

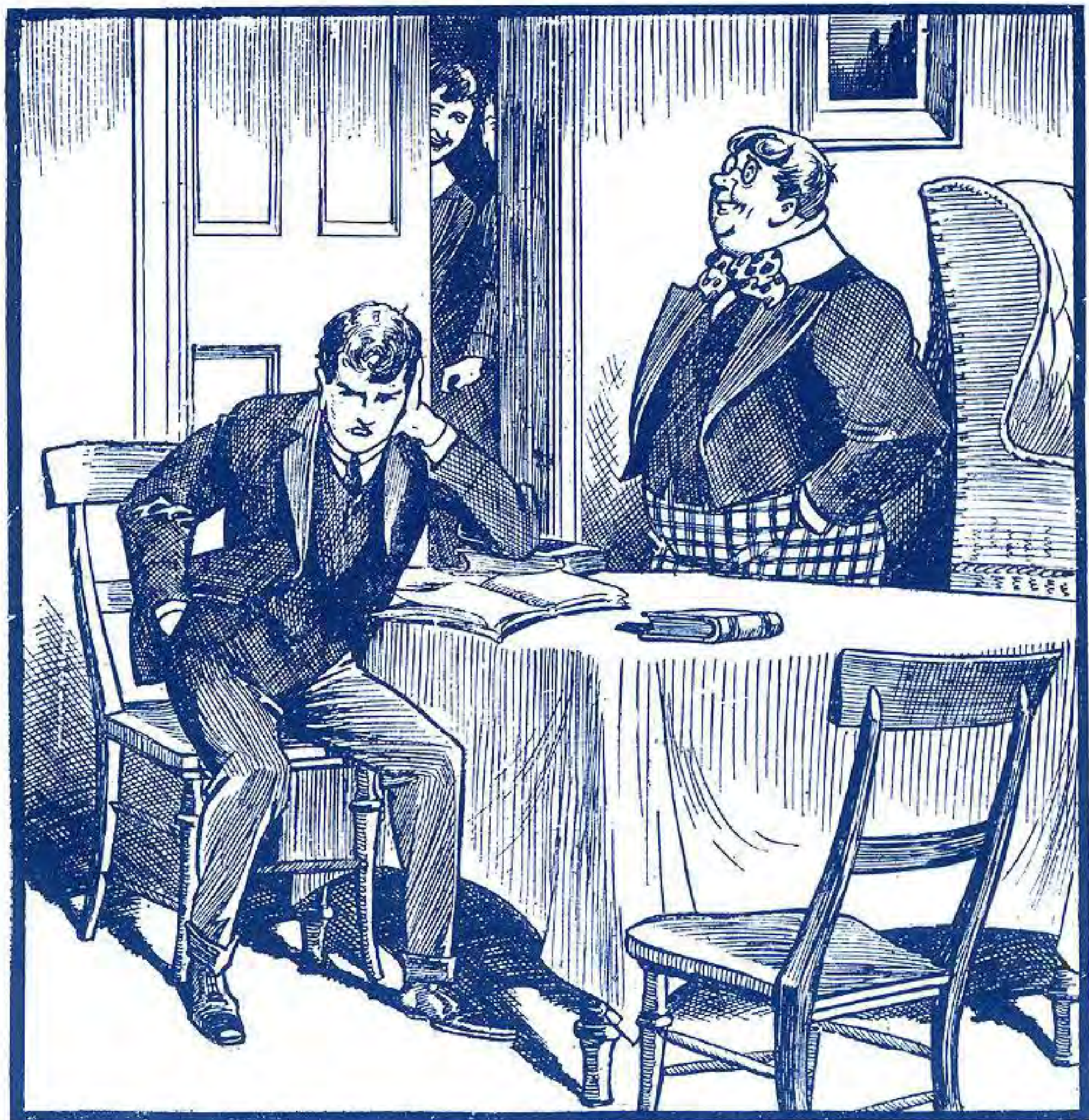


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The illustration at the top of the cover shows a man in a suit sitting on the ground, looking distressed, with various items scattered around him. To the right, a woman is sitting and reading a book, with a child standing behind her.

SMITHY'S SCHEME!



MAKING WORK IMPOSSIBLE!

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SMITHY'S SCHEME!

By FRANK RICHARDS.

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

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Bounder is Wrothy!

CRASH!
"Hallo, hallo, hallo! That sounds like trouble in the happy family!"

Harry Wharton & Co. were passing the door of Study No. 4 in the Remove when that terrific crash came from within.

The Co. were on their way to Wibley's study, where a discussion was to take place on the subject of amateur theatricals, but they stopped as they heard that crash in No. 4.

No. 4 belonged to Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, and Harold Skinner.

It was not exactly a happy family there, as Bob Cherry expressed it; certainly there was trouble.

The crash was followed by Skinner's voice, raised in anguish.

"Yaroooh!"
Then the Bounder's voice was heard in low, concentrated tones of anger.

"Get up, you cad, before I kick you round the study!"

Harry Wharton glanced at his chums, hesitating. It occurred to him that it might be just as well for somebody to intervene in No. 4.

"The troublesomeness is terrific," murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "Perhaps the esteemed peacemaker would be ridiculously useful."

There was the sound of a scuffle.
Then Skinner's voice again:

"Oh, oh, oh! Leggo, you rotter! Oh, oh!"

Harry Wharton hesitated no longer. He threw open the door of the study. He was friendly with Vernon-Smith, and he did not like Skinner; but he knew that the Bounder's temper was savage when roused, and certainly the sounds from No. 4 indicated that a peacemaker was badly wanted there.

Quite an exciting scene was going on in the study.

Skinner's head was in chancery, and the Bounder was pommelling his study-mate with great energy.

The unhappy Skinner wriggled and struggled and roared.

Vernon-Smith's face was set and his eyes glittering. He was hitting Skinner as if he mistook the latter's face for a punch-ball.

"Hold on, Smithy!" exclaimed Frank Nugent.

"Go easy, Smithy!" cried Wharton.

The Bounder did not heed. He went on pommelling, and Harold Skinner went on yelling and squirming.

Harry Wharton ran in and caught the Bounder by the arm.

"Let go!" shouted Vernon-Smith.

"Go easy, Smithy!"

"Let go, confound you!"

Wharton did not let go. He tightened his grip, and the pommelling had to stop. Johnny Bull caught hold of Vernon-Smith's other arm. Between them the two juniors dragged him back from Skinner.

It was high time.

Skinner was looking hurt. His long, thin nose streamed crimson, and he was quite spent. The weedy black sheep of the Remove was no match for Vernon-Smith. He reeled against the table, and leaned there, panting for breath, and dabbing feebly at his nose.

"Will you let me get at him, you fools?" exclaimed the Bounder savagely.

"The esteemed Smithy is not politeful," remarked Hurree Singh.

"I'm going to lick him!"

"You've licked him enough, Smithy," said Harry Wharton drily. "Whatever he's done, or not done, he's licked enough. Let him alone!"

"Well, I won't!"

"Keep the beast off, you fellows!" panted Skinner.

"Will you let me go?" roared the Bounder.

"No!" answered Wharton coolly.

"We won't let you go, Smithy—not till you're cool. You've done enough."

"A bit more than enough, if you ask me!" grunted Johnny Bull. "Skinner can't stand up to you, Smithy, and you know it. Let the chap alone!"

Vernon-Smith gave the Famous Five a furious look. Furious looks, however, had no effect upon these cheerful juniors. They were ranged between the Bounder and his study-mate, and they did not intend to let him begin again. They had no doubt at all that Skinner was to blame in the dispute, whatever it was; but there was a limit.

The Bounder calmed down, however. It was very seldom that the cool-headed, iron-nerved Bounder of Greyfriars lost his self-control. His face remained dark, but he was calm.

"You can let go," he said sullenly.

"I won't touch him again."

The Co. released him then.

"What's the terrific row about?" asked Bob Cherry. "Skinner ain't a pleasant chap, I know, but there's no need to push his nose through the back of his head."

"Find out!" snapped the Bounder.

Bob's good-humoured face became a little less sunny.

"Have you lost anything, Smithy?" he asked.

Smithy stared.

"Lost anything? No!"

"Oh! I thought you might have mislaid your manners somewhere."

"Don't be a silly ass!"

"Draw it mild, Smithy!" said Harry Wharton.

"Oh, rats!"

Evidently the Bounder was thoroughly out of temper. Skinner mopped his nose with his handkerchief, which was stained red. In safety behind the Famous Five, he glared at his study-mate, with hatred and malice in his looks. There had never been any love lost between the study-mates of No. 4 since the Bounder had given up his old shady ways, and left Skinner to follow the primrose path of a black sheep alone.

"You rotter!" panted Skinner. "You rotter! If you think you're going to

get me out of the study that way you're making a mistake. You lay your paws on me again and I'll go straight to Quelch about it! I mean that."

"You're sneaking cad enough for that, or anything else!" snapped Vernon-Smith. "You needn't tell me what a crawlin' worm you are!"

"Out of the study!" repeated Wharton. "What do you mean, Skinner?"

"I'll tell you what I mean!" said Skinner savagely. "And I want you to chip in, as captain of the Remove. If you don't, I'll see that Mr. Quelch does! Smithy wants me to change out of this study so that his pal Redwing can dig with him! I'm not going to!"

"No reason why you shouldn't," said Harry. "You don't pull with Smithy, and Redwing does."

"I suppose I can stick to my own study if I choose?"

"Well, yes, I suppose so."

"The stickfulness is permissible," remarked Hurree Singh; "but under the esteemed circumstances it is not considerate."

"That's my business! Do you think I'm going to change out because Smithy's punched my nose?" howled Skinner.

"Well, your nose would be safer in another study," remarked Frank Nugent.

"It's safe enough here," said Skinner. "I'll see whether I'm going to be bullied out of my study! I leave it to you, Wharton, as captain of the Form. If you don't stop that cad, Mr. Quelch will. I'll tell him fast enough."

"No good sneaking," said Harry uneasily.

"You can call it sneaking if you like!" hissed Skinner. "I'm not going to be bullied and hammered; and if you expect it you'll be disappointed. It's your business to put down bullying in the Remove, and you know it. The Head of the Form is expected to do that."

"That's right enough," said Wharton, rather dismayed at being forced into the position of championing a fellow he disliked against a fellow he liked a good deal. "You might be obliging, though, and change out. You'd get on all right with Snoop and Stott in No. 1, and Redwing would get on all right with Smithy here."

"I don't feel obliging!" snarled Skinner, still dabbing at his nose. "This kind of thing doesn't make a chap feel obliging, you know."

"Something in that!" grinned Bob Cherry. "You really weren't diplomatic, Smithy."

The Bounder shrugged his shoulders impatiently.

"I asked Skinner to change with Redwing," he said. "Redwing wants to dig with me, and I want him. Skinner's pally with Snoop and Stott, and Redwing isn't. It's a good arrangement for all parties, only Skinner chooses to refuse because he's got his knife into Redwing."

"He's within his rights," said Harry. "I must say that hammering him is a bit beyond the limit."

"You can say what you like!" growled

the Bounder. "But if you had any sense you'd know that I didn't hammer him for refusing to change out. I hammered him for calling Redwing names." "Oh, that was it, was it?" exclaimed Harry. "I might have guessed that, Skinner!"

Skinner sneered.

"I don't like upstarts and prize-hunters," he said. "I ought to have had the scholarship Redwing bagged to wedge himself into Greyfriars. I might have had it if he'd stayed in his proper place. I don't like low longshoremen who wedge themselves into a school too good for them. Let the rowdy lout go back to caulking boats and mendin' nets! That's his mark!"

The Bounder breathed hard.

It was curious enough that the cool, hard Bounder, who seldom made a friend, should have chummed with Tom Redwing, the sailorman's son of Hawkscliff—all the more as he was a millionaire's son, and Tom Redwing had little beside his scholarship. But there it was; and snobbish remarks about Redwing from Skinner & Co. always had the effect of rousing the Bounder's temper—not a nice temper when it was roused.

"Will you fellows get away?" said Vernon-Smith savagely. "Redwing's my pal, and I don't allow him to be talked of like that."

Harry Wharton's brow darkened.

"If we'd heard Skinner on that topic I don't think we should have come in," he said quietly. "I warn you, Skinner, that you'd better chuck that kind of talk, or Smithy isn't the only fellow here who will punch your nose!"

"Can't I say what I like in my own study?" sneered Skinner. "You're all jolly taken with that longshoreman, but I believe in the lower classes keepin' their places. The fellow's a disgrace to Greyfriars, an' Smithy knows it—"

The Bounder made a spring forward, shoving the juniors savagely out of his way. Skinner's remarks stopped suddenly as he made a bound for the doorway.

He escaped Vernon-Smith's knuckles as he darted out; but the Bounder lunged out with his boot, and Skinner caught that. He landed in the passage on his hands and knees, with a loud yell.

Vernon-Smith strode after him; and Skinner leaped to his feet and fairly fled for his life. He vanished down the Remove passage and the staircase at record speed.

The Bounder turned back savagely into his study.

"Coming along to Wib's, Smithy?" asked Wharton pacifically. "We're going to fix up a new play for the Remove Dramatic Society—"

"No!" snapped Smithy.

Wharton gave a slight shrug of the shoulders and left the study. His chums followed him, leaving the Bounder with a dark brow.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Swotting Under Difficulties!

TOM REDWING was at work in his study.

The sailorman's son was working hard; but there was a cheerful, contented expression on his face.

Life had seemed good to the boy from Hawkscliff just lately.

He had a good deal to be glad of. He had won the scholarship that gave him admittance to Greyfriars, and had come to the school on an independent footing, poor as he was. He was popular in his Form, save with a few outsiders like Skinner and Stott, and he had one pal who would stick to him through thick and thin. Best of all, his sailor father, whom he had believed drowned when his ship



A "ragtime" band rags Redwing! (See Chapter 2.)

went down in a submarine attack, had returned alive and well. He was working now at a Latin paper for an exam, which, with luck, might result in a cash prize—the cash to be expended on purchasing a bicycle, if it came to Redwing. Hard work and Tom Redwing were old acquaintances; and he found pleasure in his work, too, which few of the juniors did.

He had the study to himself just then, Snoop and Stott being out. He was glad of it; it gave him a chance to work. Snoop had been rather civil to the new junior of late, not having yet quite forgotten that Tom had done him several good turns. But Stott was as morose as ever; and Stott found an impish pleasure in making a shindy in the study when he found Redwing hard at work. It was not easy to grind classics with a fellow using the punch-ball close at hand, and taking care to bump over the furniture in the process.

Bob Cherry had looked in to inform Redwing of the meeting in Wibley's study; but Tom had shaken his head with a smile. The meeting of the Dramatic Society had to proceed without him.

He sighed a little as he heard a tramp of footsteps in the passage. He knew Stott's heavy tread.

The door was flung open with a crash, and Stott strode in, with Sidney James Snoop. Skinner followed them in, and Redwing glanced at him rather curiously. Skinner's nose was red and swollen, and he looked as if he had lately been in the wars. Redwing had heard the row along the passage some time before, and he guessed that Skinner had had trouble with his study-mate.

It was not yet tea-time, and there seemed no reason why the three juniors should invade the study; but they had evidently come to stop. Skinner closed the door, with an evil look at Redwing.

"Hallo! Swotting again, Redwing?" exclaimed Stott, with a laugh.

"I'm doing some work, Stott."

"After the Bagehot Prize—eh?"

"I've entered for the Bagehot," said Tom quietly.

"You're becoming the champion prize-hunter of the Remove!" sneered Stott.

"I haven't bagged any prizes so far,

excepting my scholarship," said Redwing, a faint flush coming into his cheeks.

"Well, that was a big fish to land, wasn't it? I should think you might be satisfied with that for one term."

"You can think what you like," answered Redwing, turning back to his work again. He did not care very much what Stott thought, as a matter of fact.

"Latin!" said Snoop, glancing at Redwing's work. "My hat! That's miles too deep for me! Doesn't it give you a pain in the head, Redwing?"

"No," said Tom, with a smile.

"Oh, Redwing can work!" sneered Skinner. "He was taught to work as soon as he could walk—weren't you, Redwing?"

"As soon as I was able to, certainly."

"I dare say you caulked boats before you were ten."

"I helped."

"Oh, my hat! Baggin' our prizes comes pretty easy after that—what?"

"It's easier than real work, I suppose," said Tom. "But this is a rather stiff paper, and I'd like to get on with it, if you don't mind."

"Not at all! Get on with it by all means! You fellows ready for the rehearsal?" smiled Skinner.

"Oh, quite!" said Stott.

Snoop looked rather uneasy. He was hand-in-glove with his associates, but he had the grace to feel a little ashamed. Snoop was not of a grateful nature, but he could not quite forget that Tom Redwing had been a friend to him in the hour of need.

Redwing looked up.

"The dramatic meeting's in Wibley's study," he said.

"Bother the dramatic meeting!" answered Skinner. "We're going to have a little rehearsal on our own. Got your mouth-organ, Stott?"

"Here it is!"

"Good! I've got my tin whistle. You keep time with the poker on the fender, Snoop. Mark time loud enough."

"Right-ho!"

Redwing's face set.

Unheeding him, the three young blackguards proceeded with their rehearsal. Skinner blew the tin whistle, Stott buzzed

on the mouth-organ, and Sidney James Snoop banged the fender with the poker. He might have been keeping time, but, if so, it did not agree with the time observed by the whistle and the mouth-organ. In fact, it could not have agreed with both, since they were out of time. The din that filled the study was the last word in hideous discordance.

It was hopeless to attempt to work while that was going on, and Tom Redwing hid down his pen.

He did not need telling that the "rehearsal" was intended solely to prevent him from working in the study.

Yet it was difficult to raise objections to the proceedings of Snoop and Stott. It was their study as well as his.

"Good!" said Skinner, pausing for breath. "If we get on, we'll set Hoskins of the Shell to come and give us some tips on music. This sounds a bit like his march in F sharp, doesn't it?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now, no slackin'! Get on with the music!"

Shriek! Buzz! Bang! The music proceeded.

Tom Redwing waited quietly till there was another pause. Then he struck in:

"Are you fellows keeping this up long?"

"Oh, some time yet!" said Skinner affably. "We're going to make up an amateur orchestra, you know. What do you think of our music, Redwing?"

"It's a horrid row."

"Good! I meant it to be on the Debussy lines," said Skinner. "Might take it for Richard Straus, though, mightn't you? We're improvising, Redwing."

There was a chortle from Snoop and Stott. "The 'music' produced by Skinner & Co. was enough to make Richard Strauss turn green with envy. The greatest works of the most famous modern German composer did not contain such hideous discords as were being produced in Study No. 11 in the Remove.

"Get on!" chirruped Skinner. "Mark time a bit louder, Snoop—use the tongs with your left as well. Hoskins says you have to be very careful with the time, to turn out a really good musical performance."

Bang, bang! Crash! Shriek, shriek! Buzzzzzzzzzz!

Redwing rose to his feet.

"Not going?" asked Skinner.

"I can't work here."

"Don't mind us, you know. We can rehearse all right while you're swottin'."

Redwing made no reply to that. He gathered up books and papers and walked out of the study. Skinner peered after him as he went up the passage, and watched him disappear into No. 4—Vernon-Smith's study.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Stott. "Cleared out the swot!"

"Ho, ho, he!" cackled Snoop.

Skinner rubbed his nose. It still hurt. But he grinned.

"I fancy that puts a spoke in his wheel!" he remarked, with great satisfaction. "He's gone into my study now."

"Smithy can enjoy his company if he likes. Let's play banker, now the brute's gone."

Skinner shook his head.

"No fear! Too busy for banker."

"Kh? What have you got to do?"

"My musical training. Can't neglect that, now I've taken up music."

"Redwing won't hear it from here."

"I can rehearse the tin whistle in my own study, I suppose. Come along!"

"No jolly fear!" said Snoop. "Smithy would take a cricket-bat to us if we kicked up that shindy in his quarters."

"They're my quarters, too."

"All the same, I'm not coming."

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"Same here," said Stott. "Let it drop, Skinner. After all, why shouldn't the blessed fellow swot if he likes it? It's a lark to clear him out, but enough's as good as a feast."

"I've got a prize nose to pay him for!"

"Redwing didn't do that."

"Smithy did, and it comes to the same thing. You fellows stay here, then, and start the shindy again if he comes back."

"Done! Where's the wicked pasteboards, Snoopey?"

Skinner left the study, leaving Snoop and Stott to the delights of banker, with their musical instruments ready in case Tom Redwing returned. Harold Skinner strolled along to No. 4.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Bounder Causes Surprise!

"TROT in, Redwing, old chap!"

The Bounder had been looking moody, but his face cleared as Tom Redwing looked in at his study.

"Working?" he asked.

"Yes. Do you mind if I work here for a bit, Smithy?" asked Tom. "I'd like to get on with this paper, if I'm not putting you out."

"Welcome as the flowers in May," said the Bounder, smiling. "Here you are; here's a clear place. Shall I worry you if I squat here and read?"

"Of course not!"

"Right-ho, then!"

Tom Redwing sat down to work at his chum's table, and the Bounder, looking much less moody, took up a book. But Tom had not been at work more than five minutes when Harold Skinner sauntered into No. 4.

Vernon-Smith gave his study-mate a dark look as he came in. Skinner took no notice of him. He sat down in the window-seat, and began playing on his tin whistle.

Skinner was not a musical fellow. His object was to make the whistle shriek, and he did it.

The Bounder looked across at him grimly.

"Stop that row, Skinner!" he said.

Skinner looked at him.

"Can't I play a musical instrument in my own study?" he asked.

"You can't make that thumping row when a fellow's working."

"You're not working."

"Redwing is."

"I didn't know that this was Redwing's study!" sneered Skinner. "Sorry to bother him, but I'm rather keen on getting some practice, and I've nowhere else to do it. I put up with your row when you took up the violin once. One good turn deserves another."

The whistle shrieked again with incessant iteration.

Vernon-Smith jumped up. Redwing had stopped working; his brow clouded.

"Will you stop that row, Skinner?" shouted the Bounder.

"No, I won't!"

"Then I'll jolly well make you!"

Vernon-Smith strode across the study. Tom Redwing jumped up quickly and interposed.

"It's all right, Smithy!" he exclaimed hastily. "Skinner has a right to play in his own study, as far as I'm concerned, anyway. Don't bother."

"I'm going to bother," said the Bounder doggedly. "Do you think I can't see the game? I heard that row along the passage. They've turned you out of your own study, and now Skinner's come to drive you out of this. I'm going to boot him out!"

"Do!" said Skinner, showing his teeth. "I'll go straight to Mr. Quelch, and ask him whether I'm to be turned out of my study for that fellow!"

Redwing caught the Bounder's arm.

"Hold on, Smithy! I've no right to work here if Skinner doesn't like it; it's his study. I can go down to the Form-room."

"And if I choose I'll play the whistle in the Form-room," said Skinner.

"You won't," said Redwing quickly.

"If you follow me to the Form-room, Skinner, with that row, I'll pitch you out on your neck! Take it easy, Smithy. I don't mind going downstairs."

Vernon-Smith controlled his temper with an effort. He nodded shortly, and left the study with Tom Redwing.

Skinner made a movement to follow; but he paused. So long as he was within his right he had the upper hand; but if he followed Redwing to the Form-room to interrupt his work he could be dealt with. Skinner had already learned that the lad from Hawkscliff was a hard hitter. Skinner decided that it wasn't good enough. And he finally went along to Snoop's study to join in the game of banker.

Redwing laid his papers on his desk in the Remove-room, which was quite deserted then. The Bounder stood watching him for some moments.

"It's rotten that you should have to work here, Redwing," he said, at last.

"I don't mind; it's just as good, really."

"If you want a book, you'll have to trot off to the study for it."

"I've got all I want."

"It's rotten, all the same. Skinner's schemed this."

"I know."

"Look here, Redwing, we've got to manage somehow for you to change into my study," said Vernon-Smith.

"I'd like to, old chap. And, if Skinner would be decent about it, it could be done," said Redwing, rather wistfully. "He would get on better with Snoop and Stott than I do. But he won't, and he has a right to refuse."

"I'll make him, somehow!"

Redwing looked uneasy.

"Skinner's a disobliging cad, Smithy, but he's within his rights," he said. "Let him go his own way."

"Does that mean that you don't care whether you change into No. 4 or not?" asked the Bounder gruffly.

"No, Smithy. Don't catch a fellow up! I'd like it no end. I don't get on well in No. 11, and I can't work there very often. But Skinner's within his rights, and he can't be turned out of his own study."

"Well, I'm going to wangle it," said the Bounder. "I hate askin' favours of a cad like Skinner, but I'm goin' to work it. After all, the worm would do anything for a few quid."

Redwing look troubled.

The Bounder walked away, and Tom settled down to his work. He was not interrupted again, and his face soon cleared as he grew immersed in his task. Vernon-Smith returned to the Remove passage, but he found his study empty. As he came out again, looking for Skinner, he met the Famous Five coming back from Wibley's quarters.

"Wib wants to see you, Smithy," said Harry Wharton. "He's got you down for a part in our new play."

"Oh, Wib can wait!" said the Bounder carelessly. "Have you seen Skinner?"

"No. I hope you're not ragging again."

The Bounder smiled sarcastically.

"Not at all. No need for you to come down as captain of the Remove, like a god from high Olympus," he answered.

Wharton coloured.

"Don't be an ass, Smithy!" he said. "You know that a Form captain has duties to do, and one of them is—"

He paused.

"To prevent an athletic chap from bullying a weedy slacker who can't put his hands up? I understand perfectly. But I'm not looking for Skinner to bully him," said the Bounder coolly. "I'm going to be very civil. I dare say he's in Stott's study now, and you can see how nice I'm going to be to him, if you like."

The Bounder threw open Stott's door. There was a startled exclamation within.

Snoop and Stott and Skinner were deep in banker, and there were three cigarettes going, and the sudden opening of the door had startled them.

"Oh, only Smithy!" said Snoop, in great relief.

"What the dickens do you want here, Smithy?" growled Skinner.

"I thought I should find a little game going on here," said the Bounder calmly.

"Tain't so very long since you used to join in a little game, and make the fur fly, too!" remarked Stott.

"Quite so! I'm your man now, if you want a fourth."

"Welcome home!" grinned Stott.

"Here's a chair. Come back to the merry old fold and be a good boy, Smithy!"

"Thanks!" Vernon-Smith turned to the Famous Five, who were staring.

"You see, you're not wanted, Wharton, Skinner doesn't need protection now."

"You're not going to play cards with those rotters, Smithy?" said Harry Wharton very quietly.

The Bounder shrugged his shoulders.

"Why not?" he answered.

"The reason notfully is great, my ridiculous friend," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh gently. "Evil communications corrupt the pitcher that goes longest to the well, as the English proverb says."

The Bounder laughed.

"Well, it's no business of mine, I suppose!" said Harry Wharton tartly; and he walked on down the passage, his brow clouded. It looked as if the Bounder of Greyfriars was breaking out again, as he had done so often before.

Skinner closed the door. Skinner was grinning quite gleefully now. The look on Wharton's face afforded him great satisfaction. He could almost have forgiven Vernon-Smith at that moment. As for Snoop and Stott, they welcomed the Bounder with open arms. The black sheep of Greyfriars had sorely missed their old leader since the Bounder's reform.

Vernon-Smith dropped into a chair at the table.

"Your deal, Skinner!" chirruped Snoop. "You're banker."

And the game of poker proceeded, with four instead of three. Skinner was quite good-humoured now; he was very keen to annex some of the many currency notes that he knew the Bounder had in his pocket-book.

"Smoke, old scout?" asked Stott.

"Not now," answered the Bounder.

"Oh, put a fag on!"

"No, I tell you!"

"All serene. Keep your hair on! Are you afraid Redwing may come in and see you?" chuckled Stott.

"Let's get on with the game, and not so much jaw!" said the Bounder gruffly.

They got on with the game, and it was going strong, when the door opened and Tom Redwing stepped into the study. It was tea-time now, and Tom's work was finished in the Form-room.

Redwing coughed as he came in. There was a good deal of smoke in the study. For a moment he did not notice that Vernon-Smith was there.

"Your win, Smithy!" Snoop was saying.

Redwing started as he saw the Bounder sitting at the table. Vernon-Smith flushed under Redwing's surprised glance.

"Hallo! Come in to tea?" asked Snoop. "Can't have the table for a bit, Redwing. We're busy. Go somewhere and swot."

Vernon-Smith opened his lips, but closed them again.

Redwing, without a word, turned and left the study, closing the door after him.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

N.G.!

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH'S brow was moody as he went on with his game.

He had joined the merry dogs of the Remove, but certainly he was not looking very merry.

But his usual luck held good, and he was winning. A cooler head and plenty of capital gave the Bounder the advantage, and Skinner & Co. really had little chance against him with the cards.

The black sheep had welcomed the Bounder, but after a while they were not so sure that they were pleased.

Stott, indeed, looked decidedly discontented when he rose from the table in the unpleasant state known as stony.

"Chuckin' it?" asked Snoop.

"Must!" grunted Stott.

"Then I'll have a smoke with you."

Snoop, too, was near the end of his tether, and a remnant of wisdom made him decide to keep his few remaining shillings in his pocket.

He looked on at the game with Stott, both of them smoking, and both looking rather glum.

Neither was Skinner looking happy.

Harold Skinner had been in unusual funds, but his funds had slowly but surely travelled across the table, and now lay at the Bounder's elbow.

The sum was small enough to the millionaire's son, but it was a large sum for Skinner to lose. He did not count his cash by the fiver, as the Bounder did.

He went on playing savagely, hoping to snatch victory from the jaws of defeat, as it were.

But luck remained with the Bounder. Skinner had one or two gleams of good fortune, but in the long run the last of his cash crossed the table, to join the little pile at Smithy's elbow.

Skinner sat with a moody and savage look on his face, probably wishing that he had not been quite so gay a dog that afternoon.

The Bounder looked up at him, an ironical smile curving his lips.

"Goin' on?" he asked.

"On tick?" asked Skinner.

"Ahem! I'm not collectin' waste-paper." The Bounder rose and yawned.

"Quite a pleasant hour, you fellows!"

He smiled at the moody trio.

"Pleasant for you!" grunted Snoop.

"You've won all our money," said Skinner.

"What did you expect, dear boy? Lemme see. How much have I had of yours, Skinner?"

"Thirty bob!" grunted Skinner.

"What a fortune!"

"We're not all dashed moneylenders' sons!" said Skinner sourly. "Thirty bob is a lot to me."

"I'll make you a present of it, if you like!"

"What?"

"There it is!" said the Bounder, separating thirty shillings from the rest.

"And there's yours, Stott; and there's yours, Snoop. Figure it out for yourselves. I make only one condition."

Skinner gave him a quick look.

"What's that?" he asked.

"I want you to do me a favour."

"You want me to clear out of No. 4 so that Redwing can be your study-mate!" sneered Skinner. His eyes glittered. "That's why you've played with us, hang you! You knew you'd win, and you wanted to get me under your thumb and make me give in. Well, you'll be disappointed. Keep your money!"

"I—I'm not going to take mine back," said Stott, though he eyed the money hungrily. "We're not kids, playing for nuts!"

"No, you're dashed idiots, playing because you think it's clever, which it isn't at all!" said the Bounder sarcastically. "So you won't get out of my study for your money back, Skinner?"

"No, I won't!"

Snoop and Stott laughed a little.

They understood the Bounder's game now. He had taken this method of bringing Harold Skinner to terms, but he had failed. It gave Skinner a severe pain to lose the money, but he was not to be so easily caught as all that. He was bitterly determined that he would not make way for Tom Redwing in Study No. 4.

The Bounder stood silent for some moments, with a look in his eyes that it was not pleasant to see.

The money lay untouched on the table.

"You can take up your winnings!" sneered Skinner. "I'm sticking to Study No. 4, my boy—sticking like glue!"

Without answering Vernon-Smith crossed to the door.

He had been defeated, and he took his defeat quietly. He was not at the end of his resources by any means.

"You're leaving your money!" called out Snoop.

"Chuck it into the wastepaper-basket!" answered the Bounder. "I don't want it. Hang your measly shillings!"

He quitted the study, and slammed the door after him.

"Oh, my hat!" said Stott.

The three black sheep looked at one another.

Well, if Smithy doesn't want his winnings, we'll have it that we played for fun, and take the tin back," said Snoop. "After all, Smithy doesn't care. He could buy up this study and not miss the money!"

And the trio retook possession of their losings. It was rather a detraction from their dignity as merry blades and sportsmen, but they were very glad to have the money in their pockets again, all the same.

Skinner, in fact, was smiling quite cheerily as he left the study and went to his own quarters.

He found the Bounder there.

"Try again, Smithy!" remarked Skinner, with a chuckle.

Vernon-Smith gave him a quick look.

"I'm going to try again, Skinner," he said. "I'm determined to make you change with Redwing!"

"I'd like to know how you'll manage it!"

"What do you want to stick here for, Skinner? You'd get on ever so much better with Snoop and Stott, and they're willing to have you."

"I don't choose to change."

"You mean you're going to make yourself as unpleasant as possible because it happens to be in your power to do it?"

Skinner shrugged his shoulders.

"Put it like that if you like," he said.

"I'm not goin' to change out, at any rate. I'm stickin'—like glue."

"What price a fiver?" asked the Bounder.

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"Ha, ha! You'll stand me a fiver to change out?"

"Yes."

"Make it a tenner!" grinned Skinner. The Bouncer drew a deep breath.

"I'll make it a tenner," he said. "Is it a go?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Skinner.

"Is it a go?" demanded the Bouncer impatiently.

"No, it isn't a go!" grinned Skinner.

"Not if you make it a pony, old man! You don't seem to love my society; but I'm too attached to you to part with you, Smithy, old man! I'm stickin'!"

The Bouncer said no more. For the sake of putting a spoke in Redwing's wheel, as he termed it, Skinner was even ready to refuse a ten-pound note. It was clear that he was not to be moved. If the Bouncer wanted to get rid of his study-mate, persuasion was not the method to be tried. The Bouncer was silent, but his thoughts were busy, and if Skinner had been able to guess what was passing in his mind the cad of the Remove would probably have felt a good deal less satisfied and triumphant.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

New Quarters!

"WHARTON!"

"Hallo, Redwing!"

It was the following afternoon, and Harry Wharton was going out, with his bat under his arm, when Tom Redwing stopped him. The Remove had a cricket-match on that afternoon, in which the Bouncer was playing.

"You'll be playing most of the afternoon, I suppose, Wharton?" said Redwing.

"Yes. I expect that St. Jude's will keep us busy until nearly dark," answered Harry.

"Nugent's in the Remove team?"

"Yes."

"Then there'll be nobody in your study?"

"Not a soul."

Redwing coloured a little.

"Would you mind if I used your study, then?" he asked. "I shouldn't do any damage there, working, you know."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Use it and welcome!" he answered. "You're welcome any time, whether it's empty or not."

"Thanks very much!" said Tom.

Wharton's face became grave.

"Hold on, though," he said. "You're swotting this afternoon, Redwing?"

"Yes. I'm going to put in some work, as I'm not wanted for the match. It's a good chance to get on for the exam."

"You find it difficult to work in your own quarters?"

"Stott and Snoop are a bit noisy sometimes."

"I've heard about that," said the captain of the Remove. "It looks to me as if Skinner and his friends have set themselves to worry you, Redwing. It's a beastly mean trick, and they ought to be stopped."

"I don't want anybody to interfere," said Tom quickly. "They're a bit thoughtless. It's what they call a lark, I suppose. Smithy will let me use his study at any time; but, you see, it's Skinner's study, too, so I can't work there. There's the Form-room, but—" He hesitated. "I hear that Skinner & Co. are using the Form-room this afternoon for a rehearsal or something."

Wharton frowned.

"A tin whistle and mouth-organ rehearsal. I understand," he replied. "It's a rotten trick! As captain of the Remove, I think it's up to me to chip in, and I'll do so if you choose."

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"No, no!" said Tom hastily. "I don't want that. If you don't mind my working in your study, I can manage all right."

"All serene, then," said Harry.

But the captain of the Remove was frowning as he joined his chums and went down to Little Side.

When a fellow was given to swotting, it was not uncommon for other fellows to rag him a little, as a hint that hard work was not considered quite the thing.

But Skinner & Co.'s proceedings were far beyond the limit of a joke. Skinner had evidently set himself, of deliberate purpose, to prevent Tom Redwing from working for his prize—which the scholarship junior needed badly enough.

Skinner's little game was well enough known in the Remove, and most of the fellows looked upon it as rather humorous, but it did not strike Wharton in that light.

Still, unless Redwing asked him to interfere, as head of the Form, it was rather difficult for him to do so.

And Redwing shrank from doing anything of the kind. He hoped that Skinner & Co. would get tired of their amusement; and, meanwhile, he had to get his work done as best he could.

He settled down cheerfully enough with his books in Study No. 1. His own study was impossible, owing to Snoop and Stott; the Bouncer's study was barred by Skinner; and the Form-room was not available this time. Skinner had calmly asked Mr. Quelch's permission to use the Form-room for a rehearsal, and the Remove-master had unsuspiciously granted permission, little dreaming of Harold Skinner's real object.

But in Study No. 1—which belonged to Wharton and Nugent—Tom felt that he was safe from interruption. The Bouncer looked in, with his bat under his arm, as Tom was beginning work.

"Getting at it?" asked Vernon-Smith.

"Yes. I'm quite snug here," answered Tom, with a smile.

"Good! I believe you had rather a shock yesterday, Redwing, when you saw me in your study with that crew."

Tom's face clouded a little.

"It's not my business, Smithy," he answered. "I haven't thought about it."

"I'm going to explain, all the same," said Vernon-Smith. "I won all Skinner's money, and offered it back to him to change out of my study. He refused. That was my game."

"Oh, I see!"

"You don't approve?" grinned the Bouncer.

"I—I don't think it was a good idea, Smithy. That kind of thing isn't good enough for you. I know you were doing it for my sake, though."

"But you wish I hadn't?"

Redwing was silent.

He would not appear to be setting up in judgment upon his chum; but it was not possible for his real thoughts to escape the keen-eyed Bouncer. Vernon-Smith laughed rather harshly.

"You're a more particular chap than I am, Redwing," he said, with a suspicion of a sneer in his tone. "I'm afraid I don't quite come up to the Hawkscliff standard in some respects."

"Smithy, old chap," said Redwing, greatly pained, "I—I—"

"I've seen the longshoremen sitting on the boats playing pitch and toss," said the Bouncer. "You never did anything so naughty, of course?"

Redwing did not answer, but the expression on his face made the Bouncer's mood change.

"Don't mind me, kid!" he exclaimed. "Anybody in the Remove could have told you I had a bitter tongue, if you'd cared to hear it. The fact is, that cad Skinner is getting on my nerves. But I'm going

to down him. I know a way. Pile in with your work! I'll give you a look in after the match."

"Right-ho, Smithy!" said Tom.

The Bouncer left the study, and Redwing settled down to work.

By the time the cricket-match had started on Little Side Skinner & Co. were ready for business. But they were rather puzzled at first. Redwing was not to be found in his own study, or in Smithy's, and the Form-room was drawn blank. The three young rascals gathered in the Remove passage, puzzled and exasperated.

"He must be chuckin' swotting for the afternoon," said Stott. "Watching the cricket, after all, very likely."

Skinner shook his head.

"He's swotting right enough," he answered. "He's dodged into some other study, that's all. Look for him along the passage."

"What a game!" chortled Stott.

The trio began at the upper end of the passage. In No. 14 they found Fisher T. Fish, Johnny Bell and Squiff being out at cricket. Fishy was deeply engaged in some abstruse calculations with the aid of a pencil and a scrap of paper, and he gave an impatient snort as they looked in.

"Absquatulate!" he ejaculated.

The three promptly "absquatulated." Redwing was not there. In the next study they found Wun Lung curled up in the armchair. The little Chinese blinked sleepily at them.

"Seen Redwing about?" asked Skinner.

"No savvy!"

"Do you know where Redwing is, you Chinese image?"

"No savvy!"

Skinner grunted, and retired.

In the next study Lord Mauleverer was found, chatting with Sir Jimmy Vivian.

"Seen Redwing, Mauly?" asked Stott. Lord Mauleverer glanced at him.

"Let Redwing alone!" was his answer.

"If I were Redwing, dear boys, I'd take the lot of you by the necks an' mop up the passage with you, begad!"

"Precious gang of blighters you are, ain't you?" remarked Sir Jimmy Vivian, with a snort of contempt.

Skinner & Co. departed.

The rest of the studies were empty, till they came to No. 1. There they found Redwing at work.

"Hallo! Run to earth!" grinned Stott.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"So you're swotting in Wharton's study!" grinned Skinner.

Tom Redwing rose to his feet.

"Yes. Get out!"

"Perhaps you'll put us out!" sneered Skinner.

"I don't know whether I could handle the three of you," said Redwing, "but I'll try if you don't clear!"

He picked up a cricket-stump, and advanced towards the trio. Skinner & Co. promptly backed into the passage, and Redwing shut the door after them. And for a time there was quiet for "the swot."

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

What Aubrey Angel Knew!

TOM REDWING looked up wearily half an hour later as the door of Study No. 1 opened. It was Billy Bunter of the Remove who came in. There was a lurking grin on Bunter's fat face.

"Wharton's at cricket," said Redwing.

"All right—I'm not looking for Wharton," answered Bunter.

"Nugent's playing, too."

"I know that."

"Well, what do you want, then?"

"I'm going to do some of my ventriloquial practice," explained Bunter. "My pals won't mind my using their study."

"You can do your ventriloquial practice in your own study," suggested Redwing.

Bunter shook his head.

"I'd rather do it here," he answered. "I suppose Wharton hasn't given you permission to keep his friends out of this study, Redwing?"

Redwing breathed hard.

He heard a chuckle in the passage; but he did not need that to tell him that Bunter had been put up to this by Skinner & Co. Bunter was not an unwilling recruit. The fat Owl of the Remove shared Skinner's aristocratic prejudices. He had entered quite cheerily into the game of ragging Redwing.

The unfortunate "swot" felt rather dubious about turning Bunter out of Harry Wharton's study. Bunter proceeded to do some of his ventriloquial practice—a series of fat squeaks and gurgles which made it next to impossible for Tom to settle down to work within a few feet of him.

"Good!" applauded Skinner from the passage. "Jolly good, Bunter! Go it!"

Keeping just outside the study doorway, Skinner & Co. urged on the Owl of the Remove. They were strictly within their rights there. They were not in the study.

Tom Redwing's face was set.

There was no possibility of working, and he collected his books and left the study.

Skinner & Co. made room for him to pass, grinning.

"I wonder where he'll try next?" grinned Skinner. "Like a blessed wild fowl, with nowhere to rest his giddy head, isn't he?"

"He, he, he!"

Redwing went to his own study. Skinner & Co. promptly followed him there. But Tom had only gone into the study to put his books away, and then went downstairs and quitted the School House. From a window the trio watched him cross to Little Side, and join the crowd watching the cricket.

Skinner chuckled gleefully.

"Fairly dished!" he exclaimed. "He's given up swotting for the afternoon!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Skinner & Co., quite satisfied with their success, strolled out of the School House. They felt that they deserved well of their country.

The Remove match was going strong. Wharton and Vernon-Smith were at the wickets, and they were giving the St. Jude's fieldsmen plenty to do. Tom Redwing was keen enough to watch the game, but his sunburnt face was somewhat clouded. He ought to have been at work, and he wanted to be at work; but the devices of Skinner & Co. had made work impossible. Still, it was very pleasant there in the sunshine, watching a good game, and Tom made the best of it.

Vernon-Smith sighted him, when he came away from the wicket at last, and joined him in the crowd.

"Chucked swotting?" he asked, with a smile.

"Yes, for a bit," said Tom.

The Bounder gave him a quick look.

"Finished your work?"

"Well, not quite."

The Bounder did not pursue the subject. He understood well enough, and his lips were compressed.

Tom Redwing remained on the ground, watching the match with a good deal of interest. St. Jude's had batted first, and he watched them through their second innings, the total coming to 100. The Remove had scored 55 in their first

innings, and Wharton and the Bounder opened for Greyfriars in the second.

Tom watched his chum's innings very keenly, and joined in the cheering for the Bounder's fine hitting.

Vernon-Smith had made 25 when he fell to a good catch, and he came out cheerily enough.

"Jolly good, Smithy!" called out Redwing.

"Not so bad—the bowling was good," remarked the Bounder. "Take this, will you, Redwing?"

He handed Tom his bat.

"I'm going out for a bit," he explained. "I sha'n't be wanted again, and I want to get back before locking-up."

"Right-ho!" said Tom.

The Bounder did not explain where he was going. He walked away, a lithe, well set-up figure in his straw hat and blazer. Tom looking after him rather curiously. The Bounder disappeared from sight, and Redwing turned his attention to the game again. Harry Wharton had been joined at the wickets by Bob Cherry, and they were making the running in great style. Greyfriars looked like winning with several wickets to spare.

Tom, as he stood looking on, heard a voice behind him, as the match was drawing near its close. It was the drawling voice of Aubrey Angel of the Fourth Form. He was speaking to Kenney of the Fourth.

"I saw him plain enough, Kenney."

"It's dashed odd! He certainly was playing in the match," said Kenney. "I saw him at the wickets some time back!"

"He's out the cricket for the Cross Keys, then!"

"It's odd!"

Tom Redwing stared.

It was pretty plain that the two Fourth-Formers were speaking of the Bounder, and Tom glanced round at them.

Angel of the Fourth came a step towards him.

"You've been watching the game, Redwing?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Smithy was playing?"

"Yes."

"But he's gone now, hasn't he?"

"He left after his second innings," said Tom quietly. "He won't be wanted again, as St. Jude's have batted twice."

"I could tell you where he's gone!" grinned Angel.

Tom looked at him steadily.

"I shouldn't believe you," he answered. "I heard what you said to Kenney. I don't believe a word of it!"

"Please yourself about that, dear boy," said Angel, laughing. "It's true, all the same. Smithy cleared off the cricket-field to go down to the Cross Keys. I saw him there, talking to Jerry Hawke in the veranda. He was there when I came out of the billiard-room, and he went in with Hawke."

"I don't believe it," said Tom coolly.

Angel shrugged his shoulders, and walked away with Kenney. The black-guard of the Fourth was highly entertained with the discovery he had made about the reformed Bounder. It was very amusing to him to catch Smithy tripping in this way. Tom Redwing had said that he did not believe it; and he did not. But there was a troubled expression on his face.

He realised that of late the Bounder had not been quite the same as usual; and there was the incident of the game in Snoop's study. True, he knew the Bounder's object in that; but a visit to Jerry Hawke, the sharper, at the Cross Keys, could scarcely have the same object.

Was Smithy breaking out again in the old way, of which Tom had heard a good

deal of talk, though he had seen little or nothing of it so far.

The thought made Redwing's heart heavy.

The healthy, right-minded sailorman's son could not understand the taste which led a fellow into shady and dingy paths; but he knew that all fellows were not built like himself.

If Smithy was erring again, Tom had no thought of judging him harshly, or of judging him at all. If he was forced to believe that it was so, his only thought would be to help his chum back to the right path.

A sudden outburst of cheering woke him up from a gloomy reverie.

"Greyfriars!"

"Hurrah!"

The match was over, and Greyfriars Remove were the victors, with two wickets to spare. Tom Redwing joined in the shouting. A few minutes later, as he was turning away, he felt a tap on the arm, and turned to see the Bounder, smiling, at his side.

"Back again!" said Tom, forcing a smile.

"Yes! You look a bit glum!"

"Do I?"

"You didn't finish your work this afternoon," said the Bounder. "It's too rotten; but I think it's going to be all right, Redwing. I think that next week you'll have a study where you can work."

"You mean that Skinner will change out?" asked Tom.

"I feel sure of it!"

Redwing was silent as they walked towards the School House. He was sorely troubled in mind.

"I say, Smithy," he said at last, "I'd be jolly glad to dig with you in No. 4, as you know, and it would be over so much better for my work. But—but—"

"But what?"

"I don't want Skinner forced out of his study," said Tom. "I know you're doing it for my sake, Smithy; but I don't want the fellow driven out of his own quarters, especially by—"

Tom paused in time—he had nearly said "trickery."

Vernon-Smith shrugged his shoulders.

"But suppose I want to get rid of him?" he said. "Suppose I can't stand the cad about the study? You're going to let me do as I like, I suppose?"

Redwing flushed.

"Of course, Smithy; I shouldn't dream of chipping in. But—"

"Well, let it go at that," said the Bounder, rather gruffly.

He left Redwing as they entered the School House, and Tom did not see him again for some time, being marched off to tea by Squiff and Johnny Bull. But when they met in the Common-room later the Bounder was smiling and cheerful, and Tom felt reassured, though he noticed once or twice that Smithy's eyes dwelt upon Harold Skinner with a strangely ironical look.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

A "Good Thing!"

HARRY WHARTON came along the Remove passage to No. 11 with a frown upon his brow.

He threw the door open, and found Snoop and Stott at home, and Harold Skinner with them. Skinner was speaking in eager tones.

"Lucky Dog—three to one against!" he was saying. Apparently Skinner was dabbling in geo-gees again.

It was three or four days since the St. Jude's match, and Skinner's entertaining little scheme with regard to Tom Redwing was still going on. Harry Wharton

CADET NOTES.

Arrangements have now been made for the admittance of members of Cadet units into the Royal Air Force for training as pilots and observers, a step which will prove the most popular means of recruiting the Cadet Movement that could have been taken. An Army Council Instruction issued recently provides that members of Cadet Corps who are desirous of joining the R.A.F. (Pilots and Observers Section), may, on attaining the age of 17 years and 10 months, apply to the officer commanding their Cadet unit, who, if he considers the candidate suitable, may send him to the nearest Reception Depot of the R.A.F., with a written recommendation under this instruction. Bearing in mind the large number of lads who are anxious to get into the Air Force, this step of turning the Cadet units into a channel for entry into the Royal Air Force ought to bring an enormous number of boy recruits into the Cadet Movement.

Of course, there are a number of other provisions in the Order, and a number of details to be attended to, but copies of the Order are sent to officers commanding all the Cadet units, so that they should be familiar with its terms and the steps they must take to assist their members to enter the R.A.F. when they reach the required age. During the past six months some hundreds of boys have applied to the Central Association Volunteer Regiments for information and advice about how to get into the Air Force. Here is a door open for them, and all they have to do is to join their nearest Cadet Corps and wait until they reach the proper age for securing admission to the Air Force. As hitherto, full particulars, with address of local corps, etc., will be supplied to any recruits who will write to the Central Association Volunteer Regiments, Judges' Quadrangle, Royal Courts of Justice, W.C. 2.

had just seen Redwing going down to the Form-room, and he had looked into No. 11 in consequence. Redwing had not asked for his interference, or he would have chipped in before.

Skinner broke off sharply as the captain of the Remove appeared in the doorway.

"You've cleared Redwing out of this study again," said Harry, abruptly.

"Not at all," smiled Skinner. "He didn't seem to enjoy our conversation, that's all. He was quite welcome to stop."

"Oh, quite!" grinned Stott.

"In fact, we really miss him," said Snoop. "I'd have liked to hear his opinion on Lucky Dog for the Pinky Plate!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, this won't do," said the captain of the Remove. "I know your game. If Redwing goes to Smithy's study, you follow him there, because it's Skinner's study, too. If he goes to the Form-room, you go to the Form-room, and begin clearing out your lockers or something."

"Chap must clear out his locker sometimes," said Skinner gravely. "Must be tidy. My locker wants an awful lot of clearing out!"

"About time we got on with it," said Stott rising. "My locker wants seeing to. I haven't touched it since yesterday!"

"You are not going to touch it to-day," said Wharton.

"Eh?"

"You are not going into the Form-room at all!"

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"Who'll stop me?" demanded Stott fiercely.

"I will, if necessary!" answered Wharton coldly. "There's been enough of this ragging Redwing. He's gone there to work, and you're going to leave him alone. Mind, I mean that."

"I'm going to the Form-room to clear out my locker!" said Skinner.

"You'll leave it on your neck if you do!" said Wharton.

"What business is it of yours?" demanded Skinner. "Has Redwing asked you to chip in and protect him?"

"No; I'm doing it on my own, as captain of the Form. I mean business; if any of you fellows sets a hoof in the Form-room while Redwing's there you'll get a Form ragging!"

With that Harry Wharton turned and walked away.

He did not care to argue the matter with the cads of the Remove. He had made up his mind, after thinking the matter over, and they could take their choice.

Skinner & Co. looked at one another rather uncertainly.

"I don't think I'll bother about my locker to-day," murmured Stott, sitting down again.

"Ahem! Same here," said Snoop.

Skinner gritted his teeth.

"Wharton's no right to interfere," he exclaimed. "Let's go, all the same, and complain to Mr. Quelch if he turns us out of the Form-room."

Snoop chuckled.

"Wharton might explain to Quelch, too—he would! Quelch wouldn't exactly back us up in preventing a chap from working. It's N.G., Skinner! Chuck it! We shall have to leave the swot alone in the Form-room, now Wharton's put his foot down!"

Skinner scowled angrily; but he realised the truth of Snoop's remark. He did not really feel inclined to back up against the captain of the Remove.

"After all, it's pretty rotten workin' in the Form-room," said Stott. "Fellows come in and out sometimes, even if we have to keep clear. We're keeping the cad from working in the study, anyway. I think you're really a bit too keen on ragging Redwing, Skinner!"

"I hate the cad!" growled Skinner.

"Oh, give him a rest! What's that about Lucky Dog?" asked Stott. "Are you going to have somethin' on?"

Skinner's face cleared; he was willing to let Tom Redwing slide, in the discussion of the chances of Lucky Dog in the coming race.

"It looks to me like a good thing," he said eagerly. "Jerry Hawke gave me the tip, and he told me he's put ten quid on Lucky Dog himself. He says he's had a tip straight from the stable that the horse is certain to win. The price is three to one against, so far; but Hawke says that on the day of the race it will be evens, or perhaps odds on."

"Looks a good thing if it is genuine," said Snoop. "But Hawke is rather a downy bird; he may only be after your tin. Has he asked you to lay anything?"

"No; he says he's not booking bets against Lucky Dog," answered Skinner. "Other bookies can if they like—he won't!"

"That looks genuine, then!"

"I could find another man, of course," said Skinner. "In fact, there's Cobb, of the Cross Keys. He does a lot of betting transactions on the quiet. I dare say he would take the bet, but—"

"He would want money down!"

"Exactly."

"You had thirty bob last week?"

"I've seen Ponsonby since then," said Skinner, rather ruefully. "Pon is a demon at poker; he cleared me out.

But—this is too good a thing to miss, and thirty bob on wouldn't satisfy me. It's such a snip that a chap ought to have a fiver on at least!"

"Phew!"

Snoop and Stott opened their eyes.

Betting in fivers was rather too reckless for their taste, and rather beyond their means. It was beyond Skinner's means, for that matter.

"You can't raise a fiver," said Stott. "Smithy won't lend you any money under the circumstances."

"He offered to stand me a tenner to clear out of the study, and let Redwing in. I'm not taking it, though!"

"I'd jump at it," said Snoop. "After all, you don't pull with the Bounder, and you've worried poor old Redwing enough lately, goodness knows!"

"Not so much as I intend to," said Skinner coolly. "I tell you I wouldn't let Smithy have his way for fifty of the best."

"Then you're an ass!"

"Well, you can't raise the tin from Smithy," said Stott. "You'll have to let Lucky Dog slide."

Skinner shook his head.

"I know where to raise a fiver," he said.

"My hat! Where? Tell us the place, and we'll go and do likewise," grinned Stott.

"Hawke's offered to lend it to me."

"Great pip!"

"It's jolly good-natured of him," continued Skinner. "Of course, he's doing it for business reasons; it pays him to be good-natured. He's made some money out of me the last term or two. He's offered to stand me a fiver, if I hand him back five pounds ten in a week's time. That's ten per cent. for a week—about five hundred per cent. per annum. But it's worth it. If Lucky Dog wins I bag three fivers."

"But if he doesn't?"

"If he doesn't, Hawke will have to wait for his money," answered Skinner. "He's waited before, if you come to that. Mind, if he was trying to book the bet himself, I shouldn't pay up; but he's distinctly refused to take a bet on Lucky Dog. He knows the horse is



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going to win, and he won't lay money against him. I don't think there's any doubt about Lucky Dog pulling it off; but if the off-chance turns up, and he loses, I owe Hawke five pounds ten. Well, I've owed him that much before, and no bones broken."

"That's so," agreed Snoop.

"I think I shall take his offer," said Skinner. "It's too good a thing to be missed. I thought I'd give you fellows the tip, too. You can get some bets booked in time, if you like."

Snoop looked suspicious.

"Hawke is rather hand-in-glove with Cobb," he said. "They may be workin' it between them—"

"It's possible, of course; and I sha'n't go to Cobb. I can lay my money at Highcliffe. Ponsonby or Gaddy will take me on."

"Make 'em put up the money, then. They won't pay otherwise."

"Leave me alone for that," said Skinner. "Stakes will be held by a third party, that I can rely on, you bet! Look here, we've got to leave Redwing alone to-day. Let's get out and see about it now."

"We'll come along with you to the Cross Keys," said Snoop. "Tell Hawke that you're goin' to lay your bet among some friends of yours, an' I'll watch his face. If he's fixed it up with Cobb, I shall see it. If it's all genuine about Lucky Dog, he won't care whether you lay your bet at Highcliffe or Jericho."

"Good egg!" said Skinner.

Tom Redwing worked uninterruptedly that afternoon, while Skinner & Co. were sneaking in cautiously at the back way of the Cross Keys, and interviewing Mr. Jerry Hawke there.

Mr. Hawke greeted his young friends very affably.

He was full of confidence concerning Lucky Dog's chances for the Pinkey Plate, and advised the sportsmen of the Remove to put their shirts on it.

And he was not in the least disturbed by Skinner's remark that he was making his bet among some friends.

Evidently, it was not a put-up game between Mr. Hawke and Mr. Cobb to lend the fiver at high interest and bag it back on the race.

Mr. Hawke plainly did not care where Skinner laid his bet.

Skinner & Co. were quite satisfied; and Skinner did not hesitate to borrow the fiver of the public-house. Shylock, giving him a written acknowledgment in return—without which, of course, Mr. Hawke would not have parted with the note. Stott and Snoop, as greedy for gain as their chum, borrowed each a sovereign of Mr. Hawke, on the same terms, to back their fancy.

They left the Cross Keys in great spirits, and their next destination was Highcliffe School.

By the time they left Cecil Ponsonby's study the bets had been booked, and Monson major, of the Highcliffe Fifth, was the stakeholder. Ponsonby, Gadsby, and Vavasour had taken them on, being quite oblivious, apparently, of the absolute certainty that Lucky Dog would win Saturday's race.

Cecil Ponsonby glanced rather curiously after the three from his study window when they departed.

"Dashed queer, you fellows!" said Pon.

"I suppose there isn't anythin' wonderful about this gee, Lucky Dog?" asked Gadsby. "I've heard that he's a perfect rotter, and that the price will be miles up against him on Saturday."

"Same here. He hasn't a dog's chance," said Ponsonby, with an air of wisdom. "I'd have laid four or five to one against him, if Skinner had asked me, by gad!"

"The money's as safe as if we had it



The Bounder's bait not bitten! (See Chapter 4.)

in our trousers-pockets!" chuckled Vavasour. "It's simply a question of waitin' till Saturday for Monson major to hand it over. Blue Bird's goin' to win the race."

"Well, I don't know who'll win it, but I know Lucky Dog will lose it," said Ponsonby. "Skinner's had a tip from somewhere—from a man who's been talkin' out of the back of his neck. Never mind; his fiver will come in handy for me, and the other fellows' quids for you chaps."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

So Skinner & Co. left as much satisfaction behind them as they felt themselves when they walked home.

Vernon-Smith glanced rather oddly at Skinner when the latter came into Study No. 4 to tea.

"I'm on to a good thing!" said Skinner boastfully. "I could give you a snip that's worth something, if I liked, Smithy."

"You can keep it."

"I'm goin' to!" snapped Skinner.

And he did; and he looked forward to Saturday and the afternoon's race with great and joyful anticipations. Vernon-Smith was also looking forward to that occasion, though he had no money on the race—a fact that he would have surprised Harold Skinner had he known it.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

The Luck of Lucky Dog!

HARRY WHARTON had "chipped in" with good effect in the affair of Tom Redwing and Skinner. Tom's own study, and the Bounder's study, were barred to him when he wanted to work; but he was left at peace in the Form-room. Skinner made only one attempt to interrupt him there, on the pretext of clearing out his locker. The Famous Five descended upon him while he was so engaged, and smote the Form-room floor with him, and then bundled him out neck and crop. Skinner departed yelling, and threatening to complain to Mr. Quelch; but he wisely decided not to take that step. He was very anxious to keep the facts from the knowledge of the Remove-

master. After that handling by the Co. Skinner gave the Form-room a wide berth when Tom Redwing was there, contenting himself with visiting Snoop and Stott, for rehearsal purposes, whenever Tom was in his own quarters.

The Bounder had ceased to cut up rusty on the subject. In fact, he seemed unconscious that Skinner's ill-natured game was still going on at all. He spoke little to his study-mate, but he was not uncivil.

Skinner thought he knew the reason, and he grinned sarcastically at the thought. The Bounder, having failed to spoof him out of his study, and to bully him out of it, was going to try civility—that was how Skinner worked it out. And he was more determined than ever that he would stick like glue to his claim on Study No. 4, and not give it up for any reason whatsoever. The remarks that some of the other fellows made on the subject only made his obstinacy more bitter. Had he abandoned his claim to No. 4 he must also have abandoned his persecution of Tom Redwing and his hope of preventing Redwing from succeeding in the prize exam, and he would not have done that at any price.

During the next few days Skinner was in unusually cheery spirits, from the prospect of bagging three fivers when Lucky Dog won on Saturday. His satisfaction did not make him any less bitter towards Redwing, however.

It had leaked out in the Remove that Skinner & Co. were "backing a horse" for Saturday, and the fact that Skinner was putting a whole fiver on the gee-gee created surprise and interest. Billy Bunter asked him where he had found the fiver; Micky Desmond even inquired in whose pocket he had found it, and Wibley reminded him that banknotes were numbered, and that it was risky. Fivers were decidedly uncommon with Skinner, whose people were not rich, and he might really have been suspected of bagging it surreptitiously, had he not explained how he had come by it. He explained in the Common-room one evening, looking very sporting and dog-gish as he did so. He felt quite a man

of the world, and an old hand of the Turf, just then.

"You utter idiot!"

That remark came from Harry Wharton, who heard him.

"The idiotfulness is terrific, my esteemed, fatheaded Skinner!" said Hurree Singh. "You will lose your fiver, and you will owe money to the excellent and disgusting Hawke!"

"Who cares?" said Skinner airily. "I've owed him money before. He's generally easy-goin' with a sportin' chap. A racin' fellow has his ups an' downs. I can take the downs with the ups."

"A racing fellow!" repeated Johnny Bull, with withering scorn. "You ought to be jolly well kicked out of Greysfriars, you shady worm!"

"Any charge for sermons?" inquired Skinner.

"You fellows are a bit stick-in-the-mud," remarked Sidney James Snoop. "You're not sportin'. You'd be a good deal better if you were. You'll look a bit green when we bag the quids on Saturday!"

"When!" said Frank Nugent drily.

"The whenfulness is terrific, my idiotic Skinner!"

"I say, it seems rather a good thing," said Bolsover major. "You might have told a chap before, Skinner."

"Well, it's not too late. Only, Hawke won't take your bet. The gee is good, and he knows it."

"I say, you fellows——" Billy Bunter's little round eyes gleamed behind his big spectacles. "I say, Wharton, can you lend me ten pounds?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Make it ten thousand," suggested Bob Cherry.

"Why not ten millions?" asked Harry, laughing. "You're quite as likely to get it, Bunter."

"Well, make it a fiver, then," urged Bunter. "Look here, I'll settle up on Saturday out of my winnings——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Make it a quid, then! A quid won't hurt you!" said Bunter. "I'll buzz off and—— Yarrah! Leggo my ear. Toddy, you beast!"

"What will you do?" inquired Peter Todd. "Backing horses—oh? Backing horses isn't allowed in Study No. 7."

"Yarrah! Leggo!"

"I'm keeping hold of your ear, Bunter, till you decide that backing horses isn't good enough," explained Todd.

"Yow-ow-ow! I was only j-j-joking!" howled Bunter. "I—I wouldn't do such a rotten thing, of course—yarrah!—especially in war-time! Yow-ow-ow!"

And Bunter didn't! Between his lack of cash and Peter Todd's friendly attentions to his fat ear, Bunter had to keep to the strait and narrow path, for which he had reason to be duly glad on Saturday.

On Saturday Skinner & Co. were on tenterhooks of excitement.

They even forgot to rag Tom Redwing, who worked in the study at his Latin paper without interruption.

As soon as there was a possibility of getting an evening paper giving the result of the race, Skinner & Co. started for Courtfield.

They were assured of the result, so far as that went, but they were anxious to see it in black and white.

Having seen it, they intended to drop in at Highcliffe with the newspaper, and bag the stakes from Monson major of the Fifth.

Vernon-Smith was lounging on the steps of the School House when Skinner & Co. started, and he glanced after them with a sarcastic smile. Wharton observed them, but he did not smile. The dingy blackguardism of Skinner & Co. jarred on

Wharton's nerves, and he felt keenly the stigma it placed on his Form.

"Merry dogs—what?" smiled the Bounder, meeting Wharton's eyes.

"Silly rotters!" growled Wharton. "If there's much more of this I shall think about calling a Form meeting and giving them a jolly good ragging."

"I don't think there will be much more of it."

"I don't know. Skinner seems to have what he calls a good thing, and if he wins money there'll be no stopping him."

"He won't win any money this journey."

"Oh!" said Harry. "I dare say you know something about the horse. Surely you've got nothing on the race, Smithy?"

"Nothing. If I had, it wouldn't be on Lucky Dog," said the Bounder, with a shrug. "He will come in about tenth, I fancy."

"Then Skinner's got it all wrong?"

"Quite!"

"The silly ass, it will be a blow to him, then," said Wharton. "He's counting on winning a pot of money."

"Yes; sportin' fellows do count their chickens rather early," said the Bounder.

"Skinner's spent his three fivers in advance—buildin' castles in the air. I fancy he'll never finger them, though. He's got his money on the rankest outsider in the whole field."

"Then Hawke must have been fooling him," said Tom Redwing, who was standing near the Bounder, his work just finished. Redwing had heard the talk in the Common-room and studies about Skinner's great plunge.

"I think he was," assented the Bounder.

"I don't see why he should, said Harry, puzzled. "He wouldn't make any bet with Skinner, so he doesn't stand to win anything."

"Quicer, isn't it?" smiled the Bounder.

Tom Redwing gave him rather a sharp look. He could not help remembering the Bounder's visit to the Cross Keys to see Jerry Hawke on the day of the St. Jude's match. It had been borne in upon Redwing's mind that Angel of the Fourth had been speaking the truth on that occasion.

The Bounder met his glance, and smiled in an ironical way.

"Skinner will be left in rather a fix if it's as you say, Smithy," remarked Redwing, after a pause.

"Doesn't it serve him right?"

"Well, yes, that's so. I—I suppose the man will give him time to pay his debt?"

"Skinner seems to think so."

"Don't you think so?" asked Wharton.

"My dear man, how should I know what Hawke is goin' to do or not to do?" yawned Smithy, as he sauntered away with his hands in his pockets.

Half an hour later Skinner & Co. came in. A good many fellows saw them come in, and grinned at the expression on their faces. They had had no occasion to walk over to Highcliffe to collect their winnings. Those winnings were destined to be collected by Ponsonby, Gadsby, and Vavasour.

Skinner & Co. looked utterly blue.

"Any luck?" asked Tom Brown, with a smile, as he met them on their way in.

"Rotten!" groaned Skinner.

"I say, you fellows"—Billy Bunter rolled up—"I say, how did it go? How much have you bagged?"

Skinner walked on without answering. His feelings were too deep for words just then. Bunter blinked at Snoop and Stott.

"Is it all right?" he inquired.

"No, you fat idiot!" snapped Stott.

"Phew! Didn't Lucky Dog win?"

"No."

"He, he, he!" cacked Bunter. "Jolly

glad I didn't put a fiver on him after all! He, he, he!"

That evening there were three fellows in the Remove who looked as if they found life hardly worth living—especially one of them. But they did not get any sympathy. The view of the Removites was that Skinner & Co. had had a lesson they needed, and the Removites charitably hoped that it would do them good.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The Troubles of a Blade!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! What's the merry trouble?"

Bob Cherry clapped Skinner on the shoulder as he asked that question a few days later.

Skinner of the Remove had just come in at the gates, and his face was so white that Bob was struck by it.

Bob did not often bother himself much about Skinner, whom he did not like, but now he greeted him with some sympathy. Skinner looked as if some heavy load of trouble had suddenly landed on him.

Skinner had not been looking at all chippy since the failure of Lucky Dog to win at three to one against. He owed Mr. Hawke five pounds ten shillings, and the sharper was to wait for it—at all events, Skinner supposed that he would wait for it, as he had sometimes waited before for Skinner to settle. One thing was quite certain—Harold Skinner couldn't pay on the promised date, or for weeks after.

Skinner glanced at Bob Cherry as the latter greeted him in the gateway with so harassed and miserable a look that Bob was quite touched.

"What on earth's the matter?" he asked. "Are you ill, Skinner?"

"Ill! No!" muttered Skinner.

"You look it."

Skinner walked on without explaining farther, and Bob gazed after him in wonder, and shook his head seriously. Apparently it was not "all lavender" to be a "dog" and a "merry blade." Skinner was in trouble, and his looks showed that he was in very deep waters now.

"That silly ass Skinner has got landed, I think," Bob Cherry told his chums when he joined them. "I—I wonder if a chap could do anything?"

Snort from Johnny Bull.

"Do you want to pay his gambling debts?" he demanded.

"Yes, if they could be squared up with fivepence-halfpenny," answered Bob humorously. "I couldn't go further than that."

"The silly ass!" said Harry Wharton, frowning. "I suppose that man Hawke is welshing him somehow. He's been asking for it. Why can't he be decent?"

"Echo answers whyfully," remarked the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"He looked bad when he came in," said Bob Cherry, his sunny face a little clouded. "I suppose it's his own fault. But he did look bad."

Another snort from Johnny Bull.

"I know what's the row," he said.

"You do? What do you know about it?" asked Frank Nugent.

"Oh, rats! Isn't it plain enough? Wasn't Skinner telling all the fellows that he'd borrowed money from Jerry Hawke to put on his gee-gee?" said Johnny impatiently. "Well, the gee-geo lost, and Skinner owes the money. Hawke's squeezing him for it, most likely."

Harry Wharton nodded.

"Likely enough," he said. "If Skinner owes him five pound ten, he won't be able to pay it in a hurry."

"Chance for you, Bob, if you've got five pound ten," remarked Johnny Bull, with a touch of sarcasm.

"Fivepence-halfpenny is the limit; and

"I don't suppose Hawke would be satisfied with that," replied Bob. "I'll put it in, if you go round with the hat for poor old Skinner, Johnny."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Catch me!" grunted Johnny Bull.

The juniors went down to cricket; but Harry Wharton quitted his chums, and went into the School House with a thoughtful brow. Skinner and his concerns were nothing to him, but he was a little troubled over the reckless rascal of the Remove.

He met Tom Redwing in the Remove passage.

"Seen Skinner?" he asked.

"He's in my study," answered Tom.

Wharton understood; that was why Redwing was leaving the study. Tom went on his way, and Wharton tapped at the study door and opened it. Skinner and Snoop and Stott were there, all looking very blue. They turned savage looks on Harry.

"What the thump do you want?" exclaimed Skinner angrily.

"Nothing," answered Wharton quietly.

"Only—only to ask you whether I can help you out of your fix, Skinner."

Skinner stared.

"You!" he ejaculated.

"You seem to have come a cropper," said Harry. "If I could help you out, I'd do it."

"Blessed Good Samaritan!" said Stott.

"We're all in it," said Snoop. "I can swim out, though—I can settle up, thank goodness! Mine's only a quid."

"I—I say, you're jolly good, Wharton!" stammered Skinner, his look eager now. "I'm in an awful scrape. That rotten cad Hawke lent me five pounds, and—and I was to settle this week. Of course, I can't. I was counting on Lucky Dog winning; or, at the worst, on Hawke giving me time to pay. He won't give me an hour, the hound! I don't know why—he's been accommodatin' before. Now he's as hard as a rock, for some reason."

"Short of money, perhaps," remarked Snoop. "He may have been puttin' his own money on Lucky Dog."

"He says he has, but I don't believe him," said Skinner. "Anyhow, he wants the cash we owe him, and he says plainly there'll be a shindy if he's not paid to-morrow. How the thump am I to raise five pound ten to-morrow?"

"He won't give you time?" asked Harry.

"No."

"What is he going to do, then, if you don't pay?"

"Send my paper to the Head, he says!" muttered Skinner, with white lips.

"Great Scott!"

"I—I suppose he thinks I shall raise the money rather than be sacked from Greyfriars—for that's what it means," said Skinner. "But how am I to do it? You can't lend me five quids, Wharton?"

The captain of the Remove shook his head.

If he had possessed that sum he would hardly have been inclined to hand it over to Skinner to pay a gambling debt; but he did not possess it. But the fear in Skinner's face touched him.

"You think Hawke is in earnest?" he asked.

"Certain!"

"It won't pay him to get you into trouble here. He will lose his money."

"He's in earnest, all the same. I—I can't understand him!" muttered Skinner. "He knows I can't pay yet; but he doesn't seem to care about the money. He seems bent on showing me up and ruining me. I don't know why; I've not done anything to put his back up. It's just as if he'd been put up to it by someone else, to get even with me for something."

Wharton started a little.

"Well, I'm going to see Hawke," said Snoop. "I can settle up my quid, and I'm going to do it."

"Same here," said Stott. "Sorry for you, Skinner, but you really did go in a bit too deep, you know. You were greedy."

The two juniors left the study. Mr. Hawke having cut up unexpectedly rusty, they were anxious to get out of his debt; and very thankful that they had not gone in so deep as Skinner, and so were able to clear themselves. Harold Skinner flung himself into a chair. Wharton turned to the door, but lingered. Skinner was so utterly crushed that the captain of the Remove did not care, somehow, to leave him alone to it.

"You can't help me, Wharton!" muttered Skinner. "Blessed if I know why you should care to if you could. Bull could—he's got lots of money—but he wouldn't!"

"I'm afraid it wouldn't be much use asking Johnny," said Wharton. "I don't see anything for it but making a clean breast to the Head before Hawke has time to give you away."

Skinner shuddered.

"You ass!" he said. "As if I could do that! Oh, what am I going to do? What am I going to do?"

The wretched junior groaned out the words.

Vernon-Smith looked in at the half-open door with a curious smile on his face. Skinner gave him a haggard look.

"Hallo! Trouble in the sportive family?" asked the Bounder. "You condolin' with the afflicted, Wharton?"

"Skinner's in trouble," said Harry shortly.

"Gay dogs are born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward," answered the Bounder. "Anything I can do?"

Skinner looked up.

"Lend me some money!" he said huskily.

"How much?"

"Five pounds ten!" muttered Skinner. "It isn't much to you, Smithy."

"Ha, ha!" The Bounder laughed with great amusement. "You haven't been very obligin' to me of late, Skinner. Still, I'll see you out of your fix if you like—only on one condition."

Skinner started.

"What's that?"

"I'll stand you the sum you want—if you'll change studies with Redwing."

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

At the Bounder's Mercy!

HARRY WHARTON'S face cleared.

Here was a way out of the trouble to which no exception could be taken. There was no reason why Skinner should not have done that good-natured action long ago. If the Bounder was willing to part with so much money, for so slight a favour, all was well.

Skinner stared at the Bounder, his eyes glittering.

"You mean that, Smithy?" exclaimed Wharton.

"Certainly!"

"It's a lot of money."

"I've offered Skinner more than that to change out," said Vernon-Smith.

"He's refused up to now."

"Hang you!" muttered Skinner.

Vernon-Smith laughed again.

"I call that ungrateful!" he remarked. "You seem to be in a hole, and I'm offerin' to help you out. Still, I can keep my quids in my pocket, if you don't want them. Please yourself."

Wharton looked at Skinner in astonishment.

"Are you potty, Skinner?" he exclaimed. "You must accept, of course!"

"I sha'n't!"

Skinner muttered the words doggedly. "Skinner, look here. To be plain, you ought to have changed out of Smithy's study before this!" exclaimed Wharton angrily. "You don't want to stay there—it's just ill-nature. You want to dish Tom Redwing over his work for the exam. I'd forgotten that for a minute, or I shouldn't have bothered to come here, I can tell you! If you really need this money to get out of Hawke's clutches, here's your chance. Let Redwing dig in Smithy's study—you'd rather be here with Snoop and Stott, as a matter of taste."

"I won't!" said Skinner, with glittering eyes. "Hang you, Smithy! You've got me into this!"

Vernon-Smith shrugged his shoulders. "Oh, don't be an ass!" exclaimed Wharton. "You got into this fix through being a greedy, gambling cad, Skinner; and it's jolly decent of Smithy to offer to help you out!"

Skinner rose to his feet, his eyes fixed upon the Bounder with a glitter of hatred.

"He got me into it, I tell you!" he exclaimed shrilly. "I can see it all now! I know now why he went down to see Hawke that day—Angel of the Fourth told me he'd seen him there. I know why Hawke spun me that yarn about Lucky Dog, and offered to lend me money—just to get a signed paper from me! I know why he won't give me time to pay, as he's always done before! He's actin' on instructions—Smithy's instructions!"

"Don't be a duffer!" said Wharton uneasily.

"He doesn't dare to deny it!" cried Skinner fiercely. "I wondered why Hawke was so rusty without cause—just as if he knew I could get the money somewhere if I liked, and I can only get it from Smithy! It's just one more of his tricks to get me out of my study!"

Wharton looked at the Bounder.

Skinner spoke with savage conviction; he at least had no doubt on the subject. And Wharton could not help suspecting that he was right.

Vernon-Smith laughed.

"You haven't said yet whether you accept my offer, Skinner," he remarked.

"No!" shouted Skinner.

"All serene, then."

The Bounder walked out of the study, whistling, Skinner shaking a furious fist after him.

"You know his game now?" exclaimed Skinner bitterly. "It's a dodge to get my study for his pal. I won't give in. I'll chance it with Hawke, rather!"

"Then you're a fool!" said Wharton. "You ought to do as Smithy wishes. I don't say this kind of trickery is quite playing the game, if the matter's as you say. But Smithy is standing by his chum, and he's right there. You've treated Redwing like a cad, Skinner!"

"Oh, rats!"

Wharton turned to the door.

"I—I say, hold on a minute!" gasped Skinner. "You—you might be able to help me, Wharton. If you spoke to Bull, or Lord Mauleverer—"

The captain of the Remove shook his head very decidedly.

"Smithy's offered you the money, if you want it," he answered. "I suppose you don't expect me to help you to keep up a cowardly persecution of Tom Redwing—for that's what it amounts to. Accept Smithy's offer."

"I won't!"

"Well, it's your business."

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Harry Wharton left the study without another word. He had had enough of Harold Skinner. His compassion was quite gone now. Had there been no other help for the wretched blackguard of the Remove, Wharton would have done what he could; but the help had been offered, and Skinner refused it because he wanted to be free to keep up his persecution of Tom Redwing. In those circumstances Harry Wharton was not likely to trouble his head further about him.

Skinner was left alone, and he was still in the study, with moody brow, when Stott and Snoop came in.

"Seen that brute?" he asked.

"Yes; we've cleared him off, and got our papers back," said Stott. "You'd better buck up and do the same, Skinner."

"I can't raise the wind."

"What about that offer Smithy made you last week—"

"Hang Smithy!"

"Well, it would come in useful now," said Snoop. "After all, you might give old Redwing a rest."

"Hawke wouldn't give me my paper back if I had the money!" muttered Skinner. "He's hand-in-glove with Smithy. I see that now. It's a trick to get me under Smithy's thumb. He's made it worth Hawke's while to do as he tells him."

"By gad, jolly deep of Smithy if that's so!" said Stott. "Well, you can slide out easily enough by doing as Smithy wants."

"I won't do it!"

"My dear man, you'd better go to Smithy and offer him your whack in Study No. 4 for five pound ten down!" grinned Stott.

"He's offered me the money, and I've refused!" snapped Skinner.

"More duffer you, then!"

Stott and Snoop sat down to tea, and Skinner left them, with a moody brow. He was quite sure that his suspicions of the Bounder were well founded. Smithy had not even troubled to deny the imputation. If it was so, he could not get clear of the sharper even by raising the money to pay him. Jerry Hawke would act only on instructions from Vernon-Smith. A feeling of terror took possession of Skinner as he realised how utterly he was at his study-mate's mercy. The millionaire's son had found a ready tool in Jerry Hawke, and Skinner's taste for blackguardism had done the rest. If Skinner had been straight he would have had nothing to fear from the wealthy Bounder's machinations. But he had not been straight.

The Bounder was at tea by himself when Skinner came into No. 4. He smiled genially at the scowling cad of the Remove.

"I suppose you think you've got me fixed now, Smithy?" said Skinner between his teeth.

"Nice weather, isn't it?" remarked the Bounder.

"But bear this in mind, Smithy—if Hawke gives me away to the Head I'll tell him the whole story, and drag you in!" said Skinner savagely.

"Dear man, how could you do that?" smiled the Bounder. "Hawke doesn't even know me! He would swear that in a court of law, if necessary. He would swear anything, in fact, at a quid a time!"

He laughed lightly, while Skinner regarded him with helpless rage.

"You put Hawke up to this, Smithy, you rotter—you know you did!"

"If I know I did, what's the good of tellin' me?" smiled Vernon-Smith.

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"Why not change out of the study, Skinner?"

"Because I won't!"

"You want to keep on worrying Redwing—what?"

"Yes!" said Skinner defiantly.

The Bounder looked grim.

"You'll have to give up that pleasant little amusement when you're kicked out of Greyfriars!" he suggested.

"You'd let it go as far as that?" muttered Skinner, catching his breath.

"Can I stop it, my dear fellow?"

"You know you could! Hawke will do as you tell him, as you've got the brute in your pay!" said Skinner bitterly.

"One word from you will be enough."

"And you want me to speak it?" Vernon-Smith laughed. "My dear man, have you been very obligin' to me or my pal? You're a funny merchant, Skinner. You seem to think that it's more blessed to receive than to give—with a vengeance!"

Skinner muttered a curse.

He was in a cleft stick, and he knew that he must surrender; but the knowledge of it filled him with rage and hatred, and he put off the words of surrender until the last possible moment. And when the Remove went to the dormitory that night still the words had not been spoken.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Skinner Scores!

"WITNESSES wanted, please!"

The Famous Five were at tea the next day in Study No. 1 when Herbert Vernon-Smith looked in with Skinner.

The Bounder was smiling. Skinner was scowling savagely.

The cad of the Remove had surrendered at last.

He had left it till the latest possible moment, but he had done it. He knew there was no help for it. There only remained time for him to visit Jerry Hawke and settle with him, and get back to Greyfriars before locking-up. Harry Wharton & Co. glanced at the two in surprise, and at the paper Vernon-Smith held in his hand.

"It's a giddy legal document," explained the Bounder. "If you fellows will witness it, it will save Skinner the trouble of trying to sneak out of it afterwards."

The Co. looked at the paper.

It was worded as follows:

"In consideration of the sum of £5 10s. I agree to change out of Study No. 4 in the Remove, and agree to give up and abandon all claims whatsoever to that study in favour of T. Redwing."

"(Signed) HAROLD SKINNER."

"Witnessed by:"

The space for the witnesses' signatures was left open. The Famous Five looked at the paper rather dubiously.

"Like to witness it?" asked the Bounder. "You can see the cash paid over."

"I'll witness it, if you like," said Wharton. "Of course, this paper isn't any good. Quelch wouldn't take any notice of it."

"The Remove will see that it's kept, though," said Vernon-Smith. "If Skinner sells out of the study I shall be entitled to keep him out; and I'll do it fast enough, too! This paper will see me through, if he goes back on his bargain and tries sneaking to Quelch."

Wharton nodded.

"Pay up, then!" he said.

Vernon-Smith laid a five-pound note and a ten-shilling note on the table, and

as Skinner picked them up the five chums signed the paper in turn as witnesses. Smithy folded the paper, and placed it carefully in his pocket-book.

"Jolly queer bizney," said Johnny Bull, as Skinner quitted the study, angry and resentful, but greatly relieved in mind all the same. "I know what the worm wants the money for. Mean worm, too, to sell out of a study! Who ever heard of such a thing!"

"Well, dear old Skinner is a bit of a worm," smiled the Bounder. "Worms have to be treated as worms, you know. There'll be an end of the little game of spoiling old Redwing's work."

"That's good!" said Harry Wharton. Vernon-Smith sauntered out of the study in a cheery mood, and went to look for Tom Redwing. He found him working in the Form-room.

"Hallo! Still goin' strong?" asked the Bounder, with a smile.

"Oh, yes!" answered Tom.

"No more of this," said Vernon-Smith. "Skinner's agreed to change out at last. You're going to dig in my study."

"He's agreed?" exclaimed Tom.

"Yes."

"Of—of his own accord?"

The Bounder laughed, and showed his chum the paper witnessed by the Famous Five.

"Voila!" he said cheerily.

"Smithy, you've given the fellow five pounds ten!" exclaimed Redwing, aghast.

"Well, he wanted the money."

"Yes, I can guess what for, from what's been said lately," said Tom Redwing, with a nod. "But it's a lot of money—not to you, though, I suppose."

"Quite so. You know I'm a bloated plutocrat," answered the Bounder placidly. "My disgustin' money comes in useful sometimes, you see."

"I say, Smithy, I'm jolly glad!" said Redwing, his handsome face very bright. "If Skinner chooses to get out of his own accord, that's all serene. I believe you handed him this money out of good-nature, as much as anything else, though, to get the silly ass out of his scrape!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Bounder.

Tom Redwing laughed, too.

"Well, I think so," he said. "I believe I know you better than you know yourself, Smithy; and I know you felt sorry for the poor rotter."

"Redwing, old man, you had great advantages in being brought up at Hawkscliff," said Vernon-Smith. "You were a long way out of the wickedness of the big world in that quiet and sequestered spot. You ought to have a medal or something, if there's a Society for Encouraging Innocence Among Youths."

"Bosh!" said Tom, laughing.

The Bounder strolled away, leaving Tom to finish his task with a light heart, having arranged to help him, later, in removing his books and personal belongings from his old study to his new.

Just before the gates were locked Harold Skinner came in, looking relieved, but dark and resentful and sullen. He had escaped from the scrape his dingy blackguardism had landed him in, aided by the cunning of the Bounder; but he had been defeated in his long contest over the possession of the study, and his persecution of Tom Redwing had to come to an end now. Redwing, in future, would have a study in which Skinner could not disturb him. If Skinner ventured into quarters where he had no claim to enter he would be dealt with drastically, and he knew it. He was defeated all along the line, and his breast was full of bitter rancour.

Stott and Snoop met him as he came in.

"So you've changed out?" said Snoop.
 "Yes," grunted Skinner.
 "Well, it's all serene. We'd rather have you than Redwing. He's packin' together his things now. The Bounder's goin' to help in the movin' job, after calling-over," said Stott, with a grin. "You've been fairly done, Skinney. Take it smiling."

"I wonder whether Redwing knows?" muttered Skinner. "I wonder does he know the game Smith has played on me?"

"Most likely, I should say."

"I'm goin' to see, anyhow."

Skinner went up to the Remove passage. When the Removites came into Hall for calling-over there was a lurking grin on Skinner's face. He did not seem so very dissatisfied, after all.

Vernon-Smith came in with Harry Wharton & Co. They had been rehearsing in Wibley's study. Smithy gave Tom Redwing a cheery smile as the sailorman's son came in, rather later than the rest. Redwing's face was very clouded.

After call-over the Bounder joined Redwing in the corridor.

"Now for the merry movin' job!" he said cheerily.

Tom did not answer; but he went up the Remove passage with the Bounder, who was in great spirits, and did not for the moment notice his companion's silence and preoccupation.

In Study No. 11 most of Tom Redwing's few belongings were sorted out, ready for the transfer to No. 4.

"This won't take us long," remarked Vernon-Smith. "Skinner hasn't moved his stuff yet. We'll lend him a hand."

"Hold on, Smithy!"

Tom Redwing's voice was low and troubled, and there was a tone in it that struck the Bounder. He turned quickly to Redwing.

"Not ready to move yet?" he asked, his eyes curiously on Tom Redwing's face.

"Yes; but—"

"But what?"

Redwing was silent, the colour deepening in his sunburnt face. He rather avoided the Bounder's cool, penetrating glance.

"Anythin' up?" asked Vernon-Smith abruptly.

"Ye-e-s."

"Well?"

"Skinner's told me—something—"

Tom hesitated.

What has he told you?"

"I—I don't believe him, Smithy," said Redwing, almost appealingly. "I know what a liar he is. But—but I want to ask you." He drew a quick breath. "Smithy, old chap, Skinner says that you worked it with that man Hawke to get him into a scrape so that he would have to do as you told him, and give his study up to me."

"Does he?"

"I—I know it's not true," said Redwing. "You wouldn't play a trick like that, Smithy?"

The Bounder's face hardened.

"If you know it's not true, why ask me about it?" he said.

"Perhaps I oughtn't to," said Redwing, flushing redder. "Skinner made me feel very uncomfortable, though. It's pretty plain that he believes what he says. He said I could ask Wharton."

"Well, you can ask him."

"I'm not going to, Smithy. I'm satisfied with what you say," answered Redwing.

The Bounder laughed ironically.

"But I haven't said anythin' yet!" he exclaimed.

"It isn't true, is it, Smithy?"

"Suppose it is?"

Redwing's face grew more deeply troubled. In his heart he had a feeling that Skinner's tale of that cunning trickery was true. He had hoped against hope that the Bounder would deny it.

"Then it's true, Smithy?" he said, at last.

"Quite true that I dealt with Skinner in the only way that cad could be dealt with," answered the Bounder coolly. "He's out to prevent you from working for the prize exam. I'm stoppin' him. I'm sick of him about the study, too, with his second-rate blackguardism, and his smokes and his gee-gees and the rest of it. I've dished him, and I don't see why I shouldn't. Do you?"

Redwing did not answer. It was not easy to explain that the trickery involved in dealing with Skinner was repugnant to him, and that he did not want to bag another fellow's study against his will, even when the other fellow was ill-

natured and caddish, like Skinner. But his face was expressive enough; it was easy for the Bounder to read his thoughts.

Vernon-Smith laid down the bundle of books he had picked up.

"Are you coming to my study?" he asked sharply.

"I—I can't turn Skinner out against his will, Smithy," faltered Redwing.

"Skinner's sold out. I've bought him out. It was a quid pro quo—five quid pro quo, in fact," said the Bounder, with a grin. "A bargain's a bargain, and Skinner's going to be held to it."

"He wasn't willing, Smithy."

"What does that matter?"

"Well, it—it does."

Vernon-Smith shrugged his shoulders, a very unpleasant expression coming over his face.

"In short, you don't care to change into my study?" he asked.

"I'd like to."

"But you won't?"

"Under the circumstances, I don't feel that I can," said Redwing. "I'm sorry, Smithy."

"Let's have it out plain," said the Bounder, his eyes glittering. "You don't think I've played the game, and you can't take advantage of my—what do you call it?—trickery, I suppose. From your high moral standpoint I've done wrong, and you feel called upon to give me a sermon—what?"

Redwing coloured painfully.

"Nothing of the sort, Smithy. You've been a good pal to me, and I shouldn't think of judging you in any way. But—"

"But you won't come to my study?"

"I can't!"

"That's enough!"

The Bounder went to the door, his face set and hard.

"Smithy!"

Vernon-Smith did not answer. His footsteps died away down the passage, and Tom Redwing was left alone with a heavy heart. He called out his chum's name again, but there came no answer. The Bounder was gone.

(DON'T MISS "THE BROKEN BOND!"—next Monday's grand complete story of Harry Wharton & Co., by FRANK RICHARDS.)

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

THE EVADING OF GRUNDY!

In Three Evasions. By ROBERT ARTHUR DIGBY.

PROLOGUE.

THE Terrible Three were about to stroll across to the nets, to put in a bit of practice, when Grundy bore down upon them.

His wants, I will here say, were to play in the next match, boss the team, and—oh, everything that we wouldn't let him do.

In his hand he held the cricket list. He had torn it from the notice-board. Needless to add, his name was not upon it.

"You rotters—" he began unwisely.

"Well, Grundy?" demanded the Three, with looks scarcely friendly. They were fed up with Grundy. This was not the first time he had descended upon them with grievances against the chosen eleven.

"About this notice. I'm coming down jolly heavy—"

"Are you?"

"Yes!" roared Grundy. "And jolly quickly!" "Indeed!" said Lowther, with false sweetness. "And jolly often, perhaps?"

"Eh?" said Grundy suspiciously. "Yes; as

often as I'm left out in the cold through petty jealousy and ignorance!"

"Good!" Lowther rubbed his hands in the business-like manner of a shopman who has sold a rotten article at a high price. "Comrades, it's our duty to help our fellow-man and brother here to succeed in his little resolves. Bump him!"

A movement was made towards Grundy, and he was seized.

"You—your silly appeal! Yareeh!"

Bump!

"Did you come down heavy enough, George Alf?"

"And quickly enough, George Alf?"

"We'll see that you come down often enough, George Alf!" was Monty's contribution.

And down came George Alfred again!

And yet again, and again, and again!

"Yoop!" gasped Grundy. "Check it, you measly Huns! I—I—"

"Ring off!" snapped Tom Merry. "Think

you're a second-hand gramophone? Come along to the nets, you two!"

But after the practice Grundy bore down upon them again.

"About that notice—"

This beginning was received with basilisk-like glares.

"At it again, are you?"

"Do you rotters know that my name isn't down on—"

"Bump him!"

He was bumped; but that did not give the Terrible Three the requisite satisfaction. They knew that it was only warring on the trouble, and Grundy would be on them again before long.

"I'll tell you what, you chaps," said Tom, with ruffled brow, a little later. "I can't stand this much longer. He's as bad as the Huns! Roll him back, and he rolls forward again. Suppose we—"

Monty Lowther's Evasion.

LOWTHER happened to be alone in the study when the sound of Grundy's footsteps and Grundy's voice approached along the passage. Wilkins and Gunn were behind him. It was, as usual, his "Comic Column" that Monty was at work upon. But, hearing Grundy's approach, his movements became rather singular.

Number one was to place the biggest volume he could find upon the table and open it. Number two was to spend a second before the glass, brushing his hair the wrong way till he looked like a goliwog, and rolling his eyes and grinding his teeth by way of experiment.

Number three was to sit in his seat as usual, but not looking as usual.

George Alfred Grundy entered. William Gunn and George Wilkins entered also. Grundy shut the door.

Lowther looked over the top of the volume.

"Grundy!"

"Yes, it's me!" returned George Alfred grimly. He started a bit at the apparition confronting him.

"You're heard of Professor Posh?" asked Lowther.

"Never mind Professor Posh! About that list—"

"You haven't?" Monty rose to his feet, and spoke sonorously and deliberately. "I have taken up Professor Posh. Professor Posh's Objections. Listen to this—"

"That's all very well—"

"Listen to this! There is a war in go now—there is a war in vogue. Call it 'go' or 'vogue,' just as you please. The words are not synonymous, but the vowel-utterance is the same in either case."

Grundy and his followers looked at each other alarmedly.

"There is a war in go, or vogue. But why should there be a war in go, or vogue?" roared Lowther suddenly, jumping about with much facial contortions. "Answer that! Answer it, to the eternal obligation of me and Professor Posh. Were human beings sent on to the earth to swipe each other off it? Have we not enough other things to fight—vices, weaknesses, and allotment-earwigs—besides each other? Militarism? Who says militarism?" Lowther leapt on to a chair. "Should we not be ground down by militarism to save our own skins?" He was on the table now. "Should we not be squelched, kyboshed, and all thought and feeling be bootled out of us by glorious Prussian militarism?"

"Certainly!" said Grundy, quickly and nervously. "By all means! Hadn't you better come along to the dorm, old man?"

"What is love?" bawled Lowther, evidently starting a new theme. "What is love but a sour pill coated with sugar—save that no coupon is required as yet? As yet!" rumbled Lowther ominously. And round rolled his eyes, and like an old-time corn-mill went his teeth.

"And the moon!" he bellowed suddenly. "Who but a thundering ass would roll round this fatheaded earth as that chump does—"

"Year after year—er,
Never getting nearer!"

His eyebrows were raised, and his jaw protruded ferociously.

"That's just the point, old fellow!" said Grundy feebly, getting nearer the door. "Quite so!"

"And the National Debt! Am I going to pay that? By George! Where's my bat?"

He darted into a corner, and snatched up his bat, brandishing it over his head.

"Out of here, you fellows!" exclaimed Grundy hastily.

Gunn and Wilkins usually lag behind Grundy in the execution of his orders. This time they were well in advance.

Montague chuckled as he returned to his "Comic Column."

"Rummy thing!" he murmured, with a philosophical summing-up of the incident. "Show signs of thinking, and the world thinks you're potty!"

Tom Merry's Evasion.

NEXT morning at brekker Grundy took a wry seat beside Lowther.

"I—I say, Lowther," ventured Grundy, "you're all right, ain't you?"

"Quite all right, Grundy, old fellow?"

"You—or—yesterday, you know!" Grundy eyed him anxiously, fearful lest anything ex-

traordinary should occur again. "You know what—what day it was yesterday?"

Extreme desperation made him propound this vital question. To his relief, Monty was quite unmoved.

"Perfectly, old man! Tuesday, wasn't it?"

"Yes, of course. Er—in the evening, you know. Do you remember that—whether anything—if you saw anybody?" finished Grundy, with a rush.

Monty looked before him with a puzzled frown, as if striving to reflect. Suddenly his features made a gruesome grimace, but only for an instant, when they righted themselves.

Then he shook his head.

"I—I think I do remember something, though. A kind of—of ghastly apparition, with a great big head, you know, and—and feet like portmanteaux!"

"Shush!" said Grundy hastily, in trembling lest Monty should go off again. "It—it's jolly fine weather, isn't it?"

"Eh? Yes; I suppose so!"

"It'll be a fine day, you know, if—if the weather holds up!"

That was Grundy's way of changing the subject.

Tom Merry sat on the other side of Grundy. At irregular periods he kept giving a series of troubled groans, a fact which alarmed Grundy more than a little. Tommy got twenty lines for it from Linton before brekker was through; but that didn't matter. It was Tom's turn on the boards, you see!

Grundy made for him during the brief interval before morning lessons. Tom was pacing tragically beneath the elms—round and round one of them, as a matter of fact.

Directly on Grundy's approach he clawed the air and dropped to the ground, tearing open his collar when he arrived there.

"Water!" he groaned. "Grundy, my friend, my one and only friend in need, to the fountain—quick!"

"But," stammered Grundy, dismayed, "what is there to get it in? Wharrerm—"

"My cap!" murmured Tom. "I mean yours! But quick—quick!"

Off dashed Grundy to the fountain, cap in hand.

When he returned Tom was leaning against the elm, with his hands in his pockets, looking at his boots.

"I say, Tom Merry!"

Tom looked up, and nodded pleasantly.

"Hallo, Grundy! I say, old chap, I've got something on my mind! Don't mind my looking worried!"

"But—but didn't you faint?"

"Did I faint?" asked Tom, raising his eyebrows. He nodded distantly. "It's no wonder if I did! You see, it's this way. There's a match!"

Grundy threw down his brimming cap in disgust. A more prudent person might have kept it by in case the patient fainted again. Grundy wasn't prudent.

"But do you know about the match this afternoon?"

"Nunno!" said Grundy. "I thought it was a practice."

"St. Alban's are turning up."

"St. Alban's? But aren't they a set of kids? We don't play them—or haven't done—"

"That's just it!" said Tom eagerly. "There isn't a man in the Fourth or Shell Eleven who will turn out against them this afternoon. See the fix I'm in?"

"The mutinous bounders!" said Grundy indignantly.

"You're a chap of sense and ability, Grundy," said Tom hopefully. "You're a chap of action! You could tackle a job like this. If only you could get together an eleven, and captain it!"

"Yes, yes!" said Grundy eagerly. "Ain't you going to play?"

"If I fainted," said Tom dolefully, "do you think I'm fit to play?"

"No, old man. Don't exert yourself too much," said Grundy concernedly. "I'll get together a pretty good team, don't be afraid!"

"You could use the same team you had when you played as Old Boys—"

"Never mind the Old Boys!" said Grundy hastily.

"Turn out in full flannels, you know, on the Third Form pitch—"

"The—the Third Form pitch?"

Tom sighed.

"There's another difficulty! The fellows mean to use our own pitch for practice."

"Why, the—the thieving Huns!" exclaimed Grundy. "I'll jolly well—"

"Don't row with them," said Tom hastily!

"The Third have consented to let St. Alban's play on their pitch, so it's quite all right. Can I rely on you?"

"Sound as the Allies!" said Grundy heartily. "I'll start at once to collect a team!"

Grundy hurried away, thinking this stroke of fortune too good to be true.

* And it was too good to be true, as it happened.

I can't fill up a ream of paper with this yarn, owing to the measly shortage, so I won't go into the details of the match.

It was the Third Form, of course, whom St. Alban's were booked to play. Grundy marched on to the field in time with a dubious team at his heels, and caused a bit of a sensation.

When their intentions were known there was an uproar. The Third Form Eleven and the St. Alban's Eleven, backed by a horde of inky lag spectators, swooped down upon them.

Harry Manners' Evasion.

MANNERS' little joke won't take up much space.

But you can be assured he squeezed his camera into it, however little the space.

Heralded by much pumping, clumping, and thumping, Harry Manners burst into Grundy's study, his camera before him.

This, I admit, was more in the nature of an invasion than an evasion. Grundy had ceased calling on the Three; but they deemed it wisest to make the cure as lasting as possible, and so called on him.

The three of them were at tea.

"Grundy!" exclaimed Manners. "Your photo—quick! You want it on the front cover of the 'Weekly,' don't you? If you were only in flannels! But never mind! Quickly, man! The copy's just going to the printer's!"

It was! I myself had it under my arm, and was already wheeling my bike out of the shed. Manners' hurry, you know, was really a bit belated.

One of Grundy's great ambitions was to have his photo in the "Weekly," but he didn't quite cotton to Manners' methods of bringing about that end. In a strange sort of way, he was both willing and unwilling.

"Stand where you are!" yelled Manners, dragging Grundy about the room. "Don't move! Farther back—there!"

He jammed the dazed George Alfred against the table. Over it went, accompanied by sounds of smashing crockery and the howls of Wilkins and Gunn.

Manners biffed his camera in Grundy's face.

"Got you!" he cried triumphantly. "Come along and help in the development! We must work against time!"

Dragging the still willing but unwilling Grundy, the photographer hurried to the dark-room.

"Careful as you go in!" exclaimed Manners. He spoke in an excited voice all the time, and it had a bewildering effect upon Grundy. "There's something just inside there—a red preparation! Takes weeks to come out of the skin—if you don't use soap and water! Careful man! Careful how you go in!"

With which he pushed Grundy into the room.

There came a great splash, and a greater howl.

A second's pause, and then Grundy darted out like a mighty bull.

"The bath-room! The bath-room!" he bellowed, thudding along the passage. "A week to wash off—week to wash—Ow! Yow! The bath-room!"

Wilkins and Gunn, emerging into the passage, dodged out of his way just in time.

"What's the matter, Grundy?" roared the former.

"The bath-room! The bath-room!" howled Grundy.

After which I fancy he ended up by falling down about a dozen flights of stairs, judging by the din that arose.

EPILOGUE.

And it came about that a day or two hence there appeared upon the notice-board a notice.

And one worn but world-wise youth, George Alfred Grundy by name, did gaze upon that notice. Whereupon he discovered that his name did not appear thereon.

Sadly, sadly shook he his head, and turned upon a certain Three a wan and patient smile. And lo! he crept away unto his own study, in which he locked himself, and wept!

Ah, me! I—I am near unto shedding tears myself.

THE END.

A RAILWAY TRAGEDY!

By MONTAGUE LOWTHER.

LIKE a seraph in a dream the child—the tender victim of this woeful tragedy—entered the fateful railway-station.

Thoughts—sad thoughts—weighed heavily upon him to-day. One glance showed that.

He hesitated. One might have thought that he was waiting until the ticket-porter's back was turned. Not so! A presentiment of coming evil held him back.

But he threw it off with a great effort, and passed through the barrier as the ticket-porter turned to answer an old lady.

Let us gaze upon him through our tears as he steps along the platform.

The child was beautiful. But what was it marred that charming face? Had some great calamity befallen his early years? Had the loss of some beloved one blighted his childhood's days? He wore a large yachting-cap and spectacles, and looked like a dream-angel, though his nose needed wiping.

Opposite an automatic machine he stopped. And, as if he sought to dispel his sadness for the moment with a faint burst of childish merriment, he thrust a cardboard penny into the slot.

Then he flung himself upon a seat and softly wept. Not because the war had caused the

machine to be destitute of chocolate! What mattered that? He was overcome by tender emotions.

His grandfather. Where was he? Oh, those games of marbles that they had played together! Again, where was he? Kidnapped? Poisoned? Assassinated? Asphyxiated?

'Twas useless to conjecture, and he bravely dried the tears that were beginning to make a pool around his goloshes.

He took up his umbrella, and rose from the seat—to fall back again with a gasp!

There—on the platform opposite—was—who else but his grandfather?

Recognition was mutual. A white-bearded old man, with a benevolent face and a pair of crutches and a gouty foot, sat forcibly down upon that opposite platform with astonishment. More than astonishment—was it not affection?

"Grandson!" he bawled over the rails. "Grandson!"

"Grandfather!" cried the child.

Forward he ran, with arms outstretched, joyously prattling something about "overdue spending-money."

A moment later he was over the edge and lying across the gleaming lines!

The train! The London express! See how

it tears towards the station—eating up the metals!

Shrieking, cranking, hissing, and rumbling—nearer, nearer, and nearer!

"Stop!" roared the old man, waving both his crutches at the onrushing engine. "You're like a—a— Stop! Pull up, driver, you great—"

The train entered the station with a rush and a roar.

"Stop!" shrieked the old man.

His voice was drowned by the roar of the engine as it passed through.

One second later and the back of the last carriage rattled out of the station.

But it was on the other side of the opposite platform that the train passed.

Unfortunately, from grandfather's point of view, the train was a non-stop, and he was obliged to wait for the next.

During which waiting, sad to relate, he scolded his grandson for not looking where he was going, and demanded an explanation for his being on the platform at all. Then the angel-child said things, and granddad did things—painful things—but let me draw a veil over the tragedy!

THE TEARFUL END.

THE CRAFT OF THE CATERPILLAR.

By TOM BROWN.

DE COURCY, the chap everybody at Highcliffe calls the Caterpillar, is as crafty as Brer Rabbit in the old Uncle Remus yarns.

Some of us had toddled over to Highcliffe to see a match on their ground, having no game on our own. Squiff and Delarey and I were there, and Bulstrode and Peter Todd, and one or two more.

And Bunter came along. No one asked Bunter to come, of course. But when did Bunter ever wait to be asked?

Highcliffe's opponents went in first, and didn't do much. When the home side batted Courtenay, their skipper, took De Courcy in with him to start the innings.

I have noticed before that the Caterpillar simply will not be bothered to buck up when there is nothing hanging on it. I think he felt like that this time. He played carelessly at a very easy ball, and smiled quite graciously when he saw his off-stump lean back.

He lounged back to the pavilion as if he felt almost too tired to go on living, and he sat down near Bunter, probably because the seat was nearest.

"Hallo, De Courcy!" said the Owl. "That was a pretty rotten stroke, you know!"

"Think so, dear boy?" yawned the Caterpillar.

"Yes. You want me to show you, that's what you want! Now, what you ought to have done was to bring your bat down so, and—"

"Yoop!" howled Bulstrode.

Bunter had illustrated the stroke with a bat he had snatched up, and Bulstrode had got it on the funny-bone. But he did not seem to see anything funny about it.

"Ha, ha, ha!" we roared in chorus. It was funny to us, if not to poor old Bulstrode.

"You silly fat ass!" howled Bulstrode. "I'll slay you!"

"Don't kill him, Bulstrode, dear boy," drawled the Caterpillar. "If Gunter turns up his toes to the daisies, what about my battin' next year, by gad?"

"Also, what about the effect on the price of milk?" inquired Peter Todd sweetly.

"I really don't see the connection, Todd, old sport."

"I don't, either," said Todd.

"Oh, dash it, have I got to explain? Awfully fatiguing work, explainin', y'know. I was thinkin' of gettin' Gunter to give me a little coachin', that's all."

"I'll do it!" Bunter said eagerly. "Of course, I'm not in the Remove team; but that's only Wharton's absurd jealousy. I flatter myself I could teach Wharton a thing or two about cricket."

"Oh, shut up!" growled Bulstrode, rubbing his elbow. "Everybody knows that you're such an ass that you don't know which is the right end of a bat!"

"Did he swipe you with the wrong end, dear boy?" asked the Caterpillar blandly.

"I wish you wouldn't keep butting in, Bulstrode!" said Bunter peevishly. "I want to

talk business with my friend De Courcy. Look here, Caterpillar—"

"I'm lookin', Punter. But I can't keep it up long, y'know. Your beauty dazzles my eyes!"

"I'm not a professional coach, of course, but—"

"Not? You surprise me, Shunter! You ought to be, with your talents for the game, by gad!"

"One thing's jolly certain, by gad!" sounded the voice of Ponsonby.

There isn't any love lost between De Courcy and Ponsonby; but, though Pon gives away that fact freely, you don't often catch the Caterpillar doing so.

"An' that, Pon, dear boy?" he asked, as sweetly as if Pon were his dearest pal.

"Bunter couldn't coach you to bat any worse than you did to-day, dashed if he could!" sneered Ponsonby.

"Something in that," replied the Caterpillar thoughtfully.

"Everythin' in it! You can't win a match without makin' a giddy run, that's a dead cert!"

"Now, I'm not so dashed sure of that!" said the Caterpillar.

We all stared at him. Ponsonby is not famous for telling the truth; but what he had said really seemed past arguing about.

"I'll bet you a fiver you can't!" snapped Pon.

"You will bet me a fiver that I can't beat even Gunter here without scorin' a run?"

"Of course I will! The thing can't be done!"

"Well, I'll bet you a fiver that I can beat Punter at single wicket without even touchin' the ball with my bat."

If Courtenay had been there he would have jumped on the betting at once. It was hardly the thing on the cricket-ground. But he and Derwent were at the wickets together, piling up runs at a good pace.

"It's a go!" said Pon eagerly.

"Don't say afterwards that I took you in, Pon, old top!"

"I won't say that, by gad! You've bitten off more than you can chew—even with a putrid ass like Bunter, who knows no more about cricket than a cow does about Greek!"

"Oh, really, Ponsonby! And after you've heard De Courcy agree that I shall coach him next season, too!"

"Let's settle the thing at once, dear boys," said the Caterpillar lazily. "There's a net in the corner there, an' it's far away enough not to interfere with the game in the middle."

He looked round at us. His glance fastened upon Squiff. Old Squiff is as fly as the Caterpillar, though he does not look quite so innocent. He was grinning. He told us afterwards that he saw through it; and he knew that the Caterpillar twigg'd that he did. That was why the Caterpillar said:

"Field, old sport, will you have the kindness to umpire?"

"Oh, with pleasure!" answered Squiff.

"You don't object to Field, Pon?"

"No, by gad! The chink's as good as in my pocket, y'know!"

"It had better rest in Field's meanwhile," said the Caterpillar.

He handed Squiff a fiver, and Ponsonby, after a moment's hesitation, did likewise.

Wharton would not have taken on the job of stakeholder. I don't fancy Squiff quite liked it. But Highcliffe ways are not exactly our ways, and that made a difference.

We all adjourned to the net in the corner. I saw Courtenay and Derwent look across. They must have wondered what we were up to.

Bunter was in high feather. He felt sure Pon must whack out that fiver with him after he had won it. I fancy Bunter made an error there. But it was no odds, for—

Let us not anticipate!

Bunter put on pads, flourished a bat, and rolled to the wicket. The Caterpillar asked Smithson to chuck him a ball; stooping did not suit him, he said.

Smithson complied. Squiff gave Bunter guard. De Courcy sent down the softest of straight underhand balls; Bunter swiped yards away from it, and the wicket tumbled.

There was nothing surprising in that. The Caterpillar could bowl Bunter first ball every time if he chose, though he took a bit of a risk in sending down anything so dead easy.

De Courcy lounged up to the wicket. Bunter stood fast.

"Oh, really! That was a trial ball!" he burred. "I ain't out, am I, Squiff?"

"You are, my pippin!" replied Squiff.

Very unwillingly Bunter gave up the bat, and took the ball. Still most of us failed to see the Caterpillar's game. But Toddy and Delarey were both grinning now, and on a sudden the truth dawned upon me.

De Courcy took the bat. He did not bother about taking guard, but he stood as if he meant to defend his wicket.

"If you touch the ball you're a loser, by gad!" snapped Pon.

"Yaas, dear boy, that's right!" said the Caterpillar coolly.

Bunter bowled. By some miracle he got his first ball nearly straight. But it was not quite straight; and De Courcy never turned a hair as he stood and watched it roll past within an inch of his wicket.

The Owl's face gleamed with excitement as he gripped the ball again.

"If he don't hit this, he's done!" he chirped.

And he sent down a ball quite three yards off the wicket.

"Wide!" called Squiff.

"An' that settles it!" drawled the Caterpillar.

"Oh, by gad! It's a beastly swizzle!" roared Pon.

But it wasn't anything of the sort. Wide-count at single wicket just as they do at double wicket, and Bunter's wide won the game for the Caterpillar. See?

THE END.

THE GREYFRIARS GALLERY.

No. 89.—PAUL TYRRELL.

LIKE some other characters lately dealt with in this series, Paul Tyrrell, the "never-do-weel" cousin of Bob Cherry, will naturally be unknown to some of our readers. He has not made many appearances on the Greyfriars stage; and the last of these appearances was made quite a considerable time ago. But we may hear of him again.

No one could understand why Bob Cherry should greet Yorke, the new footer coach, as "You rotter!" His chums had heard, only a little while before, about the home-coming of his scapegrace cousin, who had speculated with money that was not his own, bolted to South Africa, and was now returning because he could not see his way to making a living there without hard work, and found that hard work was quite unsuitable to his constitution. Bob would naturally despise both an embezzler and a slacker; and Tyrrell was embezzler and slacker rolled into one. But not even Harry Wharton or Mark Linley knew that Tyrrell and Yorke were one and the same. Bob did not know it until the new footer coach appeared upon the scene.

He did his best to get Tyrrell to clear out; and it was with very great reluctance that he consented to keep the secret of the wastrel's identity. To give it away seemed too hard, for blood is thicker than water, after all, and Dr. Locke would not have allowed a defaulting bank cashier to stay on at Greyfriars as footer coach had he known the truth. But the secret weighed heavily on Bob. He does not like secrets of any kind, except in the way of a jape.

The Remove got hold of the notion that there was something queer about Bob's evident previous acquaintance with the fellow who had come to improve the school's footer. The Bouncer, at odds with the Famous Five in those days, fostered that notion. Yorke was invited to tea in Study No. 1. Bob had almost to be forced thither, and when he came was by no means civil to Yorke. He could not stand the lies the fellow told; and eventually he left the study in a huff. His chums wanted him to apologise to Yorke. He refused point-blank; but, of course, could not explain why he refused.

There came a night when Bob, unable to sleep on account of worry, sat up with Mark Linley, who was swotting for an exam; and the two were witnesses to some suspicious behaviour on the part of Tyrrell. It was plain that he was robbing the safe that contained the valuable Greyfriars plate—at least, it was plain to Bob, and Mark no longer doubted when he had heard the secret which Bob had so carefully kept till then. Bob insisted upon dealing with his cousin alone; and neither a revolver at his head, nor Tyrrell's threats to disgrace him by denouncing him as an accomplice, moved him one hairbreadth from his determination. In the event Bob was attacked suddenly, knocked half insensible, and bound and gagged, by his rascally kinsman. Mark Linley rescued him, and Bob tracked the scoundrel to the vaults, where he was burying his booty. There was another struggle; but in the nick of time Bob's chums came to his aid, and Tyrrell was captured. The secret came out then; Tyrrell made his lying denunciation in vain; but, for Bob's sake, the Head gave him until the morrow to clear out.

He went. But he came back again. He wrote to Bob to meet him at the Courtfield Arms. All that he wanted was a little capital to finance a scheme out of which he expected to make thousands, he said. It turned out to be a system for breaking the bank at Monte Carlo, which Bob unhesitatingly pronounced to be rot. Harry Wharton and the rest of the Famous Five were with Bob, and the upshot of the affair was that they ragged and bumped Tyrrell.

That was the immediate upshot; but it was not the end. By means of a cunning trick, in which Bunter was his unconscious accomplice, he succeeded in robbing Lord Mauleverer of a heavy sum—a sum of two hundred pounds. Then he bolted.

Bob made up his mind what to do at once. He knew where Tyrrell would make for. As Bob's simple, direct mind saw the affair there was but one thing to do—to follow him, and compel him to disgorge the stolen cash.

He did not go alone. The Head was won over—not to allowing the chase of Tyrrell,

but to consenting that the Famous Five should go for a brief holiday on the Riviera with Mauly.

They went, and they caught the thief, and he had to shell out. But they could not tear him from the fascination of the tables. At the last Bob let him have two louis to try his luck once more. So they left him, with the hope that they would never see him again.

But they did. He had the audacity to turn up at Greyfriars yet once more. He appeared as one Dick Chester, who claimed to have been at Greyfriars some ten years before, though no one there could recall him. In spite of the doubt, he was allowed to take part in an Old Boys' cricket-match. He was in disguise, of course, and Bob Cherry failed to recognise him. With the connivance of Loder—himself in deep waters—he stole the Games Fund money from Wingate's study. But he was chased, and caught, and his identity was revealed. Professing repentance, he was let off, on condition that he enlisted.

It was supposed that he had gone to serve King and country, and to redeem himself at long last. But that was deferred. Again he caused trouble for the hapless Bob Cherry. The time had come when a man of Tyrrell's age could no longer take his choice about answering the call. So he skulked in hiding. Bob had a letter from him; and Bunter heard Bob muttering things about someone



who was a rotten funk, a white-livered waster, and a disgrace to the family. As Bob's father was the only member of the family whom Bunter thought it possible that these things should be said, the Owl put it about that Major Cherry was a deserter, and a funk—whereof, naturally, came trouble. Bob would explain nothing to anyone. How could he explain that his worthless cousin was hidden in the old Priory, ready to bear the shame of desertion rather than face the hardships of life in the ranks? To honest, plucky Bob the attitude was positively loathsome; and Bob talked to Tyrrell very straight indeed. He would not help him; he was firm about that; and if he came to Greyfriars he would give him away on the spot, regardless of the disgrace that it would bring upon himself.

Bob was utterly miserable. He would not tell his secret; but Skinner found it out, and told others. Bob's chums stood by him, as he might have known they would do. Skinner gave the game away to P.-c. Tozer, and helped that keen limb of the law to search the Priory. But it was too late—the bird had flown!

And then, when all hope of him seemed dead, the wastrel redeemed himself. A bomb from a raiding aeroplane set Gosling's lodge on fire, and it was Paul Tyrrell, lurking hard by, in the hope of seeing Bob and getting help, who dashed into the flames and rescued the old porter. Tyrrell was severely burned, and lay some time at Greyfriars, near to death. But he recovered eventually, and went where he should have gone long before—to the recruiting-office!

It is hard for anyone to wipe out such a past as his, for such a past is the reflex of character, and character is hard to change. Yet one may hope that, with the good in him now uppermost, Paul Tyrrell will never disgrace his family again.

The Editor's Chat.

For Next Monday:

"THE BROKEN BOND!"

By Frank Richards.

This is one of the best and most dramatic stories which have appeared in our pages for quite a long time.

We have all watched with sympathy and interest the growth of what bade fair to be a strong and lasting friendship between Vernon-Smith and Tom Redwing. There is a debt of gratitude on each side, though Redwing does not as yet know how big it is on his; but gratitude could not alone hold Vernon-Smith as this new friendship holds him. There is more than that in it. He has come to look to Redwing for something that his own nature lacks—a certain simplicity of honesty born in the sailor's son. In short, he looks up to Redwing without realising that he does so, perhaps.

There is danger in this attitude. It is all very well for the Bouncer to look up to Redwing; but his pride is sure to rebel if he suspects that Redwing is looking down upon him. How that happens, how the Bouncer fights with his pride, how he shows at his best and at his worst, and how the bond between the two comes to be broken—of all these things next week's story will tell.

NUTSHELLS AND FRUIT-STONES.

One of the minor lessons that the war has taught us is that most substances hitherto looked upon as waste have a use of their own.

Who would have thought that the day would ever come when such things as nutshells and fruit-stones would be collected to save men's lives?

Yet no less purpose than that is behind the request lately made public that these things should be carefully collected.

It seems that nothing makes better charcoal for the gas-mask respirators than nutshells and fruit-stones. It is far more absorbent than any other charcoal it is possible to manufacture.

We are all agreed, I am certain, that the best of everything is not too good for the men who are fighting our battles over there. Most of us have learned during the last few years to be more careful about little things—paper, string, and the like. Now we are asked to save what we had never before thought worth saving. And, of course, we are going to do it! There can be no question about that.

In many districts clubs for the purpose have been, or are being, organised. But if there is no such club in your neighbourhood that is no reason for not joining in the good work. It is hoped that many shopkeepers will find room in front of their counters for sacks to hold the shells and stones. Look out for these. The Boy Scouts are helping, too. Many who read this are Scouts, and they will be already at work. Let them tell others. Let all who read tell their friends. If you can see no other way, make a collection of your own, and wait your chance to add it to some bigger one. Don't get discouraged because that chance does not come at once; and don't be silly enough to think that a small lot is useless. The tons that will be used will come from collections made in ounces, you know.

Dates and prunes furnish stones, as well as fresh fruit. Coconut-shells are as good as anything else.

Buck up, all of you!

NOTICES.

Miscellaneous.

Hon. Sec., 25, Morton Road, Colchester, wants members for MAGNET and "Gem" Exchange Club.

Jr. MacLachlan, 1, Bbeckleuch Street, Greenock, Scotland, wants more members for "A. & A." Club—those wanting to go on the stage.

F. Singleton, jun., Heath End Cottages, Walton-in-the-Hill, Surrey, wants a lady's bicycle. State price.

YOUR EDITOR.

14-9-18