to find out, too. Here you are!"

He knocked at the door.

"Come in!" called Mr. Quelch.

The Bounder opened the door.

"Redwing, sir!"

"Ah! Come in, Redwing. I was expecting you!" said the Remove-master cordially. "Thank you, Vernon-Smith!"

The Remove-master shook hands with the sailorman's son, and motioned him to a chair. Vernon-Smith smiled as he closed the door and withdrew. The cruel impression Redwing had received was fading from his mind now. But the Bounder did not mean to let the matter rest there.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Brought to Book!

"I—I SAY, you fellows!" said Bunter dismally.

Skinner and Snoop and Stott had gone out into the quad, not at all in a happy mood. They scowled at Bunter as he joined them, with a very dismal expression on his face.

"You fat rotter!" snapped Skinner. "Why didn't you do as you arranged?"

"I did!" howled Bunter.

"Redwing doesn't look any the worse for it!" growled Snoop.

"I gave him a jolly good jaw," said Bunter. "I expressed my contempt for him—put it quite plainly. He cleared off. I think I made him thoroughly ashamed of himself. He'd have gone away, only that beast Smithy—"

"He was going away?" exclaimed Skinner.

"Yes, he was. I'd made him feel jolly small, I can tell you!" said Bunter.

"Of course, the low rotter didn't dare to argue with a gentleman. He was clearing off, without even daring to show his nose in the school, when that brute

Smithy chipped in. He fetched him in—fairly dragged him in by the arm!

"Hang him!" growled Skinner.

"He kicked me!" said Bunter plaintively.

"I wish he'd kicked you harder!" said Skinner, with black ingratitude.

"Oh, really, Skinner—"

"I say, though, the fellow must be awfully touchy if he was letting Bunter sheer him off with mere impudence," said Stott.

"Impudence!" exclaimed Bunter, with a stare. "It wasn't impudence! I expressed my scorn for him—"

"Oh, don't be a fat idiot!"

"Look here, Stott, you rotter—"

"He must be soft," said Snoop, with a nod. "Perhaps the game isn't up yet. If he lets his feelings be worked on like that—what?"

Skinner nodded thoughtfully.

"I say, you fellows, I did my best," said Bunter. "I say, Skinner, hadn't I better change that note for you before you go over to Highcliffe?"

"Eh? I'm not going over to Highcliffe!" snapped Skinner.

"Why, you told me—"

"Did I?" said Skinner indifferently. Bunter blinked at him wrathfully.

"Well, what about that note?" he asked.

"What note?"

"Your fiver. Don't you want me to get change for you?" exclaimed Bunter anxiously.

"Certainly! If you can get me the change for a fiver I'll be grateful," said Skinner. "In fact, I'll go halves with you."

"Well, gimme the fiver."

"What fiver?" asked Skinner, while Snoop and Stott chortled.

The truth dawned upon William George Bunter at last. If he had not been the densest fellow at Greyfriars, as well as the fattest, it would not have taken quite so long to dawn.

"Why, you—you rotter!" he stuttered. "You were spoofing me!"

"Go hon!"

"You put me up to tackling Redwing, because you were afraid to!" hooted Bunter. "You—you haven't got a fiver at all!"

"I shouldn't jolly well trust it in your fat paws if I had!" assented Skinner. "I know how much of it I should see again."

"You spoofing rotter!" howled Bunter. "I've been pitched over—I've been kicked—"

"You'll get pitched over again if you hoot at me!" answered Skinner. "And jolly well kicked, too! Cut off, and don't bother!"

The Owl of the Remove gave him a look that bade fair to crack his spectacles. Evidently that afternoon's work was to produce more kicks than halfpence for William George Bunter.

"You're a spoofing rotter, Skinner!" he gasped. "Why, that boulder Redwing's worth a dozen of you! He wouldn't tell a fellow lies! I think—"

"Don't trouble to tell me what you think," yawned Skinner. "Cut off! Hallo! What do you fellows want?"

The three black sheep of the Remove looked rather alarmed as a crowd of fellows bore down on them in the quad. Vernon-Smith and the Famous Five, Squiff and Tom Brown and Delarey and Lord Mauleverer, Peter Todd and Ogilvy, and several more fellows, were in the party.

"We want you!" said the Boulder grimly.

"Anything on?" asked Skinner, striving to speak carelessly.

"Yes. You were warned not to insult Tom Redwing when he came here this

afternoon, Skinner," said Harry Wharton quietly. "Smithy's told us what's happened. Bunter—"

"I haven't spoken to the fellow," said Skinner, biting his lips.

"Neither have I," muttered Snoop.

"Haven't even seen him," said Stott.

"Bunter insulted him," said Wharton.

"Bunter is a fat beast—"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"But I don't think Bunter would have thought of it on his own account. He was put up to it. Smithy thinks so, and I agree with him."

"Glad to see you agree," yawned Skinner. "You used to be on fightin' terms."

"Never mind that now. Did you put Bunter up to what he did?"

"I really don't know what Bunter may or may not have done. I'm not at all interested in Bunter."

"Did you act as you did on your own account, Bunter?" asked Harry Wharton.

"I—I'm sorry I can't stop any longer, Wharton—"

"What?"

"I've promised Courtenay to drop in at Highcliffe, to give him some tips on cricket—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Squiff caught the fat junior by one ear, and swung him back as he moved off. The Owl gave a Hunnish yell.

"Stay where you are, podgy!" said the Australian junior.

"Oh, really, Squiff— Ow!"

"Will you fellows let me pass?" asked Skinner between his teeth.

"Not yet. Stand where you are. Bunter, you've got to tell the truth for once. Now, then, was it your idea or Skinner's?"

"Skinner's," said Bunter promptly. "I was against it all along." He blinked cautiously round at the circle of grim faces. "The—the fact is, you fellows, I—I rather like that chap Redwing. I—I admire him! He—he's splendid, you know! I—I really meant to tell him that—"

"You didn't tell him exactly that," said the Boulder.

"I—I was really joking with him," said Bunter feebly. "I—I've got a sense of humour, you know. I—I was just pulling his leg. I—I don't despise him really, you know."

"You despise Redwing!" yelled Ogilvy. "Oh, my hat!"

"Not really, you know. I—I don't scorn him," said Bunter. "I—I—in fact, I'm prepared to take him up, and—and patronise him, you know."

"Redwing's not in want of your patronage, you fat idiot!" said Harry Wharton. "But he's entitled to decent manners. You insulted him."

"Only a—a joke, you know. I—I'll beg his pardon, if you like," added Bunter. "A gentleman can do no more."

"And a fat cad can do no less," remarked Ogilvy.

"Oh, really, you know—"

"Your jokes are a little too personal, Bunter," said the Boulder grimly. "You are going to pay for being so funny."

"I—I say, you fellows, it was Skinner's idea!" said Bunter in dismay. "He was afraid to tackle Redwing himself, and he asked me—"

"I thought so!"

"Because I'm a brave chap, you know," explained Bunter. "Skinner's a funk—ain't you, Skinner?"

"It's a lie!" said Skinner, greatly alarmed now. "So far as I remember, I haven't even mentioned Redwing to Bunter."

Bunter jumped.

"Oh, crumbs! Why, you rotter, didn't you tell me you had a fiver, and

ask me to get it changed at Uncle Clegg's?" he hooted. "Didn't you tell me I ought to put it plain to Redwing, as a leading spirit of the Remove—you and Snoop and Stott?"

"He's making this up," said Skinner, biting his lip. "You fellows all know what a Prussian he is!"

"We know," assented Wharton. "But it's pretty plain that he's telling the truth this time, Skinner. You were warned to let Redwing alone, and you put Bunter up to insulting him in your place. You gave the chap the impression that we're a crowd of snobbish cads in the Remove. You can't be allowed to disgrace the Remove like that, Skinner!"

Skinner set his teeth.

His denial was believed by nobody; and, indeed, it was rather too thin on the face of it.

"Well, you know what I think of the cad!" he said desperately. "I think a low hound like that ought to be kept out of the school. It's a disgrace if he comes here, and my friends agree with me!"

"What is that worm doing outside Prussia?" growled Squiff.

"You're welcome to your opinions, Skinner," said Harry Wharton quietly. "But when it comes to expressing them, there's a line to be drawn. Redwing's a sensitive chap, and his chance of getting to Greyfriars on a scholarship might have been spoiled, from what Smithy says. You've played a dirty trick, and you've disgraced your school! Smithy can say what's to be done with you, as Redwing's pal."

"Hear, hear!"

"All four of the cads were in it," said Vernon-Smith. "They're going to beg Redwing's pardon on their knees."

"Oh!" ejaculated Wharton.

"That will be a lesson to them. Redwing's coming to tea in my study before he goes. Take them up to the Remove passage."

"Do you think I'll beg that cad's pardon?" shrieked Skinner.

"I think you will—on your knees, too," said the Boulder calmly.

"Well, I won't!"

"We'll see about that."

"This way, Skinner!" said Bob Cherry, with a grin.

"I won't come in! I—"

"I'll help you, then, old scout!"

Skinner & Co. decided to go in. They had to walk or to be carried. Harold Skinner's face was a study as he was marched up to the Remove passage. The humiliation before him was simply maddening. He deserved it, but that did not make it any the more palatable.

The cad of the Remove would have dodged, and run to the Form-master's study for protection; but that was a worse alternative. For he knew very well what Mr. Quelch would think of his conduct if he came to know the facts. His miserable persecution of the sailor-man's son would not pass unpunished; and the Form-master's eye would be on him afterwards.

Harold Skinner was in the hands of the Philistines, and he had to bear it as best he could. In the midst of the Remove fellows he was taken up the staircase, to wait for his ordeal when Tom Redwing came up.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

All Serene!

TOM REDWING came out of the Remove-master's study in about half an hour, with a very bright face.

His interview with Mr. Quelch had been an agreeable one.

The master of the Remove had shown him kindness of which few would have

supposed that the cold, reserved Form-master was capable.

Mr. Quelch took a keen interest in his profession; and, knowing Redwing's abilities, he was very pleased that such a chance had come the way of the sailor-man's son. He had strongly advised him to enter for the scholarship, and assured him that he had a good chance of success. And his kindness did not stop there. Mr. Quelch was a busy man; but he had undertaken to give the boy tuition twice a week, and Redwing was to visit him at Greyfriars for the purpose. Poor Tom, who stood in great awe of the stern-featured Form-master, had been almost overwhelmed, and he could only stammer out his thanks.

He felt as if he were walking on air when he came out into the corridor. Vernon-Smith was waiting for him, and he joined him at once, with a smile.

"All serene?" he asked.

"Smithy, he's a brick!" said Redwing.

"Quelch?" asked the Bounder, with a smile.

"Yes. He's advised me to enter, and my name's to be put down. And—and I'm to have instruction from him twice a week until the exam, Smithy, so—so that I can keep up what I've learned. Isn't he a brick?"

"Yes—rather a dry old brick; but a brick, all the same," said the Bounder. "Come along! You know your way up."

"Yes, rather!" said Tom, laughing.

They went up the stairs together, and found a crowd in the Remove passage. Skinner & Co. were in the midst of the crowd, looking sullen and furious.

"Halt!" smiled the Bounder.

Tom Redwing stopped.

"Anything on?" he asked.

"Yes, rather—an apology in state!"

"Wha-a-t?"

"Skinner & Co. want to express their regret for having put Bunter up to be a Prussian pig when you came," explained Wharton.

"It doesn't matter," said Tom hurriedly.

"Your mistake—it does! We can't have Greyfriars disgraced by a handful of rotters who ought not to be in the school at all," said the captain of the Remove. "Smithy's sentenced them, and they're going through it. Ready, Skinner?"

"I'm not going to apologise to that outsider!" shrieked Skinner.

"Toddy, would you mind getting your stump—the one you keep for Bunter?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Half a tick!" said Peter Todd cheerfully. He went into his study for the stump.

"I—I wish you wouldn't make a fuss, you chaps!" exclaimed Redwing. "I don't mind what Bunter said—I don't really—"

"I was only joking!" wailed Bunter. "Wasn't I, Redwing, old chap? You'll bear me out, I'm sure."

"Well, I don't think you were exactly joking," said Tom. "But it doesn't matter."

"I—I'm ready to make a friend of Redwing," said Bunter. "I am really, you know, though he's a low beast—"

"Shut up, you fat idiot!"

"Kick him, somebody!"

"Yaroooh!"

"Let Bunter think I'm a low beast, if he likes," said Tom, colouring. "I don't mind."

"But we do, begad!" said Lord Mauleverer.

"The mindfulness is terrific, my esteemed Redwing!"

Peter Todd came out, stump in hand.

"Bend 'em over!" he said, in a businesslike way. "Skinner first!"

"I—I say, I don't mind apologising to the fellow!" exclaimed Snoop.

"I—I want to!" howled Stott, in great alarm.

"Do you want to, Skinner?"

"No, hang you!"

"Bend him over!"

Skinner struggled savagely, but he was bent over, and then Peter Todd commenced operations with the stump. There were fiendish yells from Skinner.

"Say when!" smiled Peter.

"Oh, crumbs! Oh! Oh! Yow! Woooop! Leave off, you beast!" wailed Skinner.

"You've only got to say when!"

"Yow-ow! I'll apologise! Yow-wooop!"

"You needn't mind me," said Peter.

"I could keep this up for hours. Don't hurry on my account."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Leave off!" shrieked Skinner.

"Well, if you're really in a hurry—"

Peter Todd ceased operations with the stump.

"To your knees!" grinned Russell.

Skinner & Co. dropped on their knees, with faces that would have done credit to a set of Von Tirpitzes.

"Go it!" grinned the Removites.

"I—I—I apologise!" stammered Skinner.

"We apologise!" howled Snoop and Stott and Bunter.

"And you hope Redwing will overlook your having acted like low, sneaking cads," said the Bounder. "Put that in." Skinner ground his teeth.

"We—we hope you'll look over our having acted like low, sneaking cads, Redwing!" mumbled the unhappy four, in miserable chorus.

"That'll do," said Bob Cherry.

"Crawl away, you worms! You make me feel ill."

"Kick 'em out!" said Bolsover major.

Skinner & Co. were kicked out. They went fleeing down the staircase, in fury and shame and bitter hatred. Tom Redwing stood silent, looking very red and uncomfortable. The Bounder drew him into his study.

"They wanted a lesson, kid," he said lightly. "You'll be coming here, you know, and Skinner's got to learn manners before then. We're going to have a party to tea. You don't mind?"

"Not at all!" said Tom, brightening.

"Every chap's going to bring his own rations, of course," said the Bounder, laughing. "Study spreads are at a discount, till we've finished licking the Prussians. A chap who's asked to tea always brings his own stuff now."

"A good idea!" said Tom, laughing.

"But—"

"Oh, that doesn't apply to a distance. Lend me a hand with these kippers, old son; you're a better cook than I am."

"I ought to be!" said Tom cheerfully.

"Yes, so you ought, and you are. Here come the merry guests!"

All Smithy's friends, and also good-natured fellows who were not precisely his friends, were standing by him kindly, in order to impress upon Tom Redwing that he was welcome in the Greyfriars Remove.

Smithy had one of the largest studies in the passage, but it was likely to be taxed to its utmost capacity.

The Famous Five arrived together, and Lord Mauleverer dropped in next. Then came Peter Todd and Tom Dutton, and Hazeldene and Tom Brown, and Squiff came along with Delarey. Ogilvy and Russell and Wibley and Micky Desmond arrived, and by that time there was standing room only.

Every fellow brought his rations, and anything else he had in the grub line, so

there was really a "kind of a sort" of a study spread.

Other fellows dropped in, though it was rather a puzzle how they managed to get into the study at all.

And then there was an overflow meeting in the passage, fellows bringing their own chairs and occupying the doorway and the space outside. And as tea—minus the tea—was going strong, a well-known voice was heard in the passage.

"I say, you fellows, make room for a chap!"

"Bunter!" yelled Johnny Bull.

"Let a chap get in, you fellows, really! Redwing will be disappointed if I don't come."

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Tom.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Scat, you fat fraud!"

"Oh, really, Peter Todd, I suppose you don't want to keep your own study-mate out of a spread!" exclaimed Billy Bunter indignantly. "Look here, let me squeeze in! Old Redwing wants to see me—"

"Old Redwing!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Of all the nerve—"

There was the sound of a bump in the passage, and a loud yell followed, and then Billy Bunter's voice was heard no more. The spread proceeded without the presence of the Owl of the Remove.

Everybody was in cheerful spirits, and Tom Redwing was very happy. When tea was over, Vernon-Smith and the Famous Five walked with him as far as Friardale on his way home. They parted on the cheeriest of terms, and in the dusk of the evening Tom Redwing tramped home to Hawkscliff, the happiest fellow that could have been found within the county of Kent.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Ponsonby is Called In!

"CHEERO!"

It was a few days since Tom Redwing's visit to Greyfriars, and the Bounder, coming into his study, found Skinner there with a scowling face.

He greeted him with a somewhat cynical good-humour.

Skinner had by no means recovered his equanimity since the humiliation during Redwing's visit.

His face, whenever Vernon-Smith saw it in the study, always wore a scowl, and he was more bitter-tempered than ever to everybody.

Skinner was not a forgiving youth. He had deliberately set out to persecute the boy from Hawkscliff, and he had failed, and he had been forced to go through a bitterly humiliating apology. His feelings towards Redwing were naturally not improved thereby.

"Cheero!" repeated the Bounder, as Skinner scowled yet more darkly. "Yours isn't a cheerful chivvy to have about the study, Skinner."

"If you don't like it, you can lump it, I suppose," said Skinner sourly.

"Come! Why don't you drop playing the goat?" exclaimed the Bounder good-naturedly. "What's the good of keeping this up? What, after all, had Redwing ever done to you that you hated him? It's not sense, Skinner."

"I don't hate social inferiors," said Skinner loftily. "I despise them."

"Oh, don't be funny! Why can't you be decent?"

"Go and eat coke!"

"Well, if you choose to keep up a grudge, that's your look-out," grunted the Bounder. "But if you're going to look at a fellow like a gargoyle every time he comes into the study, I wish you'd change out. Couldn't you go and dig with Snoop and Stott?"

"I dare say I could if I liked."

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"Well, be a good fellow, and do it!"

"I'll see you hanged first!"

With that Skinner lounged out of the study. The Bounder shrugged his shoulders impatiently. He knew Skinner's malicious nature of old, but he was getting fed up with this endless grudge.

But he forgot about Skinner as he sat down to write to Tom Redwing.

Redwing had already paid his first visit to Mr. Quelch for "toot" on Wednesday afternoon. He was coming again on Saturday.

In the kindness of his heart, Mr. Quelch was giving up to his new pupil a couple of hours on each of the two weekly half-holidays.

Excellent progress as Tom had made in his studies, considering his disadvantages, he needed tuition, and that "extra toot," as the juniors called it, was invaluable to him in view of the forthcoming examination.

But Mr. Quelch, though he wished Redwing well, was strictly impartial. Every fellow at Greyfriars who had entered for the exam was welcome to all the aid the Form-master could give him in preparation.

Harold Skinner had been seen working of late in a desultory way. Skinner would have been glad to carry off the Memorial Scholarship for many reasons—for its value, for the kudos of winning it, but, above all, for the sake of defeating Tom Redwing and keeping him out of Greyfriars.

But his hopes were not really high. He hated work, and hard work was needed. Unless Skinner was able to get some underhand advantage, it was not likely that he would carry off the scholarship.

The thought of Redwing beating his competitors and getting into Greyfriars on such a sound footing made Skinner quite cold with rage. He debated all kinds of plans in his cunning mind for queering Redwing's chance.

But he found little backing among his friends. Redwing was popular with most of the Removites, and Snoop and Stott were not the kind to back up against a popular fellow. They cried off, and Skinner found that if he made any move against the sailorman's son he would have to make it on his own, with nothing more substantial than good wishes from Snoop and Stott.

But as he left his study on this sunny afternoon, leaving the Bounder writing his letter to Redwing, Skinner was thinking hard of other allies. He remembered the old, bitter dislike Ponsonby of Highcliffe had for Tom Redwing, and he wondered whether it would be possible to enlist the nuts of Highcliffe against the "outsider." Redwing had thrashed the great Ponsonby on one occasion, and that was a thing not to be forgotten or forgiven.

Skinner came downstairs, to go round for his bike for a visit to Highcliffe. He passed the Famous Five on the steps, and scowled. Harry Wharton & Co. smiled in return. Skinner's scowling face was growing into a standing joke.

"Dear old man!" said Bob Cherry. "Which of us are you smiling so sweetly at?"

"The sweetness of the esteemed smile is terrific, my worthy fatheaded Skinner!" remarked Hurree Singh.

The chums of the Remove chuckled as Skinner stamped away.

The scowling junior wheeled out his bicycle, and rode away through Court-field for Highcliffe.

"Pon at home?" he called out, as he passed three Highcliffe juniors in the road near the gates.

"Yes, I think so," answered Derwent, looking rather curiously at Skinner. "He was staying in with Gaddy."

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"Thanks!"

Skinner rode on to the school, and, leaving his bike at the lodge, went to the House. He found Ponsonby and Gadsby lounging in the hall by the fireplace, chatting about gee-gees.

They glanced at Skinner in none too friendly fashion.

The Highcliffe nuts tolerated Skinner as a sort of member of their exalted circle, but they only tolerated him. Skinner was made to realise that he was not quite one of their noble selves.

"Lookin' for anybody?" yawned Ponsonby.

"I've dropped in to see you, Pon."

"Thanks awfully!"

Skinner flushed a little. Even to his own friends Cecil Ponsonby could never quite restrain his supercilious insolence.

"I want to speak to you," said Skinner abruptly.

"Go ahead!"

"Better come up to the study."

"Oh, there's nobody listenin' here," yawned Ponsonby, sinking down in the window-seat. "Everybody's out of doors—place is deserted. Sit down an' pile in, and don't keep us on merry tenter-hooks."

Skinner sat down in the window.

"You remember that fellow Redwing—Clavering as he was called once?" he said.

Ponsonby frowned.

"I remember the cad."

"You haven't heard about him lately?"

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"No; an' don't want to!"

"We don't want to hear of the dashed ruffianly longshoreman!" said Gadsby loftily. "What are you thinkin' of, Skinner?"

"Oh, come off!" answered Skinner.

"The cad's entered for a scholarship at Greyfriars, and looks like havin' a good chance of pullin' it off. If he does, he comes into the Remove, and you fellows will see a lot of him."

"Oh, gad!" ejaculated Ponsonby.

"You don't exactly love him, I believe?" grinned Skinner.

"Not exactly," said Ponsonby, gritting his teeth. "He punched me once, the low cad, when I was raggin' Bunter. Laid his low hands on me, y'know! I'll make him sit up for it yet, if it's ten years hence!"

"Oh, let it drop!" said Gadsby.

"Smithy cut up rusty when you tried it last time, Pon. Don't let Skinner drag you into it again."

"What do I care for Smithy cuttin' up rough?" snapped Ponsonby. "He got me under his thumb by gettin' hold of a paper I'd signed for Jerry Hawke, the bookie; he had me there, an' I had to leave his pal alone. But afterwards, when the cad left Greyfriars, and it was all out, Smithy handed me back the paper—more fool he, but he did it. He hadn't any further use for it, never expectin' to see Redwing again, I suppose, and it was a bit under his dignity to be actin' like a sneakin' blackmailer. So

he gave me back my paper, and I shoved it in the fire. And that," added Ponsonby, with a glitter in his eyes—"that leaves me free, and if I can put a spoke in the wheel for Smithy, or any of his friends, I'd walk ten miles to do it, by gad!"

"I don't see that there's anythin' doin'," said Gadsby uneasily. "Greyfriars knows all about this fellow Redwing now; there's nothin' for you to give away."

"Might be other ways," said Skinner. "That's what I came to see you about. Pon's got lots of ideas. He beats me hollow. I've tried to deal with the hound, and failed. But I'd like to get a chance—"

"He's goin' in for a school scholarship?" asked Ponsonby thoughtfully. "Might be a chance there."

"That's some weeks ahead. He comes to Greyfriars twice a week now—Wednesdays and Saturdays—for toot from Quelch."

Ponsonby started a little.

"Comes over from Hawkscliff?" he asked.

"Yes."

"How does he get there? He can't have a bike, a poor rotter like that."

"I fancy he walks it," said Skinner. "He's as hard as nails, you know; thinks nothing of a ten-mile walk."

"Oh, crumbs!" said Gaddy, with a shudder at the bare idea.

"On Saturday?" said Ponsonby thoughtfully.

"Yes; twice a week."

"It's a pretty lonely route, from Hawkscliff to Greyfriars, round Cliff Edge way," Ponsonby remarked.

"Rotten!" said Skinner. "I've been over it. Sometimes you don't pass a human being for a mile."

"What a place for Redwing to fall in with some fellows who've got an old grudge against him!" smiled Ponsonby.

Skinner's eyes gleamed.

"By gad! That's a good idea, Pon! You could give the cad the hiding of his life! That would do him good, at any rate."

Ponsonby glanced round cautiously before he answered. But there was no one within hearing.

"Might be a bit worse than that," he murmured. "He might have a fall, hurt himself, and not be able to do any swottin' for the exam—what?"

"I say, Pon!" exclaimed Gadsby, turning pale.

"Nothin' to get us into trouble, you ass!" said Ponsonby contemptuously. "I'm not a dashed fool, am I? A chap might have a fall, scuffin' on a rocky path—fellows carry him home, full of sympathy, an' fetch a doctor—full of regrets an' apologies, an' all that—and there he is, crocked, and when the exam comes off he hasn't done any work for it!"

"I say, you've got a head on you, Pon!" exclaimed Skinner admiringly.

"What time does he get to your show on Saturday?" yawned Ponsonby.

"Four o'clock—in Quelch's study."

"That gives us heaps of time."

"Hold on, though. Smithy may go and meet him on the way," said Skinner.

"I believe he met him at Friardale on Wednesday, coming here."

"You'd better see that he doesn't on Saturday, Skinner."

"Well, I could do that," agreed Skinner. "In fact, it would be easy enough. It's a go!"

"And not a word!"

"Not a giddy syllable!" grinned Skinner.

And the cad of the Remove rode back to Greyfriars in great spirits. His ally at Highcliffe had settled the knotty

difficulty for him, and Tom Redwing was booked for a punishment more savage than Skinner himself would have thought of. And Ponsonby & Co. were taking all the risk—which was a source of additional satisfaction to Skinner.

That evening, in his study, Skinner smiled, and was unusually good-humoured; and the Bounder concluded that his study-mate was getting over his resentment and malice. He was far from guessing the cause of Skinner's good-humour.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Caught!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! Smithy!" Bob Cherry clapped Vernon-Smith upon the shoulder on Saturday afternoon, with a hearty clap that made the Bounder jump.

"Don't break my collar-bone, ass!" exclaimed Smithy.

"Oh, never mind your collar-bone!" answered Bob cheerfully. "Are you coming over to Cliff House this afternoon? Marjorie asked after you last time."

Smithy shook his head.

"Better come," said Wharton. "We're going for a ramble on the cliffs with Marjorie and the other girls, and it's ripping weather! What are you doing—taking a last farewell of footer, or thinking of cricket?"

"I'm going to do a bit on my bike—to meet Redwing on his way here," explained the Bounder. "He walks from Hawkscliff."

"Oh, yes! He comes to-day to see Quelchy, doesn't he? I'd forgotten. Then you won't come on the cliffs?"

"Not this time."

"Right-ho!"

Harry Wharton & Co. strolled out of the gates, and took their way to Cliff House, where they were to call for Marjorie and her friends that sunny spring afternoon.

The Bounder would have been glad enough to join in the excursion; but he had another engagement, and he did not want to miss seeing Redwing. He did not intend to go more than a few miles on the way.

"I say, Smithy!"

Billy Bunter met him in the passage with a mysterious look.

"Hallo, fatty!" said the Bounder, good-humouredly. "Hasn't your postal-order come? Awfully sorry!"

"As a matter of fact, it hasn't," said Bunter, blinking at him; "and if you happen to have five bob about you you don't want, Smithy—"

"I don't happen."

The Bounder went on to the staircase, but Bunter rolled after him.

"I haven't told you yet!" he exclaimed. "Well, if you don't want your bike this afternoon—"

"My bike!" exclaimed the Bounder. "What's the matter with my bike?"

"A fellow may have wheeled it away and hidden it, and he may not," said Billy Bunter mysteriously. "I may have seen him, and I may not. I don't say anything. I may know where it is. I may not."

Vernon-Smith stared at him angrily.

"Has somebody been playing tricks with my jigger?" he demanded.

"He may have, or he may not—Yaroooooh!" yelled Bunter, as Vernon-Smith caught hold of his plump ear. "Leggo! Yah!"

"Where's my bike, you fat idiot?"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

The Bounder released him impatiently. It was evident that he would get nothing but howls from Bunter so long as he held his ear.



Over the cliff-edge! (See Chapter 9.)

Taking no further notice of the fat junior, he hurried round to the bike-shed, to ascertain whether his jigger was safe in its place.

But the stand was empty. Vernon-Smith's handsome and expensive jigger had vanished.

The Bounder looked angry. He did not like his bike being borrowed without his permission, and he wanted it himself now, too. A fat grunt sounded in the doorway, and he looked round at Bunter, who had followed him.

"Who's borrowed my bike?" he snapped.

"He, he, he!" chortled Bunter. "I fancy it isn't borrowed, Smithy. It's to prevent you going to meet that fellow Redwing."

Vernon-Smith snapped his teeth.

"You mean that it's hidden somewhere?" he growled. "That wouldn't stop me! I could borrow one of these machines, and I should, if I couldn't find my own! But you know where it is, you fat bounder, and you're going to tell me! Out with it!"

"Haven't I been looking for you, specially to tell you?" said Bunter reproachfully. "I'd do more than that for a fellow I really like, Smithy—especially a chap who's going to lend me a bob till my postal-order comes!"

The Bounder stared at him angrily for a moment, and then, laughing, tossed a shilling at the fat junior.

Bunter caught it in a podgy paw.

"Now, where's the bike?" demanded Vernon-Smith.

"About this bob, Smithy," said Bunter calmly. "Would you rather have it back out of my postal-order this evening—"

"Bother your postal-order!"

"Or shall I put it down to the account?"

"Eh? What account?"

"You know, I owe you one or two other small sums, Smithy," said Bunter, with dignity. "I will add this, if you like, and settle the lot together. In that case, I shall have to ask you to wait till next week."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at, Smithy! It's much better to have

these little matters on a business footing."

"Oh, put it down to the account!" grinned the Bounder. "Put it down to the account, by all means!"

"That means you'll have to wait till next week—"

"Or next year—or next century," said the Bounder. "Never mind. I'm a good waiter. I can stand it."

"In that case, perhaps you'd like to hand me another bob," said Bunter, in a very business-like way. "That would make a round sum, so—"

"I'll hand you a thick ear if you don't tell me where my bike is!" snapped the Bounder. "Back up! Enough jaw!"

"You'll find it in the old tower," grinned Bunter. "Stuck behind some of the masonry in the floor-room."

"Skinner, I suppose!" snapped the Bounder.

"Oh, really, you know, you can't expect me to mention names!" said Bunter, shaking his head. "Still, if you like to make it another bob—"

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

Vernon-Smith strode away from the bicycle-shed, and hurried through the Cloisters to the ruined tower. He was feeling angry, but more contemptuous and amused than angry. This petty trick was hardly worth getting angry about, and it showed that Skinner was at his wits' end for a knavish trick when he descended to a foolish prank like a fag of the Second Form. The Bounder hurried into the narrow, gloomy doorway of the old ruin, and looked round in the half-light for his bicycle.

He caught sight of a glimmer of steel from behind a pile of fallen masonry across the wide, gloomy apartment.

He ran across towards it.

As he did so there was a loud crash, as the heavy oaken door was dragged shut from outside.

Bang!

Vernon-Smith spun round.

A heavy, jarring sound was heard—the grinding of a huge iron key in a rusty lock. Vernon-Smith ran to the door, and dragged at it fiercely. He realised that it was not merely a fag's trick with him.

bicycle, after all. It was a cunning scheme to trap him!

The door was fast, and there was no answer to his fierce blows upon it.

He heard a low chuckle, and retreating footsteps. Then there was silence; and the Bounder stood panting with wrath.

It looked as if he would not meet Tom Redwing on the way that afternoon, after all!

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

A Highcliffe Rag!

PONSONBY & CO. rode away from Highcliffe that afternoon in a merry crowd. There were six of the merry nuts of Highcliffe in the party. Evidently Pon did not intend to leave anything to chance.

Cecil Ponsonby had tackled the sailor-man's son before, and had found him too hard a nut to crack. Tom Redwing had stood up to three of the elegant nuts of Highcliffe, and they had been fain to leave him victor in the field. Ponsonby was not taking chances this time.

Gadsby and Monson, Vavasour and Blades and Cheyne were with him. The nuts had been quite pleased at the idea of ragging the sailor-lad as a pleasant amusement that afternoon. Only Gadsby knew of Pon's secret intention—that the ragging was to be so severe that Tom Redwing would be crooked for weeks to come. Gaddy was a little uneasy about it, but he was too accustomed to following Pon's lead to raise any objection. And Ponsonby, elegant and dandified as he was, was at heart as thorough a young ruffian as could be found in any slum in the kingdom. It was a long time since Redwing had offended his lofty dignity; but Pon's revenge only slept. He had not forgotten.

"I say, we're not goin' all the way to Hawkscliff, you know," said Vavasour, as they rode away in a bunch. "Too jolly far, you know, absolutely!"

"Too much beastly fag!" agreed Monson.

"No need," answered Ponsonby. "We're goin' to catch the cad on the way. There's a good place near Cliff Edge—a place where he can't cut and run. That's where we're goin' to nail the cad."

"That's a good way from here," grumbled Cheyne.

"Oh, don't be a slacker!"

The six bicycles whirled on, the riders taking various short cuts to cut off the distance. But they were breathing hard when Ponsonby gave the word to halt at last, and they jumped down.

The machines were put in a bunch among the big rocks by the roadside. At this point the road ran along the cliffs in a wide loop. A footpath left the road, and joined it again some distance farther on, cutting off a good half-mile. Walking from Hawkscliff, anyone was sure to take the footpath, and for Ponsonby's purpose this had the additional advantage of being very solitary.

Leaving their machines, the Highcliffians proceeded on foot, ascending the path. It ran among great cliffs, and was rugged and toilsome—to the nuts of Highcliffe, at least—though Tom Redwing would have made little of it.

"Here we are!" said Ponsonby at last.

"I say, that's a dangerous place!" muttered Vavasour uneasily.

Where the nuts halted the footpath ran along a cliff, with an abrupt rise on one side and a steep fall on the other. The path, in fact, for a hundred yards or more, was little more than a rocky ledge jutting from the cliff.

Below it, tangled rocks lay in confusion in a long jumble down to the beach and the sea.

A fall from the path was a serious matter.

Ponsonby laughed lightly. "Just the place we want," he said. "He can't dodge us here!"

"I don't like the idea of fighting on a path like that!" objected Vavasour. "Do you think he'll be able to fight six of us, ass?"

"He's a rough beast!"

"Oh, rot! Gaddy and Monson, you go along, and get among the rocks at the other end, an' don't show yourselves till he's passed you."

"Right-ho!"

"When I call out, get into the path, an' see that he doesn't scud back."

"You bet!"

Gadsby and Monson carried out their leader's instructions. The other four sat down among the boulders and waited.

They were early on the scene. Ponsonby had taken care of that. They had some time to wait before footsteps sounded on the cliff-path.

They amused themselves in the interval by smoking cigarettes, and Vavasour was just proposing a game of nap to kill time when footsteps rang on the rocky path.

"Here he comes!" murmured Pon, with a grin.

He peered round a big rock along the path.

From the opposite end, where the path wound round the great cliff, Tom Redwing came into sight. The Hawkscliff lad was swinging along, with a cheerful face and a tireless stride.

Not for a moment did he suspect that foes were on his path. He was thinking of Greyfriars, and wondering whether Vernon-Smith would meet him on the way before he arrived at the school.

"Come on!" said Pon.

The four juniors showed themselves, blocking up the path from side to side.

Tom Redwing glanced at them, and their look was so hostile that he was left in no doubt as to their intentions. He halted.

"Fancy meetin' you, dear boy!" grinned Ponsonby.

"Did you come here to meet me?" said Tom disdainfully.

"You've guessed it!"

"Well, what do you want?"

"Gaddy!" shouted Pon.

There was a clattering in the boulders back along the path, and Tom Redwing glanced over his shoulder in surprise. Gadsby and Monson emerged into view, barring escape the way he had come.

Redwing's lip curled contemptuously.

He could see now that he had walked into an ambush, but his sunburnt face showed no sign of fear.

There was a chortle from the nuts.

"Looks like a fair catch—what?" grinned Cheyne.

Tom Redwing came on. Ponsonby & Co. lined up in his path, and he halted again, with a gleam in his eyes.

"Will you let me pass?" he demanded.

"No fear!"

"Not just yet, my child," drawled Ponsonby. "We haven't done with you yet. Do you remember layin' hands on me, Redwing?"

"I remember thrashing you, because you were ragging a short-sighted fellow who couldn't defend himself!" answered Tom scornfully.

"Yaas, you remember, dear boy? Well, you're goin' to have that back again, with interest now!" said Ponsonby grimly. "You're goin' to have such a lickin', old top, that in a few minutes you'll be howlin' for mercy—which you won't get!"

Redwing looked steadily at the nuts.

"I am going on my way," he said. "If

you try to stop me, somebody will get hurt. I warn you that this is a dangerous place for fighting in."

"Come on!" said Ponsonby invitingly. "We're waitin' for you—yearnin' for you, in fact, my dear man!"

Redwing strode on steadily, right at the four nuts. His glance was steady, and his step was firm. Behind him, Gadsby and Monson were running along the path, and he could not delay without being taken in the rear as well as in front. His hands were clenched as he strode at the Highcliffians.

Ponsonby faced him coolly, but his companions looked uneasy. Vavasour sidled back behind the others.

Pon did not believe that Redwing would venture upon a struggle in such a place. For the ledge at that point was not more than seven feet wide, and on Pon's left the drop was almost sheer to the rocks far below.

But the sailorman's son had no intention of submitting to a brutal ragging. If the Highcliffians barred his way he intended to fight for it, and he came on.

"Stand aside!" he rapped out.

Ponsonby laughed.

But he yelled the next moment, as Redwing strode him down, hitting out as he came on.

The Highcliffe junior staggered back, but only for a moment.

"Back up!" he shouted.

He attacked Redwing savagely.

Alone, he would have had little chance against the Hawkscliff lad; but Blades and Cheyne backed him up—the courageous Vavasour backing away in alarm.

Three pairs of hands seized upon Tom Redwing.

"Now chuck it, you cad!" shouted Ponsonby.

Redwing did not chuck it.

He struggled fiercely in the grasp of the Highcliffians, hitting out with all his strength.

Blades rolled on the rocky path, and squirmed away. But Gadsby and Monson came running up behind, and they grasped Redwing together.

"Down him!" panted Ponsonby.

Four pairs of hands were on the Hawkscliff lad now, but they were not able to down him.

With Ponsonby & Co. clinging to him like cats, Redwing staggered to and fro, dragging them with him, and still fighting.

"Look out!" shrieked Vavasour, white with alarm. "Pon—Gaddy—look out! You'll be over the edge, you fools!"

"Hold on!" shouted Blades, sitting up dazedly. "Pon—"

"Chuck it, Redwing, you fool!" raved Pon. "Do you want us all to go over?"

A crashing blow on the mouth was the only answer he received.

He fastened on Redwing again.

But the struggle, so perilously close to the verge, was too much for his comrades. They released Redwing, and backed away to the cliff, panting.

Ponsonby was left to tackle Redwing alone.

He struck savagely at the sailor-lad's flushed face as he grasped him. Redwing, panting and almost exhausted by the unequal struggle, reeled on the very edge of the gulf.

Vavasour gave an hysterical shriek.

"Over!"

But Redwing recovered, and lurched back into safety. He came on his way, his eyes blazing, and Pon struck again, and grasped him.

"Back up, you funks!" he shouted.

"We've got him now!"

"Let him alone!" panted Gadsby.

"You fool, stop it!"

The two were struggling.
 "Stop it, Pon!" shrieked Vavasour.
 "Oh, my hat! There they go!" gasped Drury. "Pon! Pon!"
 The two were reeling on the very verge, when Ponsonby's foot slipped on the uneven rock, and he lurched to one side—the side of danger.

His grasp was still upon Tom Redwing, and Tom was dragged with him. The pallor of a terrible fear swept over Ponsonby's face as he realised his danger. He clung to Redwing like a cat.

On the dizzy verge Redwing made a herculean effort to keep his balance. But Ponsonby was over the edge, and his weight dragged. A blow, even then, would have freed Redwing of his enemy; but it would have sent Ponsonby alone over the cliff, and Redwing did not strike it. He struggled to keep his footing, the nuts watching in horror, but not daring to approach the edge and touch them, lest they should be dragged over, too.

Redwing's boots scraped on the rock, and he went. Still grasping one another, Cecil Ponsonby and Tom Redwing rolled over the edge, and disappeared from the view of the horror-stricken juniors crouching on the path!

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Cash Down!

"SMITHY!"

Tap, tap!
 The Bouncer of Greyfriars, locked in the old tower, was raging like a captured animal. It was Skinner, he knew, who had locked him in; and Skinner had gone, leaving him a prisoner.

The barred loophole windows were too narrow for him to force a way out. He was too far from the school buildings for a shout to be heard. He was a prisoner in the old tower until Skinner chose to release him; and that would be too late for him to ride out and meet Tom Redwing, he knew.

Not that it mattered very much whether he met Tom or not, so far as the Bouncer knew. But he was enraged at being trapped and imprisoned in the musty old tower on that sunny afternoon.

For some time Vernon-Smith had been raging, and vowing vengeance upon Skinner, when the tapping came at the locked door, and he heard Bunter's voice without.

He hurried to the door at once.

"Is that you, Bunter?"

"He, he, he!" was the reply.

"Is the key outside?"

"Yes. He, he, he!"

"Open the door, then!"

"He, he, he!"

If Vernon-Smith had been able to lay hands upon William George Bunter just then Bunter's "He, he, he!" would have changed into quite another kind of utterance. But the old oak door was between, and Bunter was free to chortle as much as he liked—and he did.

The Bouncer repressed his wrath with a great effort. It was necessary to speak Bunter fair if he was to get out.

"Bunter, old chap—"

"Yes, Smithy?"

"Open the door, like a good fellow!"

"I'm rather afraid of Skinner," replied Bunter, his squeaky voice sounding faintly through the thick door. "Skinner would go for me, you know."

"I'll see that he doesn't, Bunter."

"He, he, he!"

"You fat rotter!" exclaimed the Bouncer. "You had a hand in this! You got me here on purpose, you rotter!"

"He, he, he!"

Vernon-Smith clenched his hands in helpless wrath.

"I say, Smithy, you're booked, you know. I'm really sorry, but I couldn't refuse to oblige a pal, could I?" chuckled Bunter. "But I'll tell you what, Smithy. I'm expecting a postal-order this evening—"

"What?" yelled the Bouncer. He was not in a mood to listen then to Bunter's oft-told tale of a postal-order.

"A postal-order for a pound, Smithy."

"Will you let me out, you—you fat slug?"

"I wonder whether you'd cash my postal-order for me, Smithy?"

"Yes, yes! Open the door!"

"Only, you see, it's barely possible that it may not arrive this evening," continued the Owl of the Remove calmly. "Would you mind cashing it in advance, Smithy? Of course, I shall hand it to you immediately it comes—Monday morning, most likely."

"Do you think I'm going to give you a pound for turning a key, you dishonest young scoundrel?" roared the Bouncer.

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"Let me out, and I'll stand you a bob!"

"If you mean to insult me, Smithy, I may as well retire from the scene at once!" said Bunter, with dignity. "I couldn't receive a gift of money from you, or from anybody else, under any circumstances whatever. That's got to be thoroughly understood at the start."

"Oh, you—you—"

"Some fellows are not so particular on such points, I know. I happen to be. A loan is a different matter, of course. If you thought you could cash that postal-order for me—"

"You won't get a quid out of me, you fat frog! Go and eat coke!"

"Don't you want to go and meet Redwing?"

"Mind your own business!"

"Oh, very well!" said Bunter loftily. "After all, the fellow's a rank outsider, and a ragging will do him good!"

"What's that?" exclaimed Vernon-Smith, with a start.

Bunter chuckled a fat chuckle.

"The Highcliffe fellows have gone to meet Redwing on the way here," he said, through the keyhole. "Pon and his friends, you know. He, he, he!"

Vernon-Smith gritted his teeth. He had no doubt it was true. He wondered he had not guessed it. It was not merely for a fag's trick that Skinner had shut him up in the tower.

"How do you know, Bunter?" he asked quietly.

"I happened to hear them talking about it—Skinner and Snoop!" chuckled Bunter. "I chanced to stop to tie my shoelace, and they—"

"Let me out, Bunter, and I'll give you the quid!"

"Sorry, Smithy, but it can't be done. I'm rather a particular chap in money matters, and I couldn't possibly accept a money present from you. I'm sorry; but there it is."

Vernon-Smith breathed hard through his nose.

"I'll cash your postal-order for you, Bunter," he said, between his teeth.

"Now, that's business," assented Bunter. "You'll lend me a quid, to be repaid as soon as my postal-order comes?"

"Yes, yes!"

"And you'll make it pax? No punching a fellow as soon as you get out!" said Bunter suspiciously. The Owl was evidently on his guard.

"No, no!"

"Honest Injun?" demanded Bunter.

"Honest Injun!"

"Right-ho, Smithy! I'm jolly glad to

be able to do a pal like you a good turn!" said Bunter affably.

The key grated in the lock. Vernon-Smith dragged the door open, and the sunlight flooded the dusky room. In the arched doorway stood Bunter, grinning. Vernon-Smith was a fellow of his word, but it required all his self-restraint to keep from planting his knuckles full in the fat, grinning face.

Without a word he tossed a currency note to Bunter—it was a trifle to the millionaire's son. Then he rushed his bicycle out into the open air, and ran it away towards the gates.

Billy Bunter grinned. He felt that he had done a good afternoon's work, and his only uneasiness was that he would have to deal with Skinner afterwards. But it was worth that risk, he considered, to get his celebrated postal-order cashed at last. Bunter rolled away to the school shop, in search of estates that were yet uncontrolled. Vernon-Smith rode away at top speed through the narrow lanes to Hawkscliff. He only hoped that he would arrive on the scene in time to lend Tom Redwing a hand when he was tackled by the cads of Highcliffe.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Saving His Enemy!

VERNON-SMITH jumped off his machine where the footpath over the cliffs left the lane. He had caught sight of Highcliffe caps on the cliff-path, and knew that he was close on the ambush. He left his bicycle beside the road, and ran lightly up the rugged path to the ledge.

Five Highcliffe juniors were there, staring with white faces towards the edge of the path, and trembling.

Never had the Bouncer looked upon such a sickly, terrified crowd.

They looked round as they heard his heavy footsteps on the rocky path. He glanced from face to face as he came up, panting.

"Smithy!" muttered Vavasour, licking his colourless lips.

The Bouncer's eyes gleamed.

"Waiting here for Redwing—what?" he snapped.

The Highcliffians looked at him, and looked at one another, but none of them replied.

"Isn't Pon with you?" demanded the Bouncer.

"Nun-no!" stammered Gadsby. "Pon is—isn't with us!"

"Have you met Redwing yet?"

No answer.

"You set of staring owls!" exclaimed the Bouncer impatiently. "What are you looking like that for? I've heard about your little game, and I've come to take a hand—do you savvy? You'll have two of us to tackle when Redwing comes along—see?"

Gadsby shivered.

"You can begin on me, if you like," said the Bouncer sarcastically. "By gad! I think I could handle such a white-faced crew quite on my own! Begin if you like!"

Vavasour gave a groan.

"I—I wish we'd never come!" he whimpered. "It was Pon's own fault! An—an' what's goin' to happen now?"

The Bouncer eyed them more sharply. He discerned that something had happened, and his glance wandered to the edge of the cliff-path.

"Has anythin' happened to Pon?" he exclaimed.

Cheyne, without speaking, pointed to the precipice.

"Great Scott!" shouted the Bouncer. "Do you mean to say he's fallen over?"

"Yes!" groaned Monson.

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"And you're hanging about here like a set of boiled owls!" exclaimed the Bounder scornfully. "Can't you see what's become of him?"

"I—I can't go near the edge," faltered Gadsby. "I—I should be giddy!"

"Funk!" snapped the Bounder. "What on earth made Pon fall over? He isn't usually such a clumsy fool."

"He was fightin' Redwing," groaned Monson.

Vernon-Smith jumped. "Redwing! Redwing isn't—"

"Yes!" muttered Monson.

For an instant the Bounder stood still, as if turned to stone. He understood at last. He had arrived too late; and it was not a ragging, but a tragedy, that had intervened.

"Redwing!" he almost whispered. "Over the edge! Tom Redwing! And you—you cowards—you hounds—"

He ran past the shivering nuts, to the edge of the path, and threw himself there on his knees, to look down—a proceeding that made Gadsby & Co. shudder.

But the Bounder's nerve was of iron.

Firm on his knees on the edge of the precipice he looked down, with steady eyes and steady head.

For a hundred yards the cliff sloped down, almost sheer, with bulging rocks here and there, and a few hardy plants breaking the surface.

The Bounder's face was white, with fear for his chum, not for himself! His eyes swept the cliff-face below.

He almost sobbed as he caught sight of a figure twenty yards beneath him.

The Highcliffians on the path above had not seen what became of the two who had fallen when they disappeared over the verge. But the Bounder could see.

Twenty yards down a rock jutted out from the abrupt slope, and Tom Redwing's arm had caught it as he rolled. He was holding on, and had got one leg over the jut. And he was not alone. Ponsonby of Highcliffe, white and insensible, was held upon the jutting rock, poised between death and life, but unconscious of his peril. He had fainted.

But Tom Redwing had not fainted. His head was cool and clear, though he knew that the merest slip meant a rush down to sudden death on the cruel rocks. And there was no chance of rescue, as it seemed.

It needed all his strength to maintain his position, and to keep Ponsonby from slipping away to death. It was his enemy who had brought him into that position of terrible peril, but Tom had not thought of letting him go.

His eyes were turned upwards, and they met the Bounder's. A bright look came over his face.

"Smithy!" he whispered.

He tried to shout, but he could not. His faint tones hardly reached the Bounder's ears above.

Vernon-Smith's heart throbbed with joy as he saw the sailorman's son and caught the faint whisper. Tom had evidently been in hope of seeing some of the Highcliffians look down, but they had not dared to approach the verge.

"Redwing," panted the Bounder, "hold on—hold on!"

Redwing nodded up at him.

The Bounder gritted his teeth.

"Redwing, you could climb up, get within reach, and I can give you a hand!" he called. "You might do it!"

Redwing shook his head.

"Let that fellow go!" hissed the Bounder. "You can't save him! It's only a dog's chance of saving your own skin! He got you into this! Let him slide!"

Another shake of the head.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 531.

"Are you mad, Redwing?" cried the Bounder shrilly. "You can't save him—you know you can't! Let him go, and save yourself!"

"Smithy" — Vernon-Smith had to strain his ears to catch the faint tones—"old man, try to get a rope from somewhere—only try! There's a chance for us if you could get a rope!"

"You can't hold on while I get a rope, lumbered up with that funky fool! Let him go!"

"I can't!"

"You madman!" yelled the Bounder. "Are you going to die with him? Let him go—let him go!"

Tom Redwing did not answer. But his grasp remained firm on the wretched Ponsonby, holding the insensible junior upon the jutting spur of rock. A moment's relaxation of his hold meant death to the wretched Pon. But if he held on, what did it mean to both of them? For the sailor-lad, hardy as he was, could feel his strength waning fast.

Vernon Smith set his teeth savagely. But he knew that Tom Redwing was determined, and he urged him no further.

"Hold on, Redwing—hold on, while I try to get a rope!" he panted.

He drew back from the precipice, and vanished from Tom Redwing's sight. With a haggard face he turned back to the shrinking group of Highcliffe juniors on the path crouching against the cliff, their nerve utterly gone.

"Are they—are they alive?" stammered Gadsby.

"Where can I get a rope?" hissed Vernon-Smith, with burning eyes. "Is there a place near—"

"I—I don't know—I don't know this part—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

It was a clear call through the sunny air, and never had the Bounder of Greyfriars been so glad to hear the voice of Bob Cherry.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

From the Shadow of Death!

"THAT chap's off his rocker!"

Johnny Bull made the remark.

Harry Wharton & Co. and the Cliff House girls were enjoying their ramble along the cliffs that bright afternoon. They had come out on a high point, and were standing there to look at the sea and the great chalk cliffs, when Johnny Bull spoke. He was pointing to a great cliff in the distance, upon the glimmering face of which a dark figure appeared.

"My hat!" exclaimed Miss Clara. "I should say he was off his rocker! Trying to climb the cliff, I suppose."

"And he's got stuck!" remarked Nugent.

Bob Cherry, whose eyes were almost like an eagle's for vision, started as he stared at the distant figure on the cliff-face.

"Lend me your glass, Marjorie!" he said quickly.

Marjorie passed the little field-glasses to him. Bob clapped them to his eyes and turned them upon the cliff. His face paled.

"Great Scott!" he exclaimed.

He thrust the glasses into Wharton's hand, and without a word dashed away, scrambling wildly over the rocks.

"Bob!" exclaimed Marjorie, in amazement.

"What the dickens—"

Wharton put the glasses to his eyes, and then he understood. For the dark figure on the cliff-face was not that of a solitary climber. It was that of Tom Redwing of Hawkscliff, and he was clinging upon a jutting spur, and holding

there a motionless form—holding it from death.

"Redwing!" panted Wharton. "Who's with him? They've fallen over the cliff. Good heavens! This way, you fellows—"

"Hurry—hurry!" exclaimed Marjorie, as she understood.

The chums of the Remove did not need telling to hurry. They were dashing away at breakneck speed. The girls followed them more slowly, with anxious faces. Two human lives were in peril—deadly peril. Bob Cherry was well ahead of his chums, but, excited as he was, he was clear-headed. He swerved from his way, and Johnny Bull shouted to him:

"This way, Bob!"

Bob did not answer. He was heading for a fisherman's cabin that nestled among the rocks. He knew that Redwing and his burden could never be reached by human hands, and he knew what was wanted. He dashed into the cabin, where the old fisherman was smoking his pipe.

"A rope!" he panted. "Quick!"

He caught up a coil without waiting for the astonished man to answer, and dashed out again. He rejoined his chums, panting.

"Good man!" muttered Wharton.

They raced on, clambering up the rugged slopes to the path above. It was not an easy climb, though they had chosen the point where it was easiest. But they hardly noticed that it was difficult. Scrambling, falling, picking themselves up again, bruised and breathless, they clambered on till they came out on the upper path.

Then Bob's voice hailed the Bounder, still at a distance.

Vernon-Smith swung round.

"Bob! Harry—"

"We saw him from down yonder!" panted Bob.

"You've got a rope? Oh, thank Heaven for that!" muttered Vernon-Smith. "Give it to me!"

He almost snatched the rope from Bob's hand, and sprang to the edge of the precipice.

Kneeling there, he looked down.

Redwing's face was turned up to him, white and haggard. His strength was giving out, but his courage was not failing.

"Hold on, Redwing! I've got a rope! I'm coming down!" shouted the Bounder.

"Comin' down!" muttered Vavasour feebly. "Oh, he's mad!"

Vernon-Smith was not mad, but he was utterly reckless so far as danger to himself went. With quick, deft hands he knotted the end of the rope about his chest under his armpits.

"Hold on to it, you fellows!" he said. "If I slip you've got to stand the strain. Hold on, and pay it out as I go down."

"Trust us!" said Harry Wharton. "Hang on to the end, you Highcliffe fellows!"

Gadsby & Co. obeyed. The rope was long enough to allow them to hold it without going into danger. Many hands were grasping the rope, and the Bounder, with perfect coolness, swung himself over the dizzy verge.

Redwing watched him from below, hardly breathing.

Loose stones rattled down past him as the Bounder clambered down. Once—twice Vernon-Smith lost his hold, and swung on the rope; but he clambered again, and reached the jutting rock where Redwing clung with his burden.

Wharton, lying on his face at the verge above, watched him.

"Stop, you fellows!" he called out.

The juniors ceased to pay out the rope.

"Ponsonby first, Smithy!" muttered

Tom Redwing. "He can't help himself."

The Bounder nodded without speaking.

He secured a hold on the rock, partly resting on the spur, and with steady hands untied the rope from himself and knotted it round Ponsonby.

"Pull!" he called out.

"Pull!" called Wharton.

The juniors above dragged on the rope.

Ponsonby was drawn up, Wharton helping him over the verge as he came within reach. Vernon-Smith looked at Tom Redwing as the two of them clung to the jutting spur, alone in space, with the seagulls wheeling near them.

"A precious pair of fools we are!" muttered the Bounder. "That worthless rotter first, and us here!"

Redwing did not speak.

They waited.

The rope came swinging down again at last. It seemed an age, but it was only a few minutes.

"You now, Smithy—"

"Shut up! Steady, while I tie it on!"

Redwing smiled faintly, and did not resist. The Bounder knotted the rope under his arms.

"Pull!"

Redwing, helping his ascent by catching at the rough surfaces of the cliff, was drawn up by the Famous Five. He scrambled over the rock, and sank, gasping and exhausted, upon the path.

"Quick! The rope!" he panted.

Wharton's active fingers tore it loose. It swung down again for Vernon-Smith, and the Bounder, sitting coolly on the

rocky spur, bound it round him. He gave Wharton a cool nod as the captain of the Remove looked anxiously down.

"Pull away, old scout!"

Two minutes more and Herbert Vernon-Smith was on the path above. He untied the rope and threw it off, and breathed hard.

"I don't want to go through that again!" he muttered. "How do you feel, Redwing?"

"I'm glad I'm out of it," answered Tom quietly.

"Pon's comin' to!" muttered Gadsby.

The juniors gathered round Ponsonby. Pon's eyes were open now, and he was staring about him dazedly.

"Save me!" he muttered hoarsely.

"Help! Help!"

"You're all right now," said Bob Cherry.

"Oh, heavens!" muttered Ponsonby.

"I—I was falling! I—I—"

A shudder shook him from head to foot.

Gadsby helped him up.

"How—how did I get here?" stammered Ponsonby, staring from one to another dazedly. "I—I fell—"

"Redwing held you on the cliff till we got you up with the rope," said Harry Wharton curtly. "Redwing's saved your life, Ponsonby!"

"And was a dashed fool to do it!" growled the Bounder.

Ponsonby stared stupidly at them for some moments, and then turned away without a word, his friends helping him away. The girls had arrived on the path now, and they, as well as the juniors, stared after Ponsonby as he went.

"My hat!" exclaimed Miss Clara.

Evidently Tom Redwing was not to be troubled with demonstrations of gratitude from Cecil Ponsonby of Highcliffe.

Redwing smiled slightly.

"I'm much obliged to you fellows," he said. "I hardly thought I should get up the cliff again alive."

"You won't feel up to toot from Quelch this afternoon," said Harry Wharton, with a smile.

"This won't make any difference. I'm all right," answered Tom cheerfully. "I'll get off now. Coming, Smithy?"

He raised his cap to the girls, and walked away with the Bounder.

"Well," exclaimed Bob, "that merchant's a cool customer, and no mistake!"

Tom Redwing was quite himself when he entered Mr. Quelch's study that afternoon; and the Remove-master certainly had no suspicion of the grim peril he had been through as they sat down to devote their attention to Latin prose.

And while Redwing was busy with Latin prose in the Remove-master's study, Vernon-Smith was busy with Harold Skinner in the Remove passage. When Harry Wharton & Co. came home they found Skinner in a state of deep woe, nursing his nose and his eye and his chin, and sincerely repenting of the little scheme he had laid that afternoon.

(Don't miss "BUNTER TO THE RESCUE!"—next Monday's grand complete story of Harry Wharton & Co., by FRANK RICHARDS.)

The Editor's Chat.

For Next Monday:

"BUNTER TO THE RESCUE!"

By Frank Richards.

This is another story of Tom Redwing and the Greyfriars Memorial Scholarship, which he so ardently desires to win.

To put a fellow of Cecil Ponsonby's type under an obligation is by no means to make a friend of him. The meanness and the arrogance alike of Pon are up in arms at the notion of owing his life to the lad he has hated. He hates Redwing worse than ever, and attempts a trick to ruin him.

What that trick was, and what came of it, you will read next week; as also of the part played by Bunter in the affair. But don't expect to find W. G. B. in the role of hero!

LIST OF GREYFRIARS STORIES IN THE "MAGNET."

- 26.—"The Greyfriars Sleepwalker."
- 27.—"The Reformation of Greyfriars."
- 28.—"The Remove Master's Substitute."
- 29.—"The Greyfriars Conjurer."
- 30.—"Billy Bunter, Hypnotist."
- 31.—"Harry Wharton's Task."
- 32.—"The Greyfriars Ventriloquist."
- 33.—"Aliens Against Greyfriars."
- 34.—"The Rival Schools."
- 35.—"Harry Wharton's Scheme."
- 36.—"The New Boy at Greyfriars."
- 37.—"The Greyfriars Chinese."
- 38.—"The Cheerful Chinese."
- 39.—"Greyfriars v. St. Jim's."
- 40.—"Billy Bunter's Raid."
- 41.—"The Rival Entertainers."
- 42.—"Harry Wharton's Day Out."
- 43.—"The Greyfriars Victory."
- 44.—"The Amateur Cooks."
- 45.—"A Lad from Lancashire."
- 46.—"Expelled!"
- 47.—"Home for the Holidays."
- 48.—"The New Term at Greyfriars."
- 49.—"The New Sixth-Former."
- 50.—"Harry Wharton's Campaign."
- 51.—"Billy Bunter's Vengeance."
- 52.—"The Hero of Greyfriars."

- 53.—"The Greyfriars Sailors."
 - 54.—"Billy Bunter's Housewarming."
 - 55.—"The Chinese Captain."
 - 56.—"Harry Wharton's Recruits."
 - 57.—"The Ventriloquist's Pupils."
 - 58.—"Cut by the Form!"
 - 59.—"The School Dance."
 - 60.—"The Greyfriars Cricketers."
- (Another instalment next week.)

NOTICES.

Back Numbers, Etc., Wanted.

By J. C. Morcom, 87, Lone Road, Clydach, Glam.—"Figgins' Fig-Pudding," "The Toff," "Bob Cherry's Barring-Out," "Tom Merry Minor," and "The Cad of the Sixth."

By Jas. Norton, 1, Sussex Road, Worthing—"Figgins' Fig-Pudding," "Bob Cherry's Barring-Out," and yarns about Bunter.

By A. Simpson, 15, Broadfoot Street, York Road, Leeds—"Boy Without a Name"—6d. offered for a clean copy.

By Miss Kathleen Fox, the Shushions Manor, Church Eaton, Stafford—"Making of Harry Wharton" and other early Wharton stories.

By A. E. Johnson, 93, Belmont Street, Chalk Farm, N.W.—Christmas Numbers of MAGNET and "Gem," 1915; also Tom Merry Minor, "Talbot's Triumph," "Saving Talbot," "Surprising the School," "Fishy's Fag Agency," "Postal-Order Conspiracy," "In the Seats of the Mighty"; number containing "Race to Tuckshop."

By John Taggett, 30, Chatsworth Avenue, Moss Lane, Walton—"Gem," Nos. 17-52—double price offered.

By Robert Ramsay, Suite 7, Germain Block, Ellen Street, Winnipeg, Canada—"Loyal to the Last," "Figgy's Fig-Pudding," "Kildare for Ireland," "Tom Merry for England," "A Son of Scotland," "A Hero of Wales," "Saving Talbot," "Bob Cherry's Barring-Out," "Bunter the Boxer," and "Talbot's Triumph"—any reasonable price paid.

By George Miller, 3, Prospect Place, Grundy Street, Poplar, E. 13—any old MAGNETS and "Gems," especially "Bunter the Boxer," "Figgins' Folly," "Figgins' Fig-Pudding," "St. Jim's Airmen," and any Talbot yarn—state price.

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coloured covers, especially "Postal-Order Conspiracy," "Surprising the School," "Wun Lung's Wheeze," "Terror of Greyfriars," "Mysterious Mr. Mobbs," and stories about Bunter.

By P. Geere, Betsanger, Mulgrave Road, Sutton, Surrey—MAGNET, Nos. 254, 487, 504, 505, and 510; "Gem," No. 470.

By H. Wittich, 95, Aveling Park Road, Walthamstow, E. 17—"Gem," Nos. 1-400; the "Boys' Friend," 1915-1917—please write first, stating terms.

By Miss G. Mitchell, 4, Evelyn Terrace, Brighton—MAGNET, No. 254.

By Malcolm Morris, 143, Cornbrook Street, Brooks' Bar, Manchester—Christmas Numbers of "Gem," MAGNET, and the "Boys' Friend," 1908-1916—clean.

By G. R. Parr, 18, Nursery Street, Pendleton, Manchester—"Victory!"

By Edward Lawrance, Field House, Anlaby, Hull—MAGNETS containing Greyfriars Gallery articles of Wharton, Cherry, Inky, Bull, Vernon-Smith, and Peter Todd—must be clean—8d. offered.

By E. Holroyd, Market Place, Knaresboro'—MAGNET, Nos. 175, 253, 283—4d. each offered.

By J. T. Harold, 5H, Seabrook Street, Barrow-in-Furness—"Gem" and MAGNET, Nos. 1-403; "Penny Popular," 1-243; "Boys' Friend," 1-839; and school stories in "Boys' Friend" Library up to No. 383; also "School and Sport"—must be clean—good prices offered—write first.

By R. Swallow, 143, Herbert Road, Plumstead, S.E. 18—"Head of the Poll."

By W. J. Lindsay, 3, Radwon Place, Canton, Cardiff—MAGNET, No. 1.

By A. L. Foulger, 3, Keyworth Place, Edward Road, Balsall Heath, Birmingham—"Figgins' Fig-Pudding," "Figgins' Folly," "Tom Merry Minor," "Wun Lung's Secret," "Skimpole the Third," and "Glyn's Great Wheeze"—4d. each offered, with postage—please write first.

By F. Westover, 20, Woodbury Park Road, Tunbridge Wells—"Gem" stories dealing with Tom Merry's trip to America.

Your Editor

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

RATHER A MUDDLE!

By S. Q. I. FIELD.

THE Latin lesson was in full swing, and Mr. Quelch, in by no means an amiable mood, was endeavouring, by means of frequent application of the cane and generous distribution of impositions ad libitum, to instil the more or less spontaneous minds of the Remove with enthusiasm over the wondrous deeds of those mighty men of valour, the Roman soldiers, during the ancient Gallic Wars, as chronicled by the stylus of the immortal Cæsar.

But the mind of Billy Bunter dwelt not upon Ariovistus or the valiant Vercingetorix. His gaze was riveted upon a tiny, crawling object upon the floor beneath his desk, and Billy Bunter was lost in profound meditation until the inevitable happened, and the eagle eye of Mr. Quelch sought him out.

"Bunter!" Billy Bunter's ruminations came to a sudden full-stop, and he awoke with a start from the midst of a brown study.

"Oh!" he ejaculated. "Bunter!" "Y-yes, sir?" gasped Billy, blinking apprehensively at Mr. Quelch, whose hand had instinctively wandered towards the cane on his desk.

"What are you doing, Bunter?" "I—I—I—" "What have you beneath your desk, Bunter?"

"N-nothing, sir! I—I—" "Don't tell falsehoods, Bunter! You were looking at something beneath your desk!" "No, sir—I—I mean, y-yes, sir!" Poor Billy was confused, and did not know what to say. "It was—er—n-nothing, sir!"

"Do you presume to tell me that you were looking at nothing, Bunter?" asked Mr. Quelch tartly.

"Yes, sir—I—I mean, nunno, sir! It was a—a—a p-patterkiller, sir!"

"What!" yelled Mr. Quelch. "A p-pitterkaller, sir! That is to say, a—"

"Bunter!" thundered Mr. Quelch, in a voice of fear.

"Y-yes, sir?" "Have you taken leave of your senses, boy?"

"Ow! Nunno, sir! I—I—" "Then kindly tell me why it is you were not paying attention to me?"

"I were, sir—I—I mean, I was, sir, really!"

"Then why were your eyes continually roving underneath your desk, instead of looking at the blackboard?"

"There was a p-pallerk-kitter—" Mr. Quelch gave a jump.

"A what?" he demanded. "A c-c-callerpitter, sir—I—I mean, a—" "Bunter, are you mad?"

"Nunno, sir! It was a—a—a—" "Well?"

"A patterkiller—" "Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the Form.

"Silence, boys!" rasped Mr. Quelch, his thin lips drawn tightly together in anger.

"Bunter!" "Ow!"

"Answer me, Bunter!" boomed Mr. Quelch, in a terrifying voice.

"There was a p-p-pitterkaller—that is to say, a pallerkitter—er—a—" "Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Quelch, with a brow like thunder, strode up to the confused Billy, and shook him hard.

"Ow, ow, ow!"

"Now, Bunter, will you explain yourself? What were you looking at?"

"A c-c-callerpitter—" "Eh?"

"A poller—er—paller-catter—er—puller—er—piller—a cullerputter—no, a—a—" "Ha, ha, ha!"

Poor Billy was hopelessly at sea, and fear of Mr. Quelch did not tend to make him more at ease—quite the opposite. And Mr.

Quelch, who was under the impression that Bunter was making him the victim of an audacious practical joke, was righteously indignant. The laughter of the other fellows, too, made him more unreasonable than ever.

Meanwhile the innocent cause of all the trouble had crawled from beneath Bunter's desk, down the gangway, until it caught the eye of Bob Cherry. Bob gazed at it mechanically for a moment, and then his gaze wandered in the direction of Billy Bunter, who was endeavouring, though without much success, to explain to Mr. Quelch what he had seen underneath his desk.

"A patterkiller, sir—" Then light suddenly dawned upon Bob Cherry, and he stood up, and cried triumphantly:

"Oh, I know what it is, sir! A patterkiller—"

Mr. Quelch gave a jump, and swung round and fixed a steely gaze upon the luckless Bob.

"What did you say, Cherry?" he demanded, between his teeth.

"Oh!" was all Bob could say. He was floored.

"Cherry!" thundered Mr. Quelch, more convinced than ever now that an audacious practical joke was being perpetrated in the Form-room.

"Y-yes, sir?" "Answer me, Cherry! What did you say?"

"I—I—I said it was a—a—a—" "Well?"

"A pallerkitter, sir!" groaned Bob, heartily wishing he had never spoken.

Billy Bunter, glad that Mr. Quelch's terrifying attentions were transferred to Bob Cherry, sank as limply as his fat form would allow upon the edge of his desk, and mopped his forehead with a none-too-clean handkerchief. It was a welcome chance, at any rate, to collect his scattered wits.

"Cherry," said Mr. Quelch, glancing grimly from that unhappy youth to Billy Bunter—"Cherry, is this a joke, or—" "Nunno, sir!" groaned Bob Cherry. "What I really meant to say was a callerpitter!"

"That's it, sir!" chorled Bunter. "A pittercaller!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Silence!" rasped Mr. Quelch. "Bunter! Cherry! I—"

"Oh, sir!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Look there for yourself, sir! There it is, under Fish's desk!"

The whole Form jumped up now, and crowded round.

"Yep; I guess so, sir!" said Fisher T. Fish. "It's there right enough. A pittercaller—Oh, Jee-roosalem! I mean a pallerkitter, I guess!"

"Merciful Heaven!" gasped Mr. Quelch, as a fresh howl of laughter rose. He was fairly at his wits' end.

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Boys, boys!" he shrieked. "Take your seats this instant!"

He grasped Fisher T. Fish by his tawny hair.

"Ow! Leggo, you jay!" roared Fishy. "Can't you see for yourself—down there?"

Seeing Fishy was apparently in deadly earnest, Mr. Quelch released his hold on the unfortunate Fish's hirsute appendages, and peered beneath his desk.

"Dear me!" he murmured, giving the tiny, crawling object a glare like that of a basilisk. "Dear me! A patterkiller—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Remove.

Mr. Quelch had fallen into the trap himself!

Mr. Quelch sprang up, and fairly danced with rage.

"Silence!" he shrieked. "Be quiet, I say!"

And, seeing the evil look in his eye, the Remove subsided.

"Bunter," said Mr. Quelch, panting, "is

this—was this what you were looking at just now?"

"That's it, sir!" chirped Billy Bunter. "A pittercaller, sir—"

"Ha, ha, ha, ha!" bawled the fellows. They saw the point now, and entered into the joke with gusto.

"Ha, ha, ha! It's a pittercaller, sir!" yelled Skinner.

"I guess so, sir—a callerpitter!" roared Fisher T. Fish.

"Silence!" roared Mr. Quelch, tearing his own hair now. "Silence, boys!"

"Ho, ho, ho!"

"Bunter!" grated the bewildered and furious master.

"Yes, sir?"

"You will take five hundred lines, Bunter!"

"Eh?"

"Are you deaf, boy? Take five hundred lines, I say!"

"Oh, really, sir! I—I—" "Sit down, Bunter! Cherry!"

"Oh—yes, sir?" groaned Bob.

"You will also take five hundred lines, Cherry!"

"Oh, sir, I say, you know—" "Will you sit down, Cherry, or shall I double your imposition?"

Bob Cherry thought better of it, and subsided. Not so Billy Bunter. His blood boiled at the gross injustice of it all, and he stood up again.

"Really, sir—" he spluttered.

"Well, Bunter?" demanded Mr. Quelch, a gleam in his eye which anybody but a short-sighted owl like Bunter would have taken as a danger-signal.

"It ain't fair, sir! You said the same as I did, you know! I—I—"

Mr. Quelch, with cool deliberation, selected a cane from those standing beside his desk. Billy Bunter saw this, and his little, fat knees began to knock together.

"Bunter!" grated Mr. Quelch, feeling a stout ashpunt lovingly.

"Ow!"

"Come here, Bunter!"

"Eh?"

"Come here!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

Billy Bunter rolled disconsolately from his seat, and received four stinging cuts on each hand with all the force Mr. Quelch could muster—which was an appreciable amount. Quelch is a beast when roused; and his blood was up with a vengeance just then.

"Ow, ow, ow, ow, ow!" wailed Bunter.

"Now," said Mr. Quelch, "go back to your place, Bunter, and let us hear no more of this patterkiller—"

"Ha, ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Quelch, conscious of his own blunder, waxed exceedingly waxy.

"Shall I wring its neck, sir?" inquired Johnnie Bull sweetly.

"Tie a brick round its neck and chuck it in the fountain!" yelled Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Will you be quiet, I—I—I—" "Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Quelch grasped his cane, and the uproar died suddenly away.

"You will all take a hundred lines, I—I—" "Oh, sir—" began the Remove heatedly.

"Silence!" yelled the unhappy but susceptible master.

"Now, then," he said, when peace and order were restored, "we will continue with the lesson. Field, look this way, and leave that callerpitter—er—patterkiller—"

A faint but perceptible snigger went round the Form, and Mr. Quelch at last gave it up as a bad job.

"Mauleverer, take your book, and start Caput X!"

And the lesson proceeded on the uneven tenor of its way—so did the—er—callerpitter—I mean, the paterkiller—that is to say—well, you know what I mean—that tiny, crawling object that Billy Bunter saw.

MORE IMPRESSIONS OF LONDON!

By SHAKESPEARE II., from Mudanslush.

IMPRESSIONS more favourable this week. Funds still very low, but a rise expected shortly—

But I'm forgetting myself. That's what comes of reading money market columns.

I managed to get into that Monument at last, and I frankly admit that I'm not in a hurry to visit it again. There are precisely three hundred and forty-five steps to mount spirally, making you feel worse than a convict on a treadmill.

When you get out at last at the top, you are blown three times round the balcony before you can stop yourself. This you probably manage by grasping at the iron railings, after the manner of the celebrated drowning man clutching at his straw, and there you stand, hair on end, coat-tails fluttering gracefully above your head, trying to assume an expression of poetical meditation in the prospect for the benefit of anybody else who passes by in the course of their involuntary initial circuit.

The view is about the dreariest imaginable—in this sort of weather, at any rate. In one direction, through the smoke and fog, you can dimly discern something like a huge, foggy egg in an eggcup much too small for it. That is St. Paul's Cathedral, nowadays labelled "Air-Raid Shelter." And the fact that it is one of the places which the Huns would particularly like to bomb renders it particularly inviting as a shelter, of course!

In another direction is a dirty streak on a background almost as dirty. That is the Tower-Bridge.

Before you have time to take in more than this, a horde of rowdy individuals troop on to the balcony, and, the preliminary swirling round completed, proceed to double themselves over the railings in an endeavour to see the lower part of the building. They look rather like people crossing the Channel in a very choppy sea for the first time. Whilst you are considering the desirability of toppling one of them over, as an experiment, you hear a series of terrific crashes below. Thinking the concern must be built on a foundation of bombs, and that they are just beginning to go off, you fly frantically down the stairs, pressed upon by the horde.

The descent is not so simple as you might imagine. You find yourself very shortly steadying down to a jog-trot, which gradually becomes a slow and spasmodic jolt. But you brace yourself up for a final spurt, and get up a reasonable gallop. Then you turn it up altogether, and flop down upon a step—No. 121 from the bottom, I believe I chose. You are aroused, from your lethargy by the thundering hoofs and clamorous chortles of the horde behind, and begin once more your weary descent, with legs feeling like blanc-mange.

Believe me, brethren, the downward path is not quite so swift and easy as it is pictured! And it is annoying to find that the cause of your alarm was only the slamming of the door. And you are not allowed out until you have bought a picture postcard of the Monument and tuppenny handbook.

According to this handbook—but I don't guarantee other people's statements—the Monument was erected a couple of hundred yards from Pudding Lane, where the Great Fire started, in the reign of the Merry Monarch, Charles II., to commemorate that happy event. The blessed thing took six years to build, showing that people must have been very hard up for a job in those days! On the top is something like a misshapen milestone with an angry hedgehog sitting on it. This is intended to represent a vase of flames. And perhaps it looks a bit like that—when you know what it's meant for. But why not label it: "Exhibit A—Vase of flames"? And add a note to the effect that we don't keep vases in flames now because—oh, because— But this is not my job. There must be a reason, but I don't see why I need bother about it.

It isn't a bad thing in its way, this Monument, but it isn't worth spending money on. Ruving MONERS and "Gems" would be better. (Perquisite expected for this advert!)

So much for the jolly old Monument. Thereafter to the Tower. I've such a lot to say about it that I'm afraid the last three or four chapters of Mr. Richards' yarn will have to be cut out, not to mention such a

trifle as the Editor's Chat. Nobody is likely to object, I am sure.

How, bound for the Tower, I sauntered along the flowery vistas of Lower Thames Street; how I was so overcome by the beautiful architecture of the neighbouring wharves that I should have been unable to proceed farther, had not the vigorous strains of melody from General Booth and his warriors on the left spurred me on to greater efforts; how the pleasing and powerful aroma of Billingsgate spurred me on to even greater efforts than did the music of General B. & Co.; how at last that afore-mentioned Monument hove in sight; how I circumambulated a number of grimy streets and again came face to face with the Monument, but no Tower; how I passed Love Lane without in the least falling in love with it; how, that temptation fought and conquered, I spun round, to find myself facing the Monument again; how I cast scornful reflections upon the Idiots who were just visible on its high top; and how I did at last discover the Tower and did invade it. How all these things came to pass need not be described here. (This is the method of authors who have made up their minds to treat the public to a more than usually wearisome description.)

But though I won't describe the above description, I will describe my impressions of the Tower, and nothing shall stop me, though the Editor's blue pencil may rob you!

Tower Hill isn't much to look at, but it seems to have been found convenient for beheading purposes. I admit it has its advantages. Chaps of a romantic turn can easily imagine the executioners dribbling nappers down Tower Hill and sending them over the ticket-office into the river with rising shots. But I learn that a scaffold was afterwards rigged up within the Tower grounds. To tell the truth, it is my opinion that the jossers of those days couldn't clear the ticket-office with rising shots—nor even drop shots—to save their lives! Therefore business had to be closed at Tower Hill. Government-bribed historians hush these things up, however.

There was a rather shabby member of some political party spouting on the top of Tower Hill when I was there. He had pink cheeks, flashing eyes, and a bald head. He said that Lord Lansdowne and he agreed on such-and-such a point, and Lord Northcliffe's opinions and his tallied exactly; but, unfortunately, he begged it to be understood that he differed on four separate points with the Duke of Thiss and the Marquis of Thatt. He said quite a lot of things, and his audience of small boys were advising him to "shut up and git off their footer pitch" when I passed into the Tower.

My word! But that Tower, or collection of Towers, ain't half gruesome! The place is dotted with innumerable grim-visaged warders, who in their goodness-knows-what century costumes would be no end impressive if the costumes fitted them, instead of being about seven sizes too large.

The first building of real interest is the Council Chamber, where, in the year 1605, a chap whom most of us have heard of, named Fawkes (christened Guy), received some very disconcerting information apropos of the scaffold and an elected candidate for it. There is in the White Tower a dungeon where he was imprisoned, but of that hereafter. I know you are all hungering for as many dates as I can possibly supply. They are cheaper here than at the fruit-shop, anyway.

Passing the Traitors' Gate, we reach (let me be mild in language!) the Sanguinary Tower. This tower seems to have been almost as popular as Tower Hill for the old-time sport of doing people in. The sight of it makes you feel shuddery.

Wakefield Tower is now used for exhibiting the Crown Jewels. These are guarded by two ancient and fat custodians, who contrive to sit in such a way that they appear to have no legs! My natural curiosity at this phenomenon was quickly dispelled by the "josses" themselves—a really splendid array of crowns, sceptres, precious stones, and various golden ornaments. They can't fail to inspire you with romantic thrills, for I am sure the stingiest pawnbroker in all London couldn't offer less than a tenner on the lot.

The White Tower is the oldest part of the whole place, for it was built by William

the Conqueror. Up to the last century or two mysterious bones and skeletons were continually being discovered in odd corners of this tower.

A part of the Tower formerly used as a ball-room is now adorned with armour. The coats of mail don't impress you so much, but the spears and swords arouse in you grave doubts as to whether the good old times were quite so jolly good as they are made out to be. It might have been all very well for the chaps in the sardine-tins—till they were tumbled over and couldn't get up again. But those spears could not have been quite enjoyable to the rank and file, who were not soldered up in iron suits!

There are some ghastly dungeons. That one of poor old Guy's was made so that he could neither stand up nor lie down—and he put in over eighty days there! Sir Walter Raleigh's prison isn't quite so bad, but it's bad enough. There are lots of implements of torture on view—thumb-screws, spiked collars, and racks—and an execution-block.

But I find myself getting as tired of the Tower as I did of the Monument, though if it wasn't connected with so many dates I should call it a rather interesting sort of a place.

Speaking of dates, I have found that these are things which improve on acquaintance. There is nothing more terrifying than a whole string of dates you don't know. But learn a few, and you find yourself eager to learn more.

An American named Emerson, who did a lot of pen-brandishing in his time, says we should read history actively, not passively. When the Black Prince wipes up the ground with the Froggies—no offence to the present Froggies!—just kid yourself you're doing likewise. You will soon be keen on knowing the date on which you did it!

In my Mudanslushian schooldays the masters succeeded in instilling into me a morbid hate of history. I regarded our kings and queens as so many Court cards, though Court cards don't always fall flat, and the history lesson invariably did. For over a year after leaving school I had to let my mind remain a complete blank. It is now in course of recovery—at least, I hope so—and I am just beginning to see how interesting history really is.

There's character, now! (This has no reference to the Tower of London, which has no character left, after all the horrible deeds done there.) Impressions as to character are beginning to make marks on my blank mind.

In Mudanslush we were given to understand that Londoners always minded their own business.

H'm! If you walk along a busy thoroughfare, and pull up for a few seconds to gaze at the sky, everybody near you will do the like. By the time you have travelled fifty yards, and look back, you will see a whole crowd of people all gazing earnestly into the heavens. I know this is so, for I have tried it, and I sha'n't do it again. A chap from the country can take in those smart Londoners if he tries!

Still, if you are in a restaurant, for instance, and you chance to meet the eye of a Londoner—for there are still a few Londoners here—he will politely avert his gaze to the menu or a comic paper. In Mudanslush we stare all the harder!

Here everybody you meet is different from the other people you meet, and shows it at once. In Mudanslush the personality is there, no doubt, but you have to be intimate with a chap about a century before he shows the slightest difference from any other Mudanslushian.

Whether this is a fault or a merit I don't know. There is such a thing as too much personality! Every juvenile Mudanslushian is a facsimile of every other one. In the case of the juvenile Cockney, if you put him up—or he pulls you up—in the street, you find in two ticks that in many respects he is quite different from his contemporaries. He'll jaw like a politician! But after the interview, when you find your watch, your chain, and the money earned by your last "Impressions" have all mysteriously mizzled, you are in no mood to dwell upon the question of the juvenile Cockney's personality. It is your own personality you think about! (Joke here. For explanation see the law-books.)

THE GREYFRIARS GALLERY.

No. 67.—DICK TRUMPER.

WE have not heard much lately about the fine fellow who is the acknowledged leader of the Courtfield Council School boys; but he is certain to bob up again sooner or later. In some of the earlier Greyfriars stories Dick Trumper and his chums played very considerable parts. Of one of them—Solly Lazarus, son of the pawnbroker at Courtfield—there will be more to say in a future article. I don't think that Grahame or Dicky Brown have ever been prominent enough to justify their being given an article between them, even; it would not be easy to find much to say. The difficulty with most of these articles is quite of another kind. There is so much to be said that one cannot get it all in.

Dick Trumper is not a Courtfield boy. He is the son of an old fisherman at Pegg; and father and son alike are counted by Harry Wharton & Co. among their friends.

What is there about the sea that makes most of the men who follow it such fine fellows at heart? They may be rough on the surface; they have their faults, like the rest of us; but where will you find men more self-sacrificing, men of a higher courage, men of more enduring resolution? The declaration of war brought right into the firing-line every seaman. Since then men trained only to the arts of peace—deep-sea sailors and those of the coasting vessels, simple fishermen—have been all, in fact, if not in name, members of the combatant forces. Their deeds would fill many books; the half of them will never be told. One has no words that can praise them as they deserve.

There is that fresh, breezy tang of the sea about Dick Trumper and his old father. When the stories take us to the seashore—when there is "trouble on the sea," and someone plays a hero's part in saving life from a wreck, as has often happened—they and the rough, honest Pegg fishermen generally come into them, and always in a way that makes one think the better of them. Who is readier than such men as these to play the Good Samaritan to anyone in distress?

No doubt Dick himself will follow the sea as a career. But he will have chances that his old father never had. In the Royal Navy he might well attain the quarter-deck. There are fewer bars to that now than there used to be; and Dick Trumper is a fellow of education and manners, quite fit to train on into an officer. Even if he remains a fisherman he will still always be a gentleman. For that is not a matter of birth or of wealth.

Of course, the snobs of Greyfriars—and those of Highcliffe, who are more in number—look down upon Dick and his chums. Do you remember how Billy Bunter proposed to raise a subscription for the purpose of giving a Christmas dinner to poor people, and asked them to it? They did not accept, of course; and as Bunter intended to handle the subscriptions there was no likelihood that anyone who accepted would even smell that dinner. But that was not the reason why Trumper & Co. refused. They did not want charity; and they would not take it. They are not so well off as the Greyfriars and Highcliffe fellows, naturally; but they are really prouder than some of them.

What, after all, does the opinion of snobs matter? Dick Trumper is less sensitive to it than Tom Redwing—possibly because he rates it more accurately. Skinner & Co., Bunter, Ponsonby & Co., are infinitely below Redwing and Trumper in all that really matters.

There was very keen rivalry between the Greyfriars Remove and the Courtfield Council School at one time. In the days when Harry Wharton & Co. had a small schooner of their own the Courtfield crew scored over them more than once. On one occasion the Remove sailors captured Trumper, and made him walk the plank. There was no danger, for Dick can swim like an otter. And he had asked for it. He and his merry men were engaged in a thoroughly piratical attempt to seize the Marjorie when he was nabbed. Temple & Co. boarded the little craft, and ran up the black flag; but Harry Wharton and his chums overcame them in the end, and took them ashore, and told Trumper and the rest that they were at liberty to hang them as pirates—a generous invitation

which was declined. After that Trumper and the rest of the Pegg-Courtfield contingent taught the Greyfriars juniors quite a lot about sailing a schooner; and whatever rubs there have been between them since there has been real friendship under the rivalry.

But there was plenty of rivalry, too; and more especially in the matter of scouting. Trumper & Co. were quite sure they were above the Remove mark there. And at times they scored heavily. But not always! Do you remember when they captured the Famous Four—it was before Johnny Bull's coming—and arranged a skill test for the next half-holiday with them? Do you remember how Frank Nugent, who can make up quite nicely as a girl, tried to get through the enemies' lines in that guise, and did it, taking in Dick most completely? But then Frank ran into Miss Primrose, who took him for a new girl. Marjorie knew better; and Miss Clara found out, and tied seaweed to Frank's flaxen, curly wig, and eventually Miss Primrose learned the truth. It was not entirely a triumph for Frank, but it was a score over Dick Trumper, nevertheless.

Frank and the Courtfield leader figure together in another and a much later story—that in which Nugent falls under the imputation of being a coward for backing out



Richard Trumper

when there was a row on with Highcliffe. Heavy trouble came of that, for Frank is proud, and he would not explain. It turned out, after all, that he had faced heavier odds than any of his comrades in going to the help of Trumper, for whom the Highcliffe nuts had set a cruel trap.

Do you remember how the Cliff House girls challenged the Remove to a snow-fight, and how well the castle was held against a hot attack, and how it was discovered in the end that it had not been the girls at all who had been defending it, but Dick Trumper & Co.? Marjorie and her chums are not snobs, you see, though I fear there is at least as much snobbishness among girls as among boys.

Do you remember, too, the stern fight between Dick Trumper and George Bulstrode? It came about through the deportment class. Bunter had written a letter expressing the resentment that the decent fellows in the Remove did not really feel at the Courtfield boys' presumption in asking Miss Primrose to let them join her class. He did not sign it, of course; and it led to real hot blood between the Courtfielders and the Remove. Harry Wharton was to have met Trumper in fight, each as the chosen champion of the respective sides. But Harry hurt his wrist, and Bulstrode took his place.

We have had many a fight in the Greyfriars stories, but never one more sternly contested than that. Dick won in the end, after showing far more chivalry than Bulstrode. And meanwhile the culprit had been discovered, and Harry Wharton made an apology that cleared away the clouds.

There was the adventure of the haunted island, too; but Solly Lazarus was as much in that as Dick, and it can be left over.

A fine fellow, Dick Trumper; one of Nature's gentlemen—who are as true gentlemen as any!

FISHY GETS LEFT.

By Frank Nugent.

Fishy poked a bony head

In our study door.

"Hallo, you galoots!" he said.

"Hyer's a bargain for

Any jay who cares to snap it;

Now, which mug would like to cap it?

"Hyer's a top-notch fountain-pen,

Only half-a-crown—

Only two-and-six—worth ten—

Yep, sir, money down!

Got it from a near relation.

Now, let's have no hesitation!

"Like to see it, Wharton? Do!

Fills itself, you see.

It's a daisy, just a few—

Writes, sir, splendidly!

Just a perfect gift it is, sir.

Have it? That's the style! Good biz, sir!"

Fish put out a bony paw

Avariciously.

Wharton wasn't diddled, of

Did intend to be—

Simply wasn't taking any—

Seen the same things at a penny!

Fishy took the coin, and then

Saw that he'd been had.

"You galoots! Hand back that pen!

This half-dollar's bad!"

"Go on, Fishy! You just caught on?

So's the pen!" laughed Harry Wharton.

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