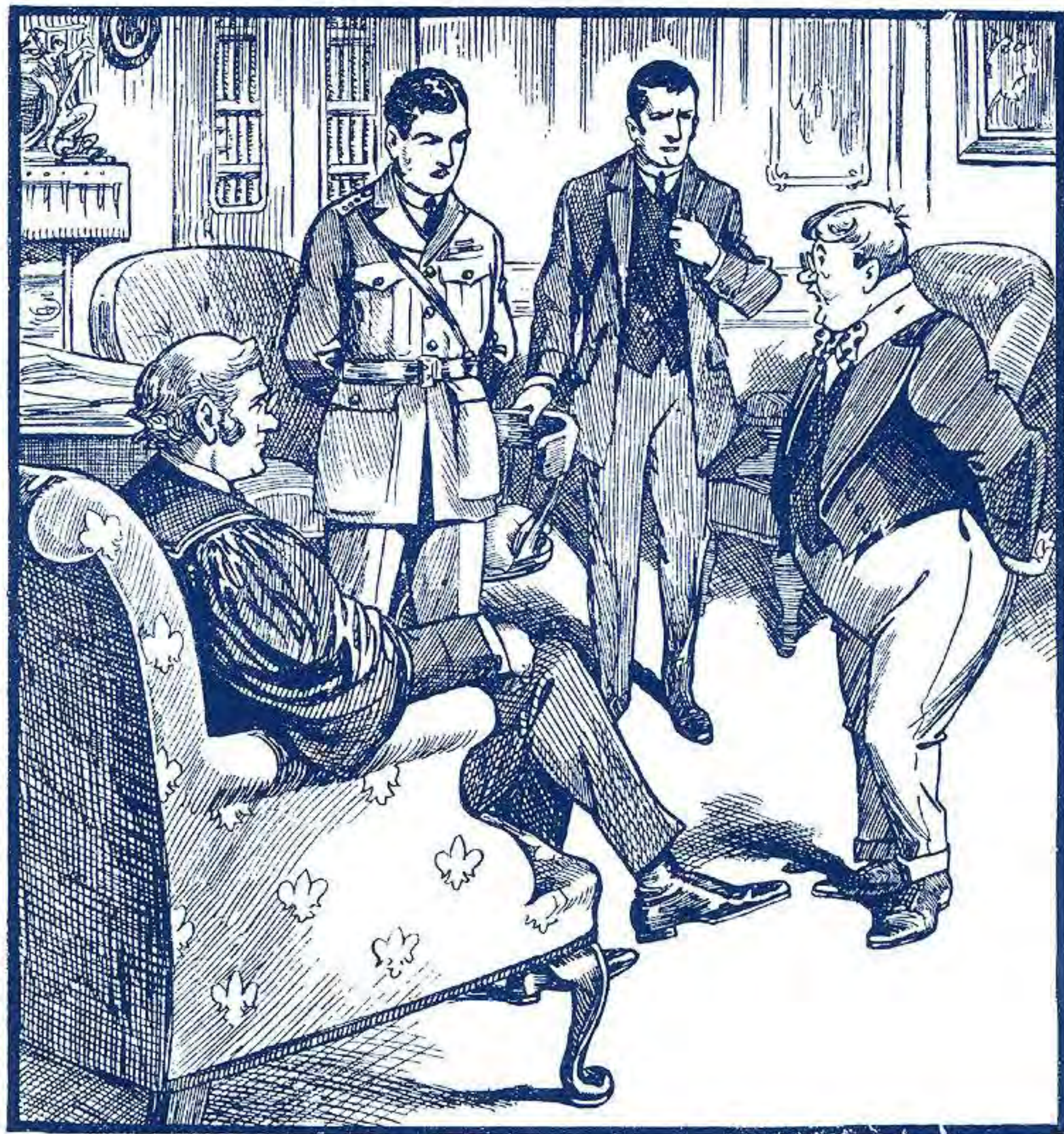


SAVED FROM SHAME!



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ON THE CARPET!

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

SAVED FROM SHAME!

By
Frank
Richards.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Backing Up Ogilvy!

"DONALD, old chap!" Robert Donald Ogilvy, of the Remove, ought really to have looked pleased on being addressed by Billy Bunter in that affectionate and chummy way.

But he didn't.

He frowned.

"You fat duffer!" was his ungrateful reply.

"Oh, really Donald—"

"If you call me Donald again," said Ogilvy, in measured tones, "I'll biff you! Hand me over that stump, Russell!"

Dick Russell grinned, and passed the cricket-stump over to his study-mate. Billy Bunter jumped back so quickly that his glasses slid down his fat little nose, and he grabbed at them in a hurry.

"Look here, Ogilvy, you beast—" he began warmly.

Ogilvy chuckled.

"That's all right," he said. "You can keep that up."

"I hear that your brother's coming to-morrow, Don—Ogilvy, I mean."

"He's coming," assented Ogilvy. "Could you manage to have an engagement out of gates to-morrow afternoon, Bunter?"

"Certainly I could," said Bunter. "Wharton's pressing me to go over to Cliff House with him. I've declined to go, however. Mauly wants me to go for a walk with him, but I don't care about it. I've half promised Temple of the Fourth to take him to a matinee, but I really don't know. The fact is—"

"Well, close on one of those engagements, there's a good chap!"

"What do you want me out of gates for?" asked Bunter, blinking at the Scottish junior suspiciously.

"Well, if you're here, you know, my brother Malcolm might see you."

"Suppose he does?"

"I don't want him to think he's got into the Zoo by mistake!" said Ogilvy, with a serious shake of the head.

"Why, you—you—you—" stuttered Bunter, in great wrath, while Russell gave a roar. "You—you silly chump—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I was going to offer to stand by you, and help you look after your brother to-morrow," said Bunter warmly.

"There won't be a spread," answered Ogilvy. "No spreads in war-time. So it wouldn't interest you."

"That's all you know," answered Bunter. "The fact is, I was going to help in getting a spread for the chap. I think it's up to Greyfriars to be hospitable when a soldier chap comes here."

"My only hat!" exclaimed Russell. "He's got his postal-order at last, and he's going to spring it on your brother to-morrow! Good old Bunter!"

"I—I haven't exactly got my postal-order yet," said Bunter cautiously. "I'm expecting it hourly, but there's been delay in the post, owing to these blessed

ration schemes, I expect. 'Tain't that. I've got a wheeze."

"Go and tell somebody else, old son," said Russell. "Never mind the grub question now."

"But it's a jolly good idea!" said Bunter eagerly. "I've got jolly good reason to believe that Loder of the Sixth is hoarding. He has jolly good feeds in his study, and where does the grub come from, unless he's got some hidden? Well, my idea is that you should go to his study, Ogilvy—"

"I!" exclaimed Ogilvy.

"Yes, and Russell can keep watch—"

"Oh, can I?" grunted Russell.

"Yes, that's the idea. You collar the tommy, you know, and we go halves," said Bunter eagerly. "That's fair, you know. Yaroooh!" yelled Bunter, breaking off at that point, as a heavy hand clapped him on the shoulder from behind.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob Cherry genially. "What's the matter with you, Bunt? What are you howling about?"

"Yooop! You thundering ass—"

"What's the row?" demanded Bob.

"You've nearly busted my shoulder!" yelled Bunter.

"Pooh! That's nothing! You've nearly busted my ear-drums!" said Bob. "Come in, you fellows! Dry up, Bunt; there's nothing to howl about."

The Co. followed Bob Cherry into the study—Harry Wharton, Frank Nugent, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. Ogilvy looked at them in surprise.

"What do you fellows want?" he asked.

"Nothing," said Harry Wharton, with a smile. "We've come to lend a hand with the lines."

"Oh, my lines for Loder?"

"That's it. You'll be kept in to-morrow if they're not handed in to-night, so here we are, ready for work."

"I say, that's jolly good of you!" said Ogilvy gratefully. "The beast slammed three hundred on me just because my boot caught him on the ear when I was sliding down the banisters. I couldn't get them done and do my prep as well. And if I don't—"

"If you don't you'll be detained when the merry Highlander comes along to-morrow afternoon," said Nugent.

"Give us a copy of your fist, and we'll all whack them out. Loder never looks at the lines, so it won't matter if there's a bit of difference here and there."

"The matterfulness will not be terrific," remarked Hurree Singh.

"Right you are!" said Ogilvy brightly.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Buzz off, Bunter; we're busy!" granted Johnny Bull.

"But I say—"

"Do you want to help with the lines?" demanded Ogilvy.

"Nunno!"

"Then clear!"

"I—I'd help like anything, old chap, only—only I've sprained my wrist," explained Bunter.

"I'll sprain your ear if you don't travel!"

"But about that spread."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Is there a spread going?" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Blessed if I see how you do it on rations!"

"I'm standing the spread, when Ogilvy's brother comes," said Bunter, with dignity.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Well, not exactly standing it—but I know where the stuff is to be got. You're the chap to get it, Bob. Loder's hoarding it—"

"Oh, scat!"

"Perhaps you'd better go, Wharton. You've got more pluck than Cherry."

"Not a bit," answered the captain of the Remove, laughing. "If you want to scoff Loder's grub, Bunter, you can do the scoffing yourself."

"Perhaps you'd better go, Inky—"

"The perhapsfulness is terrific, my esteemed fathead!"

"Look here, who's going, then?" demanded Bunter.

"You're going," answered Ogilvy; and he took the Owl of the Remove by the ear and led him into the passage, to the accompaniment of a loud howl from Billy Bunter. "Buzz off! Go and dream about grub somewhere else."

"Yow-ow-ow!"

Ogilvy came into the study again and closed the door. Seven juniors found room to sit round the study table, and pens were produced, and dipped into the ink. Against an inkstand the copy was set up; the work of many hands was to be as like Ogilvy's own "fist" as possible.

"Which of your blessed brothers is coming, kid?" asked Bob Cherry.

"You've got about a dozen, I believe."

"Six!" smiled Ogilvy.

"And all in khaki?"

"Every one."

"Bravo!"

"Age from nineteen up to thirty-three," said Ogilvy, who was very proud—with reason—of the distinction of having six brothers in the King's khaki. "And, if the war lasts long enough, I shall make seven."

"And which one is coming here—the general, the colonel, the major, the captain, or the merry private?" asked Bob.

"There isn't a general in the family—yet," said Ogilvy. "One's a major, one's a captain, two lieutenants, and two privates. Malcolm's a captain. He's on leave, and dropping in here to see me before he goes North. Look here, Loder said Virgil. Will it do to begin 'Arma virumque cano'?"

"Better give that a rest," said Wharton, with a laugh. "Begin with the merry shipwreck scene, and take it in batches."

The study door opened, and Billy Bunter's spectacles glimmered in.

"I say, you fellows!"

"Scat!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Loder's going out with Carne presently; I heard him say so."

"Buzz!"

"It'll be a splendid chance," urged Bunter. "Suppose you cut into his study, Bull, while Nugent keeps watch—"

Bob Cherry grabbed up the inkpot, and the door closed quickly. Then the chums of the Remove set to work on the imposition. Many hands made light work, and the impot, large as it was, was not likely to take long with so many helpers. But in a few minutes' time the door opened again, cautiously, and Billy Bunter blinked in once more.

"I say, you fellows—"

Whiz!

"Yoooooop!"

Ogilvy had a cushion ready that time, and it caught the Owl of the Remove before he could escape. Billy Bunter sat down in the passage with a terrific yell.

"Well bowled!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The door was slammed after Bunter. It was not opened again. William George Bunter had given it up.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Loder's Fiver!

"GREAT SCOTT!"

Billy Bunter uttered that exclamation with a gasp, and his eyes fairly shone behind his big glasses.

The Owl of the Remove was blinking cautiously in at the door of Loder's study in the Sixth-Form passage.

For a long time Billy Bunter had hesitated, after the failure of his wily attempt to enlist the chums of the Remove in the raid on Loder's study. Like the monkey in the story, Bunter would have preferred to make use of a catpaw to pull his chestnuts out of the fire. But as there was no assistance to be had, the fat junior had resolved, at last, to take the risk himself. Gerald Loder was out with Carne, so there was really little risk, unless Loder should come in suddenly.

Nobody but Bunter suspected the existence of a food-hoard in Loder's study. But Bunter's thoughts ran continually upon food. Even in those dear, dead days beyond recall, when there was enough food to go round, Billy Bunter never considered that he got enough. And under a system of rations Bunter found life hardly worth living. He thought of food, he dreamed of food, and he longed for peace to "break out" so that he could celebrate the occasion with a terrific spread. Loder of the Sixth had several times had Sixth-Form fellows in to tea of late, and that was quite enough for Bunter; he suspected hoarding. And he considered that he would be justified in confiscating that hoard. He had a very safe place to stow it in, where it could never be discovered by the keenest Food Controller.

But as William George Bunter blinked into the empty study, even food vanished from his mind for the moment. For on the study carpet, between the door and the window, lay a banknote, evidently blown there by the draught. Bunter's eyes quite bulged as he saw the figure "5" on the note.

Loder had certainly been very careless. Bunter observed a torn envelope lying on the table, and the senior had left the banknote there with the envelope while he read his letter, and left it there when Carne had called him suddenly out of the study. The breeze had caught it and transferred it to the floor, where it caught Bunter's startled eyes.

Billy Bunter gave a cautious blink along the passage. It was quite deserted. He whipped into the study, and closed the door after him softly.



Chasing Bunter! (See Chapter 2.)

His fat face was flushed now, and his heart palpitating. His fat fingers shook as he picked up the banknote.

It was a fiver—a real fiver! The mere sight of the fiver caused visions of tuck to float before Bunter's eyes. Somehow, anyhow, the "grub rules" could be dodged, with five pounds in his pocket. But Billy Bunter, though a young rascal in many respects, was not a thief, and he stood with the banknote in his fingers, struggling with temptation. Even Billy Bunter couldn't feel that he had a right to confiscate Loder's banknote. With a deep sigh he laid it on the study-table, but he could not leave it there. Like a magnet it drew his eyes, and he simply could not tear them away.

"It's rotten!" mumbled Bunter. "He's a beast, and I believe he's a food-hog. He will very likely spend that fiver on grub. Or—or horses, most likely. I know jolly well Loder goes in for betting. That's disgraceful, especially in war-time. He deserves to lose that note."

The temptation was strengthening again.

"Then it was lost," said Bunter, arguing with himself. "It was blown away—might have been blown out of the window. Loder deserves to lose it for being careless with money. Besides, leaving it about is a temptation to a dishonest sort of chap—there are such chaps! He oughtn't to do it. It would serve him right to lose that note!"

Bunter's fat fingers were stretched out, but he dropped them again. With all his arguments he could not make up his mind to do it.

But a sudden thought flashed into his mind, and he brightened up.

"It was lost!" he murmured. "Well, when a banknote's lost you have to offer a reward for it. Loder ought to offer a pound reward, at least, for a lost fiver. That's fair! Suppose the note was blown out into the quad, and—and I picked it up. I—I should keep it till it was inquired after, and—and then give it to the owner, and there ought to be a reward. Well, if I find it on the study floor it comes to the same thing. Besides, Loder's a beast! He hoards food, and he kicked me yesterday!"

Billy Bunter caught up the banknote.

The next moment he gave a gasp of terror, and the study door opened.

"Ow!" he gasped. "I—I say, Loder, I—I haven't touched your banknote—Oh!"

It was not Loder.

It was Ogilvy of the Remove who came into the study, with his finished impot in his hand. Many hands had made light work, and the task was done.

Ogilvy stopped, and stared at Bunter. "Hallo! What are you up to?" he exclaimed. "What's that you're babbling about a banknote?"

"N-n-nothing!"

"Why, there it is 'in your paw!'" exclaimed Ogilvy, glancing at the note.

Bunter's fingers closed desperately on the fiver.

He had spent quite a little time in arguing with himself on the subject, but at the prospect of being deprived of the note he felt as if it were his at once, and was determined to resist.

"You picked that up in this study, you utter idiot!" exclaimed Ogilvy. "Put it where you found it at once!"

"You mind your own business!" growled Bunter. "What's the good of putting a banknote on the floor?"

"Put it on the table under a paper-weight, then."

"I don't see any paper-weight."

"Here's a book that will do," said Ogilvy.

"The—the fact is—"

"Are you potty?" exclaimed Ogilvy. "Loder will accuse you of stealing that note if he finds it in your paw. Haven't you sense enough not to touch other people's money?"

Ogilvy was really alarmed for the Owl. He was well acquainted with Bunter's dubious ideas on the subject of "meum and tuum," and he knew that the Owl was obtuse enough to find a reason for keeping a thing simply because he wanted it. Ogilvy laid his lines on the table, and came towards Bunter.

"Put it down at once!" he exclaimed.

"Do you think I'm going to steal it?" hooted Bunter.

"I think you're almost fool enough," answered Ogilvy. "Anyway, put it

down, and I'll see you safe out of the study."

"I—I'm going to take it to Loder."

"You're going to leave it here, you owl!"

"Look here, you mind your own business, Ogilvy! I haven't asked you for advice," said Bunter angrily. "It looks to me as if you want to pinch this note yourself as soon as my back's turned!"

"What!" yelled Ogilvy.

"Well, I'm going to think about it. I think there ought to be a reward. I—"

Ogilvy made a stride towards Bunter, and the Owl dodged round the table and fled from the study.

"Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Ogilvy, in dismay.

He ran into the passage after Bunter.

With the banknote crumpled in his fat hand, Bunter was fleeing, with no very clear idea in his head as to what he was going to do with the note. But Ogilvy knew very well that, if Billy Bunter escaped with the banknote, somehow or other he would reason himself into thinking that he had a right to change it at Uncle Clegg's for a feed. And the result of a proceeding of that sort was a little too serious. Ogilvy ran down the passage after the fat junior, and at the corner his hand fell on Bunter's collar. In the side passage Bunter was brought to a halt.

"Yow!" gasped Bunter. "Leggo!"

"Give me that note, you fat fool!" exclaimed Ogilvy angrily. "I'll take it back to the study."

"Yah! You want to pinch it! Ow, ow!" howled Bunter, as the Scottish junior shook him fiercely.

"Take it back yourself!" exclaimed Ogilvy angrily. "Take it back at once!"

"Tain't your business!"

"It's anybody's business, I think, to see that a fat idiot doesn't get himself expelled for theft!" exclaimed Ogilvy.

"Ow!" gasped Bunter.

Put in that plain language, it had a startling effect even upon Bunter's obtuse brain.

"What do you think Loder would do if he missed the note?" said Ogilvy. "He would think it had been stolen, at once. Take it back!"

"I—I'm going to give it to Loder, you know!"

"Take it back, you fat duffer!"

Billy Bunter wriggled in Ogilvy's grasp, blinking longingly at the little back staircase by which he had intended to escape.

"Leggo!" he growled. "I—I'll go—"

"Back up, then!" said Ogilvy, releasing his collar.

Bunter made a jump for the stairs, instead of going towards Loder's study. Ogilvy whipped after him and pinned him on the little stair, and there was a howl from the fat junior.

"Yow! I—I'm going!" he gasped.

"You silly idiot!" exclaimed Ogilvy. "Give me the note at once! I'll take it back."

He seized the note and took it from Bunter, and turned away.

Bunter blinked after him as he turned the corner, striding swiftly, and the next moment he heard a collision, and a sharp voice exclaimed:

"I thought so! Come with me, you young thief!"

Billy Bunter stood petrified for a moment as he heard that word. Then quickly and silently he slipped out at the door at the bottom of the little stair and hurried away.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Caught Red-handed!

"**B**UCK up!" growled Carne. "Right-ho! Wait for me." "Blessed if I ever saw such an ass!" grunted Carne.

"Fancy leaving a banknote in your study and not thinking of it till we were half-way to Friardale!"

"You yelled to me to come while I was reading my letter!" snapped Loder. "If you hadn't been in such a thundering hurry—"

"Oh, rot!"

Loder and Carne were both looking and feeling irritable. The black sheep of the Sixth were engaged upon one of their little shady excursions that afternoon, and they had been half-way to the rendezvous when Loder remembered that he had left his fiver behind. There was nothing for it but to return, and Carne had grouched and Loder had snapped all the way back.

Gerald Loder strode along the Sixth Form passage to his study, leaving Carne waiting and sniffing.

He found his study door open, and scowled. Someone had been there, and had been careless enough to leave the great man's door open.

He caught sight of Ogilvy's impotently lying on the table, and mentally resolved to give the junior a cuff when he saw him again. Evidently Ogilvy had been to the study and left the door wide open after him.

But it was the banknote Loder was thinking of chiefly, and he picked up the envelope from the table, expecting to see the fiver there. But it was not there.

"Oh, hang it!" muttered Loder.

He glanced round the room.

If the banknote had been wafted off the table by the draught from the open window it ought to have been lying in sight, as it would have been but for Billy Bunter's intervention.

But there was no sign of it.

"Hang it!" repeated Loder. "Where's that dashed banknote?"

"Are you ever coming?" inquired Carne, in a tone of long-suffering patience, looking into the study.

"I can't find the confounded note!" snapped Loder.

"Don't you know where you left it?"

"On the table with the envelope, when you howled at me to come."

"Well, isn't it there?"

"The envelope's there."

"The banknote hasn't walked away, I suppose?" inquired Arthur Carne sarcastically.

"Dashed if I know where it's gone! I can't see it anywhere!"

"It's not been taken, I suppose?" asked Carne, looking round. "Anybody been in the study?"

Loder started.

"Yes; a Remove kid's been here while I was out. There's his lines on the table. It was Ogilvy of the Remove. But—but—"

Carne sneered.

"I'd ask Ogilvy what's become of the fiver, if I were you," he said.

"Oh, rot! He wouldn't touch it! He's a cheeky little beast, but not that sort. Bunter or Skinner, perhaps—"

"Well, he's been here, and the note's gone! He must have seen it!"

"Yes, he saw it, I suppose. It was under his nose when he put his lines here."

"Well, ask him if he's seen it!"

"It—it must have blown about the study somewhere—"

Loder looked round helplessly and angrily. The note was not to be seen, and it was unlikely enough that it could have blown into a hidden corner.

"Oh, don't be an ass!" snapped Carne.

"Ask Ogilvy what he's done with it!"

"I don't believe he's touched it."

"Well, are we going to stand here all the afternoon?" growled Carne. "Ifawke will be giving us up."

Loder strode out of the study, and looked up and down the passage. There was no banknote to be seen there.

"He mayn't have got far with it," said Carne. "You go one way, and I'll go the other, and we'll see if he's got it."

"I don't believe—"

"Oh, rats! Let's see, anyway!"

"All right!"

Loder strode away towards the School House doorway and the stairs, Carne ran up the passage in the opposite direction. He uttered a sharp exclamation as he reached the corner, for a junior came quickly round at the same moment and ran into him.

It was Ogilvy.

Carne started back, and Ogilvy uttered an exclamation. In the junior's hand was a banknote, and it caught Carne's eyes at once.

"I thought so!" he said grimly.

"Come with me, you young thief!" He grasped the Removeite by the collar and dragged him along the passage.

Ogilvy, astonished and angry, resisted vigorously.

"Let go!" he shouted. "What are you up to, Carne, hang you? Let go my collar, or I'll jolly well kick your shins!"

"You come along with me, you young thief!"

"What!" gasped Ogilvy.

"Loder!" shouted Carne.

"Hallo! Found it?" came back Loder's voice.

"Yes; and the thief, too!"

"By gad!"

Loder came quickly up as Carne dragged the junior into the study. Ogilvy tore himself away from the Sixth-Former, his face flushed and furious, panting. The banknote was still in his hand.

"You rotten bully!" he shouted.

Loder's eyes were glued on the banknote.

"Is that my note?" he shouted.

"Whose do you think it is? sneered Carne. "I caught him dodging out by the back stairs."

"That a lie!" shouted Ogilvy. "I wasn't dodging out! I was coming back!"

"You were going to bring the note back after stealing it?" exclaimed Loder.

"You silly fool, I didn't steal it!" yelled Ogilvy. "I was bringing it back!"

"Give it to me," said Loder.

Ogilvy flung the note on the table.

Loder closed the study door. The junior, flushed and angry, faced the two angry and suspicious seniors.

"This has got to be explained, Ogilvy," said Loder quietly. "You came into my study while I was out and took the banknote from the table—"

"I didn't!"

"Why, you were found with it in your hand!" exclaimed Loder angrily.

"I was bringing it back, as I told you!"

"How could you bring it back if you hadn't taken it away?" demanded Loder.

Ogilvy gave an angry laugh.

"Is that puzzle too much for your brain?" he exclaimed. "You silly idiot, do you think I would touch your money? Somebody else took it away, and I took it from him to bring it back!"

"Oh, ye gods, what a yarn!" said Carne, with a sneering laugh. "Can't you make up something better than that, you young thief?"

"How dare you call me a thief!" exclaimed Ogilvy passionately. "You're a liar, Carne! You know you're a liar!"

"Better language!" said Carne, scowling.

"Better language yourself, then! You've called me a thief!" said Ogilvy savagely. "You know I wouldn't touch Loder's money!"

"You did touch it!" said Loder. "I'm afraid your yarn's a little too steep, Ogilvy. Still, as a prefect I'm bound to make an inquiry. You can tell me the name of the fellow you accuse, and I'll question him."

"I don't accuse anybody."

"You said—"

"I said that a fellow took your bank-note from the study," answered Ogilvy. "I went after him, and got it back, and was going to leave it here. That's all."

"Then the other fellow you mention was stealing it?"

"He was taking it."

"Isn't that stealing it?"

"I—I suppose so."

"Well, then, who was it?"

Ogilvy did not answer.

"Will you give me his name, or own up that you've invented the whole yarn?" exclaimed Loder.

"I've told you the truth, but I'm not going to sneak about a fellow," said Ogilvy. "I interfered to get him out of a row, not to get him into one."

Loder shrugged his shoulders. He had not the slightest doubt on the subject now. The evidence was, in fact, too overwhelming to leave any room for doubt.

Ogilvy realised that himself, and he was pale and troubled now. His kind action had landed him in a serious scrape—how serious he did not yet fully realise, though it was dawning upon him.

"Is that all you have to say?" asked Loder.

"Yes," said the junior, setting his lips.

"I suppose you know what I'm bound to conclude?"

"You can conclude what you like."

"Very well. Come with me. You know I've got to take you to the Head, I suppose, and report you for theft?"

Ogilvy panted.

"Loder! You don't believe—you can't believe—"

"Oh, don't be a young ass!" said Loder. "Isn't it as plain as daylight? I suppose you don't expect me to look over such a thing as theft? Come along!"

"I—I—"

"Look here, you can't go to the Head now!" exclaimed Carne. "It'll take up the rest of the afternoon. It can wait."

Loder hesitated.

He had some sense of duty as a prefect, though very little. Such a charge against a Greyfriars fellow was an important matter—far more important than his appointment out of doors, even if the latter had been of a less questionable nature. But he nodded assent to Carne.

"Come to my study at half-past six, Ogilvy," he said. "I'll give you till then. And if there's any truth in the yarn you've spun, bring with you the fellow you say took the note."

"I'll try to do that," said Ogilvy. "I think he'll come, when I tell him how it looks now."

Loder stared.

"Do you mean to say it's the truth?" he exclaimed.

"Yes, of course."

"Oh!" Loder scanned the junior's face very keenly. "Well, if there's any truth in it, you'll have a chance to prove it. I'll give you time. Come on, Carne!"

The two Sixth-Formers quitted the study. Ogilvy followed them slowly, his face pale and harassed. Loder and Carne strode away towards Friardale, to keep their appointment with Mr. Jerry Hawke and his sporting friends, and they dismissed the matter from their minds. But Ogilvy could not dismiss it.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Ogilvy's Scrape!

HARRY WHARTON & Co. were chatting by the window in the Remove passage when Robert Donald Ogilvy came up the stairs. The Famous Five were discussing the coming cricket season, in cheery mood. One of the earliest fixtures was with Highcliffe School; and the chums of the Remove were looking forward to it keenly. They intended to give Courtenay & Co., of Highcliffe, a "terrific lickfulness," as Hurree Jamset Ram Singh described it.

But deep as they were in the fascinating subject of the great summer game, the juniors noted the expression on Ogilvy's face as he passed them.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Hold on, my infant!"

Ogilvy stopped.

"You're looking specially cheery, and no mistake," said Bob. "What's the matter? Wasn't Loder satisfied with the impot, after all the trouble we took with it?"

"It was really a work of art," said Harry Wharton, with a smile. "I don't believe Loder could tell where one bit began and another ended."

"Suspicious beast, though," remarked Nugent. "Did he spot it, Ogilvy?"

Ogilvy shook his head.

"I don't think he's looked at it," he said. "He's gone out again. I—I say, I've got into an awful scrape."

His voice faltered.

The Co. became serious at once. They liked Donald Ogilvy, who was a popular fellow in his Form, and his harassed look made them concerned.

"Tell your Uncle Robert," said Bob Cherry. "What's the matter, kid?"

"I—I—I'm afraid I was rather an ass," muttered Ogilvy. "I never thought how it would look. It was through that fool Bunter."

He explained what had happened in Loder's study.

Harry Wharton & Co. were very grave as they listened.

"Just like Loder!" growled Johnny Bull, when the Scottish junior had finished. "He would suspect a chap!"

"Well, the banknote had been taken, you see," said Ogilvy. "I don't think Bunter really meant to steal it, but you know what a fool he is. He would have got himself suspected, at least. It was sheer ill-luck Loder coming in just then, with Carne. I thought they were gone to Friardale. Somebody said so. He may have forgotten the fiver and come back for it, though. Careless idiot to leave it lying about his study!"

"What was Bunter doing there?" asked Bob.

"I don't know. I found him in the study."

"Looking for grub, very likely," remarked Nugent. "You remember the rot he was talking about Loder having a hoard."

"Yes; that's it, I suppose."

"But it's all serene, if you explain the facts," said Johnny Bull slowly. "It was Bunter took the note, and he can explain what he took it for. It's his bizney, anyway."

"I—I know. But—"

"But what?"

"I refused to mention Bunter's name," said Ogilvy, flushing. "I—I thought it would be a good deal like sneaking to give him away. He would get into an awful row. The Head doesn't know him as we do; and he would simply conclude that Bunter was stealing the note."

"So he was," grunted Johnny.

"Draw it mild, Johnny," said Bob. "Bunter wouldn't steal—only he has a weird way of thinking anything is his if

he wants it. The silly ass ought to be spifficated for touching the note!"

Harry Wharton knitted his brows thoughtfully.

"You'd be justified in telling the facts, Ogilvy," he said, after a pause. "If you don't mention Bunter, you'll have to take the blame yourself; and it's a bit too serious for that. To put it plain, Loder's bound to take the matter up, as a prefect, and on the face of it you'll be condemned. The Head can't look over a thing like that. That means the sack."

Ogilvy nodded.

"I can't be expected to face that," he said.

"Of course you can't."

"But—but if Bunter would own up, it would be better," muttered Ogilvy. "I—I can't make up my mind to give him away. I interfered with him of my own accord, to keep him out of trouble."

"Bunter will have to own up," said Harry. "Where is he?"

"I think he scudded out by the little staircase at the end of the Sixth Form passage."

"Well, we'll look for him, and put it to him," said the captain of the Remove.

"He's bound to own up."

"I hope he will," said Ogilvy.

The Scottish junior went on to his own study, where he found his chum, Dick Russell. Russell was arranging empty jam-jars on the mantelpiece, with some pride.

"They're for flowers," he explained, as Ogilvy came in. "I've asked the Head's gardener, and he's going to let me have some to-morrow. We want to make the place look a bit decent for Brother Malcolm—what?"

Ogilvy started. In the worry of the scrape he had fallen into he had forgotten, for the moment, that Captain Ogilvy was due at Greyfriars on the morrow. It gave him a pang as he remembered. Was his brother, fresh from the Front, to find him in black disgrace, and in danger of being expelled from his school?

"What's the matter, Don?" exclaimed Russell, looking at him. "Trouble with Loder?"

"Worse than that!"

The story was told over again. Russell listened in dismay.

"Well, you were an ass," he commented. "You ought to have kicked Bunter back into the study, with the note in his paw!"

"Well, I couldn't very well do that, Dick. But I suppose Bunter will have the decency to own up, when he knows what a scrape I've got into."

"I wouldn't bet on that!" growled Russell. "I hope to goodness he will, though! It will be jolly serious if he doesn't."

"If he doesn't, I shall have to give his name," said Ogilvy. "I can't be expected to sit down under an accusation of theft for his sake!"

"Bunter may deny it."

"But—"

"You know what a dashed Prussian he is!" said Russell savagely. "And if he's scared he may deny the story."

"Oh!"

"And then it's your word against his, and all the evidence against you," said Russell, knitting his brows.

Ogilvy turned deadly pale.

"Dick, do you mean the fellows won't believe—"

"I don't know."

"You believe me?" gasped Ogilvy.

It was the first time that the thought had come into his head that his version of the affair might not find believers if Bunter denied it.

"Of course I do, ass!" snapped Russell angrily. "I believe you, you THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 534.

chump! But will the fellows—and the Head? But—but that fat brute's got to be made to own up, whether he likes it or not!" Russell clenched his hands. "I'll hammer him to a jelly if he doesn't! Let's go and look for the owl."

Ogilvy sank into a chair.

It was the first time the real position had dawned upon the unhappy junior, and he felt overwhelmed by the terrible possibility before him.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Surprise for the Co.!

"SEEN Bunter?"

Harry Wharton & Co. were asking that question up and down Greyfriars.

But nobody seemed to have seen Bunter.

Many of the fellows had gone out after lessons; but the Co. questioned dozens who were about the school, and they all answered in the negative.

Only Lord Mauleverer, who was about the twentieth they tackled, remembered to have seen the fat junior since lessons.

"Yaas, I've seen him," his lordship said, with a nod. "I remember now, he was goin' down to the gates."

"Then he's gone out?"

"I don't know, dear boy."

"Sure you saw him, you sleepy duffer?" asked Bob.

"Oh, yaas! I remember bein' surprised because he passed me without speakin'," explained his lordship. "I thought he was going to borrow money of me, as usual. But he rolled by without even lookin' at me."

"When was that?" asked Harry.

"After lessons."

"Yes, ass; but it's two hours or more since lessons. How long ago did you see Bunter?"

"Might have been an hour," said Lord Mauleverer, with an effort of recollection.

"Or more?" asked Harry.

"Oh, yaas; or more."

"Or less?" hooted Johnny Bull.

"Oh, yaas; or less," agreed his lordship placidly.

"Fathcad!"

And the Famous Five went on with their search, leaving the slacker of the Remove yawning.

But they did not find Billy Bunter within the precincts of Greyfriars.

It was clear at last that the Owl of the Remove had gone out of gates; and as they did not know in what direction he might have gone, the search had to be given up for the time.

But after tea the Famous Five sauntered down to the school gates, to look for Bunter when he came in.

They were rewarded at last by the sight of the fat junior coming up the lane with his rolling gait. Bunter looked tired and dusty.

"Here he is!" growled Bob Cherry.

Billy Bunter blinked at the chums of the Remove as he came up to the gates. He did not seem to guess that they were there for him.

"I say, you fellows, has the postman been?" he inquired.

"Bother the postman!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull! I'm expecting a postal-order, you know."

"Bless your postal-order!"

"If that's what you call good manners, Bull—"

"Never mind good manners now," said Harry Wharton. "Come in, Bunter. We've got something rather serious to speak to you about."

"What is it—a spread?" asked Bunter eagerly.

"No, you owl!"

"Then I'm afraid I've no time," answered Bunter, and he rolled in.

But the Famous Five followed him in, gathering round him.

"Bunter—"

"Oh, don't bother!" said Bunter snappily. "I've had a rotten tea, and I'm hungry. It makes you jolly hungry, tramping over the cliffs for hours."

"Hours?" asked Wharton, looking at him.

If Bunter had been tramping over the cliffs for hours, there was an evident impossibility that he could have been in Loder's study when Ogilvy was there.

"Yes, hours," said Bunter peevishly.

"I wonder whether Toddy's got anything to eat in the study. Have you?"

"Nothing, fathcad!"

"Then don't bother."

Wharton took hold of Bunter's arm.

"Stop a bit, Bunter. I've got something to say to you. You can sit down here, if you're tired."

Bunter grunted discontentedly, but he dropped upon the oaken bench under the elm. He was very dusty, and evidently tired; but very little exertion tired the fat Owl of the Remove.

"Well, what's the jaw?" he asked.

"If you want to borrow any money, it's no good, Wharton. My postal-order hasn't come."

"It's about Loder's banknote," said Wharton.

"What?"

"Loder's fiver."

"Has Loder got a fiver?"

"You know he has."

"How should I know? Chaps in the Sixth don't generally tell me when they get remittances, do they?"

The Famous Five stared at Bunter.

Well they knew his Prussian proclivities. Every day Bunter made at least a dozen statements that would have shocked George Washington. Nobody relied on a word uttered by William George Bunter without corroborative evidence. But he was speaking quite naturally now, and seemed only puzzled and peevish.

"You fat rascal!" broke out Bob Cherry angrily. "You know there's trouble over Loder's fiver, and that's why you're pretending to know nothing about it."

"And that was why he went out," said Nugent, with a nod. "That's why he's making out that he's been on the cliffs for hours."

"The esteemed Bunter is spoofing," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, with a shake of the head.

Billy Bunter blinked at them.

"I don't know what you're talking about," he said. "If this is a game—"

"It's not a game, Bunter," said Harry Wharton quietly. "You've got Ogilvy into trouble with your silly tricks, and you've got to see him through."

"Blessed if I understand you," said Bunter.

Wharton paused.

He wondered whether Bunter realised, after reflection, that the matter was terribly serious, and had thought it out, and determined to profess a complete ignorance of the whole affair. If he had scuttled off as Ogilvy said, he had doubtless seen Loder coming in, and guessed that Ogilvy would be found with the note in his possession. It was possible, at least. But—

But there was a chill of doubt in Wharton's breast now. After all, Bunter had to have fair play, unreliable as he was. It was not fair to give a dog a bad name and hang him. There were two sides to every question. The tone of the captain of the Remove was gentler as he went on:

"Look here, Bunter, you were bother-

ing us in Ogilvy's study to go and raid Loder's quarters—"

"Well, you didn't," said Bunter.

"Did you go there yourself?"

"No jolly fear!" said Bunter. "I thought you fellows ought to go. I don't care about nosing in a prefect's study."

"Did Ogilvy catch you there?"

"How could he, when I wasn't there?"

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"I don't know what you're getting at," said Bunter, rising. "But if you're trying to pull my leg, you can chuck it."

"Look here," said Johnny Bull. "Ogilvy says he found you in Loder's study with Loder's fiver in your fist, and he chased you down the passage and took it away."

"He, he, he!"

"What are you cackling at?" demanded Johnny, exasperated.

"Ogilvy was pulling your leg," said Bunter blandly.

"What?"

"He, he, he!"

"It isn't a matter to cackle over, Bunter," said Wharton sharply. "Ogilvy tells us that he chased you down the Sixth Form passage and took the note from you there, to take it back to Loder's study. You got out at the back door and cleared. Isn't that so?"

"Oh, don't be funny!" said Bunter.

"Tell us what you did after you left us doing Ogilvy's lines in his study," said the captain of the Remove.

"Oh, I went out."

"Not to Loder's study?"

"Certainly not!"

"Where did you go?"

"Down to the cliffs."

"And you've been there ever since?"

"Certainly!"

"Then you say Ogilvy wasn't telling the truth when he said he found you in Loder's study with a banknote in your paw!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Oh, rats! I don't believe Ogilvy said anything of the sort!" said Bunter.

"Wha-a-at?"

"You can't spoof me, you know! I know it's a lark, so you can chuck it!" said Billy Bunter.

And with that the Owl of the Remove rolled away to the School House, leaving Harry Wharton & Co. staring at one another.

"My hat!" said Bob Cherry, with a deep breath. "What do you make of that, you fellows?"

"He's lying!" said Nugent. "He must be lying! He knows, somehow, that Ogilvy's been found with the note, and is supposed to have stolen it. He's afraid to own up now."

"But—but—"

"One of the two is lying, that's a cert," said Bob Cherry. "We've always known Ogilvy to be as straight as a string, and Bunter's a terrific liar."

"That's so," said Wharton. "But—but—"

"You believe Ogilvy?"

"Well, yes. Only it does look a little like a made-up yarn," said Harry, with a troubled look. "A fellow caught pinching money could easily spin a yarn like that, and he would select Bunter as a scapegoat because of his rotten reputation. I don't think so, but—but it looks like that, and I'm afraid that's the view the Head would take."

Bob Cherry whistled.

"Come to think of it, it does sound rather steep," he confessed. "But old Ogilvy is straight—I know that."

"The straightfulness is terrific!" said Hurree Singh, with a nod.

"If—if we didn't know Ogilvy to be square, we shouldn't believe a word of it," said Wharton. "It's just like Bunter, to collar the note and lie about

it afterwards; and that makes it easy to put it on him. Bunter's rather a worm, but he's got to have fair play. I'm blessed if I know what to think!"

The Co. returned to the School House in a perplexed and troubled frame of mind. They had faith in Ogilvy, but—There was a "but" now.

For if Bunter's version was true, it was Ogilvy who was the thief, as Loder and Carne evidently believed; and there was a possibility, at least, that it was Billy Bunter who was telling the truth.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Sticking To It!

DONALD OGILVY looked into Study No. 1 a little later, and found the Famous Five there. They looked at him rather glumly and uneasily.

"Have you seen Bunter?" asked Ogilvy.

"He's come in," said Harry Wharton. "We—we've asked him."

"Is he going to own up?"

"He denies the whole bizney. According to him, he went out of gates, and never went near Loder's study at all."

Ogilvy compressed his lips. Dick Russell, who was with his chum, uttered an angry exclamation. Russell's faith in his chum, at all events, was not shaken, and was not likely to be.

"Just what we might have expected of the fat toad! I'll jolly soon make him tell the truth!"

"Where is he?" asked Ogilvy.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Talk of angels!" said Bob Cherry. "Come in, Bunter! You're wanted!"

Billy Bunter blinked at Ogilvy and Russell, and rolled past them into the study. They followed him in.

"I say, you fellows, my postal-order hasn't come," said Bunter. "Toddy's got nothing in the study. Can any of you fellows lend me five bob till my postal-order comes?"

"Look here, Bunter—" began Russell.

"I've just time to catch Mrs. Mimble before she closes the shop," said Bunter, unheeding. "I'll settle up to-morrow, Wharton— Yow-ow! Leggo my collar, Russell, you beast! Make him leggo, Wharton!"

"You've got to come to Loder and own up, you fat cad!" shouted Russell.

"Groogh!"

"I'll jolly well lick you till you do!"

Harry Wharton pushed the excited junior back.

"That's no good," he said. "Hands off Bunter!"

"Are you standing up for the sneaking cad?" roared Russell.

Bunter promptly dodged behind the captain of the Remove.

"Not exactly," said Harry. "But fair play's a jewel. Ogilvy tells one story, and Bunter another, and the Head will have to settle it."

"You believe that fat Hun, you silly fool?"

"Slauging won't do any good, either," said Wharton quietly. "Keep your temper, Russell. I don't believe him, but he may be telling the truth, and he's a right to be heard."

"If he's telling the truth, Ogilvy is a thief!" exclaimed Russell fiercely.

"If Ogilvy's telling the truth, Bunter's a thief!" said Johnny Bull tartly.

"Bunter may be a worm, but he's entitled to justice, and he's going to get it!"

"Leave him to me, Dick," said Ogilvy quietly.

Dick Russell's hands were clenched fiercely, but he unclenched them again. He realised that violence would do no good.

Ogilvy made a step towards Bunter, who blinked at him uneasily. Billy Bunter was not quite without a conscience, but the terrible word "thief" was still ringing in his ears, with all it meant. Ogilvy had chosen to interfere with him, and he could take the consequences it entailed. That was how the wretched Owl put it to himself. But for Ogilvy's interference the banknote would have been missed, but no discovery would have been made. It was Ogilvy's own fault, Bunter told himself. He shouldn't have chipped in.

"Bunter," said the Scottish junior very quietly, "you can see what a serious thing it is for me."

"Looks like it, from what I hear," said Bunter.

"I interfered with you in Loder's study for your own good," said Ogilvy patiently. "I don't think you meant to steal the banknote—I didn't think so then—but you would have kept it, and it would have come to the same thing. I was trying to keep you out of trouble."

"If you mean to hint that I'm capable of a dishonourable action, Ogilvy, this discussion had better cease!" said Bunter, with great dignity.

"Will you come to Loder and tell him the truth, Bunter?"

"If I tell Loder anything, it will certainly be the truth. I'm not accustomed to prevaricating, like some fellows," said Bunter disdainfully. "I've got into hot water lots of times for being so truthful!"

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Bob Cherry, almost overcome by that statement.

"I regard this whole affair as insulting to me," continued Bunter, mounting the high horse. "You seem to have been caught picking and stealing—"

"What?"

"And you've made use of my name. I call that cowardly."

Ogilvy gasped.

"Bunter! You know I found you in Loder's study—"

"Oh, tell that to the marines!" said Bunter. "You can't put it off on me, Ogilvy! I'm really surprised at you! I call it mean!"

"Oh!" muttered Ogilvy hopelessly.

"My advice to you is to go to Loder and make a clean breast of it," said Bunter. Ogilvy could only stare at him blankly. "Go and tell him the truth. Say that you were going to stick him for a reward for finding the note."

"Tell him lies, do you mean?"

"Well, a fellow who found the note would be entitled to a reward," said Bunter. "Tell him that, and it will be all right. He's no right to suppose there's a thief in the Remove. I believe you're honest, Ogilvy."

"You—you believe I'm honest!" stammered Ogilvy.

"Oh, yes—quite."

"You lying young villain!" yelled Russell. "I tell you you've got to own up to, Loder!"

"Now, I'm tired of the subject," said Bunter peevishly. "I prefer to let it drop. I came here to ask you for a loan, Wharton—"

"Bunter—" began Ogilvy.

"Oh, really, Ogilvy! I wish you wouldn't worry a chap when he's hungry," said Bunter irritably. "Look here, Wharton, the tuckshop will be closed in a few minutes. Are you going to lend me half-a-crown?"

"I'm going to Loder now, Bunter," said Ogilvy heavily. "I'm going to tell him all the facts! I'm bound to! And you'll be called before the Head."

"I really think you might leave me out of it," said Bunter. "Why can't you say Wharton or Smithy or Mauly, if you must try to put it on to some-

body? Or Skinner. The fellows would believe anything about Skinner."

Ogilvy left the study without replying, taking Russell with him. Harry Wharton & Co. gazed at the Owl of the Remove in great doubt. Where the truth was in this strange affair they could not determine.

But Bunter was evidently not giving it much thought. He was hungry, and when Bunter was hungry smaller matters were dismissed from his mind.

"I say, Wharton, what about that two bob?" he asked.

"Have you told us the truth, Bunter?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Eh? Of course I have! It's coming to-morrow morning for certain!"

"What! What is?"

"My postal-order."

Wharton uttered an impatient exclamation.

"Hang your silly postal-order! I mean, have you told us the truth about Ogilvy and Loder's banknote?"

"If you doubt my word, Wharton, I shall refuse to borrow two shillings of you!" said Bunter, with dignity. "I don't think you ought to be down on a chap like this. 'Tain't fair play. I say, Bob—"

"Well?" said Bob Cherry grimly.

"Can you lend me eighteenpence?"

"I'll lend you a thick ear!" growled Bob.

"I suppose you could stand me a bob, Inky? You see, I'm hungry, and I'm really afraid my health will suffer if—"

Harry Wharton opened the study door and drew back his boot.

"Clear!" he said briefly.

And Billy Bunter, after one blink at the captain of the Remove, thought he had better clear.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Before the "Beak"

GERALD LODER scowled as Ogilvy came into his study, Dick Russell waiting for him in the passage outside. Loder was in a bad temper. He had no special dislike for Ogilvy, but when Loder was "ratty" the nearest person was generally the victim. Loder and Carne had attended the little sporting party in Friardale, with disastrous results to Loder's five-pound note. Fifteen shillings were all that remained to him, plus a savage temper and a desire to kick everybody he came in contact with.

"Oh, you've come, you young scoundrel!" was his polite greeting.

"You told me to come," said Ogilvy.

Loder grunted as he rose from his chair.

"I suppose I've got to take you to your Form-master or the Head. Confound you! Some of you fags are always bothering. I suppose you're not going to repeat that silly yarn?"

"I told you the truth, and I shall repeat it to Mr. Quelch, if you take me to him."

"Suit yourself, you young fool! If you had any sense you'd make up a better yarn than that!" sneered Loder. "I'll take you to your Form-master, as the Head's gone to his house. Mr. Quelch can deal with you. I suppose you know you'll be sacked?"

"I hope not, as I am innocent."

"Oh, don't be funny! Come along!" growled Loder.

He strode out of the study, angry at having to attend to the affair at all, when he had his afternoon's gambling losses to think of. Dick Russell gave his chum an encouraging look in the passage.

"Keep your pecker up, Don!" he whispered.

Ogilvy nodded, with a faint smile, and

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followed Loder to the study of the Remove-master. Mr. Quelch was there, chatting with Monsieur Charpentier, who left the study when the two entered.

The Remove-master gave Ogilvy's harassed face a very curious glance.

"What is it, Loder?" he asked.

"A very serious matter, sir. I have to report this junior for theft!"

"What!"

"I have brought him to you, sir, as he is in your Form, and you will decide about taking the matter to the Head."

"Quite so. But surely there is some mistake!" said Mr. Quelch in amazement. "Have you confessed this, Ogilvy?"

"Certainly not, sir!" exclaimed Ogilvy indignantly. "Loder is quite mistaken!"

"I sincerely trust that it will prove to be a mistake," said Mr. Quelch. "Kindly state the facts, Loder."

The prefect explained.

"You admit Loder's statements, of course, Ogilvy?" said the Remove-master, when he had finished.

"Yes, sir; all he says is true, so far as he knows it."

"I had better see Carne, I think," said Mr. Quelch. "Ask him to step here, Loder, please. You may leave this matter in my hands now."

"Yes, sir."

Loder left the study, and Arthur Carne entered a few minutes later. Mr. Quelch questioned him as to how he had discovered Ogilvy with the banknote in his hand.

"It was at the farther end of the Sixth Form corridor, sir," Carne explained. "He was dodging out by the little staircase to the door at the back. He had the note in his hand."

"I ran into Carne coming round the corner, sir," said Ogilvy.

"Is that so, Carne?"

"Yes, sir."

"If Ogilvy ran into you coming round the corner he could not have been escaping by the staircase door," said the Form-master. "He must have been coming back into the Sixth Form passage."

Carne started a little.

"Yes, I suppose so," he assented.

"But you stated that he was dodging out, as you expressed it, by the door at the back!"

"Well, as I found him there, sir, I supposed he had gone there to dodge out," answered Carne. "But certainly he was coming round the corner when he ran into me."

"That puts the matter under a somewhat different aspect, Carne. You should be more exact in your statements in such a serious matter. Thank you, that will do."

Carne left the study, looking somewhat savage. He fully believed that Ogilvy had stolen the banknote, and he did not think that trifling details mattered, a view which Mr. Quelch did not share with him.

Mr. Quelch fixed a very scrutinising look upon Ogilvy, who stood before him firmly enough.

"You deny having taken Loder's banknote, Ogilvy?"

"Yes, sir!"

"Tell me exactly how it came into your possession."

Ogilvy explained wearily.

Loder and Carne utterly disbelieved his story; and now he did not expect Mr. Quelch to believe it, either.

The Remove-master's face was very grave, but his look gave no indication of his opinion.

"According to your statements, then, Ogilvy, you had just taken the banknote from the junior who purloined it, and were coming back to Loder's study with it when Carne met you."

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"That is exactly what happened, sir."

"The junior you allude to was still on the stair, then, round the corner?"

"He must have been."

"Carne did not see him?"

"He couldn't, sir; he never came round the corner. I was just coming round into the passage when I ran into Carne, and he collared me at once, and dragged me away to Loder's study. I never thought then that I should be suspected of stealing the note—not seriously, though Carne called me a thief."

"And what became of the junior afterwards?"

"I did not see. But I suppose he got out at the back door."

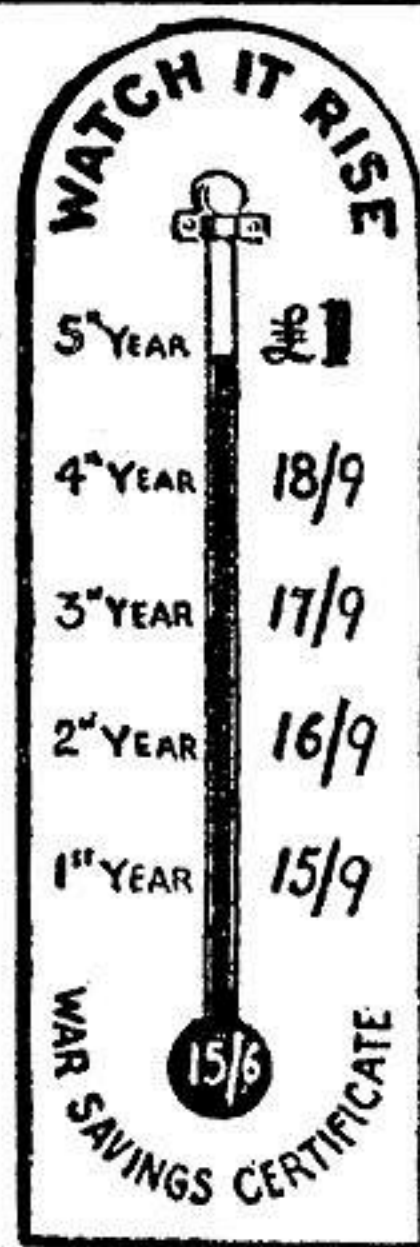
"He knew that you had met Carne?"

"Yes; he must have heard Carne call me a thief when he saw the banknote in my hand."

Mr. Quelch pursed his lips.

"Carne called you a thief?"

"Yes, sir. I—I suppose he thought so, seeing the banknote."



"You are sure the other junior heard it?"

"He must have."

"And then, perhaps, he was alarmed for his own safety, and escaped?"

"Yes."

"Why did you not give Loder the junior's name?"

Ogilvy coloured.

"I—I thought I oughtn't to, sir. It—it seemed like sneaking. I've asked the chap since to own up, and he won't."

"You understand, of course, that you must give the name if you expect the slightest credence to be given to your story?" said Mr. Quelch, somewhat severely.

"Yes, sir; I know that. As he won't own up I must give his name. It was Bunter, of my Form."

"I will send for Bunter," said Mr. Quelch. "Call in a junior."

"Russell is outside, sir."

"Very well; call him in."

Ogilvy opened the door and called to his chum. Russell was despatched in search of Billy Bunter. Mr. Quelch

signed to Ogilvy to sit down, and turned back to his papers while he waited for the arrival of the Owl of the Remove.

Ogilvy sat down with a heavy heart. What would be the result of the examination of Bunter he could not foresee; but he had little hope that Bunter would tell the truth. The fat junior had evidently been utterly terrified—first by the word "thief," uttered by Carne, which had shown him the real light in which his rascality would be regarded; secondly, by the fact that a "fuss" was only too clearly going to be made. Billy Bunter's one object would be to secure his own precious self. Ogilvy knew that. And if the truth did not come to light, what was to happen to Ogilvy?

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

The Innocence of Bunter!

"BUNTER!" Dick Russell fairly snorted out the name as he glared in at No. 7 in the Remove. That was Bunter's study, and he was there with his study-mates, Peter Todd and Tom Dutton.

Billy Bunter blinked at him irritably. Bunter's volatile mind had quite wandered away from the subject of the stolen note—his thoughts were engrossed by the painful fact that he had not had a satisfying tea. To Bunter, it really seemed too bad that he should be worried again about an affair he wanted to have done with.

"Look here! You clear off, Russell!" he said peevishly. "I'm fed up with you and Ogilvy and Loder, and all the rest of it. Let a chap alone!"

"You're wanted, you fat rotter!"

"Oh, rot! I say, Peter, about that tin of sardines—"

"Mr. Quelch wants you in his study!" hooted Russell.

"Rats! I suppose Ogilvy hasn't had the cheek to drag my name into it, has he?" grunted Bunter. "Why couldn't he make it somebody else— you, for instance?"

"Come along, you fat Hun!"

"You'd better go, Bunter," said Peter Todd quietly. "And I advise you to tell Mr. Quelch the truth."

"If you mean that I'm capable of prevarication, Peter Todd—"

"Oh, get off!" said Peter.

"Can I have that tin of sardines when I come back?" asked Bunter.

"You can have my boot, if you don't clear!" snapped Peter.

Billy Bunter grunted discontentedly, and rolled out of the study. He found the Famous Five at the head of the staircase. Harry Wharton tapped him on the shoulder.

"Look here, Bunter—" he began.

"No good now," growled Bunter.

"The tuckshop's closed."

"What?"

"Still, you can lend it to me if you like!"

"Lend you what?"

"That half-crown."

"Oh, you fat idiot!" exclaimed Wharton, exasperated. "Have a little sense. I wanted to tell you to own up to Mr. Quelch. I've heard from Russell—"

"Oh, bother Russell! Do you think I'm going to tell Mr. Quelch that I'm a thief?" exclaimed Bunter. "I should get expelled from Greyfriars. I wonder how the Remove would get on without me?"

"Oh, my hat!"

"The hatfulness is terrific!" murmured Hurree Singh. "My esteemed Bunter, remember that the truth is the cracked pitcher that goes longest to the well, as the English proverb says."

"Tell Quelch the facts, Bunter,"

urged Bob Cherry. "It will be better for you in the long run."

"I don't see why you're all down on a fellow," said Bunter indignantly. "To hear you talk anybody would suppose that I was an untruthful chap! If you chaps were as honourable as I am you'd do!"

And William George Bunter rolled down the stairs, leaving the Co. quite flabbergasted. His last remark had taken their breath away.

Russell's face was grim as he went with Bunter to Mr. Quelch's study. At the door he paused.

"Tell the truth, Bunter," he said, half appealingly, half menacingly.

"Oh, rats!" was Bunter's answer.

He blinked nervously at the Form-master as he went in. He did not look at Ogilvy. Somehow, even the Owl did not care to meet the Scottish junior's eyes just then.

"You—you sent for me, sir?" mumbled Bunter.

"Yes, Bunter," said Mr. Quelch, not unkindly. "I have some questions to put to you. Ogilvy declares that he took away from you a banknote which you had purloined from Loder's study."

"Oh, sir!"

"Is that the case, Bunter?"

"Certainly not, sir. I hope nobody believes I am capable of purloining anybody's money!" gasped Bunter.

Billy Bunter felt quite justified in making that denial. He hadn't intended to "purloin" the banknote, certainly. His ideas had been very vague when he had taken it. By this time, he had made up his mind that he had only intended to take the note away temporarily, to give Loder a lesson about being careless with his money. Bunter had the very valuable faculty of being able to believe anything he wanted to.

"Then you deny it, Bunter?"

"Oh, sir! Of course!"

"Ogilvy! At what time were you in Loder's study?"

"About five, sir."

"Where were you at five o'clock, Bunter?"

"On the cliffs, sir."

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Quelch.

"Wharton can prove it, if necessary, sir," said Bunter.

"Was Wharton with you?" asked Mr. Quelch.

"Nunno; but he met me at the gates when I came in."

"Was anybody with you, Bunter?"

"No, sir. I just went for a ramble to—to get an appetite for tea. Of—of course, I couldn't foresee that Ogilvy would—would—"

"You deny having seen or touched Loder's banknote, Bunter?"

Billy Bunter squirmed inwardly. It was the lie direct to be told this time, and that went against the grain, even with Bunter. But the terrible consequences were ever present in his mind, and he gasped out:

"Yes, sir, entirely."

Mr. Quelch eyed him sharply. Bunter was red and confused, but that was natural enough to a junior in such a position. The Remove-master turned his glance upon Ogilvy.

"You adhere to your statements respecting Bunter, Ogilvy?"

"Every word, sir."

"You are aware, of course, that there is nothing whatever to implicate Bunter in the matter at all, save your bare statement?"

"Yes, sir," said Ogilvy, in a low voice.

"He might just as well have said it about any other fellow, sir," said Billy Bunter. "He might have said Skinner, or Squiff, or Wharton."

"Quite so. You see that yourself, Ogilvy?"

"I said Bunter because it was Bunter, sir," muttered Ogilvy wretchedly. "I—I know there isn't any proof. I wish now I hadn't interfered with him; but I thought he was getting himself into awful trouble, and—and—" His voice trailed off.

"You may go, Bunter!"

"Thank you, sir."

Billy Bunter departed in great relief. His conscience, such as it was, was suffering from a twinge. But he told himself angrily that it was Ogilvy's own fault for having clipped in at all; and the thought of the tin of sardines in No. 7 diverted his mind from the subject in a few minutes.

Ogilvy, left alone with his Form-master, stood silent, waiting for the verdict. It was some minutes before the Remove-master spoke.

"Ogilvy," he said at last, "this is a very serious and painful matter. I cannot, in common fairness, accept your statement about Bunter without the slightest proof being adduced. As Bunter observed, you could have made that

such a temptation, and I am not a thief!"

Mr. Quelch sighed.

"Very well. The matter must go before the Head," he answered. "I fear, Ogilvy, that there is only one conclusion Dr. Locke can come to. My boy, if you have any confession to make, which would give me any reason for dealing with you more leniently, there is still time to make it."

"I have nothing to confess, sir. I have told the truth."

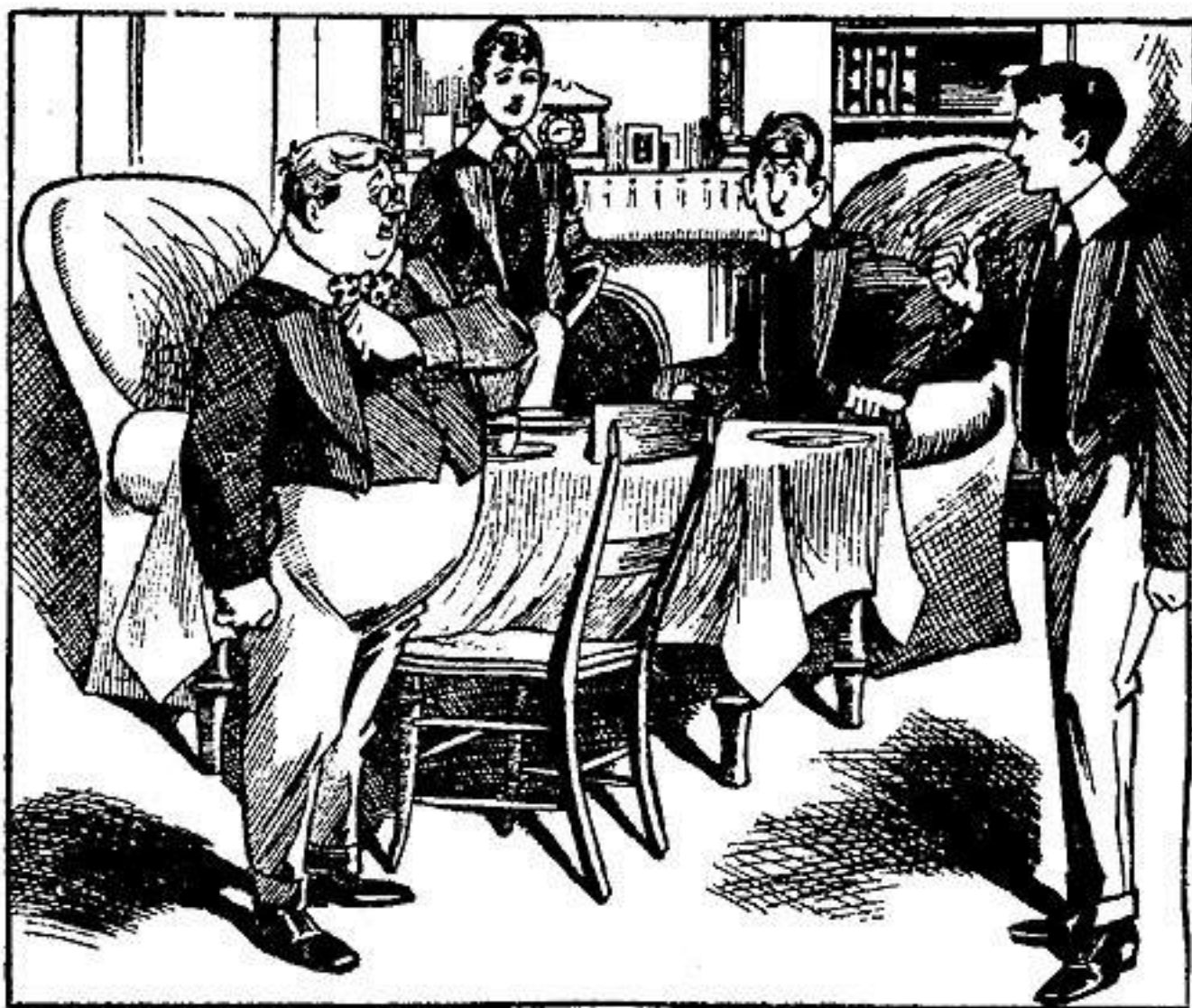
"Then it is for the Head to decide. I will take you to Dr. Locke." Mr. Quelch rose to his feet.

Ogilvy's pale face flushed.

"Mr. Quelch!" he gasped.

"Yes, my boy? You have, after all, something to tell me?"

"N-no, sir. But—but my brother's coming here to-morrow afternoon," stammered the junior. "He—he's been wounded, sir, and is on leave from the Front. I—I—" He stammered miserably. "It would be an awful shock to him, sir."



Bunter is fed up! (See Chapter 8.)

statement about any boy at Greyfriars with equal force. The fact remains that Loder's banknote was taken from his study, and that you were found with it in your possession."

Ogilvy's lips moved, but he did not speak. What was there to say? He knew that the evidence was overwhelming; there was nothing to stand against it but his own honest character. But that was something, as Mr. Quelch's next words showed.

"I am aware, Ogilvy, that you have never shown any disposition towards a base action while you have been in my Form. I have always had a high opinion of you."

"Thank you, sir," faltered Ogilvy.

"If you committed this miserable action, it was doubtless owing to a sudden temptation. Is that the true explanation, Ogilvy?"

Ogilvy almost groaned. The question showed the opinion that had formed in the Remove-master's mind.

"No, sir," he muttered. "I couldn't have a temptation to take what did not belong to me. Only a thief could feel

"I fear so, Ogilvy."

"Could you—could you, sir, leave it a little while, till—till after my brother's been?" stammered Ogilvy. "It won't make much difference—only a day, sir. After—after Malcolm's gone I can stand it better."

Mr. Quelch knitted his brows thoughtfully.

"I—I know it's asking a great deal, sir!" muttered Ogilvy. "But—but he would feel it if—he came here and found me in disgrace. There's never been a stain on our name before." The tears came into the junior's eyes, and his voice broke. "It would cut him to the heart, sir. If—if you would let it stand over till after to-morrow! It won't make much difference, will it, sir?"

There was a long pause before the Remove-master replied.

"For your brother's sake, Ogilvy, I will do as you wish," said Mr. Quelch at last. "Heaven forbid that I should inflict any pain upon a brave man who has fought for his country. I will allow

twenty-four hours to elapse before dealing with this matter."

"Thank you, sir!" faltered the junior. He left the study. In the passage Dick Russell caught him by the arm, scanning his face eagerly.

"Well?" he exclaimed.

Ogilvy gave a bitter laugh.

"Quelchy believes it," he said. "I'm going to be taken to the Head to be sacked, only it's left till after Malcolm's gone to-morrow. That's kind of Quelchy, anyway. After my brother's gone I'm going to be kicked out of Greyfriars!"

"Oh!" muttered Russell.

Ogilvy, with a white, set face, went to his study. A good many fellows noted his looks in the Remove passage, but Ogilvy said no word. That evening he did not appear in the Common-room; but the one topic there was what was to happen to him on the morrow.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Under a Cloud!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. were not feeling their usual cheery selves on the morrow.

A good many more of the Remove were looking rather clouded on that bright, sunny spring morning.

The story of Loder's banknote was all over the Remove now. The matter had not yet been reported to the Head, but it was clear enough what must happen when it was reported.

Opinion was divided on the subject of Ogilvy.

Anybody in the Form would have taken Ogilvy's word before Billy Bunter's most solemn affidavit. Nobody would have hesitated about that. Still, it was felt that even Bunter, with all his Prussian tendencies, was entitled to a "fair show." Some of the fellows believed Ogilvy's version. To others it seemed that the detected thief had cunningly availed himself of Bunter's unenviable reputation to endeavour to place his guilt on the shoulders of the Owl of the Remove. But most of the Removites had open minds on the subject. They simply did not know what to think.

All the evidence was against Ogilvy, whose character was good. Bunter's character was bad, but there was no evidence against him. That state of affairs constituted a problem which even Peter Todd, the amateur lawyer, confessed that he couldn't solve.

What Ogilvy had declared Bunter had done was exactly like Bunter. But that made it all the more likely that he had invented his version, knowing how probable it would sound.

Harry Wharton & Co. were worried and perplexed. They liked Ogilvy, and they could not believe him guilty. Yet they felt that to condemn Bunter without evidence was the reverse of fair play. They questioned the Owl of the Remove several times, but nothing came of it. Bunter's system was to stick to a denial of everything, and it was the safest system he could have adopted, from his point of view.

Ogilvy came in to lessons that morning with a pale and quiet face. He was bearing his miserable position with quiet courage. Dick Russell was almost demonstratively chummy, in order to show the Remove fellows that his faith in the Scottish junior never wavered. Poor Russell was getting into the way of giving fellows fierce looks whenever Ogilvy's name was mentioned, and he had already had a fight with Skinner, and another with Snoop—those two youths having sneered a little too openly in his presence.

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It was simply cruel luck that Captain Ogilvy was coming that afternoon, while this black cloud was hanging over his brother's head. Ogilvy had been looking forward keenly to the visit; but his happy anticipations were all dashed now. His only thought was to keep this miserable matter from Malcolm Ogilvy's knowledge during his visit to Greyfriars.

The danger of a careless word or hint worried him. The visit from his brother in khaki, long-expected, was now likely to be a torment to him. True, Malcolm would have to know of it all later, when Ogilvy left Greyfriars under a cloud. But that would not be so bad as having it "sprung on" him unexpectedly when he came down, in cheery spirits, to visit the junior at the school.

Ogilvy intended to be cheery and calm that afternoon while his brother was there, and act as if he had no trouble on his mind. But he had set himself a very difficult task.

It was not easy to keep up a smiling face while his heart was heavy as lead and his mind filled with apprehensions.

Some of the fellows avoided him now, but he hardly noticed that. The famous Five were as friendly as usual.

They could not make up their minds as to what the facts were, and it was only fair to give Ogilvy the benefit of the doubt. After dinner Harry Wharton joined the Scottish junior in the quad.

Ogilvy flushed as he came up. He did not expect from Wharton the sneers and innuendoes he received from Skinner & Co.; but he was growing sensitive and touchy. That was not surprising in the circumstances.

"Your brother's coming this afternoon?" Wharton remarked.

"Yes."

"You're going to have him in the study?"

"Yes."

Ogilvy's replies were decidedly laconic.

"Well, it will be a question of Tommy for tea," said Wharton, with a smile. "If he feeds with you, your rations won't go far. So we're going to whack out ours—see?"

"Oh!" said Ogilvy.

"Rations for five will make a regular feast of the gods," said Harry. "Don't mind us, as we have other resources. It'll be a pleasure to us to rally round and back you up, you know, as it's a man from the Front!"

"You're very good!" muttered Ogilvy. "Then—then you don't believe I'm a thief, I suppose?"

"No," said Harry, shaking his head.

"You believe that Bunter—"

"I don't know about that."

"But you must believe one thing or the other!" exclaimed Ogilvy.

"I'm blessed if I know what to believe!" confessed Harry. "But I can't think that you pinched Loder's rotten banknote, and that's flat! Only—only, I don't think I ought to be down on Bunter without any evidence—see?"

"I see," said Ogilvy slowly. "Of course—of course, you understand that I don't want my brother to hear anything of this, if you should come into contact with him?"

"I understand, of course!"

"I expect he will have tea with me in the study. He will dine with the Head before he goes," said Ogilvy. "I—I was going to ask some of you fellows to meet him; but—but I'd better not, under the circumstances. I'm afraid something might be said. I'll accept your offer about the rations with pleasure."

"Right you are!" said Harry.

And when Ogilvy started for the station to meet his brother, the Famous Five lent Dick Russell a hand in the preparations in the study. No. 3 was to be

newly swept and garnished in honour of the man from the Front.

While the juniors were busy there a fat face and a pair of big glasses glimmered in at the door. Dick Russell turned a deadly look on William George Bunter, who did not seem to observe it.

"I say, you fellows—" began Bunter.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" grunted Bob Cherry. "Have you scented a feed, you owl?"

"Oh, really, Cherry! I was thinking that perhaps you might take my tip now," said Bunter. "Suppose one of you got Loder out of his quarters somehow, while one of you dodged in and lifted his food hoard—"

"You fat chump!"

"I don't care about going there myself," said Bunter. "I don't want to get mixed up in Loder's affairs. But —"

"Travel along, porpoise!"

"But I say, Loder's hoard, you know —"

"Loder hasn't a hoard, you fat duffer!" exclaimed Wharton impatiently. "You only think so because you're a food-hog yourself. Buzz off!"

"But I say, you fellows— Here, wharrer you up to?" roared Bunter, as Dick Russell seized him by the collar.

"Are you going to tell the truth about that banknote?" demanded Russell.

"Yow-ow-ow! Haven't I told it?" howled Bunter. "Leggo!"

"Well, get out, then!"

Bump!

"Yow-ow-woop!"

But Billy Bunter was a stickler. Five minutes later he was blinking into the study again—very cautiously this time.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Buzz off!" shouted Johnny Bull.

"If there's going to be a spread I don't mind coming," said Bunter. "I'd like to meet Captain Ogilvy. I dare say he knows some of my relations at the Front. In fact, I believe he's in Colonel Bunter's regiment—"

"Not Field-Marshal Bunter's?" asked Nugent.

"I don't mind about Ogilvy being a thief, you know," said Bunter confidentially. "I overlook that. I'm an easy-going chap. So—"

Bunter got no further. Russell was charging at him with a cricket-stump, and the Owl of the Remove fled wildly down the passage. And a loud howl of anguish told that he had not quite escaped the stump.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Captain Ogilvy Takes a Hand!

"**H**ALLO, Don!"

"Malcolm, old chap!"

A cheery-looking young man in khaki shook hands with Donald Ogilvy on the platform at Friar-dale Station.

Captain Ogilvy was only in his twenties, and he looked very boyish. He was a handsome fellow, though his good looks were somewhat marred by a deep, heavy scar across one brown cheek. But that was an honourable scar gained in battle, and a greater cause for pride than good looks could have been.

The captain seemed in great spirits, and he did not notice for the moment that his young brother was quiet and downcast. In spite of his resolutions, Ogilvy could not quite hide the heaviness of his heart that bright afternoon.

He had a difficult part to play in his task of keeping the miserable secret, so that his brother's pleasure that day should not be spoiled. He did his best, but it was almost beyond his powers to keep a smile on his face.

Captain Ogilvy chatted merrily as they

walked out of the station and down the old village street. Ogilvy felt proud of the glances that were cast at his sturdy soldier brother as they walked through Friardale. Several Greyfriars juniors they passed "capped" the captain very respectfully. Some of them looked very curiously at Ogilvy at the same time.

In the lane outside the village they came upon Skinner and Snoop and Stott. Skinner & Co. had been making a great deal of the affair of the banknote, from sheer malice and idleness. They liked to be down on somebody.

At the sight of the brothers Skinner and his companions exchanged significant looks, and grinned. And the three burst into a rude laugh as the brothers passed them.

The captain glanced over his shoulder at them, and knitted his brows a trifle.

"Come on, Malcolm, old scout!" muttered Ogilvy, in dread of his brother getting a hint from Skinner as to the true state of affairs—a hint the cad of the Remove would have been only too willing to give.

"Are those lads your schoolfellows, Don?"

"Ye-es; a set of rotters," said Ogilvy. "Black sheep in every flock, you know, and they're not good specimens of Greyfriars."

"Oh!" said the captain.

He was puzzled, but he said no more. As they walked on to Greyfriars Sammy Bunter of the Second Form came in sight. Bunter minor grinned at Ogilvy with a very knowing grin—evidently he knew all about the banknote. The Remove would have passed on, but Sammy was not to be passed.

"Hold on, Ogilvy!" he piped.

"No time," answered Ogilvy, passing on.

"I say, what have you been saying about my major?" said Sammy. "It's too bad, you know, to try to put it on my major!"

"Oh, buzz off!" snapped Ogilvy.

"Have you told your brother?" continued Sammy cheerfully, with a blink at Captain Ogilvy.

The Remove, flushing, spun Sammy Bunter out of the way, and Sammy bumped on the hedge, and stood there gasping.

Ogilvy hurried on with the captain, who was looking more and more puzzled.

"What does all that mean, Don?" asked Malcolm Ogilvy.

"Oh, that silly fag is always gassing!" muttered Ogilvy. "They're a pair of burbling duffers, he and his major."

"He said you were trying to put something on his brother."

"Only his rot."

The captain gave his young brother a keen look, but made no further remark, and they walked on. But Captain Ogilvy was very thoughtful now, and he was no longer chatting so cheerfully. Poor Ogilvy felt it difficult to chat with the weight that was on his mind, and he was rather relieved by the silence.

But if Captain Ogilvy was saying less he was thinking more; and several times his eyes turned keenly on his brother's face, which, unconsciously, was growing more and more clouded, from the junior's gloomy thoughts.

In sight of the school gates the captain halted in the lane.

"Wait a bit, Don," he said.

"Yes, Malcolm?"

"What's up?" asked the captain tersely.

"Wha-a-at?"

"Don't be a young ass, Don!" said the captain, with a smile. "I can see that there's something wrong. You've been looking as if you were going to be banged."

"Have I?" stammered Ogilvy.

"Yes. Are you in trouble at the school?"

"I—I—I—"

"Come, make a clean breast of it, kid!" said his brother. "I dare say it's nothing awfully serious, and I can help you out, perhaps. What is it?"

Ogilvy was silent.

"Come, now," went on the captain. "If you tell me there's nothing the matter, all right. Speak up!"

Poor Ogilvy could not say that there was nothing the matter. His troubled face grew red, and he was still silent.

"Is it anything serious?" demanded the captain at last.

"I—I—I—"

"You'd rather not tell me?"

"I—I didn't mean to let you know, Malcolm," stammered the junior. "I—never meant to let you guess there was anything the matter."

Captain Ogilvy smiled.

"Well, I've guessed," he said. "Not that much guessing was wanted. Tell me what you've got on your mind, kid."

"I—I know you'll believe me, Malcolm," said Ogilvy, falteringly.

"Eh? Of course! The Ogilvys don't tell lies," said the captain. "Do you mean to say that something serious has happened?"

"Ye-e-es."

"Out with it!"

"I—I'm accused—"

"Well?"

"Of—of—of—" Ogilvy could scarcely utter the wretched words. "Of—of stealing!"

It was out now, and the junior stood with crimson face and downcast eyes, while his brother stared at him aghast, in utter amazement.

"By gad!" said the captain at last. "And you were going to keep that secret from me, were you?"

"I—I didn't want to worry you, Malcolm. It's a shame, when you've only got a short leave—"

"You young ass!" said the captain gruffly. "Now tell me all about it, from beginning to end."

"You believe I'm innocent, Malcolm?"

"You thundering little idiot, of course!"

Ogilvy smiled faintly.

The captain stood like a ramrod, with knitted brows, while the schoolboy faltered out his story. He made no comment till the junior had finished, only tugging once or twice at his moustache.

"By gad," he said at last, "you are in a pretty pickle! And this other fellow—this Bunter—refuses to own up to the truth?"

"Yes. He's afraid," said Ogilvy miserably. "I don't believe he really meant to steal the banknote. He's too big a fool to understand really what he was doing. But—but he heard Carne call me a thief, and that scared him, I think. There was a chap expelled once for such a thing, and now Bunter understands what it really means he's too scared to own up."

"A precious little rascal!" said the captain. "So the matter is postponed till after my visit—what? What's goin' to happen then?"

"Mr. Quelch will take me before the Head. I—I suppose I—I shall be found guilty," muttered Ogilvy. "You—you see, there's no proof. It's my word against Bunter's, and he says that I might have named any chap. So I might, you know, if what I say wasn't true; but it is. He's known to be an awful fibber—"

"That should tell against him."

"Yes; but some of the fellows think I chose Bunter to put it on just because he's known to be a liar," said Ogilvy. "You see, it does rather look like that."

"Bunter can be made to tell the truth," said the captain.

Ogilvy shook his head.

"He's too scared," he said. "Now it's a charge of theft he understands what it will mean to him, and he's going to keep mum."

"Do your Form-fellows believe it against you?"

"They don't know what to think, I believe. Russell sticks to me; but the other fellows don't know. They're mostly friendly, though, so far. But—but it depends on the Head. I don't know whether he can take my word, you know. I was actually found with Loder's banknote in my hand."

"You were a young ass to touch it."

"I know that now, Malcolm."

"Let's get on," said the captain abruptly. "I suppose I can see this Bunter, and speak to him?"

"Yes; that's easy enough."

"I fancy I may be able to get the truth out of him," said the captain grimly. "He seems to be more fool than rogue, by your description. We shall see."

He strode on, and Ogilvy followed, his face brighter now. It was a relief, after all, to have told his brother, and to know that Malcolm, at least, believed in him.

"Is your Form-master at home?" asked Captain Ogilvy as they entered the School House.

"I think so."

"Then I will speak to him first. This matter must be threshed out before your headmaster; and it had better be done while I am here to stand by you. Show me to Mr. Quelch's quarters."

Ogilvy obeyed, and Captain Ogilvy was shown into Mr. Quelch's study. The junior left him there, and went up to the Remove passage. Harry Wharton & Co. were coming away from No. 3.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Has Tommy arrived?" asked Bob Cherry.

"My brother's come. He's with Mr. Quelch," answered Ogilvy. "I—I've told him, after all. He noticed that something was the matter."

"He was bound to, kid," said Harry Wharton, with a smile.

"He thinks he may be able to get the truth out of Bunter," said Ogilvy.

"He must be a super-dentist if he can extract the truth from Bunter," said Frank Nugent. "I wish him luck!"

Billy Bunter was blinking out of Study No. 7. As he heard Ogilvy's words, his fat face became very alarmed, and he rolled out of the study and headed for the stairs.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" shouted Bob.

"Where are you off to, Bunter?"

"I—I'm going to Highcliffe."

"You're jolly well not!" exclaimed Ogilvy. "My brother's going to speak to you, Bunter."

"I don't care about meeting your brother, Ogilvy."

"You're going to, all the same," said Ogilvy, planting himself between Bunter and the stairs. "You're not going out till he's seen you."

"I—I've got to get over to—to Cliff House."

"It was Highcliffe a minute ago!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "You're jolly well not going to dodge the merry captain, Bunter."

"I don't want to dodge him. I—I simply object to meeting him," said Bunter. "I—I don't approve of Ogilvy. I think he's unscrupulous."

"Oh, my hat!"

"You let me pass, Ogilvy," said the fat junior. "I don't want to have to lick you."

"You can try, if you like, you fat Hun!"

"I say, you fellows, make him get out

of the way," urged Bunter. "I—I've really got an appointment with—with Dick Trumper at Courtfield."

"Trumper can wait, then," said Wharton. "You're staying here, Bunter. Blessed if I don't believe you've been lying all along!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"What do you want to dodge Captain Ogilvy for if you've been telling the truth, then?" demanded Wharton.

"I—I don't, you know. But—but I don't want to meet him, you know, because—because, you see, I'm in rather a hurry. I—"

"You'll stay here, hurry or not," answered the captain of the Remove decidedly.

And Billy Bunter, much against his will, did stay.

He looked a great deal like a very fat rat in a trap. But there was no help for it; he had to stay. And he was still there when Nugent minor came upstairs with the news that Bunter was wanted in the Head's study.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Caught by the Captain!

DR. LOCKE, the reverend Head of Greyfriars, was enjoying a quiet half-hour with *Æschylus* in his study when a knock came at the door, and Mr. Quelch entered with Captain Ogilvy.

The Head laid his volume aside, greeting the captain very cordially. He was always glad to see an Old Boy, and especially an Old Boy who had won distinction on the fields of Flanders. But it was not merely for a pleasant chat that the Remove-master had brought Malcolm Ogilvy there. Both were looking very grave, and the Head divined that something was amiss at once.

Mr. Quelch quietly explained the affair of the banknote, the Head listening in surprise and dismay. It was the first he had heard of the matter. The captain sat silent while Mr. Quelch was speaking, his bronzed face very grim.

"And this occurred yesterday?" exclaimed the Head.

"Yes, sir. At Ogilvy's request, I deferred dealing with the matter till after his brother's visit. He wished to spare Captain Ogilvy a painful shock."

"Quite so. But—"

"I found that my brother had something on his mind, and questioned him, sir," said Captain Ogilvy. "He has told me the facts. Of course, I take his words without hesitation, and believe him to be innocent."

The Head coughed.

"I—I trust so," he said. "But from what Mr. Quelch tells me—"

"Naturally, you are not prejudiced in the lad's favour as I may be," admitted the captain. "but I am perfectly certain that Donald is incapable of such a contemptible action. I would stake my life upon that!"

"It is a very unpleasant incident to mark your visit here, Captain Ogilvy," said the doctor, looking distressed.

"I am glad I came to-day," said the captain. "I think I may be of assistance. I asked Mr. Quelch to report the matter to you at once, so that a decision may be reached before I go. Naturally, this means a great deal to me."

"I quite see that. Certainly the matter shall be gone into at once, and in your presence, if you wish," said the Head.

"That is what I wish. Have you any objection to my questioning this boy, Bunter, here in your presence, Dr. Locke?"

"None whatever. I will send for him."

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The Head glanced at Mr. Quelch, who left the study, and sent a fag for Bunter. He came back in company with the Owl of the Remove.

Billy Bunter was not looking happy.

Having, as he supposed, extricated himself from his scrape at the expense of the unfortunate Ogilvy, Bunter had almost succeeded in dismissing the whole matter from his mind.

He did not want to be bothered with it any more. That was the view taken by William George's obtuse mind. Somehow or other, he had settled it to his own satisfaction that he was an injured party, and had acted rather well upon the whole.

But being called into the Head's study gave him an uneasy tremor; and he had a very strong objection to meeting Ogilvy's big brother now he knew that the captain intended to question him. Even Bunter was not quite a Prussian, and had some objection to telling direct falsehoods. He really didn't see why the matter could not be allowed to rest where it was.

The gravity of the two masters, and the stern, penetrating glance of Captain Ogilvy, made the Owl feel more uneasy than ever.

"Bunter," said the Head quietly, "Mr. Quelch has acquainted me with the affair of the banknote stolen from Loder's study. This gentleman is Captain Ogilvy, your Form-fellow's brother, and he has some questions to put to you. You have nothing to fear, my boy, as long as you tell the exact truth."

"Yes, sir," stammered Bunter. "I—I'm very truthful, sir. Mr. Quelch will bear me out in that."

"I shall certainly do nothing of the kind, Bunter," said the Remove-master tartly. "You are the most untruthful boy in my Form!"

"Oh, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"You will kindly keep to the exact truth in this case, Bunter," said the Head. "You surely perceive that the matter is very serious?"

"Oh, yes, sir!"

"Very well. You will now answer Captain Ogilvy."

"Look at me, boy," said the captain.

Billy Bunter blinked at him. He found great difficulty in meeting the clear, steady glance of the soldier.

"My brother states that he found you taking the banknote from a Sixth Form boy's study, that he followed you to make you return it, that you refused to do so, and that he then took it from you to return it himself," said the captain.

"D-d-does he, really?" stammered Bunter feebly.

"You deny that this is the case?"

"Oh, yes! Certainly! May I go now, sir?" asked Bunter, blinking at the Head.

"Certainly not, till Captain Ogilvy has finished."

"Oh, dear!"

"Now," continued the captain, his eyes still upon Bunter's worried face. "My brother thinks you did not mean to steal the banknote, Bunter. He thinks you acted as you did from stupidity rather than dishonesty."

"I'm not stupid," said Bunter warmly. "There are jolly few chaps in the Remove up to my mark. You can ask Mr. Quelch!"

"My brother thinks that you did not realise the seriousness of your action at first, owing to your stupidity; but when you heard him called a thief, you became alarmed," said the captain. "You realised then that you had stolen, and you resolved to deny all connection with the matter."

"Not at all, sir. You see, I don't know anything about it at all," said Billy Bun-

ter. "I'm as innocent as a baby, in fact. Mr. Quelch can tell you what a strictly honourable chap I am!"

"Where were you when this occurred?"

"On—on the cliffs."

"You did not go to the cliffs immediately after it occurred, so as to make out that you were there all the time?"

"Never thought of it, sir."

"Were you alone on the cliffs?"

"Yes."

"Did you meet anyone you know?"

"No."

"Can you prove that you were there all the time?"

"Well, as there wasn't anybody with me, I don't know," said Bunter cautiously. "But my word's good enough, I suppose! Ask any fellow in the Remove! Wharton, for instance, would stake untold gold on my bare word."

"Then you were not alarmed when you heard Carne of the Sixth call my brother a thief?"

"Not at all."

"You did not attach any importance to it?"

"None, sir."

Mr. Quelch started, and the Head drew a deep, deep breath. They could see the captain's aim, though the obtuse Owl could not. Billy Bunter had, in effect, admitted that he had heard Carne call Ogilvy a thief, though he was far from realising it. And certainly he could not have been on the cliffs when he heard the senior speak to Ogilvy in the Sixth Form corridor at Greyfriars.

"You thought, perhaps, that Carne was merely speaking angrily, and did not mean what he said?" suggested the captain.

"Exactly, sir," said Bunter, in great relief. "That's just what I thought. Carne is a regular bully, always calling fellows names."

Dr. Locke opened his lips, but he closed them again. Captain Ogilvy was extracting the truth from Bunter far more effectively than the Head could have done.

"So Carne is always calling fellows names, is he?" said the captain, with a smile.

"Yes. He called me a prize porker the other day," said Bunter. "Me, you know!"

"But surely you've never heard him call anyone a thief before?"

"Well, no; that's rather strong," said Bunter. "That was because Ogilvy had the banknote in his hand. Carne thought—"

He broke off suddenly.

"Thought what?" asked the captain grimly.

"N-n-nothing," stammered Bunter, with a scared look. "I—I don't mean he thought anything at all. The fact is, I don't know what he thought. I—I—"

"You have said enough, Bunter." Captain Ogilvy turned to the Head. "I think, sir, that the matter is plain enough now."

"I think so," said the Head, with a stern look at the dismayed Owl of the Remove. "Bunter, you have spoken falsely."

"N-n-not at all, sir," gasped Bunter. "I—I've only answered Captain Ogilvy's questions, just as you told me, sir."

"You have stated that you were on the cliffs when Ogilvy was found by Carne with the banknote in his possession."

"So I was, sir."

"Yet you have told the captain that you heard Carne call Ogilvy a thief."

"Yes, sir. I—I mean no, sir! Of—of course, I couldn't have, when I was on the cliffs all the time," stammered Bunter. "I—I was having a nice walk, sir, and—

and admiring the scenery—"

"You have admitted, Bunter, that you heard Carne speak to Ogilvy when he

found him with the note. "You were, therefore, near at hand, exactly as Ogilvy has stated. It follows that Ogilvy's statement is true, and that he had followed you and taken the note from you."

"Oh, no, sir!" gasped Bunter. "That's quite a mistake, sir. I—I wasn't near at hand—not at all, sir, when I heard Carne—I mean, when I didn't hear Carne—that is to say, I—I—I—"

Billy Bunter floundered helplessly.

"And now you have to explain, Bunter, why you took the note from Loder's study in the first place."

"I—I didn't sir. I—I never went to his study to look for grub—"

"What?"

"I—I don't believe he's a hoarder at all, sir. I never went there for grub, and I never saw the note lying on the floor," spluttered Bunter, utterly losing his head—what little he had. "I never touched it, sir—I wouldn't! If Ogilvy says I did, he's making a mistake! I told him plainly at the time that I wasn't going to steal the note."

"In Loder's study?" said the Head grimly.

"Yes, sir—that very place. I told him plainly," gasped Bunter.

"You admit, then, that Ogilvy's explanation is true in every particular?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, no, sir! Not a word of it!"

"You say you were in Loder's study."

"I wasn't, sir."

"What?"

"I—I never went near the place," stuttered Bunter. "I—I wouldn't. That—that's what I really meant to say all along, sir! I—I say, may I go now, sir?"

"You have just said that you were in Loder's study, you utterly stupid boy!" exclaimed the Head.

"That—that was only a figure of speech, sir," stammered the hapless Owl.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed the Head.

He turned to Captain Ogilvy. "Your brother is, of course, quite cleared, Captain Ogilvy—the truth is plain enough. The poor lad was attempting to save Bunter from his own foolish rascality when he brought this miserable suspicion upon himself. As for this boy, I hardly know how to deal with him. I have never known such crass stupidity."

"M-m-may I go now sir?" groaned Bunter.

"No, Bunter, you may not go! Tell me what you intended to do with Loder's banknote when you took it from his study."

"I—I was only finding it for him, sir," groaned Bunter, coming to the truth at last. "I thought he was a careless beast to leave it about, sir, and—and I was going to—to find it, and stick him for a reward, sir. A chap's entitled to a reward for finding a banknote, isn't he, sir? That's only fair."

"By gad!" murmured the captain, looking at Bunter in wonder.

"If—if you think Loder ought to stand me a quid or so, I hope you'll speak to him, sir. Loder's rather mean, and—"

"Bless my soul!" said the Head. "I believe, Bunter, that you did not intend to commit theft; and I think you did not understand the seriousness of your action in telling falsehoods and placing this suspicion upon your schoolfellow. Otherwise, I should expel you from Greyfriars at once."

"Ow!" gasped Bunter.

"As it is, you will be punished very severely for speaking falsely. Captain Ogilvy, you will perhaps take the news to your brother that his name is cleared."

"Very gladly, sir," said the captain.

And when Captain Ogilvy was outside the study, he was followed by howls of anguish. Billy Bunter was learning once more that the way of the transgressor is hard.

Ogilvy was waiting in the Remove passage with Harry Wharton & Co. when his brother came up the staircase smiling. The captain clapped him on the shoulder.

"All serene, Don!"

"Malcolm! Has—has Bunter—"

"Bunter has confessed," answered the captain. "Don't think too hardly of him—he is an almost miraculously stupid boy. It was really owing to his stupidity that I was able to extract the truth from him. And you were right, Don. He did not mean to steal the note—he had some scheme of pretending to have found it, to get a reward from the owner."

"Good old Bunter!" chortled Bob Cherry. "Isn't that exactly like him?"

Ogilvy's face was very bright.

"Thank goodness I told you about it, Malcolm!" he breathed. "Then it's all right now?"

"Right as rain!"

Ten minutes later Captain Ogilvy had the place of honour at the tea-table in No. 3, with his brother and Russell—who was exuberantly joyful now—and Harry Wharton & Co. and several other Remove fellows. It was quite a merry party. The clouds had rolled by at last. To the amazement of the merry party, a fat face blinked in at the doorway, and Billy Bunter insinuated himself into the study.

"I say, you fellows, here I am!" he said. "I say, I've had an awful licking—all through you, Ogilvy. But I don't bear malice. I've come to tea!"

"Well, my hat!" said Ogilvy. That was all he could say.

Captain Ogilvy burst into a laugh.

"Let him stay!" he said.

And Bunter stayed.

(Don't miss "A SOLDIER'S SON!"—next Monday's grand complete story of Harry Wharton & Co., by FRANK RICHARDS.)

The Editor's Chat.

For Next Monday:

"A SOLDIER'S SON!"

By Frank Richards.

Next week's fine story tells of the coming of a new boy—one Roy Malcolm—to Greyfriars.

The illustrious Horace Coker, in his magnificent and lordly way, has promised Malcolm's sister that he will look after her brother.

Coker has his hands full. Malcolm is not an easy person to take in hand. 'Nuff said! You will like this story, I feel sure.

A CHANCE TO HELP.

Have you fellows heard about the scheme for getting in the flax this year?

Ten thousand youths under military age are wanted to help. The time is between May 20th and August 31st. The notion is that holidays may be spent in this way. Remember that the work is of the greatest national importance, for flax fibre plays a big part in the manufacture of aeroplanes.

There are to be five camps for workers, in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire. Free food and lodging will be supplied, and from eight to ten shillings a week paid to each worker. Railway fares will not come out of the pockets of the volunteers. Parties of chums will be welcome, and employers are specially asked to try to manage to give holidays in such a way as to aid the scheme.

You can get enrolment cards between 11 and 4 any day from the Ministry of National Service, or from Captain Elgee, N.S.R., Salters' Hall, St. Swithin's Lane, E.C. Roll up, lads!

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

- 111.—"The Greyfriars Flight."
- 112.—"The 'First' at Greyfriars."
- 113.—"Friends or Foes?"
- 114.—"Billy Bunter's Trials."
- 115.—"The Juniors' Enemy."
- 116.—"Billy Bunter's Vote."
- 117.—"Wun Lung Minor."
- 118.—"The Remove's Challenge."
- 119.—"The Bounder of Greyfriars."
- 120.—"The Cad's Trial."
- 121.—"The First Eleven."
- 122.—"The Remove Eight."
- 123.—"Study 1 on Tour."
- 124.—"The Thief."
- 125.—"The Duffer of Greyfriars."
- 126.—"Harry Wharton's Peril."
- 127.—"Bob Cherry's Benefit."
- 128.—"Wun Lung's Loss."
- 129.—"Alonzo the Great."
- 130.—"Billy Bunter, Limited."
- 131.—"Harry Wharton's Century."
- 132.—"Alonzo's Plot."
- 133.—"The Postal-Order Conspiracy."
- 134.—"Todd the Terrible."
- 135.—"Captain Bob Cherry."
- 136.—"Billy Bunter's Kick-Off."
- 137.—"Only Alonzo!"
- 138.—"Harry Wharton's Pro."
- 139.—"Alonzo's Little Game."
- 140.—"The Cliff House Guest."

NOTICES.

Back Numbers, etc., Wanted.

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Your Editor

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

ROBBERY BY DAYLIGHT!

By FRANK NUGENT.

"BLESSED if I feel like lessons this morning!" yawned Bob Cherry. And Wharton, Johnny Bull, Inky, and I admitted that we were blessed if we felt like lessons, either.

We were lounging on the old benches under the elms sipping ices.

The sun was shining through a kind of haze, which promised great heat as the morning wore on. And, though it was only early spring, it made us feel almost too warm and languid even to guzzle ices.

That we were not the only Removites disinclined for lessons we were quickly to learn. But we rolled off the seats as the bell clanged out, and went into the class-room.

Mr. Quelch was at his desk scanning some papers when we entered; and even when we had settled down in our seats he made no hurry to begin the lesson.

This was something unusual. For when a fellow feels indolent, and in no mood for lessons, the masters are generally full of life and needless energy, barking questions at him and harassing him to death. I don't believe they're made of human flesh and blood.

Fisher T. Fish turned round in his seat near the front of the class, with his long countenance wreathed in grins.

"It's the certificates he's waiting for, you jays!" he murmured. "I guess Quelch don't want to begin lessons, and then have to break off while the Head hands them round."

"My hat, yes!" said Bob. "I'd quite forgotten the giddy War Savings Certificates."

"I hadn't!" said Fishy, as he turned away. We remembered now. Practically every fellow at Greyfriars had prepaid for one or more certificates, and the Head had gone that morning to the village to buy them.

"If the security and interest is good enough for Fishy," grinned Sidney James Snoop, "I reckon it's good enough for me. I've ordered a couple."

"Ain't you having one, Bunt?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Certainly! At least, I explained to Dr. Locke that I was expecting a postal-order."

"Even old Skinner's forked out the price of one," remarked Bob. "Where is he, by the way? Know where your precious pal is, Snoop? You're looking mighty cheerful about something, you three."

Snoop and Stott and Bunter, indeed, had faces like unto the full moon. If they had had a smoking-bee in project we could have understood their joyousness. But buying in War Savings Certificates, even at the interest offered by Mr. Bonar Law, was not likely to have afforded them all the happiness expressed in their singularly unattractive countenances. Probably there was something else in the wind.

"Skinney's sure to be here soon," said Stott confidently. "He's not the chap to run the risk of anyone boning his certificates."

"By my troth!" whispered Bob, in tones of exaggerated desperation, as he glanced out at the prospect of sunny countryside visible. "But for missing the certificates, I believe I'd walk out of the room and have a sun-bath in the meadows!"

"Here's the Head, with the bag, coming in at the gates!" exclaimed Bolsover, standing up in his seat. "Hurrah!"

And a faint cheer echoed round the class. "Silence!" snapped Mr. Quelch, looking up from his work for an instant. But I believe that he was rather pleased that the Head had shown up at last.

We waited impatiently for him to reach our Form-room. A certificate or two in our lockers would help us to forget the gorgeous morning that we were missing.

A fat old bee buzzed in at the window, but we were too lazy to attempt to collar it.

It hummed gracefully under Mr. Quelch's nose, and the master glowered at it. Mynheer Bee started back in astonishment, looped the loop, and made a literal bee-line out of the window.

Didn't we long to follow it!

Presently footsteps sounded in the passage. We sat up expectantly, and Mr. Quelch gathered up his papers.

But the footsteps suddenly merged into a heavy shuffling, and a number of bumps followed.

"Oh! Ah! Help!" came the agonised tones of the Head.

We sat astounded. That any fellow would dream of attacking the Head was the last thing we had expected.

"Take that!" hissed a raucous voice in the passage. "And that! And that! And that!"

Upon which followed sounds suggestive of somebody's head being bumped violently against the wall.

Then into the room dashed a figure brandishing a bag.

He was the most extraordinary daylight robber we had ever clapped eyes on—though, of course, we haven't seen very many.

He wore big blue spectacles like a couple of Tube tunnels, and a moustache that stretched straight across his face like a poker. Also, he wore a large check motor-ing-cap that bulged out and hung down at the back like a misshapen balloon. It was the kind of thing that a comic motorist on the stage would have thought twice before wearing.

In addition to these he had a pair of leg-gings like disused cricket-pads, and huge goloshes.

"I will not be balked!" he roared, whirling the bag round furiously.

"Oh, dear! Mr. Quelch!" sounded the voice of Dr. Locke in the passage. "The certificates! Don't let that villain escape! Oh, really, I will call the Sixth for assistance!"

"I—I—" gasped Mr. Quelch, in bewilderment. "You, fellow— Yaroooh!"

He sat down suddenly as the bag caught him squarely in the chest.

The marauder sprang for the open window, and in a few seconds was streaking away, a black blot against the sunlit quad.

"Stop—stop that scoundrel!" panted Mr. Quelch.

"Right-ho, sir!" shouted Bob, springing forward.

Sidney James Snoop, however, was before him.

Somehow or other that worthy seemed to experience great difficulty in getting through the window, considering the ample size of it. He struggled and kicked furiously, but the result was a right elbow in Bob's eye and a right foot in Johnny's chest.

"Yarooop!" howled these two simultaneously.

Their howls were drowned a moment later by another combined effort, as Snoop's left elbow caught Inky's eye, and Snoop's left foot biffed Wharton's chest.

Then both Snoop's feet lunged out, and I went over like a skittle.

"Oh, you clumsy idiot, Snoop!" gasped Bob. "Get through, can't you?"

"I'm trying to, ain't I?"

Fisher T. Fish almost danced with rage and mortification.

"The certificates!" he groaned. "I've paid for four—spot cash! Oh, Jerusalem!"

Snoop gave a howl as the exasperated Bob grabbed him by the legs and fairly sent him hurtling through the window.

But the man with the bag had been out of sight some time now. We used Snoop to alight upon, however, as we dropped out of the window, and that afforded us some consolation.

"The rotter has evidently bunked into the

woods!" grunted Bob, as we paused uncertainly. "And the Head and Quelch are relying on us to recover the certificates, so I vote we go in search of him."

Which was very self-denying of Bob to choose a stroll through the fresh and sunny woods in preference to sedentary feats of penmanship in a dusky class-room, as all must allow.

II.

"ISN'T this lovely?" murmured Bob, as he lay flat upon his chest on the grassy bank of a little stream in the wood, and lazily watched the waters ripple through his fingers. "Who'd have thought lessons would turn out so rip-pingly?"

We had hunted through the wood for the daring marauder, but had found no trace of him. There are lots of hiding-places in even a little wood like that of Friardale.

And, remarkable as it may seem, the prospect of returning to morning classes presented no very great attractions to us.

"It's a rummy go altogether!" said Johnny Bull, scratching his head a little puzzledly. "I can't say I know much about burglars, but that wasn't the type of chap I'd have expected to see committing daylight robbery. I wouldn't have been surprised to find him in 'Chuckles,' you know, taking these war-time cires into consideration—"

"He certainly couldn't get very far without causing notice," said Harry, nodding. "That's what makes me think he's still in the woods."

"Anyways, sahibs, the catchfulness is not of the greatfullest importance," observed Inky, who always makes the best of things. "The esteemed Empire has the needful dibs, and that is the mainful thing."

"I can't see Fishy looking at it in that light," grinned Harry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A crunching of footsteps sounded upon our ears at that moment.

"Hush!" said Harry. "Lie low! This may be the boulder!"

There was more than one new-comer, and they came to a halt a very few yards from us. But we were screened from their sight by bushes.

"Bunt, old son, you did splendidly! You deserve a feed," said the voice of Snoop, accompanied by the sound of matches being struck. "I don't believe one of the fellows tumbled to it that it wasn't the Head yelling out."

"Oh, I'm a first-rate ventriloquist, you know!" said Bunter swankily. "I told you you could rely on me to get you out of lessons. Better be spreading the things, you know. Skinner can't be very long now."

"Time he was here, though," said Stott's voice.

"Oh, I don't know! He's got to change out of those things."

"It was a jolly effective make-up, I think. I'm blowed if I recognised him, and I was expecting him."

"He made himself look like a thundering idiot!" growled Snoop. "Must have thought he was performing for a farce, or something. Those leggings he wore were a pair of battered old cricket-pads that he found in the box-room, and daubed over with blacking!"

"And those goloshes!" gurgled Bunter.

We crept away at that point of the conversation.

"Ho, ho!" quoth Bob. "So that's the merry game, is it?"

"I thought there was something fishy about that burglar!" chuckled Johnny Bull. "So Fishy's certificates are safe, after all."

"Well, it's a bit of a relief to know that it wasn't the Head who got biffed in the passage," said Harry. "Only that young

rotter Bunter at his tricks again! But what's to be done? We can't sneak about those wasters; and I'm jolly sure they're not going to get off scot-free! Though, as a matter of fact, I can't say that I haven't enjoyed—Ahem!"

"Ha, ha! We'd all of us much rather have been at lessons, wouldn't us?" I chuckled.

Bob rubbed his chin thoughtfully.

"I think I've got a bit of an idea," he remarked. "According to those cheery youths, Skinner is making for here. So I vote we collar him! You know what Shakespeare says. 'There's no such sport as sport was sport—by sport—' Oh, blow it!"

"The old chap must have been in a pretty bad way when he said that," grinned Harry.

"Anyway, you know what I mean. We'll—Here he is!"

We caught sight of Skinner among the trees. He looked very pleased with himself as he picked his way along the uneven path, carrying the bag.

As he was wearing Eltons, we began to tumble that the bag, instead of War Savings Certificates, had contained the clobber he now wore.

In all probability the extraordinary make-up was now in the bag. We hoped so, at any rate.

"Why, what on earth——" howled Skinner, as he found himself lying prostrate among the brambles, with Bob sitting upon his head. "You're sitting on my head, Cherry!"

"You surprise me, Skinner!" observed Bob.

Bob's surprise, however, was not so great as to cause him to change his position. He opened the bag, and dragged out the blue spectacles, motoring-cap, and tweeds, moustache, and leggings and goloshes all complete.

"Skinner, my son," he chuckled, "I'm so lost in admiration at this disguise that I'm going to see how I shape in it. In the interim, I think you'd better be gagged. Sorry, old chap! It's all in the game, you know."

Skinner's frantic expostulations ended in a muffled gurgle.

Bob struggled into the disguise, and cut quite a remarkable figure. The leggings caused him some little difficulty at first. But I fixed them on at last with some bits of thick rope which he found in the bottom of the bag.

Then he sauntered majestically up and down the path, to shake himself into his new costume, as it were.

"Now, we'll fill that bag with brushwood," he remarked. "And we should really enclose a note of introduction. Lemme see. How will 'Keep the Home Fires Burning' do?"

"Ha, ha! Topping!"

Accordingly Bob produced a stump of pencil and a notebook, and inscribed that excellent counsel on one of the pages. He tore it out, and placed it on the top of the brushwood with which we filled the bag.

Then the bag was closed and locked, and Johnny Bull sent the key hurtling among the trees—to vanish from the ken of man for ever.

"Which of you is going to be my darling accomplice?" asked Bob, grinning. "You're the most ruffianly-looking chap here, Johnny. Will you volunteer?"

"I'll volunteer a thick ear!" said Johnny gruffly. "What shall I wear? Eltons won't do!"

"Just turn your jacket inside-out. I'll stand between you and our victims. And wind some rope round your bags, from the knee downwards, on the principle of puttees, you know. It will make a wonderful difference to your figure. When the officials at general headquarters sally forth, incognito, to spy out the enemy's forces——"

"Blow general headquarters!" growled Johnny, who didn't like the idea a bit.

But he carried out Bob's instructions, and they did indeed make a remarkable difference to his appearance.

"You remain seated on Skinny, Franky, until the wheeze is wangled," said Bob. "Now come on!"

Snatching up the bag, Bob slouched off in the direction of Snoop & Co., with Johnny by his side, both hunching up their shoulders and trying to look desperate. A more idiotic-looking couple never walked the earth, I'm sure.

"Hallo, Skinner! You have been a time!" said Snoop, as the pair crossed the farther side of the opening in which the smokers were lounging. "Why haven't you changed, you ass?"

The disguised Bob didn't seem to hear him—did not even seem to see the smokers, in fact.

"I grabbed the certificates as easy as winking," Erb," he grated, in raucous tones something like those Skinner had adopted in the Remove passage. "Told you I wouldn't be baulked, didn't I?"

"You did, 'Enery!" replied Johnny Bull, in such deep, sepulchral tones that even his companion started violently. Johnny was piling it on a little too thick.

The complexions of the smoking fraternity went green—a verdant bloom caused, I believe, as much by the fags they were smoking as the startling information they had received.

"It—it—it isn't Skinner at all!" stuttered Bunter.

"A real thief!" echoed Snoop. "We were the ones to be taken in—not the fellows!"

"I thought as much!" muttered Stott. "I knew that fellow wasn't Skinner. And you helped him to escape, Snoop, by keeping the fellows back!"

"Shurrup!" growled Snoop.

The three lay very low, fervently hoping that the robbers wouldn't see them. Or probably they crouched low in preparation for a sudden spring, as three valiant lions would before pouncing on their prey. Though I rather fancy that if they hadn't paid for some of the certificates which—as they thought—were in the bag, they would have bolted there and then.

"We'll leave the booty here, 'Erb, while we hunt the village for a suitable disguise apiece," said Bob, concealing the bag under a leafy bush. "Kim on!"

Johnny and Bob slouched back and joined us, and we eagerly watched for the schemers' next move.

They cautiously approached the spot where the bag was hidden.

"Thank goodness!" murmured Snoop, grabbing it. "We've got the certificates back! Let's hurry back with them. This is a feather in our caps, you fellows!"

And the deluded three made off with the bag triumphantly.

"Worked like a charm!" chuckled Bob. "I'm going to get out of these duds as quickly as poss. They don't suit my fancy. Oh! Ow! What on earth—— Yaroooh!"

A lithe and weedy figure suddenly dashed into the path, got Bob's head into chancery, and commenced pummeling him for all he was worth.

It was Fisher Tarleton Fish!

"Take that, you burbling galoot!" roared Fishy. "Where's my fifteen-and-a-tanner certificates, eh? Four of 'em, by Jerusalem! Take that, you skunk! And that!"

Bob roared. But Fishy was furiously in earnest. Nothing but the loss of spondulicks could make Fishy so wild.

"Draggimoff!" howled Bob. "By dose id broked!"

"My certificates!" roared Fishy. "Hand 'em over, you guy, or I guess I'll——"

We dragged the ferocious Fisherty away from poor Bob, trying hard not to laugh. The whole thing was too funny for words.

But Bob restrained his merriment quite admirably. He made several furious attempts to get at Fishy, but he was held back in like manner.

"I—I say!" gasped Fish. "Is that galoot Bob Cherry?"

"You—you dangerous Hun!" bellowed Bob.

"Peace, Bob, old man," said Harry soothingly. And he explained the jape to the American junior.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Fishy. "If that ain't the tiddest jape of the season, call me a mugwump!"

Bob, by the way, was calling him something much more unpleasant than that.

III.

"HALLO! Here comes Quelch!" said Snoop, as the trio burst through the hedge into the main road. "Skeat's with him, too, by gum!"

Mr. Quelch, directly on recovering from the blow dealt him by Skinner, had hurried to the Sixth Form-room for the Head.

Not finding him there—he was doing out certificates to the Third, as a matter of fact—Mr. Quelch had hurriedly 'phoned for Inspector Skeat, and hastened out to meet him along the road.

He was now engaged in explaining matters. "Mr. Quelch!" shouted Snoop, running up. "We've got the certificates, sir!"

The Remove-master started, and stared incredulously at Snoop and the bag—especially the bag. But it was undoubtedly the one that had bifled him that morning.

"You have found them, Skinner? Pray—pray open the bag!"

"It's locked, sir, and the key's gone. The Head has it, I suppose, sir. But they're the certificates, right enough. We came across that burbling chap hiding the bag in the woods, and when he'd gone we collared it."

"Bless my soul!"

Mr. Quelch's brow had lightened considerably by the time the party reached Greyfriars, though Skeat was looking a trifle black. The Inspector had scented a case, and it had apparently fallen through.

Dr. Locke, with the certificates before him, was in the empty Form-room when they arrived. He was—I was going to say that he had lifted up his mortar-board, and was scratching his head. That's what he seemed on the point of doing, anyway.

The entry into the room of Mr. Quelch, Inspector Skeat, Snoop, Stott, and Bunter, added the finishing touch to his astonishment.

"Dr. Locke," smiled Mr. Quelch, "you may cease to look alarmed."

"Ce—ce—cease to look alarmed!"

"We have recovered the certificates!"

"Re-re-recovered the certificates!" repeated the bewildered Head.

"They are in this bag. You have the key, I presume?"

"Nunno!" gasped the Head. "I have not the key of that bag!"

He was scarcely likely to have the key of the bag that Vernon-Smith used for his footer-togs and boots, was he?

"Then we will force it open," said Mr. Quelch cheerfully. "Pray give me your aid, Mr. Skeat."

"Certainly!" said Skeat.

And the two started a kind of tug-of-war, each grasping a handle.

The bag suddenly flew open, and a volley of rubbish shot out, enveloping the astounded Head of Greyfriars.

"Groooh!" choked Dr. Locke. "Bless my soul! Ooooooh!"

To put it mildly, Mr. Quelch, Inspector Skeat, Snoop, Stott, and Bunter were astonished. Ditto the Head.

But when Skeat picked up the slip bearing that most excellent maxim: "Keep the Home Fires Burning," and it was devoured by six pairs of angry eyes, the vials of wrath descended upon the three unfortunates.

No explanation was asked, and none was offered. There was no time.

And Snoop, Stott, and Bunter crawled away the richer by six of the best on each hand.

Bob greeted them with three of his mighty "Hallo's!" as they crawled into the Common-room later.

The trio stopped.

"A word on the quiet with you chaps," he said pleasantly. "A ripping scheme has just come into my head——"

The trio stared.

"It's for getting out of lessons, you know——"

The trio fled!

THE END.

TO MY LOVE!

[NOTE.—Herries says he "found" these. I don't know! He says they were written by Quasy. I don't know! Perhaps G. H. has got it! Anyway, they won't hurt anyone, so here goes!—T. M.]

I'm a poet, even though it
May be doubted by a few.
You will know it when I show it
In these simple lines to you.

I adore you, dearest, for you
Morn to evening do I sigh;
I assure you, so demure you
Look; so very sweet and shy.

I entreat you, let me meet you
At the Wayland Pictures, for
I will treat you to a seat you
Will be pleased with, I am sure.

Cynics can sing of romancing,
But your fascinating ways,
Your entrancing way of glancing,
Furnish song for days and days.

In conclusion, when you muse on
These few verses at your ease,
Give your views on this effusion.
Will you do this for me, please?

THE GREYFRIARS GALLERY.

No. 70 — POTTER and GREENE.

PLEASE don't ask who Potter and Greene are!

One is ready enough to admit that they are not among the people at Greyfriars who matter most. Still, they do matter. Where would Coker be without them?

He got along without them when he was in the Shell, of course. But then Hobson was his staunch chum. The case is far different now. Hobson regards Coker as a renegade since he passed into the Fifth, and Coker affects to regard Hobson, still in the Shell, as little better than a mere kid.

The firm of Coker, Potter, and Greene did not start directly Coker got promotion. At first the mighty Horace shared a study with Blundell and Bland. But this did not last long. A little later we find him with the two who are now his great chums. Till then little, if anything, had been heard of George Potter and William Greene. But after that some share of the limelight which Coker so often gets reached them; and it is easy to see what sort of fellows they are.

Both are good athletes—Potter rather the better of the two, but Greene also far ahead of the clumsy Coker. Potter has a regular place in the school cricket and footer

they went hunting for treasure with him, having none of his faith in finding it? Many more such incidents might be recalled, but they all point the same way. Potter and Greene follow Coker, although they are pretty sure that he is chasing the rainbow, looking for trouble, on the way to the finding of a mare's nest—anything that implies sheer foolish fatuity.

Why do they follow him? Is it for what they can get out of him? I think not. They appreciate the value of Coker's friendship from that point of view, no doubt; but decent fellows would not do so much for pure greed, and Potter and Greene are decent fellows.

Is it for the fun of the things? Well, partly. Coker is really funny, you know. But no one would put up with so much as Potter and Greene have endured merely for the sake of seeing the mighty Horace in difficult situations. The fact that all too often they share those difficult situations would be enough to choke them off that.

No; it is because they really are his chums—because they are honestly fond of bashing, braying, ramping, robustious Horace. Those among the readers who don't like him may find this hard to understand.

they expected to find a smaller edition of Horace, no doubt—might easily become a nuisance. Potter told Coker that if Coker's minor was going to be coddled, it should not be in their study. But they took no hand in ragging Reggie. Perhaps they did not mind as much as the fellows in the Forms junior to them did Coker minor's being placed in the Sixth. It is quite possible that the clever, delicate, and by no means bold Reggie suited them better than a second edition of Horace would have done.

Greene rather fancies himself as a debater. But, of course, Coker could spout his head off. Potter prides himself on his ability to write verses; but, naturally, he does not reach the standard of Coker in the art poetic. When the first number of the "Greyfriars Herald" was produced by the Remove, Ogilvy wrote some verses about members of the Fifth, and Coker confiscated the MS. in Coker's usual lordly fashion.

Potter and Greene thought the verses in which Coker was taken off very funny indeed. But Potter was not so well pleased by these lines:

"Though Coker is a comic card,
A funnier is the Fifth Form bard,
Who grinds out poems by the yard—
All piffle!

"What they may mean 'tis hard to tell;
And though you smile at Coker—well,
Old Potter simply makes you yell
At poems!

Nor did these lines make Greene smile, though, of course, they pleased his chums:

"You smile at Coker's football feats,
You yell at Potter's tuneful bleats;
But when the Fifth Form Chin Club meets—
Debating.

"When Greene gets up and takes the floor,
And fellows edge towards the door,
He makes you smile and yell and roar—
Debating!"

I don't know much about Potter's poetic talents, but I rather think Robert Donald Ogilvy has some ability that way—eh, what?



eleven; and Greene often plays in both. They are thus able to estimate at their true value Coker's claims to be considered a crack exponent of the two great games. For the sake of peace and quietness—and sometimes for the joke's sake—and sometimes because they know that Coker possesses a four-point-seven punch—they humour him. But there is plenty of frankness in the opinions they express at other times.

Potter is a bit of a humorist. His humour is wasted upon Coker—that lordly per-on has so much of his own that it is quite superfluous for anyone in his study to have any. Greene also can put in a shrewdly sarcastic remark now and then. But it is all wasted on Coker. When did he ever understand sarcasm?

You do not get Potter and Greene rightly if you take them as being mere toadies and sycophants. It is true that they are ready enough to share with Coker the liberal tips of Aunt Judy. But that does not mean that they are nothing but spongers. If any such windfalls came their way Coker would have his share. He happens to be the rich man of the trio, that is all. Where there is real comradeship one may give and others take a good deal without any reflection on the others.

They have let themselves in for a number of unpleasant experiences by their loyal following of Coker's lead. Do you remember when they tracked down Mr. Prout, believing—at least, Coker believed—that they were on the trail of the missing skipper? When

But as they grow older I think they may find that the Cokers of this world are a long way from being the worst people in it. What does it matter at bottom that a fellow should brag a bit, be rather rough, always want the lead, when that fellow is as plucky as they make them, clean of heart, and generous? Coker may be a fool; but he is other things beside that. He is not mean or treacherous or cruel, anyway. If he thinks of himself first when there are things to be done, he thinks of others first when there are things to be given. But perhaps it is impossible to make a youngster understand that one may love a fool. The disposition among boys of under fifteen or so is to dislike and despise the fellow of whom they can make a butt. Later they learn better. Potter and Greene are more than fifteen.

They have their heads screwed on all right. They often give Coker really good advice. But, of course, he never takes it. Either of them has brains enough for half a dozen Cokers—and that is not making them out geniuses, either. But Coker could never be brought to see that. Some of the chapters in which Potter and Greene are described trying to choke their hot-headed chum off some particularly foolish enterprise are really delightful reading.

This is not to make the inseparable pair out faultless, or, indeed, anything more than ordinary fellows of the decent type. They were not at all disposed to be pleasant when Coker minor was expected at Greyfriars. It seemed to them that Coker minor—whom

NOTICES.

CRICKET.

Matches Wanted by:—

MILL GREEN.—A. Burroughs, 2, Stanley Terrace, Beddington Corner, Mitcham.

MAGDA.—15-17-5 mile radius.—V. Le Breton, 135, Earlshall Road, Well Hall, Eltham, S.E.

BOOTS SCOUTS.—G. Wooley, 141, Osmaston Road, Lenton, Notts.

GROSVENOR ATHLETIC.—W. A. Wigmore, 85, Ebury Buildings, Pimlico.

CRUSADERS.—17.—W. A. Shackleford, 63, Tunis Road, W.12.

ST. HELEN'S.—1st and 2nd Elevens—4 mile radius from Wormwood Scrubs.—W. Cox, 5, Bracewell Road, St. Quentin's Park, W.10.

HUNTINGDON.—16-17-10 mile radius.—A. Coomber, 37, Offord Road, N.1.

BRITANNIA.—15.—H. R. Reid, 101, Samuel Street, S.E.18.

OTHER NOTICES.

G. Potter, 10, Derwentwater Road, W.3, wants to join club. All-round player. Write or call after 7.15.

G. H. Elam, 100, St. George's Road, S.E.15, would like to act as secretary to any club.

W. L. Dyke, 27, Bolton Street, W.1, wants members for club—14-1 mile radius.

G. Barlow, 13, York Road, Great Crosby, Liverpool, wishes to join a club in the neighbourhood.