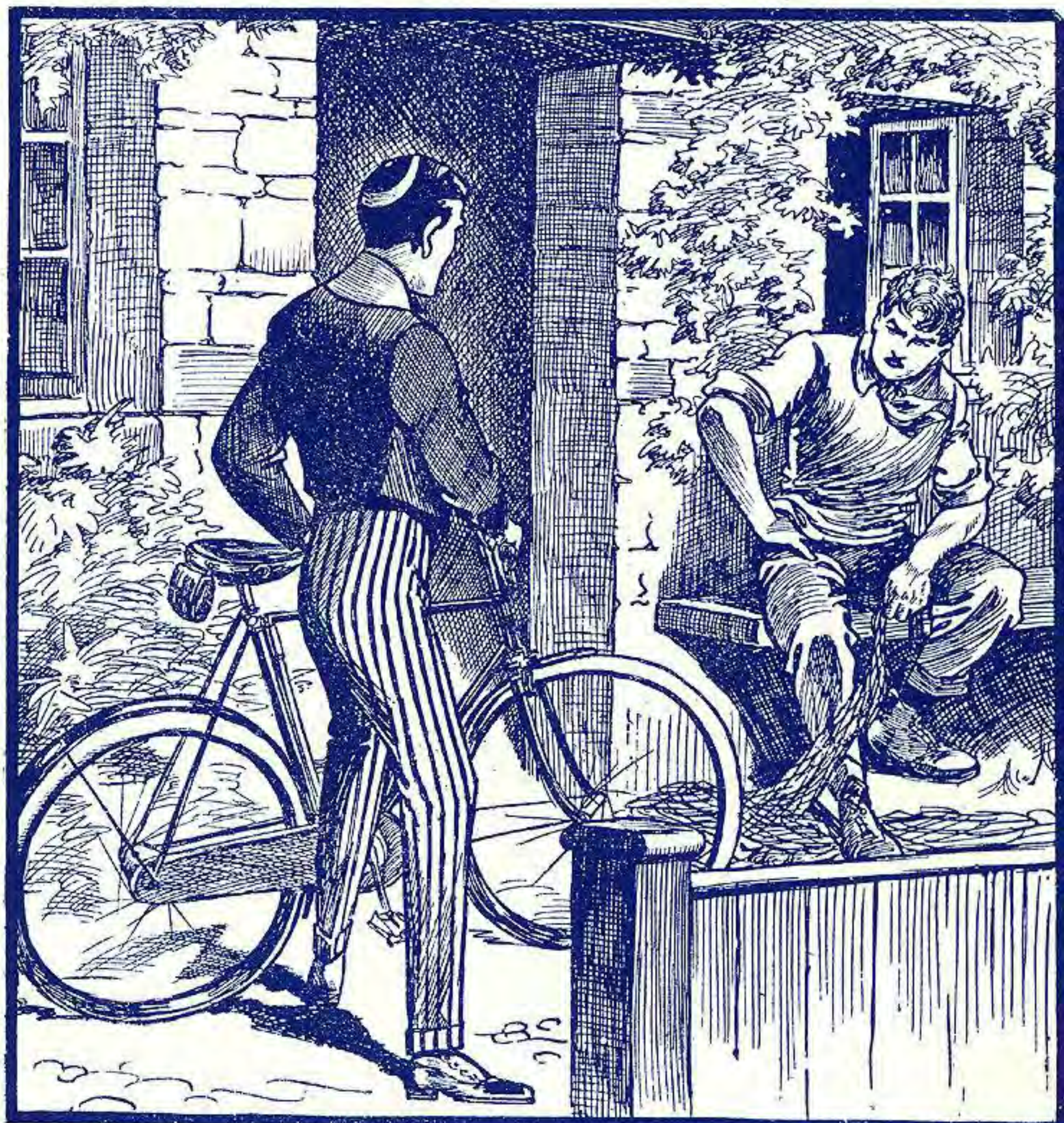


TOM REDWING'S WIN!



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“WHY AREN'T YOU COMING, REDWING?”

TOM REDWING'S WIN!

By FRANK RICHARDS.

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

THE FIRST CHAPTER

Bob Cherry Comes Down Heavy!

"STOP a minute, Smithy!"
Vernon-Smith, the Bouncer of Greyfriars, did not stop. He went on his way, only remarking as he passed:

"Rats! Don't bother!"

"But I say, Smithy——"

Smithy did not even answer.

Billy Bunter gave him a wrathful blink through his big glasses, and rolled after him. Bunter wanted very particularly to speak to the Bouncer just then. And he caught Smithy by the sleeve, and stopped him.

Vernon-Smith jerked his arm impatiently.

"Let go!" he snapped.

"Look here, where are you going in such a hurry?" demanded Bunter.

"I'm going to Mr. Quelch's study. Now let go, fathead!"

"Quelch's out."

"I know he is. Let go!" exclaimed the Bouncer. "Do you want me to bump you over?"

"Look here, Smithy," said Billy Bunter, in a tone more of sorrow than of anger. "After all I've done for your pal Redwing I think you might be decent. I'm hard up this afternoon——"

"Quite a new experience for you, of course!" grunted Vernon-Smith sarcastically.

"Well, I've been disappointed about a postal-order——"

"My only hat! Are you going to spring that on a fellow again?" exclaimed the Bouncer. "Buzz off!"

"But——"

Vernon-Smith lost patience. He was not the most patient fellow in the Remove, anyway.

He took the fat junior by both shoulders, and sat him down on the floor with a bump.

"Ow!" gasped Bunter.

The Bouncer grinned, and left him there, and went on to Mr. Quelch's study. He did not knock at the door, as the Form-master was absent. Billy Bunter sat and gasped, and blinked after the Bouncer as he disappeared into the study.

"Ow!" mumbled Bunter. "Beast! Yow! He's going to play some trick on Quelch while he's out. Ow! I've a jolly good mind to tell Loder—— Yow-ow!"

But Vernon-Smith did not remain in the study more than a minute. He came out again, with a folded paper in his hand.

"I say, Smithy——"

The Bouncer passed Billy Bunter without a glance, and went on to the staircase.

"What have you got there?" hooted Bunter.

But Vernon-Smith went up the stairs without replying. The Owl of the Remove scrambled to his feet, having recovered his breath—which was always rather short. He shook a fat fist after the Bouncer as the latter disappeared up the big staircase.

Bunter's eyes were glistening now behind his glasses. He had seen the paper in Vernon-Smith's hand—a stiff paper with sections of printing on it. Billy Bunter knew an examination paper when he saw one. The nerve of the Bouncer in taking an exam paper from Mr. Quelch's study in this open way astounded Bunter. Anybody might have seen it in Smithy's hand.

"Beast!" murmured Bunter. "He would get an awful licking if Quelch knew. Old Quelch's bound to miss the paper, too. It might be a fellow's duty to put him on the scent. Ow!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What are you mumbling about?" inquired Bob Cherry, coming along the corridor, and greeting Bunter with a hearty smack on his fat shoulder.

"Yaroooh!" roared Bunter.

"My hat! What's the matter?" exclaimed Bob, in surprise.

"Yow-ow! You silly ass, you've nearly busted my shoulder!" howled Bunter. "Do you think my shoulder's made of wood, you chump?"

"No; only your head, old scout!" answered Bob cheerily. "I'll give you one on your head——"

Billy Bunter did not wait for one on his head. He bolted.

Bob chuckled, and went on his way to the door, with his heavy tread that echoed along the corridor.

His chums were waiting for him there—Wharton and Nugent, Johnny Bull and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" boomed Bob. "Ready, you kids? Isn't Smithy coming?"

"No; he's staying in this afternoon," said Harry Wharton. "Redwing's coming to visit him."

"Redwing!" said Bob. "He's finished his toot with Mr. Quelch. The exam for the schol is on Monday."

"Yes; it's only a visit this time. I think Smithy's going to put him through his paces, and see how he shapes for the exam," said Wharton, smiling.

"Smithy's a good sort," said Bob. "Fancy spending a spring afternoon swotting over such rot—what? I'd do it to save a fellow's life—but nothing short of that. Still, I don't suppose I could help Redwing much."

"Ha, ha! No, you couldn't," grinned Nugent. Bob Cherry had many gifts and qualities, but certainly he did not shine as a bright particular star in the scholastic line.

"You can help him on in cricket, if he does come to Greyfriars on a schol," said Harry Wharton.

"Yes, that's more in my line," agreed Bob. "Let's get off, or the girls will be waiting for us at Cliff House."

"And if we are late, the esteemed Marjorie will be infuriated," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Ha, ha!" roared Bob. "Not infuriated, you ass—waxy!"

"My esteemed Bob——"

"My esteemed fathead, let's get an esteemed move on," grinned Bob. And he playfully took Hurree Singh by the neck and rushed him down the steps.

Bob Cherry was evidently in high spirits that afternoon. When Bob was in extra high spirits it really was not quite safe to be near him.

The Famous Five marched down to the gates with cheery faces, and turned out into Friardale Lane.

"May meet Redwing on the road," remarked Harry Wharton. "He's nearly due in Smithy's study now, I believe."

"Talk of angels!" said Johnny Bull. "There he is!"

"My hat! Skinner, too!"

As the chums of the Remove came round the bend in the lane they came in sight of Tom Redwing.

He was standing by the stile, having evidently crossed the field in taking a short cut from Hawkscliff, where he lived.

Skinner of the Remove was on the other side of the stile, in the road, facing him.

Harry Wharton & Co. were surprised enough to see them together.

Skinner's enmity towards the sailor-man's son of Hawkscliff was well known. Moreover, Harold Skinner had his name down for the Memorial Scholarship, and was, therefore, one of Tom Redwing's rivals in the forthcoming examination for that valuable prize.

Skinner, certainly, hadn't much chance of bagging it. Hard work was wanted, and Skinner was not a hard worker—quite the reverse.

In fact, the fellows knew pretty well that Skinner had only put his name down in the faint hope of "dishing" the boy from Hawkscliff. He had intended to "swot" for that very purpose; but though the spirit might be willing, the flesh was decidedly weak in Skinner's case, and he had done very little swotting. Tom Redwing had a very good chance of success; but Skinner, in the Bouncer's phrase, was certain to be only an "also ran."

So, under the circumstances, the Co. certainly did not expect to see Skinner in conversation with Tom Redwing. But as they drew nearer they could see that it was not a friendly meeting.

Skinner's face was dark and angry, and there was a quietly contemptuous expression upon Tom Redwing's sunburnt face. In the clear air their voices came to the juniors' ears as they drew nearer.

"There's nothing to argue about, Skinner. You knew perfectly well that it's an open scholarship, and anybody has a right to enter. Three or four fellows outside Greyfriars have entered."

"That's no reason why a low, long-shore cad should try to wedge himself into a decent school!" answered Skinner bitterly. "Get back to caulking your boats and digging your potatoes—that's your line! You're not the kind that's wanted in a decent school!"

"I don't think all the fellows agree with you," said Redwing quietly, though his handsome face flushed.

Skinner laughed scornfully.

"Do you think you'll ever be one of us, in the Remove, even if you win the schol? Even Smithy only puts up with you because you happened to pull him

out of the sea when his boat was wrecked. He feels bound to, for that reason."

"That's not true."

"It's jolly well true, and you know it! If you heard what Smithy says about you sometimes—"

Redwing's eyes flashed.

"That's a lie!" he said. "You cad, how dare you tell lies about Smithy! Get aside, and don't talk to me!"

Redwing came over the stile with that.

Skinner seemed disposed, for a moment, to attempt to throw him back, but he thought better of it. He stepped back, and the sailorman's son dropped into the lane.

"You're going to Greyfriars now?" he sneered. "Well, I can tell you you're not wanted there. Smithy doesn't want you. He said—"

Skinner got no further.

Bob Cherry, with a flaming face, was running ahead of his companions, and he came up with a rush, grasping Skinner by the collar behind.

"Yaroo!" howled Skinner, thus apprised of Bob's arrival on the scene. "Groogh! Who—what—yooooogh!"

Shake, shake, shake!

"Hallo, you fellows!" exclaimed Redwing.

"Gerrrogh!" wailed Skinner. "Leggo! Ow! Oooch!"

Shake, shake!

"You sneaking worm!" roared Bob. "I heard your beastly lying, you Prussian! Don't take any notice of his lies, Redwing."

"I don't," said Tom.

"There isn't a word of truth in what he was saying," said Harry Wharton. "The mean worm wants to edge you out of the exam, that's all!"

"Will you leggo?" shrieked Skinner desperately.

Bob Cherry was still shaking him, and the unfortunate Skinner felt like a jelly.

Bob swung him round, and tossed him contemptuously into the grass beside the road. Skinner sprawled at full length.

He lay there gasping, and blinking at the Removites.

"I've a jolly good mind to wipe my boots on you!" gasped Bob, glaring down at him. "What do you mean by telling Redwing lies about all of us?"

"Grooogh!"

"You know he was lying, Redwing?"

"Of course," said Tom, with a smile.

"I shouldn't be likely to take Skinner's word against anybody."

"That's right. Mind you don't!"

Tom Redwing nodded, and walked on up the road to Greyfriars. The chums of the Remove vaulted over the stile, and kept on towards Cliff House, Bob Cherry giving the hapless Skinner a final glare of contempt before he went. It was some time before Skinner, still gasping, limped away after Redwing towards the school, with feelings in his breast that a wild Hun might have envied.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Bunter is Not Treated as a Pal!

BILLY BUNTER blinked into Vernon-Smith's study in the Remove passage.

There was a very determined expression on Bunter's fat face.

Vernon-Smith was busy making the study a little tidy for his visitor. Skinner was his study-mate, and Skinner was not a tidy fellow. The table was cleared, and pens and ink and paper were there, and under a paper-weight lay the examination paper Smithy had brought from Mr. Quelch's study. Bunter's eyes landed on that at once, and he grinned.

"Buzz off!" said the Bounder, without looking round, as he heard Bunter's well-known fat grunt in the doorway.

"I say, Smithy—"

"Oh, clear! There's not going to be a feed, you walrus! Redwing's coming here to work," said the Bounder good-humouredly.

"I know that," said Bunter, with a fat chuckle; "and I know jolly well what work he's going to do, Smithy."

"Well, now buzz off!"

"I'm not going to buzz off," said Bunter deliberately, and he came into the study. "I'm shocked at you, Smithy!"

"Eh?"

"Disgusted!" said Bunter.

"What the merry dickens—" The Bounder turned at that, and stared at the Owl of the Remove. "What are you driving at, you fat idiot?"

"I know what I know!" said Bunter mysteriously.

"And that's precious little," said Vernon-Smith. "Do you know when you're well off? If you do, you'll clear out of this study before I kick you out!"

"Perhaps you'd prefer me to call on Loder of the Sixth!" said Bunter, with a sneer.

"You can call on Loder, or on the Kaiser and the Crown Prince of Prussia, if you like," said the astounded Bounder.

"Have you gone suddenly potty—more potty than usual?"

"You'd like me to tell a prefect?" grinned Bunter.

"Tell him what?"

"Your little game!"

"What little game?" yelled the Bounder.

"He, he, he!"

That cachinnation was intended to express that Bunter knew what he knew, so to speak. Vernon-Smith stared at him, wondering for a moment whether the fat junior was quite right in the head.

"Will you tell me what you're driving at?" he asked at last.

"You know what I'm driving at," smiled Bunter. "Some fellows are sharp, and some ain't. I am. You can't pull the wool over my eyes, Smithy. Mind, I'm not going to interfere if you treat me as a pal."

"Interfere!" repeated the Bounder.

"If you treat me as a pal—that's understood. Of course, I don't wholly approve of this Redwing fellow," said Bunter loftily. "I believe in people keeping in their own place in life—"

"Your place would be a pigsty, I think!" snapped the Bounder. "I wish to goodness you would keep there!"

"Oh, really, Smithy! Of course, I understand that you feel it's up to you to back up this sailor chap, as he pulled you out of the sea once. Still, it would be rather a come-down for a longshoreman to get a scholarship and enter Greyfriars," said Bunter, with a shake of the head. "I don't approve of it. Still, I'm not going to interfere."

Vernon-Smith picked up a cushion.

Bunter eyed it warily.

"If you chuck that cushion at me, Smithy, I shall go straight to Loder, and tell him about the swindle."

"Swindle!" gasped Vernon-Smith.

"What do you call it, then?" demanded Bunter. "If Redwing wins the exam, won't it be a swindle, the way you're doing it?"

"You crass idiot," said Vernon-Smith, in measured tones, "why shouldn't I help Redwing, as far as I can, in getting ready for the exam? Not that I can help him much; he's miles ahead of me in most things. Why, I'd have lent Skinner a hand, if he hadn't been too lazy to work at all."

"You can't pull the wool over my eyes," grinned Bunter. "It won't do. It won't wash, Smithy!"

"What won't wash?" shrieked Vernon-Smith.

"Oh, come off! Helping Redwing is one thing, but getting him the exam paper to look at is another. You know he wouldn't be allowed to enter the exam at all if the Head knew he'd seen the paper."

"You fat villain, he hasn't seen the paper!" he shouted. "He knows nothing about the paper, any more than I do."

Bunter gave him a fat wink.

"I saw you get the exam paper from Quelch's study, when you knew old Quelch was out of doors," he answered.

"Oh!"

"Understand now?" grinned Bunter. He pointed a fat finger at the sheet on the table under the paper-weight. "Do you think I don't know an exam paper when I see one? Redwing will walk off that scholarship as easy as falling off a form, when he's had the paper in advance, and worked up the questions. That's the little game!"

"My hat!" ejaculated Vernon-Smith.

"Mind, I'm not going to interfere, if you treat me as a pal," said Bunter, reassuringly.

"You think I've got a copy of the examination paper in advance for Redwing?" said the Bounder, staring at him.

"I know you have," answered Bunter coolly.

"And you wouldn't interfere, thinking that a fellow is playing such a dirty, swindling trick on the other entrants?"

"Well, of course, I'm shocked," said Bunter. "I may say, disgusted. But if you treat me as a pal, I shall feel bound to keep it dark. Of course, I shall expect you to do the decent thing. I'm hard up."

"Oh!" said Vernon-Smith.

"As a pal, I don't see why you shouldn't lend me a quid till my postal-order comes," said Bunter. "Only a loan, of course. I shall hand you the postal-order immediately it comes."

"Only a quid?" said the Bounder quietly.

"Well, under the circumstances, I think you might make it two quids," said Billy Bunter, growing bolder. "Dash it all, it's worth it. The schol is jolly valuable. There's a cash allowance with it, and I dare say Redwing has agreed to hand you something out of that—I'm certain of it, in fact. Look here, Smithy, I want you to lend me a fiver."

"Oh, a fiver!" said Smithy.

"Yes. Of course, I shall hand it back when—when I'm in funds."

"When you get your old-age pension?" suggested the Bounder.

"I'm expecting a postal-order shortly," said Bunter with dignity. "'Nuff said, Smithy! Am I going to have that fiver?"

Vernon-Smith shook his head.

"No," he said. "You're not going to have the fiver. You're going to have a licking, you sneaking, fat rotter!"

The Bounder made a jump at Bunter, and Bunter, in alarm, made a jump at the doorway. But Smithy was the quicker of the two.

His left hand closed on Bunter's collar, and swung him round. With his right he wielded the cushion.

Whack, whack, whack!

"There, you fat villain—take that, you fat frog—and that—and that!"

"Yow-ow-ow! Help! Fire!" yelled Bunter. "Leave off! Yaroooh!"

Whack, whack, whack!

"Yooop! I—I say, Smithy, I'll take a pound! Yow-ow! I say, I'll take ten bob! Yooooop! I—I say, old chap, I'll keep it dark for nothing! Oh, crumbs! Yow-ow-woooooop!"

The cushion went on smiting Bunter's

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fat person all the time. Not till he was tired did the Bounder cease, and then he spun the Owl of the Remove out into the passage.

Bunter sat down with a heavy concussion, roaring.

"Phew!" exclaimed a voice in the passage, as Tom Redwing came along from the stairs. "What the dickens—"

"Hallo, Redwing! Come in, old chap!"

Redwing passed the sprawling Bunter, and came into the study, and Vernon-Smith closed the door. Billy Bunter scrambled to his feet, gasping and snorting. He rolled away in a state of breathless wrath and indignation. In spite of all his kindness, William George Bunter had certainly not been treated like a pal!

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Bunter Does His Duty!

PETER TODD was at work in his study. He looked up with a frown as Billy Bunter rolled in, still snorting.

"Don't make a row here, Bunter! I'm working."

"Why didn't you come and help me?" growled Bunter. "You heard that beast Smithy pitching into me."

Peter nodded.

"My dear man, if I'd come to help anybody, it would have been Smithy. I've no doubt you asked for it."

Bunter gave his study-mate a glare. This was all the sympathy he received in his own study.

"If you knew what it was about, Peter—"

"I don't want to," yawned Peter. "I suppose you have been talking some of your snobby piffle about Redwing. If you begin it here, I'll give you some more of the same."

"I say, Peter—"

"Dry up! I'm working."

"You could lick Smithy, Peter. I'll hold your jacket," said Bunter encouragingly.

"I'll lick you, if you don't let a fellow work in peace!"

"They ought to be stopped, Toddy. It's a mean trick to get hold of an exam paper in advance, and work up the questions. It doesn't give the other fellows a fair show."

Peter stared at him.

"Who's done that?" he demanded.

"Skinner?"

"No; Smithy and Redwing."

"You silly duffer, dry up!"

"I saw Smithy get the paper out of Quelchy's study—"

Peter Todd rose to his feet.

"If Smithy played a mean trick like that, Bunter, he wouldn't be idiot enough to let you see him do it. You're barking up the wrong tree, as usual."

"I saw him!"

"Rats! Rot! Give me that cricket-stump!"

"Wha-at for?"

"I'm going to lick you."

Billy Bunter, instead of handing Peter the cricket-stump, rolled hurriedly out of the study. Peter grinned, and sat down to his work again. He did not attach the slightest importance to Bunter's accusation against the Bounder. He did not believe that Smithy was a rogue; and he certainly knew that Smithy was not a fool. He dismissed the matter from his mind.

But Bunter didn't! Bunter had been licked. If he had been bribed, he would have allowed the matter to pass, shocked as he was—or said he was. But having only been licked, he was taking up a highly moral attitude on the question. He realised that he was more shocked

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than he supposed at first, and he was not going to allow foul play to take place.

But he hesitated to tell tales to a prefect. The Remove were down on sneaking. Bunter did not want a Form raging. He turned the matter over in his mind, and then looked for Paget of the Third, who was one of the juniors down for the exam. He poured his tale into Paget's ear, that youth listening to him with a sceptical smile.

"You see, you'd better interfere," said Bunter. "You're going in for the exam, so you've a right."

Paget grinned.

"Have you been scoffing Smithy's grub?" he asked.

"Eh? No! What has Smithy's grub to do with it?" demanded Bunter, in surprise.

"Rats!" said Paget. "Do you think you're goin' to get me to spin a yarn like that about a chap? Tell your own lies for yourself, my fat tulip!"

And Paget walked away, leaving Billy Bunter speechless.

Evidently the fag did not believe a word of it, any more than Peter Todd.

Bunter was rather at a loss. But he spotted Skinner coming in at the gates, and his fat face brightened up. Skinner was certain to jump at any handle to use against Redwing; and he was down for the exam, and not at all likely to allow another fellow to take advantage of him.

"I say, Skinner!" called out Bunter.

Skinner scowled, and passed on. He was not in a good temper just then.

"Skinner, old chap—"

Skinner disappeared into the House.

Billy Bunter grinned, and followed him in. He overtook him in the Remove passage, where he found him with Snoop.

"I say, you fellows—" gasped Bunter.

"Oh, sheer off!" said Skinner savagely.

"Oh, really, Skinner! If you want Redwing to beat you in the exam, owing to getting a copy of the paper to work up—"

Skinner's manner changed at once.

"What's that? What do you know about it, Bunter?"

"Oh, as you're so jolly ratty, I don't see that I need tell you anything about it!" said Bunter loftily. "Never mind."

"But I do mind," said Skinner. "Do you mean to say that Redwing's seen a copy of the paper in advance?"

"I know what I know."

"What rot!" said Snoop. "How could he get the paper? He's only just come in from Hawkscliff."

"Somebody may have got it for him," said Bunter mysteriously. "Somebody may have bagged it from Quelchy's study for him. A chap may have seen him. I'm not going to say anything."

"Smithy!" exclaimed Skinner eagerly.

Bunter was loftily silent. He had to be begged to impart his valuable information, now.

"I believe the Head's got the papers," said Snoop. "He would have."

"Quelchy might," said Skinner. "I suppose he helped to draw them up—he does a lot of work for the Head. I was keeping my eyes open in his study this morning, in case—ahem! I—I mean—"

"You saw Smithy take an exam paper from Quelchy's study, Bunter?" asked Snoop.

"I may have, and I may not have. I may have seen it in Smithy's study, all ready for Redwing, and I may not. That's telling."

"They're there now, I suppose?" Skinner asked, looking at Snoop. Sidney James nodded.

"My hat! If they've played such a trick—" muttered Skinner, his eyes glittering.

"Redwing wouldn't," said Snoop, with a shake of the head. "I don't like him, but I don't believe—"

"Rot! Of course he would, if he had half a chance. Why, it would mean a walk-over at the exam, if he had a squint at the paper in advance. Of course, he'd jump at it—it would mean bagging the schol for a dead cert."

Harold Skinner was evidently disposed to judge others by himself.

"Bunter, old chap"—Skinner was very civil now—"tell us what you saw. It's your duty, you know. You can't stand by and see a Greyfriars fellow dished by that rank outsider."

"Well, if you put it like that, Skinner," said Bunter condescendingly, "I don't mind."

"Well, what did you see?" asked Snoop, still sceptical.

"I saw Smithy dodge into Quelchy's study," answered Bunter. "Sneaking in, you know, in a superstitious way—"

"In a whatter?" yelled Snoop.

"He means surreptitious," grinned Skinner. "You saw him sneaking in, Bunter?"

"Yes, I did. Looking up and down, you know, and round about, to make sure that nobody was watching him," said Bunter, drawing freely on his remarkable imagination for that description. "He bumped me over, just because I was standing near—bumped me hard, the beast! Then he nipped into the study, and nipped off. Of course, he didn't think I was spotting what he was up to."

"You saw the exam paper?"

"He had it in his hand."

"Duffer not to shove it under his jacket, if he had it," remarked Snoop.

"Yes, that's odd," said Skinner doubtfully.

"Well, he nipped upstairs like lightning with it," said Bunter. "He didn't know I'd spotted it, and there was nobody else about. I went to his study, and told him I—I couldn't allow it—"

"Great pip! What did he say?"

"He went for me," said Bunter.

"Guilt was written all over his face, like a chap in a novel."

"Too much like a novel altogether, for me," said Snoop, with a grin. "Did you make up this yarn from beginning to end, Bunter?"

"Why, you rotter—" exclaimed Bunter indignantly.

Skinner was thinking hard.

"It looks jolly likely to me," he said. "Smithy would do anything for that fellow. But I'll soon find out. They're in the study now, working. Well, it's my study, and I can go in if I like. I'll jolly soon see what they're working at!"

"I say, they'll put it out of sight when they hear you," said Bunter.

"They won't hear me."

Skinner tiptoed towards his study, the other two watching him from the distance.

Not a sound was made as Skinner approached the door.

Skinner was suspicious, and he was angry, and a little indignant as well. It was just such a trick as he would have played himself; but to have it played on him was quite a different matter.

If Bunter's story was true, it had to come before the Head. Skinner would be quite within his rights in reporting such an act of dishonesty. Tom Redwing would be excluded from the examination, and deprived of any chance of ever getting into Greyfriars School; as undoubtedly he would fully deserve—if the story was true.

The Bounder would be severely punished. He would deserve that, if he had attempted to swindle in an exam for a valuable prize, and still more, in

Skinner's opinion, for having backed up Tom Redwing at all.

Skinner's eyes were glittering as he crept to the door.

It is much to be feared that Skinner hoped Bunter's story was true. It would bring about the most complete revenge upon Tom Redwing, and, at the same blow, rid Skinner of his most dangerous competitor in the exam.

Silently he stopped at the door. From within he heard the voice of Herbert Vernon-Smith.

"Do you think you can tackle those questions, Redwing?"

Skinner drew a sharp breath.

"I think so," came Redwing's quiet answer.

"Then I fancy you're safe for the exam."

Skinner's eyes fairly blazed. Here was proof positive, if he wanted it. He turned the handle of the door, and flung it suddenly open.

"You rotters!" he shouted, as he strode into the study. "You swindling cads! I've found you out, have I?"

THE FOURTH CHAPTER

Loder Takes a Hand!

TOM REDWING rose to his feet in astonishment.

Vernon-Smith stared at Skinner.

The latter faced the two of them, his face flaming, his eyes glittering. His hand was raised accusingly, in quite a dramatic way.

"You rotters!" he repeated. "You sneaks! So that's the game! But I've jolly well found you out!"

"Are you mad?" asked Vernon-Smith, too astonished to be angry.

Skinner pointed to the paper that lay on the table in front of Tom Redwing.

It was only too plainly an examination paper, and Tom had been conning over it and making marginal notes.

He was fairly caught in the act, as Skinner exultingly realised. His enemy—or, rather, the fellow whose enemy Skinner was—was fairly at his mercy now.

"What's that?" jeered Skinner, as he pointed at the paper.

"Can't you see what it is?" snapped the Bounder.

"Yes; an exam-paper. Swindler!"

"Are you calling me a swindler?"

"Both of you!" shouted Skinner.

"Swindlers! Thieves!"

"You must be out of your senses!" exclaimed Tom Redwing. "Why should you call me such names?"

Vernon-Smith left his chair, and strode towards Skinner, his face hard and angry. His hands were up, and Skinner, for once in a way, stood up to him, putting up his hands also.

"I don't know why you're calling me a swindler," said Vernon-Smith, between his teeth. "But I jolly well know that I'm not going to let you do it!"

"Swindler!" yelled Skinner.

"Get out!"

"I won't! Why, you cheeky, swindling hound—"

The Bounder rushed on him, hitting out. Skinner was so furious that he forgot his usual pusillanimity, and put up a fight.

But he was not much use against the Bounder. Fighting fiercely, he was driven through the doorway, and a crashing blow sent him down on his back.

Vernon-Smith slammed the door after him.

Snoop ran along the passage, and helped Skinner to his feet. The junior was dazed, and breathing and stuttering with rage.



The indignation of Skinner! (See Chapter 3.)

"You—you saw what he did," he stammered. "He's got the paper there. I heard him say Redwing was safe for the exam if he could handle the questions. It's true—true!"

"The awful rotters!" said Snoop. "Hold up, old chap! You might have expected him to go for you if you caught him in the act."

"He did for me," said Bunter. "It's a shame! I'd go to Quelch, Skinner."

"I'm going to!" panted Skinner.

"Quelch's out," remarked Snoop.

"Loder's in his study. Try him. He's bound to take it up, as a prefect."

"I'm going to the Head!" said Skinner.

"Get Loder on your side first," murmured the cautious Snoop. "He's down on Smithy, and he doesn't like that sailor chap."

Skinner nodded, and hurried down to the Sixth Form passage. Most of the Sixth were on the playing-fields that sunny afternoon; but Gerald Loder was a good deal of a slacker. Loder hastily put a cigarette out of sight as he heard a knock at his door, and called out:

"Come in!"

He stared at the red and excited junior who burst into his study.

"Loder!" panted Skinner.

"Well, what's the row?" growled Loder. "Can't you give a man a minute's quiet on a half-holiday?"

"I—I—I—"

"Shut the door after you!" said Loder.

"Smithy and Redwing have stolen an exam-paper, and they're working on it in the study!" gasped Skinner.

"Oh, my hat!"

Loder was on his feet in a moment. The black sheep of the Sixth had been very rusty with the Bounder since the latter's reform. The millionaire's son no longer came to his study for a quiet game of banker.

"Is that true?" exclaimed Loder.

"I've seen them!"

"What exam is it?"

"Monday's—the exam for the Memorial Scholarship!" panted Skinner. "Smithy got the paper out of Mr. Quelch's study, and Bunter saw him. Now I've just seen them mugging it up in the study together. It's a swindle—it's—"

"Don't yell at me. It's a swindle,

right enough, if it's true," said the prefect. "I'll look into it, of course. Follow me!"

Loder of the Sixth strode out, and lost no time in getting to the Remove passage. Skinner followed him, joined by Bunter and Snoop, in a state of great excitement. Several other fellows were gathering in the passage, wondering what was on; and Skinner was not slow to enlighten them.

"Rot!" was Peter Todd's comment.

"Bosh!" said Delarey, the South African. "Redwing's not that sort!"

"You're dreamin', Skinner!" remarked Lord Mauleverer, shaking his head.

"I saw it!" yelled Skinner.

"Rats!" said Mark Linley. "Rot! It's not true!"

"You'll jolly soon see whether it's true or not!" sneered Skinner.

Loder of the Sixth had reached Smithy's door. Without troubling to knock, he threw it open and strode into the study.

The Bounder looked up angrily, supposing that it was Skinner again. He looked at the prefect in surprise.

Gerald Loder's keen glance took in the exam paper, which Redwing was going over with great care, making pencil notes. His eyes gleamed.

"So you're caught, you beauties!" he said. "Come along with me to the Headmaster, both of you!"

"What for?" exclaimed Vernon-Smith.

"You know jolly well what for," said Loder, with a grin. "A flogging for you, Vernon-Smith, and an order for Redwing never to show his nose inside Greyfriars again, I fancy. Follow me! I'll take that paper."

"This paper!" exclaimed Redwing.

"Yes, this paper!" mimicked Loder, grabbing it up from the table. "Follow me at once, both of you!"

He strode from the study.

Tom Redwing looked blankly at his friend.

"What does that mean, Smithy?"

The Bounder was looking angry and puzzled; but his face cleared as he caught sight of Billy Bunter's grinning face outside the study.

"Oh!" he ejaculated. "Bunter! You fat idiot, you've told—"

"I've told Skinner," said Bunter, with dignity. "I felt bound to put him on his guard against a dirty trick, Smithy."

"It's not true, Smithy?" exclaimed Hazeldene.

"Oh, ask Bunter!" said the Bouncer ironically. "Bunter knows! He offered me to keep the deadly secret for a quid."

"I—I—I didn't—"

"He made it a fiver," grinned the Bouncer. "He came down to ten bob when I took him by the neck."

"But it's not true!" exclaimed Peter Todd.

"Are you coming?" shouted Loder, from the stairs.

"Oh, certainly! Come on, Redwing."

Tom Redwing and Vernon-Smith joined Loder, and they went down the stairs together. There was an excited buzz in the Remove passage. Loder was taking the two delinquents to the Head; and that certainly looked as if there was something in the accusation. Loder slipped the examination paper into his pocket, as if fearing that the Bouncer might attempt to snatch it. Smithy grinned.

"I'm not after the paper, Loder," he said.

"Shut up, and come along!" snapped Loder.

"But I can tell you—"

"You needn't tell me anything; you can explain to the Head," said Gerald Loder grimly.

"Oh, all right!" said Vernon-Smith, with a shrug. "I'll explain to the Head. I dare say he will find it entertaining."

As the trio went along the lower passage, Mr. Quelch came in at the door. The Remove-master glanced at them.

"Is anything wrong, Loder?" he asked.

"A rather serious matter, sir," said Loder. "Vernon-Smith has purloined a copy of Monday's examination paper for Redwing's use."

"Surely not!"

"I'm taking them to the Head, sir."

"Quite right. I will come with you."

Tom Redwing had opened his lips to speak, but the Bouncer pressed his arm, and he remained silent. Loder marched on with his victims, and Mr. Quelch followed, with a very stern frown upon his brow. Thus they arrived at Dr. Locke's study, and marched in.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Before the Head!

DR. LOCKE fixed a surprised and inquiring glance upon his visitors, laying down his pen. The Head was busy that afternoon; and his expression indicated that he would require a very good explanation of this interruption.

"What is it, Loder?" he asked. "Ah, Mr. Quelch! Is something the matter?"

"Loder has a very serious report to make to you, sir," said the Remove-master. "I sincerely trust that there is a mistake. I have accompanied him, as it concerns a boy in my Form."

"Quite so, Mr. Quelch. Pray be seated. Now, Loder."

"Skinner made a report to me, sir," said Loder. "He informed me that Vernon-Smith had purloined an examination paper. I went to Smith's study, and found him and Redwing there—with the paper."

"Bless my soul!" said the Head. "This must certainly be very closely inquired into. Did Skinner actually see—"

"No; it was Bunter who saw Vernon-Smith take the paper."

"Call in Skinner and Bunter, please."

Those two youths were very near the Head's door, and Loder had only to put his head out and call to them. They came in at once—Skinner, vicious and determined; Billy Bunter, swelling with lofty importance.

Vernon-Smith smiled sarcastically. He was in no hurry to speak; and Tom Redwing stood silent till the Head should bid him speak. The lad from Hawkscliff was looking red and uncomfortable, but certainly not guilty or afraid.

"Bunter!"

"Yes, sir?" purred Bunter, with a triumphant blink at the Bouncer.

"You saw Vernon-Smith take possession of an examination paper?"

"Yes, sir."

"You are sure?"

"Quite sure, sir."

"Very good. Now, Skinner—"

"I saw the paper on the table in the study, sir," said Skinner. "I heard Vernon-Smith say to Redwing that he would be safe for the exam if he could deal with the questions on it."

"Bless my soul!" murmured Mr. Quelch, with a start.

"I brought the paper away from Vernon-Smith's study, sir," said Loder, putting his hand in his pocket. "I may mention that Vernon-Smith showed a desire to snatch it away from me in the passage, probably thinking of destroying it."

The Bouncer smiled.

"Most extraordinary!" said the Head. "In the first place, I will ascertain whether any of the papers are missing."

He unlocked a drawer in the desk before him. Billy Bunter watched this proceeding with his eyes growing wide and round behind his spectacles. Vernon-Smith grinned.

Dr. Locke examined the contents of the desk drawer amid a puzzled silence.

"It is most extraordinary," said the Head, when he had finished. "All the papers printed for the examination on Monday are here. It is scarcely possible that an additional copy could be in existence; such carelessness on the part of the printer would be inexcusable. Was it from the printer, Bunter, that you saw Vernon-Smith obtain the paper?"

"Nunno, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"From whence, then?"

"Fuf-fuf-from Mr. Quelch's study, sir."

"What?"

"Quelch's—I—I mean, Mr. Quelch's study," stuttered Bunter.

"You had no copy of the paper in your study, Mr. Quelch?" asked the Head, looking at the Remove-master.

"Certainly not!" answered Mr. Quelch.

Skinner looked very queer. Bunter's jaw dropped.

"But here is the paper itself, sir!" exclaimed Loder. "It speaks for itself, sir. This is the paper they had in the study, and you can see Redwing's pencil notes on the margin, sir."

"It is really very mysterious," said the Head, looking utterly perplexed as he took the paper from Loder.

He adjusted his glasses and looked at it.

The juniors watched him breathlessly; and Loder uneasily. Loder was beginning to feel that somehow there was some mistake in the matter.

"Pooh!" exclaimed the Head suddenly.

"Oh!" murmured Skinner.

"You obtained this paper from Mr. Quelch's study, Vernon-Smith?" asked the Head.

"Yes, sir. Mr. Quelch gave me permission to take one of the old exam papers from last term."

"One of the old exam papers from last

term!" murmured Skinner dazedly. He began to understand.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch sharply. "Is that, then, all there is in this affair? Vernon-Smith asked me if Redwing might have an old examination paper to work, sir, in order to test his fitness for entering the examination on Monday. Surely, Loder, you are aware that it is a common custom to work old examination papers for practice!"

"Oh!" gasped Loder. Loder wished now that he had allowed the Bouncer to explain, instead of leaving the explanation for the Head to hear.

"I selected this paper for the occasion," said Mr. Quelch, looking at it. "This is the paper used in the Craven examination last year; it is twelve months old. Excepting that the examination is of a classical nature, it bears no resemblance whatever to the paper drawn up for the Memorial examination on Monday."

The Bouncer smiled.

Skinner gave Bunter a furious look. But Bunter did not even see it. The Owl of the Remove was realising how egregiously he had put his foot in it, and he was simply gasping.

Dr. Locke's brow became stern.

"Did you not look at the paper, Loder, when you took it from Vernon-Smith?" he asked.

"I—I just glanced at it, sir," stammered Loder. "I—I thought it was Monday's paper, as Skinner had told me so."

"If you had looked at it more carefully, Loder, you would have seen that the title of the examination, and the date, appear on the outside."

"I—I—"

"Really, Loder, you should exercise a little more care before reporting a boy upon such a very serious accusation!" exclaimed the Head. "This paper has no connection whatever with Monday's examination. It is simply an exercise, given to Redwing with Mr. Quelch's full permission."

Loder's face was a study.

"I—I am sorry!" he gasped.

"Pray exercise more care on another occasion, Loder. You have interrupted me, and wasted my time, to no purpose."

The Head made a gesture of dismissal, and Gerald Loder left the study nearly choking. Dr. Locke looked sternly at Bunter and Skinner.

"Skinner, you informed Loder that this was the Memorial examination paper?"

"I—I thought it was, sir," stuttered Skinner. "Bunter told me—"

"I am afraid, Skinner, that you must be of a suspicious nature, to accept such information without proof. But you, Bunter, appear chiefly to blame."

"I, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"Yes. You informed Skinner."

"I—I—I didn't, sir."

"What!"

"Skik-Skik-Skinner was mistaken, sir," stuttered Bunter. "Wh-w-w-what I really meant to say was that I was sure Smithy wouldn't do anything of the sort, sir."

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed the Head.

"Skinner will admit it, sir."

"He told me it was the Memorial exam paper!" howled Skinner furiously.

"I—I didn't!"

"You rotter—"

"Silence!" thundered the Head.

"Leave this room at once, both of you! I trust Mr. Quelch will punish Bunter for uttering falsehoods."

"Ow!" gasped Bunter.

Mr. Quelch's expression showed that the Head would not trust in vain. Bunter and Snoop left the study, and

Dr. Locke's brow cleared as he turned to Redwing.

"I am sorry, Redwing, that you should have been subjected to this unpleasantness," he said. "I am quite assured that you are incapable of a dishonourable act. You may go, my boys."

"Thank you, sir!" faltered Redwing. "May we have the paper, sir?" asked the Bounder demurely.

"Certainly. Take it, by all means."

The two juniors quitted the study, the Bounder with the old Craven paper in his hand and a smile on his face. Mr. Quelch followed them out, and he called to Billy Bunter in the passage. A few minutes later there were loud howls proceeding from Mr. Quelch's study; and for an hour or more afterwards Billy Bunter mourned, and would not be comforted.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER

Tea in Study No. 1!

HARRY WHARTON looked into Vernon-Smith's study when the Famous Five came back from Cliff House. The Bounder and Tom Redwing were still at work there. Vernon-Smith, certainly, was not doing much. Redwing was a good deal ahead of him in Latin. But he was helping all he could, and Redwing was travelling through the old exam paper at great speed. He paused, and gave Wharton a cheery smile, as the captain of the Remove appeared in the doorway.

"Going strong?" asked Harry, with a smile.

"Yes; I think I'm getting on all right."

"Safe as houses," said the Bounder. "I'm trying to help; but there are knotty twisters on that paper I can't handle. Redwing walks through them."

Tom Redwing laughed.

"You're helping me a good deal," he said. "Self-taught Latin isn't exactly the thing for an exam. There are a lot of minor points which don't matter much in themselves, but which you simply must get from a fellow who knows."

"That's so," assented the Bounder, with a nod.

"You must be tired of it, Smithy. I've been at it over two hours."

"My dear man, I like watching you. I feel so jolly glad that I haven't got to do it myself!"

"Well, I won't interrupt," said Wharton. "Go ahead, Redwing! But when you're done, there's tea in Study No. 1. Come early, and get a good seat."

"Quarter of an hour suit you?" asked Redwing.

"Yes. It won't be ready before then."

Redwing looked at Smithy, who nodded.

"Expect us," he said.

"Right-ho! That's the old Craven paper you've got?" asked Harry, glancing at it. "Temple tackled that last year, and was bowled, and Temple's in the Fourth. If you handle it, Redwing, you can feel pretty confident about Monday."

"Just what I've told him," said Vernon-Smith. "By the way, seen Skinner?"

"Skinner? No. Not since I came in," added Harry, remembering the meeting at the stile. "Anything up with Skinner?"

"I fancy he's going to have a painful explanation with Loder, if he's not had it already, and I haven't heard any cries of murder yet!" chuckled the Bounder.

And he explained Skinner's little mistake over the exam paper, and the scene in the Head's study.

Harry Wharton frowned.

"Just like Skinner to jump to a conclusion like that," he growled. "My hat! Loder will scalp him, I think, for making him look such an ass before the Head. I can't say I'm sorry for him."

"Poor old Skinner will be sorry enough for himself!"

"There's one thing," said Harry. "Skinner couldn't touch the Craven paper to save his life. If you can't do it, Redwing, you needn't fear Skinner on Monday, whatever the others may be like. Now, pile in and get through."

Harry Wharton quitted the study, leaving Redwing to work, and the Bounder to watch him, perhaps suppressing a yawn or two the while. That afternoon had been a test of Smithy's friendship for the sailorman's son. The Bounder was not much given to swotting. Tom, indeed, would have been glad to see him seek something more entertaining, but Smithy was determined to afford what help he could. And, little as it was, it was valuable in its way.

The Co. were waiting in the passage for Harry Wharton, listening to a tale of woe from Billy Bunter.

Bunter was apparently in search of sympathy, but he did not receive any. Johnny Bull told him he had acted like a sneaking worm, and had only got what he deserved, and the other fellows concurred heartily. Indeed, Hurree Singh affirmed that the sneakfulness of the worm was terrific.

"Redwing and Smithy are coming to tea," said Harry, as he joined his chums. "Roll up with all the grub you can beg, borrow, or steal."

"Right you are!"

"Wharton!"

"Hallo, Loder!"

The prefect appeared on the staircase.

"Do you know where Skinner is?"

"Not in the least."

"The young sweep!" growled Loder. "I've been looking for him. If you see him, send him to my study."

"I'll tell him what you say," answered Wharton.

Loder went downstairs with a scowling brow. Skinner had disappeared after the visit to the Head's study, and was prudently keeping out of the prefect's way. Gerald Loder had looked for him high and low, but in vain. He was saving up his wrath for Skinner. The sharp words the Head had spoken to him were to be taken out of Skinner's skin, as it were.

The Famous Five brought their provisions into Study No. 1, pooling them for tea. Billy Bunter came in, empty-handed. He had bolted his own rations, and was prepared to bolt anybody else's that he could lay hands on. But the business end of Johnny Bull's boot persuaded Billy Bunter to seek fresh fields and pastures new.

"Tain't so bad for war-time," said Bob Cherry, surveying the tea-table. "Plenty of spuds, anyway; and who wants anything better than baked spuds? Redwing doesn't take tea, anyway, so he won't miss it; and there's real butter, though you want a microscope to see it with. And—and there's lots of salt and pepper."

"Lots!" said Harry, laughing. "Plenty of water, too."

"And some very agreeable company, anyway," said Bob. "Now, we're ready. And here are the merry visitors!"

Vernon-Smith and Redwing came in. Chairs had been borrowed along the passage, and there were enough for seven.

"Rather a squeeze," remarked Nugent. "Sorry! Did I kick you, Redwing?"

"No," said Tom.

"I kicked somebody. Sorry, whoever it was," said Nugent, shifting his legs

under the table. "Bob, old chap, I suppose you couldn't leave one of your feet in the passage?"

"Ass!" replied Bob.

"They do seem bigger than usual," said Johnny Bull. "They're in my way—unless it's your feet, Wharton. Did I biff your foot?"

"No."

"I biffed somebody. Got room, Redwing?"

"Lots," said Redwing, with a smile.

The door opened as the crowded juniors began tea. It was Loder of the Sixth again. He scowled into the study.

"Vernon-Smith, has Skinner been back to your study this afternoon?"

"Oh, no!" said Smithy.

"Have you seen him?"

"Not a hide or hair of him, my tulip!"

"It's dashed queer," growled Loder.

"I know he came up to the Remove passage. If any of you are helping him keep out of sight, you'll get warmed."

"Thanks."

"The thankfulness is terrific, my esteemed Loder."

"So you've got a longshoreman to tea!" said the bully of the Sixth, with a sneering glance at Redwing, who flushed.

Harry Wharton jumped up.

"Outside, Loder!" he rapped out.

"What!"

"Get outside, you cad!"

"Cad!" roared Loder. "Do you know you're talking to a prefect, Wharton?"

"I know I'm talking to a cad," answered the captain of the Remove, with flashing eyes. "Get outside, or we'll put you out, and sharp! And if you say another caddish word, we'll thrash you before we put you out!"

"Hear, hear!" roared Bob Cherry, in great delight.

Loder grasped his ashplant, and made a stride towards Wharton. The juniors all rose to their feet at once.

Loder was a prefect, and according to all laws written and unwritten could not be touched by a junior. But it was plain that the chums of the Remove were ready to touch him—hard.

"I shall report you to the Head, Wharton!" exclaimed Loder, pausing.

"Report away—and I'll report the caddish thing you said, and we'll see what Dr. Locke says about that!" replied Wharton disdainfully.

Loder left the study. He had a pretty clear idea of what Dr. Locke would say about that, and he did not want to hear it from the Head's lips.

"Shut the door after you, Loder!" bawled Bob Cherry.

Loder did not shut the door, so Bob kicked it after him. He returned to his seat grinning.

"Don't mind that cad, Redwing," he said. "Black sheep in every flock, you know—and we're not proud of Loder."

Bob sat down again, and thrust his long legs under the table.

"Sorry!" he ejaculated.

"Eh? What are you sorry about?" asked Vernon-Smith.

"I kicked somebody."

Nobody complained, however, and the juniors concluded that Redwing must have got the kick, Redwing being the only fellow there who was likely to bear it with polite equanimity. Bob gathered in his heavy boots under his chair, and tea in Study No. 1 proceeded cheerfully.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER

Nice for Skinner!

MY hat!"

Frank Nugent uttered that exclamation suddenly.

His companions looked at him questioningly.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 533.

"I want to be awfully polite to a guest," said Nugent, "but I really wish you wouldn't biff your hoofs at my shins, Bob."

"My feet are under my chair," grunted Bob.

"Then whose hoof is this?" said Nugent, stamping under the table.

"Are you stamping on a foot?" grinned Bob.

"Yes, I am."

"Well, it's not mine."

"Is it yours, Wharton?"

"You'd have heard from me before this if it was," answered Harry.

"You, Inky?"

"My esteemed foot is on this side of the table, my worthy Franky."

"Redwing's, of course," grinned Johnny Bull. "Redwing, my infant, you're wasting too much politeness on us. We don't go strong on politeness in the Remove."

"I say, I'm sorry, Redwing, stammered Nugent.

"But it isn't my foot," said Tom Redwing, laughing.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob. "It's an old boot under the table, you ass! Ha, ha!"

"It doesn't seem like one," said Frank, puzzled. "I'll kick it out." He lunged out with his foot. "Now— Oh, my hat!"

To the astonishment of the tea-party, there came a sudden wild yell from under the table.

"Yarooooop!"

"What the dickens—"

"What the—"

"Oh, crumbs! Look out!" yelled Bob.

As if an earthquake were happening in Study No. 1, the table suddenly rose under their eyes.

Up it went in the air, the astounded juniors jumping back in their chairs, and it suddenly pitched over on its side, with a terrific crash of crockery.

"Skinner!" yelled Nugent.

It was Skinner.

The overturning of the table revealed him, clutching one leg in anguish, and red with rage. Evidently Frank Nugent's kick had landed hard.

Harry Wharton & Co. were all on their feet now. The mystery of Harold Skinner's disappearance was revealed!

"Yow-ow-ow!" Skinner was saying.

"You frabjous ass!" shrieked Bob.

"Look at our tea!"

"Yow-ow! My shin! Ow!"

"You—you—you've smashed all our crocks!" yelled Nugent. "You—you Hun! You ruffian! You—you—"

"All the milk's gone!"

"The butter's in the jam!"

"And so are the sardines!"

"You villain, Skinner!"

Harold Skinner did not heed. He nursed his shin and howled. But for the fact that Skinner was evidently hurt, the infuriated tea-party would probably have slaughtered him on the spot. As it was, they had to exercise very great self-restraint.

"You burbling idiot!" grunted Johnny Bull. "What were you under the table for; you frumious bandersnatch?"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

Harry Wharton set the table up again, and the juniors gathered up the scattered good things. The sardines were nicely flavoured with jam, and the jam was still more markedly flavoured with sardines. They breathed hard as they sorted out the provisions.

"Haden't we better slaughter him?" asked Johnny Bull. "Who's going to eat that jam now? Put it down Skinner's neck."

"Good wheeze!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 533.

"And let him have those eggs, too; they're too dusty to eat."

"Hands off, you fools!" howled Skinner. "You silly chump, what did you want to kick a fellow for? You've been jabbing at me for a quarter of an hour with your silly hoofs."

"Serve you jelly well right!" exclaimed Nugent. "What did you want to hide under our table for?"

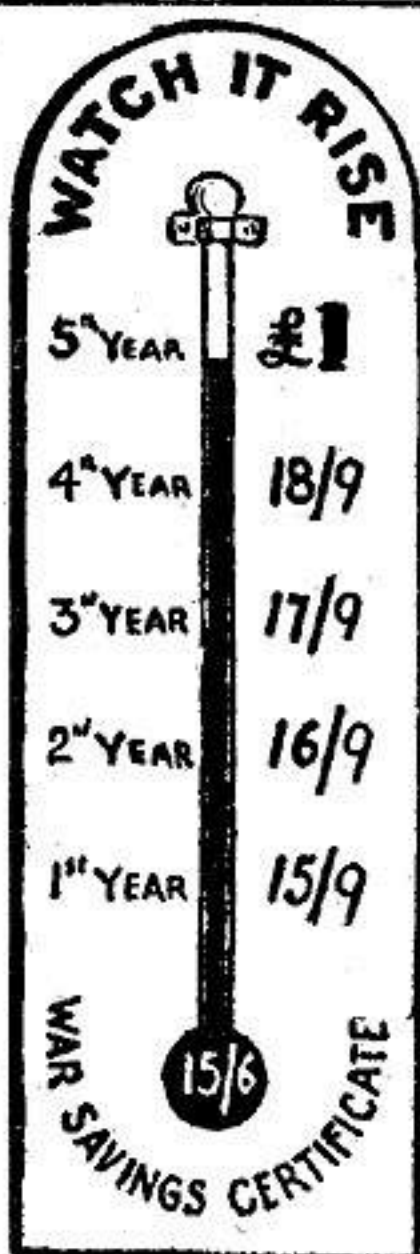
"Because Loder was hunting me, you idiot! He nearly had me, when I dodged in here," gasped Skinner. "The beast wants to take it out of me because the Head jawed him. I dodged under the table when I heard you fellows coming in. Why couldn't you leave a chap alone?"

"Loder must have heard that crash," grinned Bob. "He's in the passage! Hark!"

Heavy footsteps were heard outside.

"I—I say, you chaps, keep it dark that I'm here!" gasped Skinner.

The table-cover was off, and there was no time to replace it to screen Skinner.



Skinner backed to the wall behind the door, so that he would be hidden when the door opened. It opened the next moment, and flew back violently, nearly squashing Skinner against the wall; but he made no sound. Loder strode in.

"What's the row about?" he demanded. "Smashing up your tea-things—eh? I heard Skinner's voice here."

"What ears you must have, Loder!" said Bob Cherry, admiringly. "I don't quite see how Skinner's voice could be here without Skinner; but perhaps you know best. I suppose that's what comes of being in the Sixth."

Loder looked round the study suspiciously. The juniors looked as unconscious as they could. They were feeling very exasperated with Skinner, but they certainly did not intend to give him away.

"I heard him yelling," said Loder. "He's here."

"Hear, hear!" said Bob.

Loder strode across the study, and jerked open the cupboard door. Skinner certainly wasn't there; but he was in

full view from the cupboard when Loder should turn round.

He whipped out from behind the door, to make a bolt for it; but Loder heard him, and spun round.

He just caught sight of Skinner bolting through the doorway.

"Stop!" he roared.

"Hook it!" yelled Bob.

"Cherry, you lying young rascal, you said he was not here—"

"Not at all, my pippin. I said I didn't see how his voice could be here without him, and I don't," said Bob. "Do you?"

Loder made a cut at him with his ashplant, and strode to the door. Bob Cherry got the cut, and the next moment Loder got the war-bread—on the back of his head.

He swung round with a savage exclamation, and found Bob Cherry with the study poker in his hand.

"Come on!" said Bob.

"Yes, do," said Wharton, picking up the tongs.

Loder decided not. He strode out of the study, on the track of the hapless Skinner.

Harry Wharton & Co. sat down to tea again, such as was left of it. When it was over, and they came out, to walk down to the gates with Tom Redwing, they heard loud yells proceeding from the box-room. Evidently Loder of the Sixth had run Skinner down at last, and the ashplant was getting some exercise.

When they came back, after seeing Redwing off, they found Skinner in the Remove passage, groaning.

"Had it bad?" asked the Bounder.

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"I wouldn't stand it," said Wharton. "Loder has no right to pitch into you because he made a fool of himself. I'd go to Mr. Quelch."

"Do you think Loder wouldn't have a good reason to give?" snarled Skinner. "He would say he licked me for smashing the crocks in your study, or some lie or other. Ow-ow-ow-ow!"

"Well, after all, you asked for it," remarked the Bounder.

Skinner gave him a deadly look.

"It's that cad Redwing's fault," he said between his teeth. "I'll make him sit up for it yet, the prize-huntin' cad!"

"How is it his fault?" demanded Bob Cherry hotly. "Is it Redwing's fault you are a suspicious cad?"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

The Bounder laughed.

"You don't seem to have much luck at making Redwing sit up, Skinner," he remarked. "I'd advise you to let him alone."

"Yow-ow-ow!"

Skinner limped away to his study, still yowing and wowing. He was not thinking of vengeance upon Loder; a prefect of the Sixth was beyond his reach. It was upon Tom Redwing of Hawkscliff that all his bitterness was concentrated. He laid all the blame upon Tom Redwing's devoted head; and as he rubbed his hands and his shoulders, and growled and groaned, he was trying to think of some method of visiting his wrath upon the sailorman's son. And he did not ponder on that subject in vain.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Skinner's Last Blow!

SKINNER did not appear in the junior Common-room that evening. It was supposed that he was remaining in his study, getting over the effects of the licking he had received from Loder. But when Sidney James Snoop was moved, later in the evening, to give his pal a look-in, he did not find Skinner in his own quarters. The study was dark and empty.

But there was a light under the door of Snoop's own study, and he looked in there. There he found Skinner.

Skinner was seated at the table, pen in hand, a sheaf of paper before him. He started up as the door opened, and looked round quickly.

"Oh! Only you!" he exclaimed, in relief.

"Little me!" said Snoop, with a stare. "What's the matter?"

"Oh, nothing!"

"Workin'?" asked Snoop, in surprise.

"Ye-e-es."

"What the thump are you workin' in my study for, then?" inquired Snoop.

"Want to keep out of Smithy's way?"

"That's it. No objection, I suppose?"

"Not at all," said Snoop, coming into the study. "But what the dickens kind of work are you doing? Not swottin' for the exam?"

"No."

"You haven't done enough work, Skinner. You haven't an earthly on Monday."

"I know that," grunted Skinner.

"You were goin' to dish Redwing by gettin' miles ahead of him," grinned Snoop. "You might have done it if you'd worked."

"Well, I didn't. But there's more ways of killing a cat than choking it with cream," said Skinner, with an evil look.

"Swotting's not in my line. But I rather think Redwing won't bag the schol, all the same."

"Some of the other fellows may beat him. I hear there's about ten or twelve names down," said Snoop. "Two of them belong to Courtfield County Council School, and they've been grinding at night-classes, so I hear. But Redwing is a good man. I think he's got a tip-top chance, myself."

He glanced at the papers on the table. Skinner had thrown a newspaper across the sheet he had been writing on with assumed carelessness.

But Sidney James Snoop was not taken in. He wondered what Skinner had been doing, and he meant to know.

Snoop was getting curious.

"Why do you think Redwing won't bag the schol?" he asked. "Are you up to some little game to stop him?"

"Perhaps."

"Better be careful," said Snoop, warningly. "Smithy would be down on you like a ton of bricks. The beast's awfully thick with Redwing."

"He mayn't be so thick with him later," said Skinner, with a sneer. "It's possible there may be a rift in the lute."

Snoop whistled.

"Is that the game?" he asked.

"If you want to know, it is."

"I don't see how you'll work it," said Snoop, shaking his head. "Smithy's too jolly fly for you."

"Smithy may be, but Redwing isn't. He's sensitive," said Skinner, with a grin. "He carries his heart on his sleeve, as somebody put it. You remember once Bunter slanged him, and told him he was wedgin' into a school where he wasn't wanted, and he was quite upset, and nearly gave up coming here. I've noticed that about him. I was talking to him to-day—I met him on the way here—and he fairly flinched when I told him that Smithy only forced himself to be friendly with him because Redwing pulled him out of the sea that time."

"I believe Smithy's really friendly towards him, Skinney."

"I know. But Redwing showed that he was hit when I put it like that. He's as sensitive as a baby. You see, he didn't believe me, but it left a sting. He can't be sure whether it's so or not."

"Blessed if I'd care, if I were he!"

"Well, Redwing does care. If he thought that Smithy was patronising him because he feels under an obligation,

he would freeze up to Smithy at once. If he thought Smithy was humbugging about wanting him to come to Greyfriars he wouldn't feel like coming at all, even on a scholarship. I'm sure of that."

"Yes, he struck me as that kind of soft ass," admitted Snoop. "Too jolly soft for this world!"

"Well, his position's peculiar," grinned Skinner. "He's the son of a common sailorman, and hasn't had much education, except what he's mugged up for himself by burning the midnight oil. Naturally, he's touchy when he gets among well-off fellows. He's out of his element, and he never quite knows whether they're friendly, or only tolerating him politely, and spoofing him. I know jolly well that what I said to him will stick in his mind, and make him uneasy."

"It won't keep him away from the exam on Monday."

fed up with the cad, and might drop him a letter to shake him off, that's all. If he did, Redwing would be cut to the very soul. I think very likely he wouldn't turn up for the exam. But if he came he would be feeling so rotten that he wouldn't have much chance of getting through the paper. I know him."

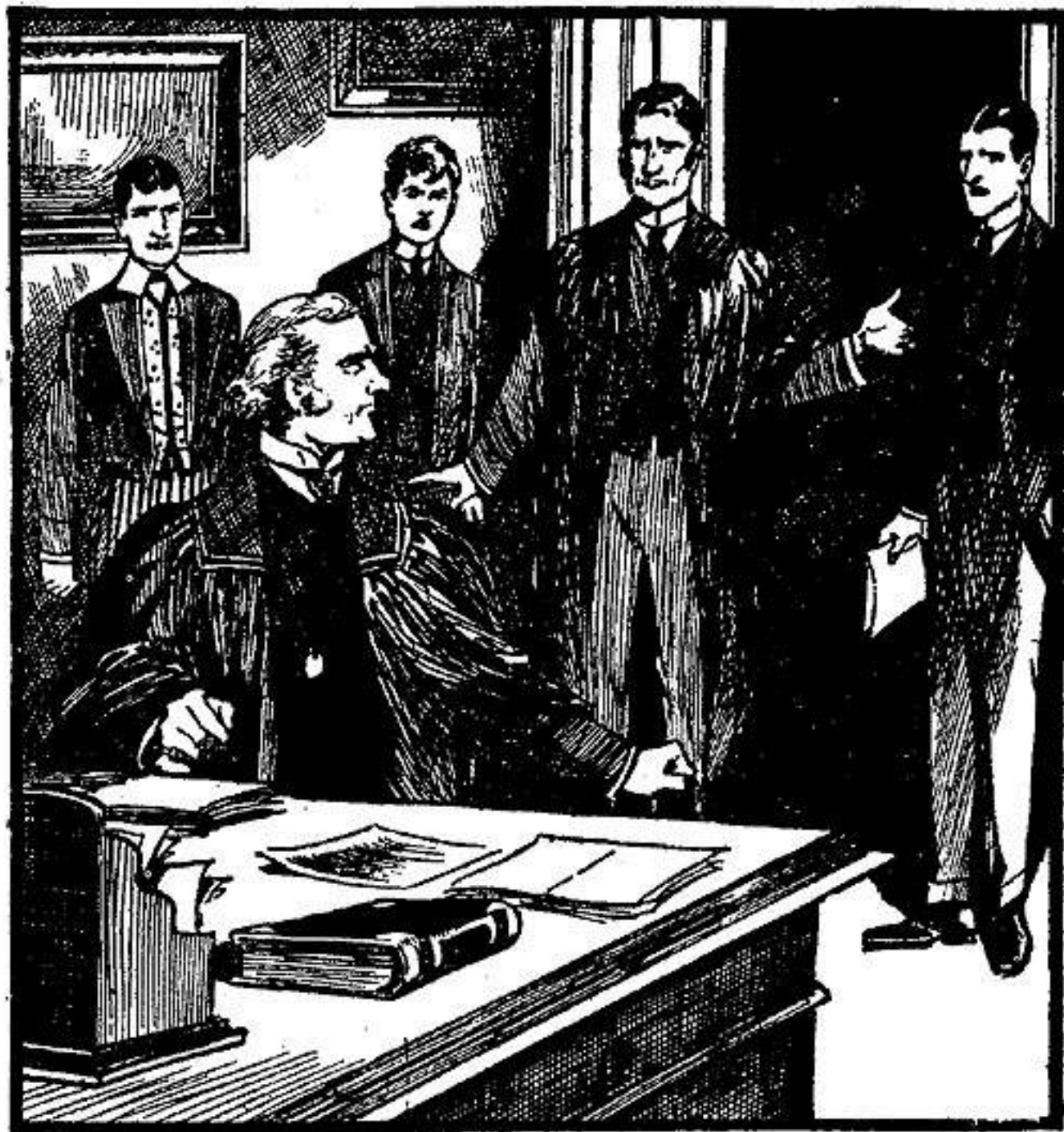
"And—and you're not thinking——"

Instead of finishing the question, Snoop suddenly jerked the newspaper aside, and revealed the sheet Skinner had been scribbling upon.

"Let it alone!" exclaimed Skinner angrily.

But Sidney James was already looking.

A sheet of impot-paper, in the Bounder's hand, lay there—a dozen lines or so from Virgil, in Smithy's well-known, strongly-marked handwriting—and on the other sheet were repeated copies of some of the lines—copies that



Taken to the Head! (See Chapter 13.)

"It may, with a little help. Suppose he heard from Smithy—a letter, say, in a cold and uppish style, as if Smithy were tired of tolerating him, and let out at last that he didn't want to be bothered with him?" said Skinner, with a smile.

"It would hit him hard, I suppose. But Smithy won't write to him in that strain. He really likes the fellow, I believe."

Skinner did not answer, but he laughed softly. A startled look came over Snoop's face as he began to comprehend.

"Skinner, you're not thinking—Are you potty?" Snoop gasped. "Why, it's against the law. Chaps go to prison for that!"

"For what?" asked Skinner coolly.

"What you're thinking of."

"My dear man," drawled Skinner, "I'm not thinking of anything. It occurred to me that Smithy might get

began in Skinner's hand, but approximated more and more to Smithy's.

Snoop stared at them with startled eyes. That was Skinner's occupation that evening—steadily practising an imitation of Vernon-Smith's handwriting.

"You idiot!" gasped Snoop. "It's too dangerous!"

"Where's the danger?" sneered Skinner. "Who's going to connect me with it, if it comes out? And it can't!"

"I—I won't have anything to do with it," said Snoop, who was quite pale.

"Have I asked you to?"

"It's too risky, Skinner; let it alone."

"You let it alone!" answered Skinner. "You shouldn't have looked at it. Forget all about it and hold your jaw. You ought to be jolly glad that cad is going to be kept out of Greyfriars."

"You're a fool to do it, Skinner! Look here, you're not going to do it in my

study, anyway. I might get connected with it somehow. Take it somewhere else."

"Oh, don't be a funk!"

"I'm not going to a reformatory along with you, Skinner!" exclaimed Snoop angrily. "Go ahead with it if you like, but I'm keeping clear of it! Take it into your own room, or anywhere you like—not here!"

Skinner scowled angrily.

But Snoop was in earnest. He was not much shocked, perhaps, but he was scared. The amateur forger had to collect up his papers and carry them away.

Snoop watched him out of the study with them.

"You funky fool!" growled Skinner, as he went.

"It's you that the fool!" retorted Snoop. "I'm as much down on that pushing cad as you are, but I'm not going to shove my head into a thing like this. You wouldn't if you were cool."

"Oh, dry up!"

Skinner stamped away angrily, with the papers crumpled in his hand.

He was rather perplexed now.

Certainly he could not take his precious work to his own study, which he shared with the Bounder, and which Smithy might enter any minute. And there was no other study but Snoop's he could have ventured to work in—at that peculiar work—and Snoop had turned him out.

He could have gone down to the Form-room; but he could hardly venture upon such work there. He finally decided upon the top box-room. It was cold there, and rather uncomfortable to work upon a box-lid instead of a table; but it was safe, at all events.

The cad of the Remove took his papers, pen, and ink up to the box-room, and settled down to work there. He was not interrupted again.

THE NINTH CHAPTER

A Bitter Blow!

"GLORIOUS!"

Tom Redwing looked out of his cottage door in the bright, fresh, spring morning on Monday.

His face was happy and bright.

No wonder he said "Glorious!" as he looked out. The sky was blue and sunny, the sea rolled wide and blue and shining, a fresh, light breeze came over the white cliffs. The straggling street of Hawkscliff, with its scattered cabins and cottages, and nets hung out to dry, looked very cheerful.

Tom Redwing stood in the doorway with a happy face, taking in deep breaths of the salt sea air.

The sunny brightness of the morning seemed a good augury to him. In a few hours more he would be seated in the dusky examination-room at Greyfriars, working away his hardest. And never had he felt so thoroughly well and fit for work!

He had dealt successfully with the old exam paper on Saturday, and to-day's ordeal was no stiffer. He was not overconfident, but he was self-reliant, and he knew that he had a good chance. And his friends at Greyfriars heartily wished him success, and that was a help.

How decent the fellows had been to him! he reflected. Even Wharton, who was often considered a little haughty by the Remove fellows, had never seemed to think that there was any difference between him and the sailorman's son.

Lord Mauleverer—an earl, and the richest fellow at Greyfriars—had been cordiality itself. Only a very few fellows,

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like Skinner and Snoop, had made themselves unpleasant.

At the thought of Skinner a slight cloud came over Redwing's happy face.

He had disdained to heed Skinner's insinuations; but, as the cunning cad of the Remove knew well, the barbed words had lingered in his memory.

He flushed at the thought of doubting the Bounder's friendship. He did not doubt it.

Yet Skinner's sneer lingered. Was it barely possible that Smithy was only acting under a sense of obligation to the fellow who had saved his life? Tom knew well that the hearty outspokenness of his sailorman acquaintances in Hawkscliff was different from public school manners and customs.

Among wealthy people, he knew, there was frequently civility, even cordiality, without sincerity. He had seen Skinner toadying to Lord Mauleverer, for instance, whom he really disliked and regarded as a duffer.

But Smithy was not that sort. He knew that Smithy was not, and he flushed with shame at the idea of doubting his friend.

Why should Smithy take him up like this if he was not really friendly? Skinner was a sneak and a slanderer, he was sure of that.

And yet Skinner's bitter words lingered, though he strove to dismiss them from his mind.

A bicycle whirled in the rugged street, and Tom nodded to the Cliff Edge postman, who jumped down.

"Anything for me, Teddy?" he asked.

"Here you are, Tom!"

Tom Redwing took the letter, and the postman wheeled his bike on.

Redwing glanced at the letter rather curiously. Very little correspondence came to him, though of late he had received a letter every now and then from the Bounder at Greyfriars. He was surprised to see that the letter in his hand was addressed in Smithy's writing.

What was Smithy writing to him for, when they would meet in another couple of hours?

He opened the letter.

The bright, sunny sky, the great shining sea, had seemed glorious to Tom Redwing when he looked out at them. But the glory was gone, out of the scenery for him now. As he read the letter his sunburnt face grew pale and his eyes dim. A deeper and deeper wrinkle of trouble and sadness grew in his brow.

After he had read, he stood with the letter in his hand, gazing straight before him unseeing.

The postman, on his way back to Cliff Edge, passed him, with a nod; but Tom did not return the greeting—he did not see him.

For many long minutes he stood thus, as if a great weight had descended upon him, almost crushing him with its burden.

With a deep, deep sigh he raised the letter again, and read it through once more from beginning to end. It was a cruel, bitter letter, that came like a stab to the heart of the unhappy boy.

"Dear Redwing,—I'm afraid this letter will be rather a surprise to you. I hope you won't be offended, but will look at the matter in a reasonable way. I suppose you don't see it, but, if you'll let me speak quite plainly, Greyfriars isn't exactly the place for you. You saved my life, and I shall never forget it, and you can rest assured that I meant to stand by you to the finish, and if I'd got only myself to think of, I'd do it. I hope you'll believe that. I've been feeling rather uncomfortable about what the other fellows say, but I didn't care much, only

now it's come to a head. A lot of the fellows came to my study on Saturday night in a body, and put it plain to me. It's a shame, but there it is. I can't stand up against Wharton, who's captain of my Form. He likes you personally, he says, but he thinks a line ought to be drawn somewhere.

"It's a shame, Redwing, I know. I don't agree with them. If you choose to go on with the scholarship exam, you're within your rights. I'm not going to advise you to chuck it. If you do come here, I shall keep friendly with you, even if I'm cut by every other fellow in the school.—Yours sincerely,

"HERBERT VERNON-SMITH."

Tom Redwing crumpled the letter in his hand.

He had never been so bitterly hurt and wounded. He was not angry; but he was wounded to the heart, and mingled with his pain there was contempt and scorn.

This was the meaning of the kind civilities he had received at Greyfriars, then—the fellows had been good-humouredly tolerating him, regarding him all the time as a pushing outsider! Probably they expected him to see it, and had been surprised at his dullness. He had been dull!

They could not tell him what they thought of him—the polished manners of the public school forbade that! And there was the fact that he had saved Vernon-Smith from the sea. They thought that plucky, and rather liked him, personally. Only, they didn't want the sailorman's son in their school!

Vernon-Smith, grateful for the service Redwing had rendered, had stood by him, feeling all the time that it would not do, but not caring to open the eyes of the sailor-lad.

And now he could go on with the exam, if he liked. He would be within his rights. His rights! Poor Tom was not thinking of his rights.

To go to the big school to be looked upon as a pushing cad, perhaps cut by the Form he belonged to, and to be a burden upon Vernon-Smith's gratitude till Smithy tired under the strain and threw him over—that was not a prospect to attract a lad who was as proud and high-spirited as any fellow in Greyfriars.

The brightness of the spring morning had faded for poor Tom Redwing.

He thrust the letter into his pocket, and turned back into his cabin. In the little bed-room upstairs his best clothes were laid out, carefully brushed, ready to put on to go to Greyfriars. He did not go upstairs.

He drew a bench to the door, and sat down to work at mending a net; but for once the active fingers were slow and clumsy, and Tom Redwing made very little progress with his work.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Where is Redwing?

VERNON-SMITH stood looking out of the doorway of the School House at Greyfriars in the sunny morning.

Harry Wharton & Co. came in fresh and ruddy from the quadrangle; it was nearly time for morning lessons.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" greeted Bob Cherry. "Wherefore that thoughtful brow, Smithy?"

"Redwing hasn't come yet," said the Bounder.

"Well, he's not due yet."

"I asked him to come early, so that I could see him before he went in to the exam," explained Vernon-Smith. "He's got a long way to come, you know, and I've got something in my study for him."

You don't want to start an exam hungry."

"The thoughtfulness of the esteemed Smithy is terrific," remarked Hurree Singh. "The worthy Redwing is late. He has forgotten that punctuality is the stitch in time that saves the cracked pitcher from going longest to the well."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, he knows his way to your study, Smithy," remarked Wharton.

"Yes; but I'd like to see him before lessons."

"I'd like to see 'em all come," observed Skinner, who was in the doorway. "I want to watch their clothes."

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

"Oh, shut up!" grunted Bob Cherry. "Don't be a cad, Skinner."

"Redwing ought to be here," said Vernon-Smith, without heeding Skinner.

"He's never late. He ought to have a rest before the exam, too."

"Perhaps he's got a job this morning," suggested Skinner. "Maybe wanted to dig somebody's potatoes."

"He, he, he!"

Vernon-Smith, still unheeding, went down to the gates to look out into the road. Harry Wharton & Co. went in, leaving Skinner grinning in the doorway.

Harold Skinner did not expect to see Redwing at Greyfriars that morning; and if Redwing came, Skinner was pretty certain that he would not be in a mood to do himself justice in a stiff exam.

Sidney James Snoop joined Skinner in the doorway.

"All serene?" he asked.

"I believe so," yawned Skinner. He glanced round cautiously. "I fancy that Smithy wrote a letter to Redwing and posted it on Saturday night. Redwing would get it this morning."

Smithy did?"

"I think so," said Skinner calmly.

Snoop drew a deep breath.

"It's frightfully risky, Skinner."

"I don't see it."

"You—you didn't leave any papers about in the box-room?"

"What do you take me for?"

"If it comes out, Smithy will guess —"

"Let him; he can't prove anything," said Skinner coolly. "I don't suppose it will come out. It's pretty clear that Redwing's not coming here for the exam. That bars him out of a chance for the school. Smithy may go over this afternoon for an explanation."

"Then he'll see the letter."

"Perhaps. It's more likely that Redwing will be savage, and meet him with a dose of slanging."

"I—I say, it's too thick, Skinney."

"If a cad shoves himself in where he's not wanted he must expect to be shoved out again," remarked Skinner.

"Smithy's sure to guess."

"Let him! He can't prove that the letter's not in his own hand. If it's shown about, fellows will think he really wrote it, and repented of it afterwards."

"Oh!" exclaimed Snoop.

"Shush! Here he comes!"

The Bounder came up the steps with a wrinkled brow. It had been arranged for Tom Redwing to arrive before morning lessons began at Greyfriars, so that he could rest in Vernon-Smith's study, and have a little refreshment before it was time to appear in the examination-room. It was a wise precaution, and it was Vernon-Smith who had thought of it and arranged it with his friend. It was really surprising that Tom Redwing had not come. The Bounder had never known him to be unpunctual before; and this was an important occasion.

Snoop walked away towards the Form-room; but Skinner remained, watching the Bounder with a suppressed grin.

"Hasn't your pal turned up?" asked Skinner.

"No!" said Smithy shortly.

"May be some delay on the line," suggested Skinner. "I suppose he's coming by train."

"He's walking," answered the Bounder curtly.

"My hat! Must be an ass to walk ten miles before an exam."

"He's not a seedy waster," said Vernon-Smith, evidently implying that Skinner was.

Skinner laughed.

"They're going into the Form-room," he remarked. "I'm off lessons to-day—I'm in the exam. Wish me luck, Smithy!"

"I wish you all the luck you deserve," answered the Bounder, with his eyes still on the gates.

"Thanks! I shall be sure to bag the school at that rate," said Skinner, smiling. "Don't worry about your man, Smithy; there's lots of time for him to get here by eleven."

"Something may have happened to him," muttered Vernon-Smith. "I can't understand his being late."

Skinner smiled.

Loder of the Sixth came along. The Remove had all gone into their Form-room now; it was lesson-time, and past.

"What are you fags doing out of your class?" demanded Loder, stopping.

"I'm in the exam," said Skinner carelessly.

"You're not, Vernon-Smith?"

"No."

"Go into your Form-room at once, then."

The Bounder's eyes gleamed, but he moved off towards the Remove-room. Loder was due in the Sixth, so he had to go his way; and he did not see that Vernon-Smith did not enter his Form-room.

The Bounder remained in the passage in troubled thought.

He was worried about Redwing. Half an hour ago the sailorman's son ought to have arrived, according to arrangement; and he had not appeared. If Vernon-Smith went into the Form-room he would not be free again to see Redwing till after the exam; he would not even know whether he had arrived or not.

It seemed absurd to suppose that an accident had happened to Redwing; but evidently something had occurred to delay him. Suppose he was delayed till it was too late for the exam?

The walk from Hawkscliff was long, but it was not much to the hardy sailor-lad. That was not the cause of the delay. But what could have happened to him to keep him back? It did not matter much, certainly, whether the Bounder saw him before the exam; but what troubled Smithy was that, as Tom was delayed, he might be still further delayed, and might arrive too late.

The Bounder heard Mr. Quelch's voice in the Form-room.

"Vernon-Smith is not here! Do you know why he has not come in, Wharton?"

"No, sir."

"Kindly go and find him!"

"Certainly, sir."

Vernon-Smith did not linger any further. He walked back quietly to the doorway. It was useless enough to ask a morning's leave of Mr. Quelch because he felt unquiet about Redwing. But he was too unquiet to go in to lessons, and he had resolved to take French leave. If Redwing was delayed late at Hawkscliff, he could still get over to Greyfriars in time on a bicycle—that was the thought in the Bounder's mind.

"Hallo, where are you off to?" ex-

claimed Skinner in surprise, as Vernon-Smith passed him in the doorway.

The Bounder did not reply; he hurried out of the House, and round to the bike-shed. Wharton came along a minute later.

"Seen Smithy, Skinner?" he asked.

"He hasn't turned up for lessons."

"He's just gone out—round for a bike, I believe," said Skinner, biting his lip.

"Hurry up, and you'll catch him."

"What on earth does he want a bike for?" exclaimed Wharton in astonishment.

"Hurry up, I tell you!" exclaimed Skinner.

Harry Wharton hurried out of the House, Skinner watching him with a moody brow. He was uneasy.

"Hallo, Smithy!" The captain of the Remove met the Bounder as he was wheeling his machine round. "You're wanted in the Form-room. Quelch sent me to rope you in."

"Can't come," answered the Bounder.

"You're not cutting lessons?" exclaimed Harry.

"I'm going to meet Tom Redwing on his way here—or else see what's happened to keep him at Hawkscliff," said Vernon-Smith.

"I—I say, Smithy——"

"You can tell Quelch I hope he'll excuse me."

"He jolly well won't!"

"I'm chancing that."

Vernon-Smith ran his bike on quickly towards the gates, and Wharton, in rather a puzzled and alarmed mood, returned to the School House. Mr. Quelch was not the kind of master to excuse a junior who took French leave from lessons.

Skinner was hurrying out, and he overtook the Bounder at the gates. He was breathless and furious.

"Where are you going, Smithy?" he shouted.

"Hawkscliff!" snapped the Bounder.

"But Quelch——"

"Bow-wow!"

"Look here, Smithy," exclaimed Skinner desperately, "what are you going for? Don't be a fool! Get in to lessons, and don't ask Quelch for a thrashing."

"You're awfully concerned about me, all of a sudden, Skinner." The Bounder looked hard at Skinner, a sudden suspicion dawning in his eyes. "My hat! Have you got anything to do with Redwing's being late? Have you been playing any of your tricks, you villain?"

"What rot!" muttered Skinner, starting back. "How could I? Don't be a fool! Look here, Smithy, get into the Form-room, and don't play the goat! I tell you——"

Vernon-Smith did not answer. He jumped on his machine and pedalled away, leaving Skinner standing in the road with black rage and dismay in his face. Was his carefully-laid scheme to be knocked on the head at the last moment? He gritted his teeth savagely at the thought.

With a grim brow, Vernon-Smith rode away hard on the road to Hawkscliff. He kept his eyes open on the way for Tom Redwing; but nowhere on the long road was the sailorman's son to be seen.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Light at Last!

TOM REDWING looked up suddenly.

A breathless cyclist came whirling up the rugged street, and he jumped down outside the little cottage, his machine spinning to the wall.

Redwing rose to his feet in blank amazement. Vernon-Smith, crimson

with exertion, panting for breath, stood before him.

The Bounder had made the long ride in record time. He was throbbing with his efforts, his breath came in gasps. He stared in amazement at Redwing—in his old clothes, the net in his hand, evidently working at his old labour instead of preparing to start for Greyfriars.

"Redwing!" panted Smithy.

Tom did not answer. His face was pale and quiet, his eyes steely. There was cold self-command and scorn in his look.

"Why haven't you started?" panted the Bounder. "Don't you know the exam begins at eleven?"

"I know."

"You don't mean to say you're not coming!"

"I'm not coming."

"My hat!"

The Bounder stood pumping in breath. He had had that long, hard ride for this. Tom Redwing did not speak again. His look was like ice, but he was puzzled. The Bounder's sudden and unexpected arrival had staggered him. Had he repented of that cruel, unfeeling letter? Even so, there was no forgiveness for it. Between Tom Redwing and the millionaire's son all was at an end.

Redwing sat down quietly again, and resumed his work. The Bounder watched him, almost stupefied.

"Redwing!" he panted. "Are you gone potty? Why aren't you coming to the exam?"

"I don't care to."

"You must be mad! Have you worked for it for weeks and weeks to chuck it up at the last minute?"

"Yes."

"You might have told me so on Saturday, at any rate!" said the Bounder, with a flash of resentment.

"I didn't know on Saturday."

"You could have written then—there was a post. Hang it all, is this treating me decently?" broke out Vernon-Smith. "I've been waiting for you since breakfast this morning, and now I've cut lessons and biked over here at top speed for you; and now you coolly tell me you've chucked the idea. If you think that sort of thing's sensible or decent, you're making a mistake!"

"I don't understand why you should come over here. I certainly never expected to see you."

"I expected to see you at Greyfriars."

"I don't see why you should."

"You—don't—see!" The Bounder almost stuttered. "Didn't we arrange it on Saturday? Are you potty?"

"A good deal has happened since Saturday," said Redwing, his lip curling. "I've found out some things since Saturday. I've found that there's more falseness in the world than I ever believed before. I've found that fellows who were kind and civil to me, as I believed, look on me as a rank outsider trying to wedge into their school. Perhaps I am—without knowing it. They may be right. I don't say they're wrong!"

"What on earth do you mean?"

"What's the good of this, Vernon-Smith? You know as well as I do!" said Tom sharply.

"If you're referring to Skinner, you're a silly fool to take the slightest notice of that cad."

"I'm not referring to Skinner."

"Who, then?"

"What's the good of talking?" exclaimed Tom Redwing, wearily. "It's all over now. I'm not going in for the exam. I shall never see Greyfriars again. You won't have to put on friendliness because you feel under an obligation to me for saving your life. I didn't want you to, goodness knows! If I've been a trouble to you, it was your own doing—

and it's come to an end. I only wanted my eyes opened."

Vernon-Smith stared at him blankly.

"Who said you've been a trouble to me?" he asked.

No answer.

"Who says I've been putting on friendliness because you saved my life?"

Still no answer.

Vernon-Smith drew a deep breath.

"Goodness knows, Redwing, I don't want to quarrel with you, and part on ill terms," he said. "I've never stood as much as that from any other fellow. But I ask you once more, has Skinner been putting this into your head?"

"No." Redwing smiled disdainfully. "He tried to, and I did not believe him—not a word."

"Then somebody else—"

"Yourself!" said Tom, impatient at last.

"Myself!" shouted Vernon-Smith. "Oh, you're dotty! What have I said or done? Answer me that!"

Tom Redwing worked steadily at the net without answering him. He was sick and weary of the subject, and wished only to be left alone.

Vernon-Smith stood watching him, puzzled, angry, and exasperated.

The quiet, patient, good-tempered sailorman's son seemed to have utterly changed. That scornful look was new to his face, and it stung Smithy sharply.

"I ask you once more, Redwing," he said at last, "whether Skinner, or somebody like Skinner, has been making mischief?"

"And I tell you it was yourself; and I don't understand why you are pretending ignorance!" exclaimed Tom Redwing. "If you are sorry you wrote that mean, cruel letter, I'm not surprised. I think even Skinner might be sorry if he did such a thing. But it's too late. It can't be undone, even if you really wanted to undo it. Good-bye!"

"The letter!" repeated the Bounder mechanically.

He fairly blinked at Redwing.

"The letter! What letter?"

"Have you forgotten it already?" asked Tom scornfully.

"If you're not out of your senses, Redwing, tell me what you mean. I've written you no letter since I saw you last."

Tom made an impatient gesture.

"Are you going to deny your own hand?" he asked grimly. "I don't see why you should. You wrote the letter to get rid of me, I suppose. Well, I'm not a hard fellow to get rid of. A hint would have been enough, if you'd only known. But why you should come here now is a mystery to me."

"If I've written you a letter, show me the letter," said Vernon-Smith, very quietly.

"What does it matter?"

"It matters this much, Redwing—that I've written you no letter, and if you've had a letter in my handwriting it's a forgery!"

Tom Redwing started violently.

"A—a—a forgery!"

"Yes."

"Smithy!"

"Show me the letter," said Vernon-Smith between his teeth. "I can see it all now; and I think I know whose hand it's from. Show it me!"

Redwing dazedly groped in his pocket for the letter. He handed it to the Bounder. Vernon-Smith's brow grew darker and darker as he read it, and his teeth came together hard.

"Oh, the hound!" he said. "That's why he was anxious for me not to out

lessons and come over her—Skinner, of course! Oh, the villain!"

"Smithy, it's in your hand!"

"It's an imitation of my hand," said Vernon-Smith quietly. "Redwing, on my honour, I never saw this letter before this minute. Don't you believe me?"

Tom panted.

"Smithy, old chap, of course I believe you! But—but—"

"You thought I was such a rotter as to write a letter like that!" exclaimed the Bounder, his eyes flashing. "Wharton, too, he's mentioned here! By gad, when I show him this—"

"And—and he—they never came to your study and—and said—" faltered Tom.

"Don't be a silly ass! There's not a word of truth in it. Do you think we're all liars and spoofers at Greyfriars?" exclaimed the Bounder savagely.

Redwing crimsoned.

"I—I'm sorry!" he faltered. Smithy, how could I guess— Your own handwriting, Smithy! I—I couldn't guess that there was a fellow who would forge a letter—and such a letter—could I?"

Vernon-Smith nodded.

"You couldn't," he said. "I don't blame you, Redwing. I think you might have known me better. Still, you couldn't guess. But you believe now that it's a forgery, and lies from beginning to end?"

"If you say so, of course."

"And you'll go in for the exam?"

Redwing started.

"I—I would, Smithy, but it's too late. Oh, what a fool I've been!" exclaimed Tom miserably. "If I'd only known—"

"That's what this is done for—to dish you over the exam; that's Skinner's game!" said Smithy, between his teeth. "But he's not going to succeed. You've got to get off to Greyfriars!"

"It's too late!" muttered Tom.

"It's not too late. Take my bike, and ride like thunder!"

"But you—"

"Will a walk hurt me, you ass? Do as I tell you."

Tom drew a quick, deep breath. His eyes were bright now. His renewed faith in his friend was more to him than the renewed chance of realising his old ambition.

"Smithy, old chap, I'm sorry I doubted you! I was a fool—"

"That's all right; it was Skinner's doing. I'll keep this letter. Get off! There's not a minute to lose."

"I—I may just do it!" panted Tom.

He ran into the cottage. In a very few minutes he had changed his clothes, and came hurrying out. Vernon-Smith handed him his trouser-clips, and held the bicycle for him.

"Put it on," he said. "If you're in time, you'll find a snack ready in my study. Go it, Redwing!"

Redwing nodded and smiled, and drove at the pedals.

He was off like a flash, and at great speed he went spinning out of the rugged street into the lane. Vernon-Smith stood watching him. He caught sight of him in the lane again, at a distance, riding up the hill at a pace few cyclists at Greyfriars could have equalled. He vanished over the brow of the hill, still riding hard.

Vernon-Smith looked at his watch.

"He'll be in time!" he muttered.

"He'll do it! Now for a dashed long walk for me, and something for Skinner!"

His eyes glinted.

He pushed the bench and the net inside the cottage, closed the door, and sauntered away.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Redwing of the Remove!

"H ALLO, hallo, hallo!" Morning lessons were long over at Greyfriars when the Bounder, tired and dusty, came in at the gates. Harry Wharton & Co. met him in the quadrangle.

"Redwing's here?" asked Vernon-Smith quickly.

"Yes. I passed the room, and saw him grinding away," said Nugent. "Trotter says he came in just at eleven, and went straight in. He seems to have come on your bike; it's in the quad now."

"What made him so late?" asked Wharton.

"That!" said the Bounder, passing the letter to the captain of the Remove. "A pleasant little forgery to dish him over the exam. You can guess who wrote it!"

Leaving the astounded juniors with the letter, Vernon-Smith went on, and repaired to Mr. Quelch's study to report himself. The Remove-master eyed him sternly.

"You did not attend lessons this morning, Vernon-Smith!" he rapped out, reaching for a cane.

"I am sorry, sir! Redwing was delayed starting for here, and I went over to take him my bike," said the Bounder; "otherwise he would have missed the exam to-day."

Mr. Quelch laid down the cane.

"You should have asked my permission, Vernon-Smith."

"Yes, sir," said the Bounder meekly.

"However, I shall excuse you under the circumstances. Redwing arrived only just in time for the examination," said Mr. Quelch. "You may go."

"Thank you, sir!"

The Bounder left the study, and found the Famous Five in the quadrangle, surrounded by a dozen Removites, all commenting on the letter. Skinner was still in the examination-room with the rest.

"So that's why Redwing didn't come?" asked Bob Cherry, whose ruddy face was dark and angry.

"Yes," said the Bounder quietly. "That letter was written in my hand to keep him away; and it would have succeeded if I hadn't gone for him. Skinner wanted to stop me from going."

"Skinner!"

"Skinner wrote that letter," said Vernon-Smith. "I know it as well as if I'd seen him do it."

"I—I suppose there's not much doubt about that," said Harry slowly. "If—if it could be proved, it ought to be taken before the Head."

"It's proved enough for me," said the Bounder.

And there was very little doubt in any other fellow's mind, and a good many of the Remove were anxious to see Skinner after the exam.

Tom Redwing was at the Remove table at dinner. He looked a little tired, but very cheerful. After dinner Skinner was tackled on the subject of the forged letter. He stared at it, and expressed the opinion that Vernon-Smith must have written it, as it was in his hand.

"Not quite in my hand," said Vernon-Smith. "If it's carefully compared with my writing, Skinner, you can see differences—and resemblances to another fellow's hand. I dare say Mr. Quelch will be able to trace it out, too."

Skinner turned pale.

"Let Redwing take it to Mr. Quelch!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Give it to me," said Redwing.

Vernon-Smith tossed him the letter. Skinner eyed him with alarm.

"I—I say," he muttered, "if—if—Oh!"

Tom Redwing was tearing the letter into little pieces. Skinner breathed hard with relief.

"Fathead!" said the Bounder.

"That's the best thing to do with it," said Tom Redwing quietly. "We don't want a disgrace in the school, you fellows."

"Well, perhaps you're right," said Harry Wharton. "But as for you, Skinner—"

"I—I didn't—"

"Oh, dry up! Gentlemen, I suggest sending Skinner to Coventry for the rest of the term."

"Hear, hear!"

That sentence was passed unanimously. And Skinner, when he thought it over, was glad to get off so cheaply.

Skinner had failed once more—but Tom Redwing had not failed. There were great rejoicings among his Greyfriars friends when at last the news came that the name of Tom Redwing stood at the top of the list. The sailorman's son had "bagged" the Memorial Scholarship; and on the day he took his place in the Remove at Greyfriars he received hearty congratulations on all sides, while Skinner looked on sourly from the cold shades of Coventry. That day the happiest fellow in the three kingdoms was Tom Redwing of the Remove!

(Don't miss "SAVED FROM SHAME!"—next Monday's grand complete story of Harry Wharton & Co., by FRANK RICHARDS.)

The Editor's Chat.

For Next Monday:

"SAVED FROM SHAME!"

By Frank Richards.

Next week's yarn should appeal particularly to our many and loyal Scottish readers, for Robert Donald Ogilvy plays the chief part in it. It is not very often Ogilvy figures as the hero of a story, but we all know that he is one of the best—a rare good specimen of a race second to none in the world for courage and loyalty and resolution.

It should also appeal to the many who like to see Bunter in an important role. But don't fancy that the Owl is to be in any sense a hero—he is most distinctly nothing of the sort! Some of you may still cherish hopes of his complete reformation. I don't. I don't want it. Think what a wet blanket a reformed Bunter would be to everybody! You could never make a Fatty Wynn of him. He would be as self-satisfied in his righteousness as in his iniquity, and would go about telling people how bad they were and how extraordinarily good he was!

Finally, "Saved from Shame" should delight all those who like the stories which link up Greyfriars and the fortunes of the boys there with the great battle-front. For into it comes one of Donald Ogilvy's six soldier brothers—a fine fellow whom you will all like.

OUR COMING SERIAL.

The extracts from the "Greyfriars Herald" and "Tom Merry's Weekly" have been running quite a long time now. We have had them in the MAGNET and in the "Gem." For a short time we had them in both papers at once. But now I am going to give them a rest, though probably not for long. It is likely that when "The Twins from Tasmania" comes to an end in the "Gem" I may restart them there; but I don't promise this.

They have been immensely popular; but

it is possible to get tired of even the best of things, and a really good serial should make a welcome change.

This is a really good one. Some of you will remember former great stories by the same author.

MR. SIDNEY DREW.

They were huge favourites with the MAGNET readers of those days. "Lion Against Bear," "Mysteria," "Through Trackless Tibet," and other yarns of Mr. Drew's were devoured with relish. Ching-Lung and Ferrers Lord and Gan-Waga were household words. I think they will soon be so again, for they all come into the new story.

"THE BROWN TORRENT!"

which will begin in No. 535 of the MAGNET, published

THE WEEK AFTER NEXT!

LIST OF GREYFRIARS STORIES IN THE "MAGNET" (continued).

- 91.—"The Fifth at Greyfriars."
- 92.—"Bunter the Detective."
- 93.—"The Circus at Greyfriars."
- 94.—"The Smugglers' Cave."
- 95.—"Billy Bunter's Christmas Dream."
- 96.—"The Greyfriars Skaters."
- 97.—"The Greyfriars Sweepstake."
- 98.—"The Greyfriars Winners."
- 99.—"Billy Bunter's Resolutions."
- 100.—"Nugent Minor."
- 101.—"The Dandies of the Remove."
- 102.—"The Disappearance of Wun Lung."
- 103.—"The Greyfriars Athletes."
- 104.—"The Greyfriars Fifteen."
- 105.—"Billy Bunter's Find."
- 106.—"The Greyfriars Plot."
- 107.—"The Cad of the Sixth."
- 108.—"Wingate's Secret."
- 109.—"The Remove to the Rescue."
- 110.—"Linley's Luck."

CRICKET NOTICES.

Matches Wanted. Apply—

G. P. Swinnerton, 44, Colehill Lane, Fulham Palace Road, S.W. 6; five players also wanted.

F. W. Chinnery, 20, St. Mark's Road, S.E. 5—age 17—radius 8 miles.

G. W. Hubble, 28, Holmley Street, Albany Road, S.E. 5.

Blackheath Invicta—age 16½.—W. E. Chapman, 5, Elmira Street, S.E. 13.

Players Wanted. Apply—

H. Davies, 2, Walmsley Street, Spring Bank, Hull—radius 3 miles.

NOTICES.

Back Numbers, etc., Wanted.

By Fred Shaw, 61, Pontypridd Road, Porth, Glam.—bound volume of "Boys' Herald" or "Chums."

By R. Mulvaney, 81, Queen Street, City Road, Hulme, Manchester—"Schoolboys Never Shall be Slaves"; Nos. 1 and 2 of "Greyfriars Herald."

By J. Bingham, 33, St. Stephen's Road, Deepdale, Preston, Lancs—"Gems." 434-522; MAGNETS, 453-522—1d.; "Boys' Friend" 3d. Library, 338-414—2½d.; "Boys' Friend" 4d. Library, 415, 410—3d. offered.

By S. Shein, 89, Lower Clapman Street, Cannon Street Road, E.—"Bob Cherry's Barring-Out," "The Bounder of Greyfriars," "The Greyfriars Tyrant," "Bob Cherry in Search of His Father," "The Hidden Horror," "The Postal-Order Conspiracy."

By E. Simmons, 78, Norman Road, Rusholme, Manchester—MAGNETS before 484, with Portrait Gallery, especially No. 20; also MAGNET, 505.

By J. Gardner, 13, Ince Street, Heaton Norris, Stockport—MAGNETS, 205, 150, 257, 305, 364, 119, 133, 392, 253, 190, 148, 172, 179, 283—2d.

By A. E. Johnson, 3/35, Kyrwick Lane, Birmingham—MAGNETS and "Gem" before 300, especially 254. State prices.

Your Editor

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

MOBERLEY'S RAG!

By PETER TODD.

Traffers Tells His Yarn.

M OBERLEY had decided to start a paper in the Lower School. It was his own idea. Nobody else in the wide, wide world would have dreamt of taking that much trouble over such a gang of young rascals.

Moberley had one very dangerous knack—perhaps I should say two. He is awfully, beastly keen on his neighbours' affairs, and he has the most wheedling manner in the world. He could get round the Great Wall of China—not to speak of the Head!

He wanted me to be sub-editor of his rag. That is not what he called it, of course! And he wanted Croale to finance the business. This is the way he set to work on us.

He came to me and said: "Look here, Traffers, I want you to sub-edit my paper."

I told him I was going to boot him out of my study within a short space of time. He was quite unmoved. He said:

"But look here, Traffers, if you're not going to join I might just as well chuck the whole thing up!"

I told him that I thought it the best possible thing he could do. But I was quite pleased with the compliment—you do see where it comes in, don't you?—and I felt better disposed towards the world in general, and Moberley's mag in particular.

He looked out of the window reflectively for a moment or two. He doesn't believe in hurrying over a ticklish job—or so he told me once. And I was the job for the moment! Then, quite suddenly, he wheeled round and blurted out:

"I say, Traffers, you know, you simply must join! I've been telling everybody I was going to have you on my staff. They were a bit doubtful at first, but when they heard that, they gave me far more orders than I could handle alone. You've got a precious lot more influence than you think, Traffers!" He sighed enviously.

I don't quite know how it happened, but, five minutes later, I found myself promising to help Moberley in all things, and to draw a salary of a penny per copy sold. Moberley was going to sell the paper for ninepence per copy. So Moberley said!

He got round Croale in a different way. He appealed to his fine commercial instincts and all that—the Croales are big shipowners—and offered him twopence commission on every copy. In return, Croale promised to lend his influence, such as it was, and to find the money for a jellygraphing machine.

All preliminaries—I think that's the right word—having been settled, we debated what the paper should be called. I thought that "Tit-Bits from Traffers" would take a lot of beating. Croale had an idea that the "Croale Times" would just hit it off. He's a conceited beggar, is Croale! Moberley wanted to call it the "Junior Jottings." Croale and I both thought that was a rotten title, and we said so. But that paper was called the "Junior Jottings," nevertheless!

Then we planned what it was to consist of. We didn't agree very well. Croale and I both had hobbies. Mine was bug-hunting. Croale, on the contrary, was mad on the operatic stage! He thinks he can act and sing. The rest of the school are not of the same opinion. Well, anyhow, we both thought the greater part of the paper should be given up to either bug-hunting or a discussion on the relative merits of certain great actors. Moberley listened to our discussion with great interest. He had already decided that the paper was going to be a comic paper. In other words, a cheap receptacle for his own rotten jokes. Of course, we had to give way, though I can never make out why we did it.

The announcement of the proposed paper—

distributed on leaflets through the school—caused a great sensation. In fact, the prospects of the paper seemed extraordinarily bright. We had already several advance orders on hand—on the cash down basis. Croale soon procured the jellygraphing machine, and all went smoothly towards the great day of publication. Moberley said the first issue must make a great "splash." It was absolutely indispensable. Some tremendous hit must mark our first production. Moberley unfolded his idea.

There was near the school a big property. It belonged to Lord Horncastle, but was let at the time to a terrible old gentleman who passed under the name of Colonel Hoenhythe. This property was strictly out of bounds. It was a pretty place, and very thickly wooded. In times past it had been a great resort for the fellows from the school, but was now too well guarded to make the game of trespass worth the candle.

Moberley proposed that I—I, if you please!—should go there and write a full account of the place. He said, very kindly, that I might even draw a map of it, if I liked! It was no good arguing with Moberley. And Croale was against me besides. The latter merchant even went so far as to say that if I carried out the game he would let me off a certain debt of half-a-quad which I had contracted to the usurious beast! Well, having received this contribution—anonymous, of course—they were going to sell it as an extra supplement to the opening pages of our grand new rag.

I went, and concerning my hairbreadth adventures on the forbidden ground I cannot do better than to quote extracts from my own report.

"At three p.m. I climbed the wall. There was nobody in sight, either on the high-road or on the property of our respected neighbour, Colonel Hoenhythe. So I climbed the wall, and jumped down on the far side. It was a long drop. For the first time I realised what difficulty there would be in climbing back again. The ground hereabouts is on a steep slope. It runs down to a small stream, skirted on either side by low poplars. I passed down towards the stream. It looked an easy jump across it. I jumped. . . . When I was nearly dry again I continued my journey. Above me the great house frowned down on the high-trees and wide lawns. Still not a soul was in sight. I heard a sudden noise. I tracked it down. In a wood near by I found a low, unimpressive building. It was throbbing and pulsing with some powerful machinery within. I noticed that there was much broken glass lying round. I picked up a bit and examined it. Then a choking cough wrung itself, it seemed, from my very vitals. I heard an exclamation from within the building. I fled!

"Behold me, ten minutes later, treed by a great mastiff who seemed to be permitted to roam about the place at leisure. He was an appalling brute! I watched those ugly yellow teeth of his with a kind of horrid fascination.

"Suddenly I remembered hearing how, in the Amazon forests, monkeys travel for hundreds of miles from tree to tree. I only had to cover twenty yards to reach the wall, and the trees were close together. I acted on the idea, and the brute followed me hungrily with his eyes, as though hoping I should drop into his jaws. I believe the poor beast was starving, but I really could not see my way towards providing him with a meal. I felt my continued existence was more important than his dinner.

"I never like to think how I covered those twenty yards. The same feat would have been impossible in an ordinary gym, providing that there was no danger to be anticipated through failure. But a thirty feet drop into the jaws of a hungry beast are a

great inducement to agility. I reached the wall and dropped, or, rather, fell, into the high-road."

Moberley and Croale were jolly bucked with my article. To be sure, both of them thought they could have done better themselves, but still, they said, it was better than they could have expected from me. Croale said he was sorry I forgot the map. But I told him that he needn't worry. A large-scale Ordnance map would tell our readers everything they wanted to know about the lie of the land. Moberley acted on the suggestion, and a copy of this was included in the "make-up" of our paper. We had managed, with infinite trouble, to get the first two dozen copies yesterday. We all three had arranged to get up early and work off the next lot before morning school. There is no doubt Moberley does get his own way a lot too much. It can't be good for him.

Moberley Takes Up the Story.

I READ the article through again to myself, and, as I was sitting in a very comfortable armchair, I quite naturally began to doze. The ideas that I had formed with regard to Traffers' article became very hazy, and I could make neither head nor tail of it—that is, the part that deals with the building in the wood. The vision of that house, grim, mysterious, and throbbing with equally mysterious machines inside its walls, haunted me. Then there was that reference to the broken glass, and the effect it had, or seemed to have.

What could they be doing? Glass-making? Why should the matter be kept secret, if it were so? How else could the presence of the stuff be explained?

Suddenly a wild idea flashed through my mind. It seemed to be the answer required. Why not broken test-tubes? For some elaborate experiments only the finest of glass tubes can be used. They must be absolutely flawless. But then, how could any single man carry on experiments that entailed the wastage of so much glass?

My thoughts then turned to machinery. And from that to the stream. Of course, the swiftly-running stream would furnish all the power required. Besides—another point—it would serve to disguise and deaden the drone of the dynamos—for such they must have been.

Why should the place be set in the middle of a thick wood? Why was it so far from the house and all the roads through the park? Obviously because the thing—whatever it was—had to be kept secret!

And then, again, the absence of any kind of chimney struck me as queer, for there had been mention of smoke. Chimney it might have had, but nobody on the high-road passing in sight of the spinney could catch sight of it. There could be only one answer to any question on the subject. The whole thing was a deep secret, and who could tell what menace that secret held?

And all else paled before this great question—were these secret experiments carried on for the benefit of England or for its destruction?

I pressed my hands to my forehead and thought.

Would an Englishman—even an eccentric one—starve a dog as that dog had evidently been starved? Would he let it run loose, to the possible destruction of any trespasser? For any child might, from sheer mischief, climb that wall. Of course, I had only Traffers' word that the dog was savage; but then, I must take his word for something. I couldn't expect a long trail of circumstantial evidence that would convince a judge and jury.

Well, the long and the short of it was that on the next half-holiday I was in the grounds

of that respectable and irreproachable gentleman, Colonel Hoenhythe. I was also in a blue funk, alone, and unattended. Of my own free will I had decided to leave Traffors and Croale behind, although I knew they would have followed me cheerfully to death at any time. They both happened to have sick-headache at the time, that was all.

I had already crossed the stream. Luckily, it was a sunny day, and my clothes soon dried. Traffors had mentioned that it looked an easy jump. And now I was following the stream along its troubled course towards the hidden power-house. I reached the wood, and came to where the glass dump was. I picked up a fragment of the glass, and returned to school via stream, wall—I think they must have fed the dog that day, for he lay asleep—and high-road. It was all quite simple, and when I reached the school I took the piece of glass to the lab.

There were still some members of the clan of the bacilli of diphtheria, clinging lovingly to that piece of glass, or so the chemistry master said. He said a great deal more, and he impounded that piece of glass besides. He got so excited that I told him the whole story.

The consequence of all these strange events was this: That afternoon certain German gentlemen, engaged in the bottling up of those dear little chaps, the bacilli of diphtheria, had rather a nasty shock. Need I say that they wore gas-helmets? This shock was none other than a visit from the local police, backed by a body of soldiers. And I wouldn't be certain that there wasn't a reporter there! At any rate, the dearly beloved of the pro-Hun gang found themselves in gaol that afternoon, awaiting that trial that an Englishman will never refuse, even to such utter scum as they were. And the result of the trial was that six innocent-looking and respected Teutons were shot and

wiped out of existence in the flower of their beauty.

I had saved the lives of hundreds of innocent women and children and men—men over military age or unfit to fight.

After this the whole story came out, and was known all over England. There were photos in nearly every paper of Traffors, Croale, and me. Those papers which were unlucky enough to have no such photos said nasty things about the ones that had. It was terrific! The old school was besieged by journalists. There were penny-a-liners, and there were famous reporters. Gaston College became world-famous. Before it had not been doing so well; I can't think why. It was far and away the best school in the U.K., though up to now it had never had proper recognition.

As for the fellows there, they didn't know whether they were standing on their heads or their heels. They were getting as proud as peacocks. Invitations were raining on them from all manner of sources—from big country houses and from some big pots who had previously never deigned to notice them. Everybody wanted to know what I looked like, and they took photos of me from all manner of positions till I imagined myself to be Maud Allan. Of course, all three of us could have been buried alive in the letters we received; and, of course, we daren't go outside the doors except in the evening. Even then we were not immune from the many autograph-hunters. Goodness only knows how many times I signed my name in dainty little books!

They had found out all about our little rag. That was the climax! We had, if you remember, just four-and-twenty copies of that excellent journal. We could have sold four millions with ease. At first, being innocent fools, we parted with them at ten quid apiece. Then there came the rush. Trains

couldn't rush down fast enough; the service down to our out-of-the-way place was all too insufficient for the crowd that came rushing down. Wealthy men came down in cars at the rate of, roughly speaking, sixty miles per hour! They were after that last copy. Many American millionaires bought up ships at New York so that they could rush over to England quickly. Traffors, Croale, and I couldn't get our hats on for swelled-headedness.

Then came the crisis! A multi-millionaire from America and a famous newspaper proprietor had fought their way into the school. I think they must each have hired a gang of desperadoes to do their dirty work. At any rate, there they were fighting for the last copy. The bids rose higher and higher. Ten thousand! Twenty! Thirty! ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND! This was the Briton's offer. Then they both spotted the last copy. That ass Traffors had left it on the table on the side. The proceedings degenerated into a free fight. They ended in tearing the paper in two! I rushed in to stop them, and, incidentally, to save the hundred thou.

The American aimed at the newspaper man and missed. He hit me, however, and—it woke me up!

When I was fully awake I found that it was Traffors hitting me on the head with his hairbrush, and imploring me to wake up and help with the copies of the "Junior Jottings." I rushed down and looked at the mag, but could find no mention of the hut in the wood, nor of its infernal test-tubes. I had dreamed it all!

I told them my dream, and they all agreed that it was a rotten dream to have to wake up from. However, we set to work and finished off that issue. And it was quite a success, although we didn't sell it at a thousand pounds a copy.

GRUNDY'S GOAL

By MONTY LOWTHER.

(NOTE.—This is one of Monty's characteristic exaggerations. Grundy can't kick two hundred yards or thereabouts. But never mind!—T. M.)

The notion of George Alfred as a centre makes one weep. Old Grundy as a footballer does sound a trifle steep! But Grundy still imagines, though we leave him on the shelf, that no one's better fitted for a forward than himself!

He worried us continually one Wednesday afternoon. Till Tom said, "Oh, my only aunt, he'll drive me dotty soon! It's nothing but a practice match. Let's offer him a game. I know it's rather weak, but yet it's funny all the same!"

"Of course, it's understood," remarked the wonderful G. A., "My place is centre-forward; if I condescend to play!" "Oh, certainly!" Tom choked, and turned a laugh into a cough. "We'll have some shooting practice now. Would you mind leading off?"

"With pleasure, Merry!" Grundy beamed.

"I shall not need to change. Don't put that ball so near the goal—I'll shoot at longer range!"

I think I'll shoot from here. You see, Herries might like a show.

He doesn't keep goal very well—he brags a lot, you know!"

G. A. seemed puzzled when we all made tracks in haste for goal.

"Here, get away from that!" he roared.

"Are you all up the pole?"

"Oh, not at all!" I answered, with a grin upon my face.

"When you are shooting for a goal, that goal's the safest place!"

"Clear out of it!" George Alfred howled.

"I know now it's a trick! But all the duffers in the world will never stop my kick!"

And if you try to crowd the goal you'll get a nasty shock."

"You don't mean us?" said Levison. "Perhaps you mean the clock!"

Then Grundy gave a little run, and shot with all his might.

No one knew where—we only knew the ball went out of sight!

And Grundy didn't understand until he heard a crash.

Then even Grundy realised he'd been a trifle rash!

"It's only someone's window, though," he muttered, "and it's made."

Me realise the folly of not changing when I played!

It isn't likely that a chap can kick in patent boots—

It's bound to make a difference to the way a fellow shoots!"

"You silly ass!" Tom Merry roared. "Now go and fetch that ball!"

"Fetch it, you fathead! Fetch it, chump!" we hooted one and all.

But Grundy only snorted; he refused to budge a yard.

So, grasping him with many hands, we bumped him—good and hard!

He still protested loudly that he didn't care a jot

Whose was the window, and if we could find the ball or not.

Then Wilkins rushed up with the ball, with Gunny in his train.

For Grundy, by a freak of chance, had smashed his study pane!

SCRAGGED ON SUSPICION!

By H. MANNERS.

"GENTLEMEN!" Grundy's thunderous voice had been booming along the passage for the last ten minutes.

Most of the fellows gave up prep under these conditions, and went along to the common-room to see what the ass was burling about.

Tommy, Monty, and I held out about the longest, but we gave in at last.

"Gentlemen!" Grundy roared, addressing a large but not very amiable meeting.

"What we want, I say, is a gun!"

The only person this had any effect upon was Monty Lowther. He, in a more than usually humorous vein, was bestowing a series of winks and nods upon one William Gunn,

who stood beside the form which supported his leader.

"What's the matter with you, Lowther, you ass?" demanded Grundy. "We want none of your jokes here, if that's your game! I repeat, gentlemen, that what we want is a gun—on the roof, in the quad, or anywhere here! How can the school be properly defended when the nearest is at Wayland? I can see what the Gothas' game is, if you asses can't! They know that there are any number of us here itching to wipe them off the earth when the time comes, so they're trying to do us in—to cut off our supplies!"

Those of us who didn't say "Bosh!" said "Tosh!"

"They're trying to blow up the road be-

tween here and Wayland!" raved Grundy, waving his arms wildly. "Then provisions won't be able to get through to Dame Taggles!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Listen to me!" roared Grundy, trying to make himself heard above the laughter.

"They've come over here to put a full-stop to commerce—"

"Gentlemen, I protest!"

Lowther bounded on to a form, and waved his arms in an exaggerated imitation of George Alfred.

"Fellow-Britishers, how does Grundy know that the Hun newspapers have run short of semicolons?"

(Continued on page 16)

SCRAGGED ON SUSPICION!

(Continued from page 15.)

"Eh?"

"Who's talking about semicolons?" belated Grundy.

"When you put a full-stop to commas you get semicolons," said Lowther. "Grundy says the Hun newspapers are short of semicolons! Now, how does he come by this information?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Sit down, Lowther!" roared Grundy furiously.

"It appears to me," resumed Lowther,

"that Grundy is connected with the German Press—the 'Berliner Tageblatt,' or something—and he's here for spying purposes. In short, he's a Hun!"

"Who's a Hun?" howled Grundy.

"In fact, I strongly suspect," said Lowther, "that his name's Hundy, not Grundy at all!"

"By gum, I'll—"

"The name Grundy is too English to belong to an Englishman," said Lowther, shaking his head. "Huns always rush to extremes, you know. If a Hun's name is Lagerdrunkenstein, he comes over here and calls himself Jones, or—as in this case—Grundy! Down with him, fellow-Britishers, and search him for incriminating evidence!"

We dragged the orator off the form, and stood him upon his head.

"Gerroff! Lemme up! Groooh!"

"There you are!" remarked Lowther, as :

folded—ship of fociscap fell from Grundy's jacket-pocket. "A plan of the school, I wager, with all spots soft enough for bombs to fall upon indigest!"

The paper was certainly scrawled over with crabbed German characters. But it turned out to be nothing more dangerous than an impot which Herr Schneider had set him for liberally offering to fight the whole Form during lessons.

However, it served our purpose. It was quite enough to justify us in putting the extinguisher on Grundy's oratorical powers.

He was bumped hard, amidst howls of merriment—in which he himself did not join—and, owing to some unaccountable accident or other, a lot of ink and soot fell upon him.

He spent the next hour or two in the bath-room, and we were at liberty to finish prep in peace.

THE GREYFRIARS GALLERY.

No. 69.—WALTER BUNTER.

WALLY BUNTER is "the other Bunter."

He does not belong to Greyfriars, but he does to the stories; and, though he has very seldom come into them, I know that many of my readers remember him with strong liking.

It is an interesting problem, this of two fellows almost exactly alike outwardly, but inwardly as dissimilar as fellows can be. Many a novelist has used it. And it has been used more than once in our papers. There was the case of Tom Merry and his double, the rascally Clavering. And there was that of Alonzo and Peter Todd, good fellows both, but as curiously unlike inside as they are curiously alike outwardly. Peter is as shrewd as boys are made, with a touch of sarcasm, of which the guileless Alonzo is absolutely innocent. Peter is strong just where Alonzo is weak. But get down to bed-rock, and you find the likeness after all—the likeness due to the fact that both are good, straight fellows.

Here the Bunter case differs. There are some readers who have developed something like an affection for the ineffable William George. They are ready to credit him with good qualities which, if he possesses them, are wonderfully concealed. I cannot see that Bunter had anything that could be classed as a positive good quality.

It is far otherwise with his Cousin Wally. Here is a fellow who knows how to play the game, and plays it. He has a wonderful appetite, and he carries no end of flesh; but he is not a pig. He resembles Fatty Wynn in character far more than he does his cousin. Wally is a good comrade, a cheery soul, the sort of fellow who would make no end of friends at a school like Greyfriars.

Billy Bunter did not know much of his cousin in their early days. Wally's people belonged to a branch of them that was rather looked down upon by the Bunter family to which Billy and Sammy belong, as not being well off. As a matter of fact, the Billy Bunters, so to call them, are not specially well off. But Mr. Samuel Bunter has had his days of prosperity in the City, and has doubtless swanked there, as his hopeful son swanked at Greyfriars when the big remittances came.

Wally had to go to a small school, and to take his seat on an office stool before he was fifteen. And that was a real pity, for Wally would have been a tower of strength to his Form at a public school. He is a fine cricketer, and, in spite of the weight he has to carry, can no doubt put up a good show on the footer-field. He might be a goal-keeper of the dear old Fatty Wynn type; but I don't think it at all out of the question that he should be a centre-forward of ability, or a good half, for he has learned to carry his burden of flesh more effectively than his cousin ever did; and it is not all fat, either. Under the adipose is a lot of good, honest muscle.

It was at Billy's suggestion that Wally masqueraded at Greyfriars as W. G. B. Billy had gone over to Margate to see Wally, who was then on holiday. Billy felt that he wanted a holiday, too. He could not quite

understand why Wally should think him so lucky for being at school.

The affair was arranged. They changed clothes, and the change was enough. Perhaps Billy's mother might have known the difference. It is hardly likely anyone else would have done.

And, of course, Wally had the advantage of tips from Billy about the school and the fellows there. They did not amount to very much, for in this, as in everything except eating and prying, W. G. B. was lazy. But his cousin has a quicker brain than he, and the few hints were enough to give him a start.

So Billy stayed at Margate, to play the nut on the front, and Wally went to Greyfriars.

No one suspected anything at first. How should they, when they did not even know of the double's existence?



But they wondered. Billy Bunter seemed transformed.

He saved Marjorie and Clara from real danger, and he was quite modest about it. He would not ventriloquise at Cliff House, and that was not like Billy. But Wally wouldn't because he couldn't, which was an excellent reason, you must allow.

Frank Nugent alarmed Wally, by saying he had changed. But Frank made it clear that he did not mean in appearance, only that Bunter had improved. Bunter must have improved when he gave away a huge chunk of cake to a man who seemed hungry, Frank thought. Only it wasn't Bunter, you see, and such a good-natured act came quite easily to the cheery and open-hearted Wally.

To overcome Skinner was nothing for Wally, either; but it would have been something astonishing, though not quite impossible, for the Owl. To make quite a good show at mathematics was easy enough for the other Bunter; but Mr. Lascelles was

surprised, for W. G. B. had never made even a moderate show in any subject. Study No. 7 was almost thunderstricken when Wally, serving pie, took the smallest helping for himself. Temple & Co. were surprised when Bunter showed form at cricket that made them glad to include him in the Fourth Eleven against the Remove, Wharton and the rest really assenting to the arrangement.

Coker was surprised when Bunter stood up to him. Peter Todd got a real shock when Bunter knocked him out. But the biggest and most amazing thing of all was Bunter's success as a bowler.

He got Wharton first ball. He brought off the hat-trick by getting Frank Nugent and Inky with the next two. In the event the Remove were all out for 56. Wally had taken eight wickets, and had caught the other two men from other bowlers! And in the end he won the match for his side by his batting at a critical time.

And all the time the only fellow who had smelt a rat at all was Sammy Bunter. That guileful youth had been bribed to silence. It was through him that the truth came out; but that was not until Wally had gone back to the hated office stool, and Billy had returned, sunburned and self-satisfied as ever from the Margate Parade.

The second appearance of Wally at Greyfriars was connected with an elaborate spoof on the part of the scheming Owl. Wally came over to see his cousin, and ran against Percy Bolsover, who was amazed when the fellow he took for Billy Bunter, instead of accepting a bumping, handed out one. He understood when he knew that it was the other Bunter. The Famous Five and their chums were very glad to see Wally again. They would have liked his help in their coming match against St. Jude's, but for that it was necessary that someone should take his place in the office at Canterbury, and Billy flatly refused to do that, asking haughtily whether he looked like an office chap, and adding that it would be derogatory to his personal dignity as a gentleman.

But after Wally had gone Billy thought out a plot. He allowed himself to be bribed to go and be an "office chap" for an afternoon, and let Wally come and play. But he did not go. It was W. G. B. who played in the first innings of the match, and did—well, much what might have been expected of him. He had pretended to go to Canterbury, and had, of course, collected his fare—first-class—in advance. He had insisted upon a luncheon-basket. But he dodged back. It was the unexpected turning-up of Wally, who had managed to get part of the afternoon off, that exposed the fraud. And Wally came into the team instead of Billy, and after all the Remove won, though I fear the laws of cricket were badly cracked, if not actually broken, by that substitution!

Anyway, Billy Bunter was bumped, and Wally was the hero of the hour. He will always be sure of a welcome from Wharton & Co.—as soon as they are sure that he is Wally and not Billy, that is.