



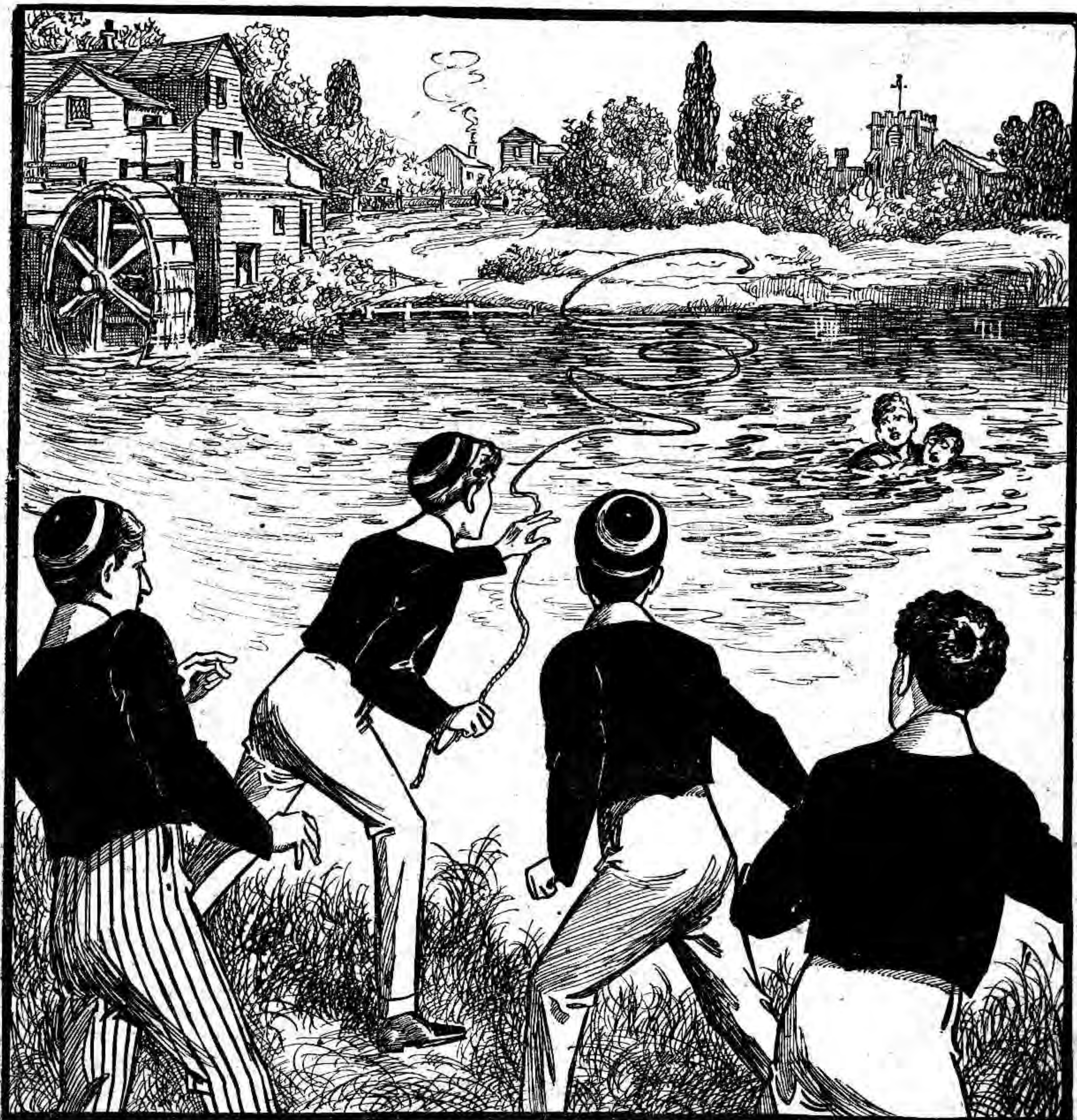
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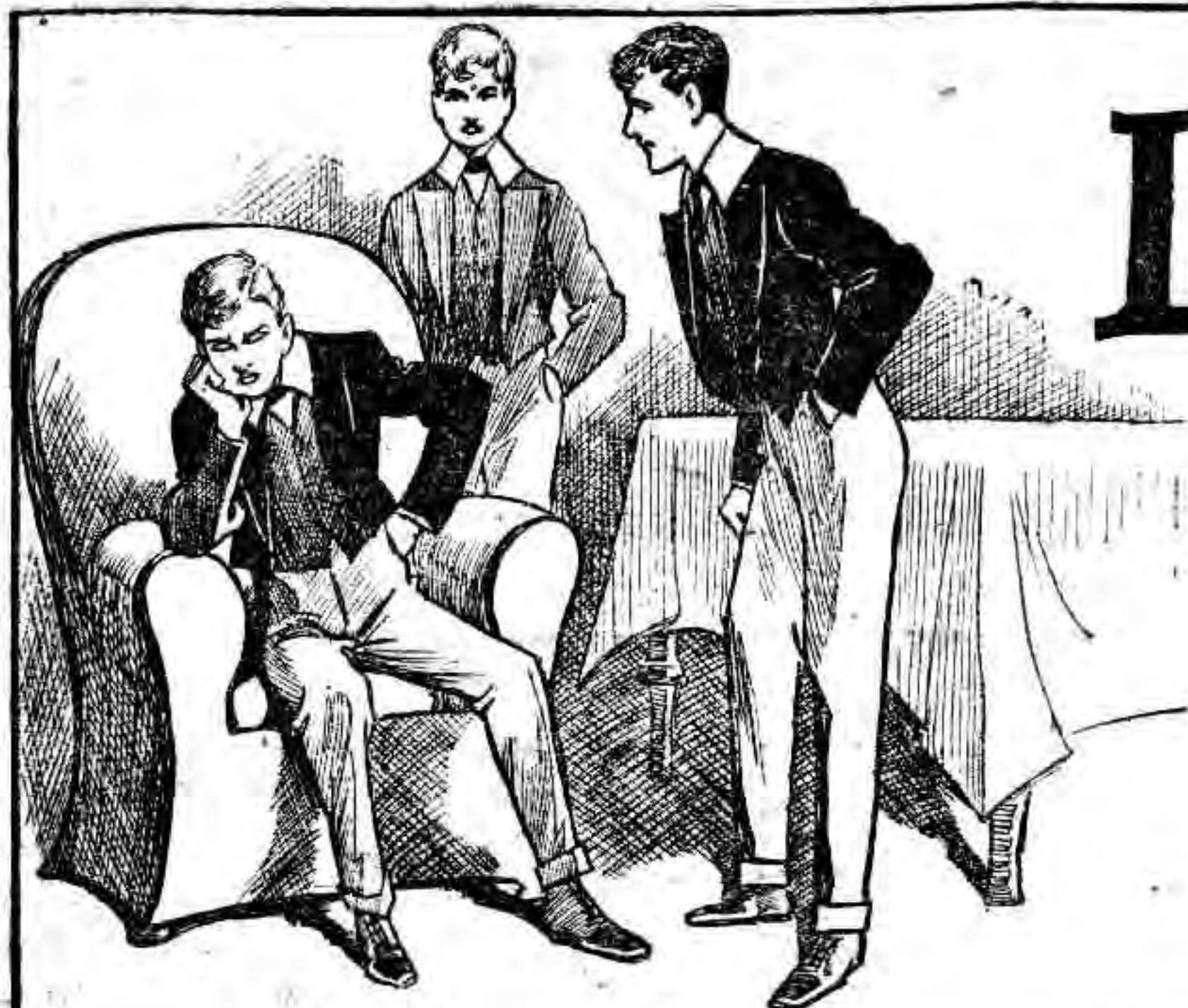


LINLEY'S LEGACY!



THE LANCASHIRE BOY'S SUPREME EFFORT!

(A Dramatic Scene in the Magnificent Long, Complete School Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars.) 12-7-19



Linley's Legacy.

A Magnificent School tale
of the chums of Greyfriars

By
Frank Richards.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

A Morning with Mossoo!

"SILENCE viz you!" Monsieur Charpentier, the French-master at Greyfriars, rapped the desk with his pointer to emphasise this order, but he rapped in vain. The buzz of talk in the Remove Form-room continued without abatement.

It was the last lesson for Wednesday morning, and the thoughts of the majority of the Form were already on Little Side, where they were playing St. Jude's after dinner.

With the easy-going French-master in charge, the juniors had greater freedom for the exchange of opinions on the match, with the result that the hum of conversation had grown louder and louder, until at last even "Mossoo" could stand it no longer.

"Silence!" cried the little Frenchman, waving his arms excitedly. "Mes garçons—my boys—"

Buzzzzzzzz!

"Vill you be silent?" roared Monsieur Charpentier. "I vill 'ave ze silence for zis lesson, ozzervise I fetch immediately ze Doctaire!"

The noise died down a little at that threat. A little "rag" with Mossoo was all very well, but it would be decidedly unwise to carry it far enough for the intervention of the Head, whose notions of discipline differed considerably from those of the French-master.

"Zat is bettaire!" said Mossoo, when the last sound had ceased. "We now continue. Buntaire, I believe I ask you to give me ze present indicative of ze verb 'comprendre'?"

"Je comprong, tu comprong, il comprong—" began Billy Bunter, but Mossoo stopped him.

"Ah! What accent! What pronunciation!" he moaned, with a hopeless gesture. "Buntaire, you are 'opeless!"

"Oh, really, Mossoo!" said Bunter, with an indignant blink. "I've been congratulated many times upon my Parisian accent. Perhaps you haven't got the Parisian accent yourself!"

There was a chuckle from the Form at this very Bunter-like explanation, and Monsieur Charpentier nearly tore his hair.

"You vill repeat after me!" he said. "Say zis: Je comprends, tu comprends, il comprend."

"Je comprong, tu comprong, il comprong," said Bunter. "My pronunciation is just a little richer in tone than

yours, Mossoo, but that's the Parisian accent, you see!"

Mossoo groaned, and heroically made an attempt at detailed explanation, which was the signal for renewed restiveness among the juniors.

Bob Cherry started the ball rolling with a whispered conversation with Bull and Nugent on the all-important subject of the St. Jude's match. Then Bolsover and Bulstrode began a heated argument about boxing, and Fisher T. Fish, the business member of the Form, started making calculations on the flyleaf of his "Henriade" concerning his latest "stunt," and Skinner commenced scribbling notes and passing them round the Form. In a minute the buzzing was as bad as ever, and when the little Frenchman had finished with Bunter he found the whole Form in a perfect uproar.

"Taisez-vous! I vill tolerate zis noise no longer!" Mossoo cried, fairly dancing with rage.

Buzzzzzzzz!

"Bull, Bolsover, Vernon-Smeece, you vill take fifty lines each; next time, I take you to ze Doctaire un'esitatingly!"

"Zank you, Mossoo!" said Vernon-Smith, in an imitation of the French-master's accent, and there was a subdued chuckle from the Remove.

Monsieur Charpentier glared round on the juniors, now as still as mice, and his glance fell on Skinner, who, for the last five minutes had been assiduously sending out mysterious notes to every corner of the room. The leader of the Remove "Blades" happened to be passing one of these scraps of paper on to Mauleverer, his neighbour, when he caught Monsieur Charpentier's eye, and the expression on that gentleman's face made him hurriedly crumple up the note in his hand, and assume as innocent a look as possible—not a very easy task for Skinner.

"Apportez-moi—bring me zat piece of papaire!" said Mossoo.

"Paper, sir?" echoed Skinner, in tones of virtuous indignation.

"Ze piece in your 'and at vunce!" said Mossoo impatiently. "Bring it 'ere, Skinnaire!"

Skinner reluctantly went out to the front of the class, and handed Monsieur Charpentier the slip of paper. The French-master unrolled it, and perused it with great interest.

"Dear Mauly," he read aloud. "Would you care to join us at banker zis afternoon behind ze chapel at zree

o'clock prompt? Be sporty, and come and 'ave a little fluttaire for vunce!"

The contents of the note did not create much surprise among the juniors, since they had all, with the exception of the poorer members of the Form, received messages couched in similar terms.

"Zis refaire to a game, eh?" said Mossoo, looking up with a rather puzzled expression on his face.

"That's it, Mossoo!" said Skinner, bestowing a wink on the Form with that eye that was out of the master's line of vision. "It's a new form of hopscotch played with marbles. There are fifty players aside, and every goal scored by the batsmen count as one point. The side that gets the most runs loses, and has to pay the other side five marbles for each goal!"

The Remove chuckled joyously.

"Vraiment! Indeed!" said Mossoo, unsuspectingly. Not being a sporting man, he did not see anything more extraordinary in banker, as explained by Skinner, than in any other game. "I am please to see zat you take an interest in sport, but you vill kindly confine your attention to ze lesson until ze time of dismissal. Aftaire school, you may play banker as mush as you like, and I 'ope zat you gain a great number of marbles."

"I hope so, sir," agreed Skinner humbly. "I'm in great form just now, and my banker team whacked Ponsonby's lot with ease last week, and won a rare lot of marbles!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mossoo looked surprised at the roar of laughter that greeted this ingenuous statement, then he turned to Skinner again, with a new light in his eyes.

"Skinnaire, I believe you are—vat you call it?—pulling my leg! You are ver' bad boy to be impertinent to your master. You vill 'old out ze 'and!"

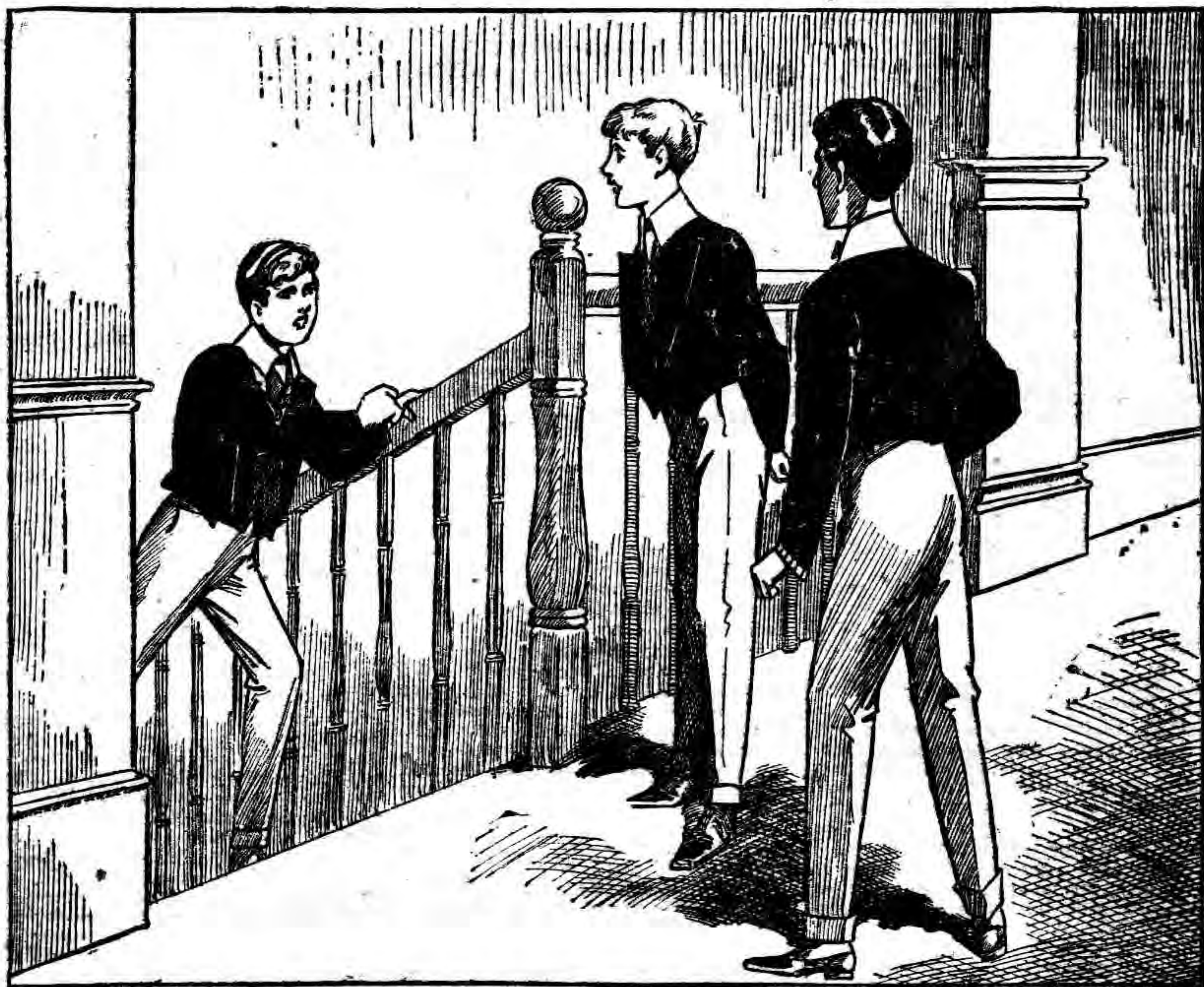
Skinner held out "ze 'and," trying to look indignant the while, but the attempt was not a success, and the undignified howl he gave as Mossoo's cane descended on his palm completely spoiled the effect.

"Now ze ozzer vun!" said Mossoo grimly. "You must learn to 'ave respect for your superiors, Skinnaire!"

Swish!

Skinner went back to his desk, squeezing his hands under his armpits to alleviate the pain, and looking quite Hunnish.

"We now continue!" said Monsieur Charpentier, and the Remove settled down to French verbs again.



Mark Linley stopped in surprise as he almost ran into Bob and Mauleverer at the top of the stairs. "Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's the news, Marky?" said Bob. (See Chapter 11.)

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Linley Hits Out!

WHEN the Form was dismissed that day Skinner was subjected to a regular bombardment of questions concerning the proposed banker party, and he answered them all with imperturbable politeness, albeit without letting out much information.

Most of the Remove were openly derisive, and the leader of the "blades" came in for a good deal of chipping, which, however, did not have the desired effect of "drawing" him.

Skinner did not mind putting up with a bit of chaff from Harry Wharton and the other "goodies," so long as the general excitement over his afternoon's meeting was productive of a few more recruits to the ranks of the "blades."

Skinner was specially keen on securing fellows like Lord Mauleverer, who were careless with their money, and whose financial aid might prove of great value to himself and his followers.

So far, Mauly had been far from encouraging; indeed, it was said that on one occasion his languid lordship had so far roused himself as to eject Skinner on his neck when he proposed a "little flutter" in the study—which, if true, was a most remarkable occurrence. Nevertheless, Skinner still held hopes that some day his persistence would be rewarded, and that Mauly would come round and become a fully-fledged "blade."

The thought of the endless stream of fivers that might flow into his pockets in that event often made Skinner sigh, and gave him fresh courage for the renewal of his efforts to arouse Mauleverer's interest in the peculiar amusements of the bold, bad blade.

When the "nuts" of the Remove assembled behind the chapel that afternoon, however, Mauleverer was conspicuous only by his absence. Skinner grunted when he observed it, and glanced round at the select circle to see who was present. Snoop and Stott and Trevor were there, of course, and Billy Bunter had turned up, quite willing to gamble on I O U's for the rest of the afternoon—if the other fellows would accept them. Vavasour and Monson had cycled over from Highcliffe, but the rest of their sporting Co. had only sent apologies. The sole new-comer was Bolsover major, and even he could hardly be considered a new member of the "nut" brigade, since he had always been on intimate terms with Skinner & Co.

It was not long before a good deal of the money that was being interchanged found its way to Skinner's pockets, and there were some pretty plain comments from the rest.

"Funny thing, you always seem to win, Skinner!" remarked Bolsover, as he handed Skinner his money at the end of one game.

"Oh, it's the luck of the game!" said the cad of the Remove sagely. "Your

turn will come if you stick to it, Bolsy!"

Bolsover only snorted. He would have preferred something more definite than Skinner's assurance on that point.

Just as Snoop was dealing the cards for the next game there was an interruption. Footsteps could be heard slowly approaching the secluded spot where the little card-party was being held. The juniors looked at one another in some alarm as the sound grew nearer.

"Shove the cards away!" snapped Skinner, who always led in any emergency of this sort. "Put out those cigs, you chumps!"

The dismayed "nuts" obeyed this polite order with admirable promptitude, and waited, with some trepidation, for the new-comer to appear round the chapel.

He came into view almost immediately, and there was a gasp of relief as it was seen that he was not in Etons. For the moment the measured nature of the tread had made the "blades" believe that they were about to be confronted by a master.

"Only the scholarship cad!" said Skinner, recognising Linley, of the Remove. "Get on with the washing, dear boys!"

Snoop recommenced dealing the cards, and the rest resumed their elegant attitudes round the circle without another glance at Linley. Apparently, the Lancashire lad had not noticed them.

yet. He was walking towards the group, fully engrossed in a letter he was reading, and, from the frown on his face, it was evident that his preoccupation was due to this missive. He did not see the "nuts" until he was almost on them; then he pulled up with a start, and regarded them in astonishment from under his knitted brows.

Skinner nodded agreeably.

"Hallo, Linley! Bad news from the family rag-and-bone shop? Let's see, it is a ragshop your people keep, isn't it?"

Skinner's cronies chuckled delightedly at their leader's choice little witticism.

"Give it him hot, Skinner!" said Snoop encouragingly. "Factory louts like him oughtn't to be allowed into a good-class school at all!"

Skinner made no reply to that, for his taunt had been too much for Linley, and the Lancashire lad made for the group.

"You seem to be determined to cause trouble this afternoon," he remarked quietly, halting before Skinner.

The cad of the Remove eyed him with a sneering grin.

"I don't see why it should cause trouble to inquire how they're getting on at the ancestral marine-store," he said, with a wink at his cronies. "Surely you're not getting snobbish in your old age, Linley? Never despise your people, even if they do live in a slum!"

Mark Linley went no further in verbal encounter, but, proceeding from words to deeds, peeled off his jacket and rolled up his sleeves. Skinner watched him with a sneer, for the knowledge that he had seven others behind him gave him a false kind of courage.

But he had not reckoned on Bolsover. That burly Removite was made of rather different stuff from the rest of the "nut" brigade, and as soon as he saw that a fight was imminent, he felt called upon to interfere.

"Here, you chaps, if there's to be a scrap, we'd better carry the thing out properly. I'll second you, Linley!"

"I sha'n't need one, thanks!" answered Linley. "You may see fair play, though, if you like."

Skinner glared at Bolsover, rather alarmed now that he perceived what attitude the bully of the Remove was taking up.

"Don't be a silly ass, Bolsover!" he snapped. "This is going to be a rag, not a fight. Help me to collar that factory cad, you chaps!"

Bolsover divested himself of his coat with great deliberation, and eyed the "nuts" truculently.

"The first one who helps that skinny boulder will feel the weight of this!" he said, with a threatening motion of his leg-of-mutton fist. "I'm here to see fair play to-day, so you can come forward at your peril!"

Snoop & Co. held back at that. They were not of the stuff of which heroes are made, and the prospect of feeling Bolsover's fist in their faces was not exactly inviting.

Skinner's eyes glittered with rage as he saw his little plan frustrated; but he was helpless in the matter, and, seeing nothing else for it, reluctantly took off his coat and waistcoat.

"Are you ready?" asked Linley, who was smarting under Skinner's bitter insults, and eager to avenge them.

Skinner nodded uneasily, and fell into a defensive attitude; and a moment later they were fighting, hammer and tongs.

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THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Hard Lines on Linley!

SKINNER was not a great fighting-man as a rule, but something in Linley's face told him that it would go hard with him if he did not manage to knock out the scholarship lad at once; and, with that end in view, he fought like a cornered tiger for the first minute. But Linley's defence seemed utterly impenetrable, and after the first furious onslaught Skinner found himself on the defensive, and already panting badly. Not one of his wild blows had gone home, and Linley was as cool as the proverbial cucumber.

"Knock him out, Skinney, dear boy!" drawled Vavasour encouragingly. "You're not putting enough science into it, you know."

"Oh, rather!" chirruped Monson, as he lit a fresh cigarette; and if looks could have killed, Skinner's momentary glare at the Highcliffe "nuts" would have caused them to drop dead that instant.

"Mop up the floor with him, Linley!" growled Bolsover, whose change of attitude was probably due in no small measure to the financial losses he had sustained at Skinner's hands earlier in the afternoon.

Mark Linley, however, was not in need of that piece of advice, for he could see for himself that Skinner's attempts at attack had now ceased, and he was now driving the cad of the Remove back. A perfect rain of blows began to descend on Skinner, and his defence became wilder and wilder, his parrying blows more and more erratic.

"Stand up to him, Skinney!" sniggered Snoop. "This is a fight, not a hundred yards' race! He, he, he!"

Skinner gasped painfully, and looked with wild eyes for a weak point in his opponent's defence without avail. He retreated still further in his efforts to escape Linley's terrible straight left; but the scholarship junior followed him up well, until the retirement became almost a debacle.

Thud, thud, thud!

"By gad, Skinner's getting it hot!" said Monson, with a deep breath; and, indeed, Mark Linley was showing him no mercy.

The juniors had never seen the quiet Lancashire lad in such a mood as this before. Evidently Skinner's sneers had gone deeper than they had supposed, and it did not take a great deal of thought to convince the juniors that the letter he had been frowning over had something to do with it.

At last a well-timed blow on the jaw sent Skinner reeling to the ground; and there he lay, licked to the wide. It was the most severe thrashing the leader of the "nut" brigade had ever received in his life, and Skinner had never repented more sincerely of a caddish trick than he did at that moment.

"Had enough?" queried Linley, bending over him.

Skinner's only reply was a groan; and, with a grim sort of smile, Linley donned his jacket again and walked off, without a mark of the fight on him.

Snoop and Stott helped Skinner to his feet, and brushed him down a bit.

"I'll show Linley if I'll stand any of his nonsense!" Skinner declared, his voice vibrating with rage. "I'll make that factory cad sorry he ever laid hands on me, hang him!"

"Look here, it's no good talking like that," said Stott uneasily. "Linley's licked you, and you must put up with it."

"You're welcome to your opinion!" said Skinner, with a sneer. "I say I'm

going to have my revenge on Linley; and I'll make it so hot that he'll remember it all his life. I'll make that rotter's life a misery to him!"

His voice rose to a shrill note, and he glared at his followers as though challenging them to say a word against him.

Bolsover snorted emphatically, and followed the Highcliffians off the scene. Skinner's last words had made the burly Removite lose all sympathy with his old ally, and his feelings, as he tramped off, were those of utter disgust.

Skinner watched him walk off with knitted brows, and drove his hands savagely into his pockets as he turned round on the three remaining members of his sporting Co.

"Look here, you chaps," he said, rather alarmed now at the thought that his unfortunate temper might lose him his rather useful cronies. "No need for us to quarrel over this, you know. One fight's enough for a day. You'd better come up to the study for tea."

"Well, you do turn round on a chap, though, Skinney," said Snoop, not wholly satisfied. "Still, if you want us to come to tea, I'm not going to refuse, for one."

And, as neither Trevor nor Stott contemplated any such action, the affair ended, and Skinner remained "monarch of all he surveyed" among the sporting section of the Remove.

Meanwhile, Linley had returned to the School House, and had entered Study No. 13, which he shared with Bob Cherry and Hurree Singh and Wun Lung. The first two were on the playing-fields, and the Chinese junior had gone to Friar-dale on a shopping expedition, so the study was empty. Linley breathed a sigh of relief when he noted this. He wanted to be away from everyone, to think, and to try to make some decision over this fresh worry that had come into his youthful but troubled life, and not even the best of his chums could be of any assistance to him at present.

Mark Linley unfolded the letter that was at the root of the trouble, and read it for the hundredth time; then he fell into one of the reveries that were typical of the serious-minded Lancashire lad. He was not disturbed for some time, but at last the tramp of feet in the passage betokened the return of the Remove Eleven and their partisans, and the study door was flung violently open by the cheerful Bob Cherry.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Penny for your thoughts, Marky!"

"They're not worth it, Bob," said Linley, with a faint smile, as he rose from the easy-chair. "How did the cricket-match go?"

"Oh, great!" replied Bob Cherry, hurling his cap into one corner of the study. "We licked St. Jude's into a cocked hat, even without your help, you old slacker! Been swotting Greek all the afternoon?"

"No; it's not Greek this time," said Mark Linley, a little wearily. "Going to have tea?"

"They want us at Study No. 1, so we'd better go. Inky's there already."

"I'll come, then," Linley said. "It will be a favourable opportunity to tell you all a bit of rather bad news I've just received."

Bob Cherry looked at him curiously; but the Lancashire lad's face betrayed no emotion, so the cheery leader of Study No. 1 wisely made no comment, but waited till they got to Wharton's study.

Study No. 1 presented a very cosy and cheerful appearance as they entered. The table was already laid, and the snow-white cloth that did honour to the occasion made the viands look even more

inviting than would otherwise have been the case.

"Welcome to the festive board!" cried Nugent, turning a ruddy face up from the fireplace, where he was cooking sausages. "Come in, if you can get in, Linley!"

"Well, it is rather a crush, isn't it?" said Wharton, laughing.

Study No. 1 was, indeed, pretty full now that the last two guests had arrived; and, as all were doing something to help, there was not a little confusion. But cheerfulness and good-temper reigned; and when at last the six chums sat down to their well-earned tea there was an air of jollity and content round the table that not even Linley's more serious mien could dispel.

"The sosses are done to a turn!" said Frank Nugent with great satisfaction. And he began serving out the sizzling sausages, which were, in truth, "browned" to a state of perfection that even Billy Bunter, the champion cook of Greyfriars, could hardly have attained.

"This is prime!" said Bob, with beaming face. "Pity Marky's going to spoil the harmony of the evening with his tale of woe, ain't it?"

Harry Wharton looked up from the act of pouring out the tea, and gave the scholarship junior a questioning glance, and Mark Linley replied with a somewhat sad smile.

"I'm sorry if I mar your pleasure, but I've got to get it off my chest, so it may as well be now as later!" he said.

"On the bawl, Marky, and we'll try to bear it!" said Bob Cherry, humorous to the last. And, thus encouraged, the factory lad began, in his usual quiet voice:

"I'll tell you now, then. The fact is, I've just heard from home that my father is laid up, and, of course, this is rather a serious blow, to speak solely from a financial point of view even. You chaps understand the position of my people, and the fact that the breadwinner of the family is laid up will certainly affect me in no small measure."

"Oh!" murmured Bob Cherry, as the nature of his chum's trouble dawned on him; and the rest were silently sympathetic. They themselves were all comfortably off, and serious money difficulties never worried them; but they could appreciate the scholarship lad's frequent struggles against misfortune all the more for that.

"Judging by what the doctor says," continued Mark Linley, "my father's only chance of full recovery is a long holiday, preferably in the South of France; and, of course, that will cost money, besides which there is the consideration that he will be earning none while he's away."

"How rotten!" said Bob Cherry in dismayed tones. "Does that mean you'll have to leave us, Marky?"

Mark Linley nodded.

"I see no other way, Bob, unless by a miracle I get hold of about five hundred pounds during the next fortnight. They have a bit saved up at home; but when the pater's expenses are paid there will be none left, and somebody will have to find the money for food and clothes. And I'm the only one who can do it, you see."

A silence followed this simple statement, and the Famous Five looked at one another with troubled faces.

"Have you told the Head?" asked Harry Wharton.

Linley shook his head.

"I have written off home, and am waiting for a reply to my letter before going to Dr. Locke; but in any case I'm afraid it's inevitable. I must leave Greyfriars."

"Well, this is rotten, and no mistake!" said Frank Nugent. "I'm sorry, for one, old man!"

"The sorrowfulness is terrific!" added Hurree Jamset Ram Singh lugubriously, bringing a smile to Linley's face. "It is indeed rottenful that you should have to leave us, my esteemed and ludicrous chum! But don't let your tea stand there waitfully, or it will be too coldful to drink!"

Mark Linley laughed, and took the hint; and the rest were following suit when there came a sudden interruption. The study door was flung violently open, and Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, entered, leading Billy Bunter by the ear.

"Here's a fat oyster I've just found tying up his shoelace outside!" said Smithy, with a grin. "I leave him for you chaps to deal with!"

And with that brief explanation he quitted the study, leaving the Owl of the Remove to face the storm.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Bunter's Luck is Out!

BILLY BUNTER blinked at the chums of the Remove, and they glared back at Billy Bunter. The Peeping Tom of Greyfriars could hardly have come in at a more inopportune moment, and the fact that he had been listening outside did not tend to add to the warmth of the welcome he received.

"Spying again!" snorted Johnny Bull. "One of these days they'll find a dead porpoise in the Remove passage, for I sha'n't always be able to overcome the temptation to slaughter you, Bunter!"

"Oh, really, Bull!" murmured Bunter, with a somewhat feeble show of indignation. "I—I was only tying up my shoelace outside the study, you know! Smithy always is too hasty in jumping to conclusions!"

"And you didn't hear anything we were saying?" demanded Johnny Bull in a terrifying voice.

"Not at all!" said the fat member of the Remove, without turning a hair. "I don't know anything about Linley's people being hard up and his pater ill; and I didn't hear a word about Linley having to go back to the factory. Of course, you could rely on my discretion if I had happened to hear it; but, as I say, I didn't!"

"Oh, chuck him out!" said Bob. And the Famous Five rose in a body and fell upon the Owl of the Remove. Bunter felt himself whirled through the air and bumped on the hard, unsympathetic linoleum of the Remove passage; then the door of Study No. 1 was slammed with quite unnecessary force, and he was left to his own devices.

"Beasts!" said Billy Bunter, shaking a fat fist at the closed door; then he rolled off, and entered a study lower down in the passage. There were only two juniors present—Skinner and Snoop—the other members of the "nut" brigade having apparently finished tea and gone elsewhere. They were smoking cigarettes as Bunter entered, and glared up at the new-comer with far from welcoming looks.

"Hook it!" said Skinner laconically; and Snoop made a threatening movement in the direction of the poker. Billy Bunter blinked at them, and approached the table warily.

"I say, Skinner, you do look a wreck!" he said, with a fat snigger. "Linley must have given you a record licking this afternoon!"

"So you've heard of it!" growled Skinner, his eyes glinting.

"The whole Form's talking about it! That factory bounder's going it strong—his last week at school, too!"

Skinner looked up quickly.

"What's that?"

Billy Bunter grinned, and bestowed a wink upon the leader of the "nuts."

"I know what I know!" he said very mysteriously. "I say, Skinner, I'm feeling peckish!"

Skinner grunted, and, going to the cupboard, fetched out a couple of buns, which he handed to the Owl of the Remove.

"Now tell us what you know about Linley, you fat oyster!" he ordered. And Billy Bunter, who was simply bursting to confide his secret to somebody, gave a fat chuckle.

"Well, I happened to stop outside Study No. 1 to tie up my shoelace, you see," he explained between bites at the bun. "There was a regular crowd inside, and quite by accident I overheard part of the conversation. Linley was doing most of the talking, and he was telling 'em all about his pater being hard up, and no money coming in to keep the wolf from the door. He, he, he!"

Billy Bunter sniggered at that exceedingly humorous recollection; and, after finishing off the second bun, continued:

"You see, his old man has been ordered to the South of France, or somewhere, for medical reasons, and that'll take all their measly savings, so the family are relying on Linley to keep the home fires burning and go to the factory again. Linley said he was bound to go, unless by a miracle he got hold of about five hundred pounds during the next few days."

"Oh crumbs!" ejaculated Sidney James Snoop, giving his leader a sideways look. Skinner's eyes were gleaming with a strange light, and he made signs to Snoop to hold his peace.

"Are you certain of this?" demanded Skinner keenly.

"Oh, really, Skinner, I hope you don't doubt my word! I tell you it's right enough, and they were fearfully wild when Smithy caught me listening—tying up my shoelace, I mean—and took me into the study. You can ask Harry Wharton, if you like!"

Skinner nodded, satisfied; then he pointed to the door.

"You can buzz off, now!" he said blandly. And Billy Bunter stared at him wrathfully.

"Why, you rotter, surely you're going to stand me something to eat now I've told you all about Linley!"

"I'm not interested in Linley's doings," Skinner replied calmly. "I've got no grub to give you, either, so you can quit!"

"But I thought you'd be glad to hear the news about Linley when you're feeling so mad with him!"

"You're suffering from delusions, my pippin!" Skinner said. "I've got no quarrel with Linley, so it doesn't interest me!" And this remark so surprised Bunter that he allowed himself to be led out of the study without protest. Skinner closed the door after him, and turned to Snoop with an unpleasant grin on his face.

"That is news—what?" commented Snoop, looking at Skinner to see how he would take it. The cad of the Remove nodded thoughtfully.

"This is just the opportunity I've been waiting for!" he said. "There's a ripping chance for us to put our spoke in the wheel here, and I think I see a way of getting a bit of my own back!"

"How?" asked Snoop.

Skinner allowed a cloud of cigarette-

smoke to drift from between his thin lips before replying.

"Did you notice what that fat outsider said about Linley's financial troubles? According to him, Linley remarked that if he was left five hundred pounds he'd be able to stay on at school. Well, if he's so keen on it, why shouldn't he have a legacy?"

Snoop stared blankly at his leader.

"What the dickens—"

"I'll explain my meaning, if you can't see what I'm getting at," said Skinner, with a grin. "The idea is this. I have a letter posted in London to Linley, telling him he has been left five hundred pounds, and asking him to come to town and settle matters. The factory cad gets it, and takes the first train to London, and when he gets there finds the address and the name are both fictitious, and that he is on a wild-goose chase. Why, he'd go nearly dotty with disappointment, not to mention the inconvenience of spending his precious savings on railway-fares and exes, and that's where my revenge would come in. See?"

Sidney James Snoop sniggered at the thought of the bitter disappointment Mark Linley would suffer under such circumstances. It was just the sort of scheme that commended itself to the worm of the Remove, and he nodded in reply to Skinner's questioning glance.

"It's O.K., Skinney! I should like to see his face on finding how he'd been fooled. It would be worth a guinea a box! He, he, he!"

"I reckon it's workable enough," continued Skinner, "and it'll be easy to settle details. There's one thing we must remember, though. We shall want some properly headed notepaper."

"Oh!" said Snoop.

"However, that difficulty will soon be overcome," said Skinner, with the assurance of one whose plans are quite settled. "I'm going down to see Tiper, the printer, in the morning. He'll do me a few sheets of headed notepaper, and that'll give the thing an appearance of genuineness that will conquer the factory bounder's possible doubts."

"My word, Skinney, you've thought out everything!" remarked Sidney James, in an admiring voice, and Skinner smiled a little patronisingly. Nothing was more calculated to establish a crony in Harold Skinner's favour than an occasional judicious compliment.

"Well, we can't do anything to-night, so we may as well go down to the Common-room now," he said. And with that the two Removites left the study.

Next day, as soon as morning lessons were over, Skinner made his way down to the village in order to interview Mr. Tiper, the printer. He got back to Greyfriars just in time for dinner.

As soon as the meal was over, the two amiable "blades" strolled off together, and Skinner recounted his interview with Mr. Tiper. Snoop chuckled when he had finished.

"Well, if headed notepaper doesn't disarm the factory bounder, nothing will," he remarked. "It's a good move, Skinney!"

Harold Skinner smiled complacently.

"I think it'll do the trick, and if the Quelch-bird will allow me the use of his typewriter for a few minutes, I shall be able to put the finishing touch to it by typing the letter."

"Look!" hissed Snoop, suddenly nudging his companion. "He's going into the Head's study."

They were passing through the passage in which Dr. Locke's study was situated, and just as Skinner looked up he could see the factory lad enter that dreaded

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apartment. Skinner whistled; then a grin broke over his unpleasant face.

"He's gone to tell the Head he's leaving, for a cert. Looks as if he's pretty sure of it now."

As a matter of fact, the cad of the Remove was not far wrong. The object of Mark Linley's visit to the Head was indeed to acquaint him with the bad news from home, and to ask his permission to leave the school for good in a few days; and while Skinner and Snoop were chuckling outside, Linley was undergoing the ordeal of "giving notice" inside the study.

Dr. Locke was very kind and sympathetic, but that only seemed to make the factory lad's task the harder, and it was with a sad heart that he announced his intention of leaving the school in a day or so.

And when Mark Linley came out of Dr. Locke's study again he was feeling quite bitter at his ill-luck—a state of things altogether different from the usual order where the cheerful Lancastrian was concerned.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Persecution of Linley!

HAROLD SKINNER was not content to remain impassive while his unscrupulous "jape" materialised, and as only a few days remained during which Linley would be available for practical jokes, he decided to make the most of his opportunity, and give the scholarship lad something to remember his last week at Greyfriars.

With that cheerful object in view, Skinner held a council of war, and with great glee the "nuts" invented a few schemes for making Linley smart.

The factory lad came across the first of the series that evening as he was passing through the hall in company with Bob Cherry. The two Removites would have missed the incident but for a sudden burst of laughter from the crowd round the notice-board.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's the merry joke?" asked Bob Cherry, shouldering his way through the juniors. And there was an uncomfortable silence as they saw who was his companion.

"Ahem!" said Ogilvy.

"Ahem!" echoed a good many others, in uneasy tones, and those who were on the edge of the crowd slipped away as quietly as possible.

"Anything the matter?" asked Bob Cherry, staring at them in surprise. "You're looking jolly queer, some of you!"

"Nothin' whatever!" sniggered Snoop. "It's the reaction after the joke on the notice-board, I expect. He, he, he! Yaroo!"

That emphatic conclusion to his remarks was due to Tom Brown's foot, which somehow came into sudden violent contact with his shins.

Snoop howled, and hopped about in agony, clapping his injured pedal extremity; but he made no more humorous comments while Tom Brown was near.

There was a sudden roar of rage from Bob Cherry as he finished reading the notice, and Mark Linley quietly took a place by his side, and scanned it curiously. The notice, which was written in a backhand scrawl, with the obvious intention of disguising the handwriting, ran as follows:

"KIND FRIENDS.

"Please spare a copper for a destitute factory lad who has won a scholarship, and wants to disguise himself as a gentle-

man. Cast-off clothing and old boots will also be greatly appreciated. Please help me, as the old man has been out on the ran-dan and spent all my savings.—Apply Study No. 13, Remove Passage."

"So that's your idea of a joke, you cackling hyenas!" snorted Bob Cherry. "Blessed if I can see anything funny in it. Whose work is it?"

"I think I can guess, Bob," said Mark Linley, his eyes glinting with anger. "There are only a few chaps in the Remove who would be caddish enough for a trick like this, and it's not hard to pick the culprit from among them."

"Skinner!" cried Bob, a sudden light breaking on him. "I'll pulverise the bounder! Come on, Marky!"

"I—I say, Linley, I hope you don't associate any of us with this trick?" said Tom Brown apologetically, as he tore the notice off the board.

"It's only just been put up, and we were reading it," explained Peter Todd. And Mark Linley nodded his understanding as he was dragged away by the indignant Bob Cherry. Bob was feeling quite enraged, and his sunny good temper had deserted him for the moment. It would have gone hard with Skinner had he met the leader of Study No. 13 just then; but the leader of the cad brigade, evidently considering discretion the better part of valour, had disappeared, and though the Removites searched all over the School House, they could find no trace of him.

"No good looking farther, I suppose!" grunted Bob Cherry, as they regained the Remove passage. And Mark Linley signified his agreement.

"I suggest we call in at the study for a rest," he said. And they accordingly entered No. 13, where Hurree Singh and Wun Lung, the Chinese, were busy with their preparation.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! You chaps look industrious!" remarked Bob, with a grin, as the two Removites ceased their work and looked up.

"The industriousfulness is terrific!" assented the dusky Nabob of Bhanipur, with a yawn, as he rose from the table. "The venerable and ludicrous Quelch piled on the prep dosefully to-night, my esteemed chum."

"Has handsome Bob Chelly done plep?" queried Wun Lung.

"Years ago!" said Bob, cheerfully exaggerating the truth. "This old swot here helped me, you see. What's the next move, Marky?"

"I think I'll read through some of these contributions for the 'Herald,' while I've got the chance," replied Mark Linley. And he produced a bundle of envelopes from the desk that the study boasted.

Mark Linley was sub-editor of the "Greyfriars Herald," and part of his duties consisted of sorting out the printable efforts from the hosts of amateur literary effusions that were submitted by the junior section of Greyfriars. It was a thankless task, for those whose manuscripts were rejected were generally indignant, and hinted at favouritism, while the more fortunate ones regarded it as quite natural that their stories and poems should be published. Linley, however, was not one to be deterred by this, and had performed his sub-editorial duties conscientiously and successfully since the first number of the "Herald" made its appearance.

"Get on with the merry washing, then, and I'll watch you!" said Bob, with a grin.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Letter Arrives!

CLANG, clang, clang! "Hallo, hallo, hallo! Rising-bell, you slackers!" roared Bob Cherry, leaping out of bed quickly in order to maintain his reputation of being always the first up in the Remove dormitory.

"I believe old Gossy rings it early out of spite!" grunted Skinner, pulling the bedclothes over his head, and composing himself for another doze. "Here, wharrer you at, you rotter?"

"Yanking a lazy bounder out of bed, my pippin!" replied Bob, cheerily suiting the action to the word. "No excuse a morning like this, you know, Skinney!"

Harold Skinner yelled as he landed on the floor with a terrific bump, and Bob grinned unsympathetically. He was not one to let the sun go down on his wrath, and had already forgotten his quarrel with Skinner; but a bumping for a slacker was a different matter.

"Any other gentleman like a bumping?" asked Bob pleasantly. "What about you, Bunter?"

"Yah! Keep off, you beast!" howled Billy Bunter, leaping out of bed as though he had received an electric shock. And Bob Cherry dropped his hands, with a laugh.

"Fishy would just enjoy a bump, though, wouldn't you, Fishy?"

"Hyer, let up, you jay! I guess I'll make tater-scrappings of you if you lay hands on me, Cherry!"

Bob Cherry made a threatening movement in the direction of the New York junior's bed, and Fisher T. Fish hurriedly slipped out. Evidently it was not his intention to make potato-scrappings of the cheery leader of Study No. 13—for the time being, at any rate.

"Who's for a sprint round the quad before brekker?" asked Harry Wharton. "Nothing like it for keeping fit, and we want to be in the pink for the Highcliffe match."

"I'm on!" cried half a dozen members of the Remove Eleven at once. And they hurried with their toilet so as to have plenty of time.

Bob Cherry was ready first, and he was soon joined by Harry Wharton, Mark Linley, John Bull, Brown, and Vernon-Smith. The six Removites quitted the dormitory in a body, and went downstairs, where there were but few about at that early hour.

"Race you round the quad!" yelled Bob, as they reached the open air, and there was a prompt acceptance of the challenge by the rest. Bob soon forged ahead of the rest, and, not content with circling the quad, and doing almost the complete round of the school buildings, raced off with a whoop in the direction of the gates. The others following in his track, perceived that he was making for Boggs, the postman, who was just entering the gates.

"Any letters for us?" asked Bob Cherry, panting with his exertions, as he reached the postman.

"Depends who you mean by 'us,' Master Cherry!" answered Boggs. "There's none for you!"

"Oh, rotten! What about these chaps, then?"

"I've got one for Master Linley, but nothink for the others," Mr. Boggs said, as the Removites crowded round him. "Here you are, sir!"

Mark Linley nodded his thanks, and glanced at the postmark in some surprise.

"Wonder who's writing me from London?"

"I should say the best thing is to open it and see," grinned Bob Cherry. And

Mark Linley, acting on that advice, slit open the envelope, and unfolded the typewritten communication it contained.

"Mustn't be late for brekker!" said Harry Wharton, looking at his watch. "You'd better read your letter as we walk along, Marky!"

The six chums hurried along towards the School House, and Mark Linley smoothed out his letter, and glanced through it quickly.

"Great Scott!" he ejaculated, as he finished reading the missive.

"News?" inquired Vernon-Smith.

"My hat! This is the limit!" said Mark Linley, staring at them blankly. "Just read this!"

He passed the letter to Johnny Bull, who was on his left, and the Colonial junior read it aloud for the benefit of the rest.

"Quillman & Jaype, Solicitors,
"Lucre Street,
"London, E.C."

"Mr. Mark Linley, Greyfriars School."

"Dear Sir,—We have pleasure in informing you that your uncle—the late Mr. Jeremiah Linley—who emigrated to Australia fifteen years ago, and died recently, bequeathed you the sum of Five Hundred Pounds (£500) in his will, and this amount is now in our possession, awaiting your claim. As there are certain details to be settled before we hand you the money, it is of the utmost importance that you visit us at an early date. If it is possible for you to call on us to-morrow (Wednesday), therefore, we shall be very pleased to see you.—Yours faithfully,
QUILLMAN & JAYPE."

"Phew!"

"My only aunt!"

The Removites forgot their breakfast, and stopped to have a look at the astounding letter. Johnny Bull held it up for all to see, and they read it for themselves.

"Five hundred pounds!" said Mark Linley, almost in awe. "Just what I was wishing for! It would mean the making of father's health, and enough over to allow for my staying on here. Surely there's a mistake somewhere!"

"They've got the name and everything right," said John Bull, in dubious tones. "Perhaps it's a practical joke, though."

"But look at the printed heading!" urged Bob Cherry. "It's typewritten, too, and there's the London postmark on the envelope. Looks genuine enough to me!"

"Did you have an uncle in Australia?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Never heard of him before; but I have some relatives out there. Most people in England have, if it comes to that."

"True enough!" said Harry, knitting his brows, as though he was not wholly satisfied.

"Shouldn't place too much reliance on it if I were you," said the Bounder, regarding the letter keenly.

"Oh, rot!" said Tom Brown. "You're a bit too suspicious sometimes, Smithy, you know. This is straight enough."

Vernon-Smith shrugged his shoulders, and smiled a trifle cynically.

"When you've seen a bit more of this wicked world, you'll learn to be suspicious, too, dear boy!" he said, with all the assurance of a man of fifty. But for once the juniors disregarded the Bounder's worldly wisdom, and refused to believe that there was anything wrong in the lawyers' letter.

"Blessed if I can see anything amiss in it, anyhow!" Bob Cherry remarked. And the rest echoed his opinion.

"Five hundred pounds!" repeated

Linley, taking the letter from Johnny Bull like one in a dream. "If only it's true!"

"You can run up to town this afternoon, and see whether it's true or not," said Bob Cherry. "I'll come with you, if you like, as it's a half-holiday, and Quelch'll give us a late pass if we explain the cires."

Mark nodded.

"Right-ho, Bob! They mention Wednesday specially, so it will just fit in. Five hundred, though! It seems impossible!"

In a state of considerable excitement—with the possible exception of Vernon-Smith—the juniors returned to the School House. Harold Skinner was waiting at the entrance, and noted their excitement with inward glee. It was obvious to him that Linley had received his letter safely, and that both the scholarship junior and his companions had taken it in. And what would pass muster with Harry Wharton and Vernon-Smith would surely do for the rest of the Form.

Feeling very pleased with the progress of the jape, Skinner strolled off to communicate the news of its success to Snoop and Stott. The three black sheep of the Remove chortled over it in unison, and waited for the unfolding of the plot, with their confidence greatly strengthened now.

After "brekker" Mark Linley went round to his more intimate friends to inform them of his unexpected luck, and there was general satisfaction at the news. Mark Linley was very popular with the best section of the Form, and the information that he would have to leave the school had caused dismay. The news of his legacy was, therefore, doubly welcome.

Lord Mauleverer, who had always had a great admiration for the Lancashire lad, was so delighted that he forgot his tiredness and clapped Linley on the back.

"By gad! This is awfully good news, my dear fellow!" he exclaimed, in unusually hearty tones. "I'd be glad to run up to town with you, if you're going this afternoon, begad!"

"You're welcome to come, if you'd like to," said Linley. "Bob's coming, too, so it will make quite a little party."

"The more the merrier, my dear boy! I wonder if Mr. Quelch will excuse us prep?"

"So that's what you're after, is it?" laughed Linley. "He'll excuse us if we ask him nicely, I expect. But do you think you'll be up to the journey?"

"Well, it will be a bit of a fag," admitted Lord Mauleverer. "Still, you'll want somebody to look after you, and I'm used to these lawyer Johnnies, you know. Besides, we'll escape prep!"

"Then you'll come with us!" said Mark Linley. "We must have a snack soon after morning lessons, and cut off to the station to catch the first afternoon train, so be prepared for a rush!"

"Oh, gad! I didn't know it was as bad as that! However, I'll put up with it for your sake, my dear fellow!" said Mauly, with the air of a martyr. And with that satisfactory settlement, they parted.

It was not a matter of great difficulty for Linley to obtain the Form-master's assent to the expedition. Mark Linley, with his thirst for knowledge of every description, and especially for Greek, had a warm place in Mr. Quelch's somewhat stony heart, and when that gentleman learnt the nature of the business that carried Linley to London, he was only too pleased to write out three late passes.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Not a Success!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! Here we are at last!" said Bob Cherry cheerfully, as the train drew to a standstill at Charing Cross Station.

"Begad! What a crowd!" said Lord Mauleverer. "People expend an awful amount of energy in London, don't they? Makes me tired to look at 'em!"

"Plenty of time, too!" remarked Linley, glancing at one of the station clocks as they stepped on to the platform. "Lucky we caught that train, you chaps."

The station presented a busy scene, and the noise and confusion and bustle and hurry made a strange contrast with the academical peacefulness of Greyfriars that the juniors were accustomed to.

"This way for the Strand, my dear fellows!" said Mauly, whose eyes were beginning to twinkle with unusual animation, as though the whirl and rush of the metropolis were already exercising a subtle influence on him. "Follow me, and we'll make for the street and board a 'bus!"

The trio quitted the busy station, and entered the Strand, which was thronged with people at that hour.

"Well, Marky, what's the programme?" asked Bob Cherry, as they walked along at a leisurely pace.

"I vote for business first, and pleasure after," answered Mark Linley, without hesitation. "If we get the interview over, we shall probably have plenty of time for sightseeing after, so I think we'd better make for Lucre Street now."

"Wherever Lucre Street may be!" added Bob, with a chuckle. "Let's ask this joint here."

The "joint" referred to was a portly policeman, standing on the edge of the kerb, and he looked round inquiringly as the three juniors came up.

"Can you tell us where Lucre Street is, my dear fellow?" asked Mauleverer.

"This 'ere 'bus takes you straight there, sir!" replied the constable, nodding towards a motor-bus that had just slowed down by the pavement.

"Let's catch it, then!" said his lordship, pressing half a crown into the palm of the surprised policeman. And they forthwith boarded the 'bus, and ascended the steps to the top, that they might obtain a better view of everything.

The motor-bus carried them eastward at a rapid pace, and very soon the cry of "Lucre Street!" from below sent the three Removites hurrying down the steps again.

The 'bus slowed down near the kerb at the beginning of the street, and they dismounted and took stock of their surroundings.

"So this is Lucre Street!" said Bob Cherry. "Dingy sort of hole, isn't it?"

It was a narrow turning, rather more quiet than the surrounding district, and consisting mostly of banks, solicitors' offices, and other business houses.

"Now we've to find the offices of Messrs. Quillman & Jaype, dear boys!" Mauleverer said, surveying the narrow street with interest. "Begad, there's an awful lot to choose from!"

"What's the matter, Marky?" asked Bob. And Mark Linley whistled expressively as a sudden thought struck him.

"By Jove! They didn't give a number on the notepaper!" he exclaimed, in dismay.

"Didn't put a number on the notepaper!" echoed Bob Cherry in astonished tones. "What's the idea of that, then? Have another look, and make sure, old man."

The three went into a neighbouring

doorway, so as not to obstruct the pavement, then Mark Linley produced the letter and unfolded it.

His two chums peered over his shoulder at the missive, and they saw that Linley's fears were realised. The notepaper was simply headed "Quillman & Jaype, Solicitors, Lucre Street, London, E.C." No number was given, nor was there any other indication of the exact situation of the offices.

"Well, it certainly gives us a very hazy notion of where we're to look for the lawyer Johnnies!" remarked Bob Cherry, scratching his chin reflectively.

"Still, we can soon find out, my dear fellows," said Lord Mauleverer. "Let's meander down the street, and keep our eyes open, first. We ought to spot the show easily enough, but if it fails we must make inquiries, or look up a directory."

"Good egg!" cried Bob, giving Mauly a clap on the back that sent him staggering half-way across the pavement; and Linley, who had had quite a fright for the moment, smiled again as he replaced the letter in his pocket.

"After all, it will be easy enough to find a firm of solicitors," he said. And with that they started a leisurely stroll down the street, side by side.

They noted carefully the name-plates and window-signs outside all the offices they passed, but when they reached the end of the street success had not crowned their efforts.

"Never mind, dear boys," said Mauly, smiling serenely. "We've still got the

other side to do yet, and it can't be so far off now."

They crossed to the other side, and repeated the search in the same way as before. Name-plates, window-signs, and showcards were subjected to a detailed inspection without avail, and even inquiries of a policeman failed to elicit any fresh information.

"Well, this is the giddy limit!" remarked Bob Cherry, as they regained their starting-point, and looked at one another with dismayed looks.

"It strikes me this is goin' to be a bigger job than we imagined, my dear fellows," observed his lordship.

"Blessed if I can understand it," said Mark Linley, knitting his brows over the letter again, in search of some clue. "As they don't put the number, I should have thought their offices would be well known, yet that constable hadn't heard of the name even."

"Well, what's to be did, then?"

"My suggestion is to visit the nearest post-office and look up the directory," answered Mauleverer, after a pause; and the other two agreed that this was the best course to adopt under the circumstances.

It did not take the juniors long to find a post-office, and having obtained access to the London Directory, they pored over it eagerly, and searched among its numerous pages for items regarding the elusive firm of Quillman & Jaype.

Linley, who was more adept at extracting information from ponderous volumes than either of his companions, looked through every possible section of the directory, in addition to making a detailed reading in the street section of the residents of Lucre Street.

Still he drew blank, and with a growing sense of despair, the trio quitted the post-office.

"I say, Marky, this is beginning to look rather fishy, don't you think?" ventured Bob Cherry, hesitatingly.

"I'm afraid it does begin to look queer, Bob," assented Linley, trying to conceal his disappointment under a smile. "Still, there is hope, even yet. They may have only recently been appointed solicitors in which case their names wouldn't be in the directory."

"Begad, that's true! And it's quite possible we missed their office among so many," added Mauleverer hopefully; then his hopeful look vanished as a new thought struck him. "But in that case, how would your uncle have had dealings with 'em?"

"It may be an amalgamation with an old firm," said Linley, reluctant to give up all hope yet. "The best thing we can do is to inquire at another solicitor's office in the same street. If that gives us no result, I must come to the conclusion that there's something suspicious about it."

"Come on, then!" said Bob, smiling again with renewed hope. "While there's life, there's hope, you know!"

They returned to the scene of their former disappointment, and finding a solicitor's office a few yards down the street, Linley led the way in.

A clerk rose from his stool to meet them, and Linley got to business at once.

"I'm sorry to trouble you, but I wondered if you would help me out of a difficulty," he explained. "Do you happen to know if there's a firm of solicitors called Quillman & Jaype in this street?"

"Never heard of them," answered the clerk, after a reflective pause. "If there is such a firm here, they must have moved in pretty recently; but I can tell you for certain if you wait half a minute."

"Thank you!" said Mark Linley, gratefully. And they waited while the obnoxious solicitor's clerk rummaged

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"I can forgive you with a good heart if you mean what you say," said Linley. And the hands of the two, who had always been enemies, met in a friendly grip. (See Chapter 10.)

among a pile of documents on his desk. Very soon he picked out a sheaf of type-written papers, tied with red tape. Quickly unrolling them, he commenced to run his hand down the list of names they contained, and in a minute had gone through the whole list.

"Can't trace anything," he said, returning to the expectant trio. "I don't remember having heard of such a firm before, and I'm acquainted with a good many solicitors in London."

Linley's face fell.

"Show him the letter, Marky!" urged Bob. And the Lancashire lad again produced the much-fingered letter, and handed it to the clerk, who perused it with interest.

"This is a very peculiar affair!" he remarked, as Linley finished a brief explanation. "Are you lads sure it isn't a practical joke by somebody?"

Mark Linley turned to his companions with a questioning look.

"What do you chaps think?" he asked. "It looks pretty suspicious now, in my opinion."

"What about the notepaper, then?" demanded Bob. But it was only a half-hearted objection. Even Bob Cherry's optimism was beginning to fail now.

"It would be easy for a practical joker to have some notepaper headed," put in the clerk. And Mark Linley nodded, with lips tightened. It was a terrible blow to him, and he hardly knew what they were all saying. One fact only was

being repeated in his mind—the legacy was a myth, and all his hopes were dashed to the ground.

"Begad, I'm afraid we've been done, my dear fellows!" said Mauly, in deep distress, as his eyes turned in sympathy on Linley's set countenance.

"I fear so myself," added the clerk. "It's practically impossible for a firm of solicitors to exist in this part of the town without my having a record of them—especially in the same street. I suppose there's nothing else I can do?"

"Nothing, thank you!" said Mark Linley. "I'm sorry to have wasted your time as it is!"

They left the office, and outside looked at one another rather helplessly.

"Well, what are we to do now?" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Get back to Greyfriars, I suppose!" answered Linley in despondent tones. "It's obvious now that this is a practical joke, probably by some humorist at the school. I was a fool to swallow the letter as I did, so I suppose this tragic end to our treasure-hunt is not wholly undeserved!"

"Oh, rot!" said Bob almost sharply. "It was so well done that anyone would have been taken in. But wait till I get hold of the joker! I'll make the boulder squirm!"

"That's little satisfaction, I'm afraid!" said the Lancastrian, making a pitiful attempt to smile. "It's a bit rough! I had hoped that this would mean the

making of father's health, and a fresh lease to my schooldays; but now—"

His voice broke, and Bob and Mauly were sympathetically silent, the former clenching his fists tight, as though he were longing for the time when the culprit should be discovered.

"Well, we'd better get back to the station now—unless you fellows want to stay in London till the evening?" Linley said, pulling himself together with an effort.

"I'll stay with you, old man!" replied Bob promptly. "What say you, Mauly?"

"Same here, my dear fellow!"

It was a decidedly more unhappy trio that made its way back to Charing Cross than had left it only an hour or so before. Mark Linley maintained a grim silence, which Bob Cherry and Lord Mauleverer did not care to interrupt, and so the short journey to the station was performed without conversation.

Luckily, a train was just about to depart, and only a minute or two after their arrival on the platform the three Removites were once again being whirled towards Courtfield Junction.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Mauly's Move!

"HERE they are!"
"Got the booty with you, Linley?"

"Where's the giddy legacy?"
There was quite a chorus of inquiries
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as Linley, Mauly, and Cherry entered the School House at Greyfriars once more.

"Show us the merry spondulicks!" shouted Harold Skinner.

"Perhaps the cash is following in a partechnicon!" remarked Stott humorously.

"He, he, he!"

"Keep cool, you silly asses!" growled Bob Cherry.

"Begad, there's no need for excitement, you know, my dear fellows!"

The more decent of the crowd, seeing that things had not "panned out" according to the programme, had enough respect for Linley's feelings to move away; but the thoughtless section still hung round, fairly clamouring for an explanation.

"Tell us all about it, Linley!" yelled Trevor above the din. And, after a little hesitation, Mark Linley stopped, and raised his hand for silence.

"There's no need for any mystery, so far as I'm concerned," he said quietly, when the noise had died down somewhat. "The affair has turned out a complete fiasco. We couldn't find the lawyers at the address given, and it's pretty certain now that the letter was a practical joke—a pretty feeble one, too, in my opinion!"

And with that abrupt conclusion he turned on his heel and walked away in the direction of the Remove quarters.

There was a buzz of talk at once, and Bob Cherry and Mauleverer, not feeling disposed to join in the general discussion, went upstairs together.

"Come into my study, dear boy!" said Mauleverer, as they reached the Remove passage. "There's something I'd like your advice on, if you'd like to give it."

"About Linley?" queried Bob, puzzled. And his lordship nodded as he led the way into Study No. 12.

Luckily, Delarey and Vivian, his two study-mates, happened to be out, and Mauleverer, no longer the languid aristocrat that Greyfriars knew so well, sat down in a chair opposite Bob Cherry.

"Look here, Cherry, this business worries me!" he said, with brows knit in thought. "Linley's a decent sort, and it would be a thunderin' shame for him to leave Greyfriars like this!"

"Agreed!" cried Bob. "But what's to be done?"

"There's only one thing," replied Mauleverer, "and that's what I want your advice about. Listen!"

He leaned forward, and explained his scheme quickly and eagerly, and Bob listened in growing surprise.

After the millionaire schoolboy had expounded his idea, the two discussed it eagerly, and the result of their consultation was that Lord Mauleverer went along to Mr. Quelch's study, and scandalised the Remove Form-master by asking permission for an extra-late pass, in order to visit his guardian, Sir Reginald Brooke.

"To visit your guardian?" repeated Mr. Quelch. "What ever has put that idea into your head, Mauleverer?"

Mauleverer explained the reason for his somewhat extraordinary request, and Mr. Quelch eyed him in astonishment.

"But, my dear boy, do you seriously think of doing this out of pure friendship? And do you think Sir Reginald will fall in with your views?"

"Oh, I'll talk to him like a Dutch uncle, sir!" said Mauleverer confidentially. "He's a decent old sport, and I sha'n't have much trouble in bringing him round!"

"Dear me!" said Mr. Quelch.

He drummed his fingers on the desk in a reflective manner for a few

moments, then he nodded. Mauly watched him in suspense.

"Very well!" said the Remove Form-master at last. "I will allow you to visit your guardian, provided you return by the earliest train available after you have interviewed him. And—ahem!—I trust you are successful. I shall be very pleased if Linley stays on at the school after all!"

"Oh, good egg—ahem—I mean, thanks awfully, sir! Then I'll buzz off, if you don't mind!"

And Lord Mauleverer "buzzed off," and raced along at express speed to the Remove passage, causing consternation among the fellows he passed. Never before had his lordship been seen in such a remarkable state of activity, and Mauly's new departure excited quite a lot of discussion in the Common-room that evening.

Bob Cherry was awaiting his return in Study No. 12, and he rose from the armchair with a grin as Mauly burst excitedly into the room. His lordship in a hurry was, as Bob afterwards expressed it to Harry Wharton, a sight for the gods, the men, and the little fishes.

"Done the merry trick, my dear fellow!" said Mauleverer, making a dive on the heterogeneous collection of books that reposed on the table. "Wonder where I put that time-table?"

"Quelch's a brick!" asserted Bob Cherry emphatically. "Don't waste your time rummaging there, Mauly! I've already found your A B C, and here's your train marked with a tick. You've just half an hour to catch it!"

"Begad!" gasped his lordship, with a pathetic yawn. "I've had enough hurryin' about to-day to last me a lifetime!"

"It'll be the making of you, man!" said Bob comfortingly. "Here's your coat and cap! Sharp's the word!"

Mauly jammed his cap on the back of his head, and grasped his raincoat.

"If I'm not back to-night I'll be back by the first train to-morrow morning!" he cried, as he quitted the study.

"Right-ho, Mauly! Good luck!" called out Bob after him. And Mauleverer waved his hand reassuringly as he disappeared down the stairs leading from the Remove passage to the lower regions.

Bob Cherry strolled thoughtfully into Study No. 13, where Mark Linley was engaged in writing home. And, not wishing to undergo the ordeal of answering the questions of the inquisitive juniors in the Common-room downstairs, he settled down in the armchair with a book, with the intention of staying there till bed-time.

Meanwhile, in the junior Common-room Linley's legacy as a topic was quickly forgotten by most of the fellows.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Linley to the Rescue!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! You here, Marky?"

It was just after tea, two days later, and Mark Linley was alone in the Remove dormitory, engaged in the uncongenial task of packing his trunk in preparation for his departure, when Bob Cherry put his head round the door and cheerily announced himself.

"Come in, Bob!" called back Linley, with a very friendly smile.

The Lancashire lad had not found it very pleasant to be alone with his thoughts on this last day at school, and his chum's appearance was a welcome interruption.

Bob Cherry entered the room, followed

by Lord Mauleverer, now once again the languid aristocrat that Greyfriars was accustomed to.

"Gettin' on with the merry packin', my dear fellow?"

"Looks like it, Mauly," answered Mark Linley. "Not that it's a specially merry job, though!"

"Never mind, Marky. Perhaps there's hope yet," said Bob Cherry; but, seeing Mauleverer's finger placed warningly on his lips, he ceased his remarks.

Bob Cherry, with his open, ingenuous ways, was one who might let out the secret in conversation, unless he were carefully supervised, and Mauly was fully alive to the danger.

"When you do expect to leave Greyfriars, dear boy?" asked his lordship, to change the subject.

"Soon after dinner to-morrow, I think," replied the Lancashire lad, rising from his neatly-packed box. "I don't feel like staying here longer than I can help, under the circumstances. You understand?"

"I understand," said Bob Cherry softly. "You're quite resigned to going, then?"

"Of course. I must make the best of it; and, anyhow, I shall have my books still."

"Begad! What a cheerful optimist!" grinned Lord Mauleverer. "I'm dashed if it would afford me much gratification to know I was takin' my books away from school with me!"

"Me, too!" added Bob. "Tastes differ, though; so we'll forgive you, Marky. Now, what about a stroll as far as the river? We've plenty of time before prep."

"Right-ho!" said Mark readily.

The three quitted the dormitory, and descended to the Remove passage for their caps.

"Wharton and the rest are going on ahead, I believe. I told 'em we'd catch 'em up," Bob said, as the three strolled leisurely down the country lane leading in the direction of the River Sark.

"A regular family reunion in my honour, I suppose?" suggested Mark Linley, with a faint smile.

Bob shook his head.

"We don't know you're going yet, for certain, so there's going to be no farewell meeting. This walk is simply a constitutional."

"Just to keep you exercised a bit, begad!" put in Mauleverer, stifling a yawn. "You old swots do too much mopin' about, you know, instead of indulgin' in the vigorous sports and pastimes that are youth's heritage in this country. You should lead the strenuous life—like me, you know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Lord Mauleverer grinned amiably at their derisive laugh. He could afford to do so, having again succeeded in turning the conversation from the channel towards which it persisted in drifting. The slacker of the Remove had but one purpose for the time being—namely, to see that the subject of Linley's proposed departure was excluded from the talk. Once that theme was under discussion, he knew it would be a matter of difficulty to prevent Bob Cherry inadvertently blurring out a part of the secret the two shared, and that might be fatal to Mauly's scheme.

The three Removites left the road, and crossed a stile leading into the fields they had to traverse before reaching the River Sark. As they entered the first field they sighted Harry Wharton and several others of the Remove a hundred yards or so in advance; and as Bob Cherry's stentorian voice hailed them they halted to wait for the new-comers.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! All the clan here?" said Cherry cheerfully, as he joined the other Removites.

"Looks like it," answered Harry Wharton, with a glance round the little crowd.

Besides himself, there were Johnny Bull, Hurree Singh, Frank Nugent, Peter Todd, and the Bounder; and, in spite of Bob Cherry's denials, it was evident that they had all turned up for a farewell stroll with Mark Linley.

"Let's make for the river," suggested Frank Nugent.

And the motion having been carried nem. con., the nine juniors moved off at an easy pace towards the Sark.

Chatting cheerfully upon a variety of subjects connected with the world of school, they crossed the fields leading to the river, and at last came out by the Sark at a point near the mill—a favourite part for the Greyfriars devotees of Izaak Walton's art.

There was no fishing going on when the Removites appeared on the scene, however; but three juniors in Etons were sitting down in the shelter of a tree near by, and Bob Cherry gave a snort as he recognised them.

"Skinner and the other two cads again!" he said in disgust. "It seems we can't escape 'em lately."

"Playing cards, too!" added Vernon-Smith, with a grin. "Merry old Skinner! He'll never rest content till he's safe in choky for a term of years!"

Skinner and Snoop and Stott looked up from their game at the sound of voices. The last two looked somewhat uneasy as they saw who the new-comers were; but Skinner betrayed no alarm, and waved cheerily.

"Hallo, you chaps! Like to take a hand at nap, any of you?"

"Cheeky cad!" growled Johnny Bull, taking his hands out of his pockets, and doubling his fists almost instinctively. "Shall we bump him, Harry?"

"Oh, let him alone! It's no bizney of ours, I suppose," replied the skipper of the Remove.

"What about you, Smithy?" asked Harold Skinner, with a grin. "Quite a long time since you tried your luck, you know."

"And it'll be quite a long time before I do so again, dear boy!" replied the Bounder, with equal cheerfulness. "Any other gentleman going to accept Skinner's kind offer?"

"I'll give the bounder cards, if he has much of his cheek!" said Bob Cherry truculently.

Skinner chuckled.

"Like to join in the game, Linley?" he asked. "You won't have the opportunity much longer, you know, if you're goin' home to-morrow. Perhaps they play cards in your ancestral slum, though!"

There was a simultaneous grunt from Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull, and they made a rush at Harold Skinner. Both had been waiting for a word about Linley, and were only too glad of the chance to give the cad of the Remove a ragging.

"Collar the bounder!" roared Johnny Bull, as Skinner jumped to his feet and fled. "Don't let him escape, Bob!"

Bob Cherry had no intention of allowing that, and by putting on a spurt he effectively cut off Skinner's escape.

Harold Skinner gave a quick glance round, to find a way out; and, rapidly making his decision, raced along beside the river, with the evident intention of dodging past Johnny Bull, after which he would have a clear course.

"Stop him, Johnny!" yelled Bob Cherry excitedly, racing after the flying Skinner at top speed.

"Go it, ye cripples!" sang out Peter Todd. "Two to one Johnny Bull floors him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton & Co. looked on, and shouted encouragement to the three principals in the entertainment; and Snoop and Stott, not wishing to attract attention to themselves, looked on in silence.

Skinner put on a desperate spurt as Johnny Bull bore down on him from the side, and kept as close to the riverside as he was able.

"Mind the river, Skinner!" cried Frank Nugent warningly, as he saw Harold Skinner's manoeuvre.

And the yells stopped suddenly as the juniors saw how close to the swift-running waters of the mill-stream he had got.

Putting every ounce of energy into his one task of escaping Bull's outstretched arms, Skinner raced ahead; and there was a sudden gasp of horror from the little crowd of spectators as he was seen to slip on the greasy river-bank.

"Hold him back!" shrieked Vernon-Smith; but it was too late.

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With a yell of terror, Skinner turned almost a complete somersault, and plunged headlong into the water.

Johnny Bull pulled up sharply, not a second too soon, and stared in horror at the swirling waters into which Skinner had disappeared.

"There he is!" cried Stott shrilly, pointing a trembling finger to the centre of the treacherous mill-stream, where Skinner's head reappeared for a moment.

The horrified onlookers could see that he was being borne rapidly towards the mill, where certain death awaited him.

"He can hardly swim!" said Snoop hoarsely. "He'll be killed!"

Johnny Bull, roused out of his lethargic state at last, hurriedly divested himself of jacket and boots, but he was already preceded.

A coatless and bootless figure suddenly dashed out from the group of watchers and dived into the river, and there was a cry from the Removites.

"Linley!"

"I'll go, too!" muttered Johnny Bull, raising his hands for a dive.

But Harry Wharton held him back.

"You're too late now, Johnny. If Mark can't do it, you won't; and it's no good risking your life for nothing."

Johnny Bull dropped his hands after a little hesitation; then he followed the rest along the bank, and watched with anxious eyes the grim struggle for life that was taking place farther down the stream.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

An Exeiting Rescue!

WITH tense faces the chums of the Remove raced along the towing-path beside the river, with the object of overtaking Linley, that they might render any assistance within their power.

Johnny Bull quickly perceived the soundness of Harry Wharton's advice. It would have been impossible for him to guide himself in the direction of Skinner, and even had he done so he would have been more hindrance than help in the present instance.

"There they are!" yelled Vernon-Smith suddenly, as he ran with the rest. "Together this time, by gad!"

"Good old Linley!" muttered Bob Cherry, who was watching the scene with haggard face. "He's got a grip on him, but he'll never have the strength to fight the current—"

"There's a chance!" said Harry Wharton, between his clenched teeth. "It's some way to the mill yet, and—"

Linley had a firm grip on Harold Skinner, whose frantic struggles ceased as he felt the iron hold on him. Mark had successfully accomplished the first part of his task, but the hardest trial was yet to come.

Every moment the current was bearing them nearer the dreaded water-mill, and every yard lost was precious. Mark Linley strove desperately to turn, but, at first, it seemed an impossibility.

"Run and fetch a rope somebody!" said Bob Cherry hoarsely. "There's one in that cowshed over there, and it may come in useful."

Frank Nugent hurried to obey, and raced across to the neighbouring shed that Bob had indicated, where he found a length of stout rope.

By the time he had returned he found that Mark Linley had made sufficient progress to remain almost at a standstill, and was actually making, bit by bit, for the shore.

"The rope—quick!" cried Bob Cherry, and he snatched it from his chum's hand.

"Grip this, Marky!" shouted Harry Wharton. And the rope flew from Bob's hand with unerring aim, the end falling just in front of Linley and Skinner.

Mark extended one hand for it, holding the unconscious Skinner with the other for the moment.

It was a terrific strain, yet for the moment the onlookers thought he would do it.

"Be careful!" called out Vernon-Smith suddenly. "Skinner's going!"

Linley made a desperate effort to retain his hold on Skinner and get a grip on the rope at the same time, but the current was too strong to permit the combined action, and there was a groan of dismay from the Removites as Linley was seen to whirl away again, still grasping his insensible rival by the collar.

"He'll never do it!" said Peter Todd, biting his lip.

"The neverfulness is terrific!" murmured the Nabob of Bhanipur, in deep distress. "Cannot we helpfully assist in the esteemed rescue, somehow?"

The chums of the Remove again ran along the towing-path after Mark Linley, shouting out encouraging remarks that they were far from feeling.

The Lancashire lad would have had all his work cut out to fight the current and effect a safe landing on his own, but with Skinner helpless in his hands he had a double burden. He struggled feverishly against the all-conquering mass of water that bore him along, but all his efforts seemed of no avail, and Linley almost began to despair of ever succeeding in the task he had set himself.

The current, too, grew more powerful at every yard, and the roar of the water at the approaching mill louder every second.

Even now, however, the thought of surrendering his unconscious burden to the mercy of the waters, leaving himself free to escape, did not enter Linley's mind. The Lancastrian meant to hang on till the very last, even though it meant giving up his own life.

"Stick it, Marky!" shouted Bob Cherry as he ran, in a voice that was meant to be encouraging. All the encouragement it might have contained, however, was negated by the sob that choked the last word. Poor Bob was nearly frantic at the thought of the peril to which his closest chum was exposed, and took no trouble to conceal his emotion.

Suddenly an involuntary murmur of hope from the Removites announced the fact that their gallant chum was again making a fight against the current—this time with more success.

Holding Harold Skinner with one hand, he managed to turn about, and, with a sudden effort, forced himself a yard or so nearer the bank.

"The rope!" he shouted, above the roar of the rapids.

Harry Wharton & Co., however, needed no telling, and Bob Cherry was already swinging the coil, as a preliminary to throwing it out.

"Coming!" he yelled, as he let fly.

Linley struggled against the force of the water with might and main as the rope whirled over his head, for he knew only too well that the mill was too near now for a third struggle, and this, therefore, was his last chance.

"Stick it, Marky!" called out Bob, for the second time that afternoon.

The juniors looked on with their hearts in their mouths as Linley grasped the rope.

"Steady!" cried Peter Todd.

There was another moment's suspense, then a gasp of relief, as the Lancastrian was seen at last to get a firm clutch.

"Help me with the heaving, you chaps!" said Bob Cherry, and the Removites willingly fell in behind him as they were accustomed to do in the tug-of-war on the sports day.

"Are you ready, Linley?" shouted Harry Wharton.

There was an affirmative cry from Mark Linley, and in an instant the juniors' grip on the rope tightened.

"Go steady, or he won't hang on!" said the Bounder, who was at the end of the row. And the warning was well-timed, for an overstrong pull might easily have had the fatal effect of pulling the rope out of Linley's grasp.

"Heave!" cried Bob.

The fellows heaved, and with a sense of almost immeasurable relief, Mark Linley felt himself being hauled in, bit by bit, in spite of the opposition of the current.

"Not so fast, you chaps!" said Vernon-Smith sharply, as some of the juniors began to pull more energetically.

"Easy does it!" added Bob Cherry.

Nearer and nearer the shore came Mark Linley and Harold Skinner, until, at length, the former was standing upright in the rushing water, dragging the unconscious Removite behind him.

Bob fairly leapt into the water, and helped Linley, who was in a state of utter exhaustion, to pull in Harold Skinner to safety.

A few more seconds and all was over, the two principals in the exciting rescue lying stretched out on the towing-path like a couple of drowned rats.

"Saved!" gasped Bob Cherry, panting from his exertions. "Thank Heaven for that!"

"We'd better apply first-aid to them at once, then run 'em up to the school!" said practical Johnny Bull.

"I don't need any first-aid, thanks, Johnny!" Mark Linley said, with a somewhat feeble smile, as he rose un-

steadily to his feet. "Skinner looks as if he needs attention, though."

The leading "blade" of the Remove did indeed look a wreck, and the juniors wasted no time about starting the work of restoring the circulation, and bringing him round to consciousness again.

It seemed a long job, and they began to fear they would have to carry Skinner back to the school in the same state as he had been rescued.

At last, however, a flickering of the eyelids and other signs of returning life rewarded their untiring efforts, and soon after that Skinner began to stir.

He opened his eyes, and blinked feebly at Harry Wharton, who was bending over him.

"Do you feel able to walk, Skinner?" asked the skipper of the Remove.

"I'll try," murmured Skinner, struggling to rise.

Wharton and Vernon-Smith assisted the rescued Removite to his feet, and Harold Skinner stood upright, gasping and shivering, and staring dully at the circle of juniors surrounding him.

"No time to waste, unless you want to catch your death of cold, begad!" said Mauleverer briskly. "Can you do the double up to the school, Skinner?"

Skinner nodded slowly, and the whole party started off at a trot, Wharton and Bull running beside Skinner, and Cherry and Smithy beside Linley.

It did not take them long to reach the school gates, where a crowd of fellows greeted them with astonished looks and a host of inquiries.

Snoop and Stott and Peter Todd and Vernon-Smith fell out at this point, and were soon engaged in giving their various versions of the events of the last twenty minutes. They had a willing crowd of listeners, with the result that before the evening was out the story of Linley's courageous deed had gone all round the school.

Meanwhile, the rest had accompanied Skinner to the sanatorium, where he was soon tucked away in bed, with hot-water bottles to counteract the effect of his wetting, and Dr. Short from Friardale in attendance.

Mark Linley, however, declined the advice of his chums to go into the sanatorium with Skinner, and unobtrusively went up to the Remove dormitory for a change of clothes.

In the excitement of the last half hour his great private worry had been forgotten; but now that he was alone and quiet again it returned to his thoughts, overshadowing all other matters.

After changing, he descended to the Form passage, where an excited crowd of Removites was waiting. Mark Linley started at the shout that went up on his appearance.

"Here he comes!"

"Hurrah!"

"Speech! Speech!"

"Three cheers for Linley!" roared Frank Nugent above the din. And they were given with a will.

"Now we'll take him round the school shoulder-high, begad!" suggested Lord Mauleverer brightly. And there was a roar of approval.

Mark Linley, however, was, like all true heroes, modest, and he fairly fled from the eager crowd, and sought obscurity among the less-frequented parts of the School House until the excitement had abated somewhat.

"Skinner wants to see you in the sanny, Marky!" announced Bob Cherry, when the hero of the Remove returned to Study No. 13.

"How's he getting on, Bob?"

"Better than he deserves!" answered

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Bob. "The doctor says he'll be as right as a trivet in a few days. Aren't you going across to the sanny now?"

Mark Linley hesitated, then nodded.

"I'd better go, I suppose! Sha'n't be long!"

He quitted the study, and after making his way out of the School House went across to the school sanatorium.

Skinner was lying in bed when he entered, and was looking a good deal better than when Linley had left him an hour before. He looked up as his old rival sat down at the bedside, and extended a weak hand for Linley to shake.

"You've come! Good!" he said. Then he continued in a low voice: "Linley, I sent for you to thank you for what you've done for me. You've saved my life to-day at the risk of your own, and I sha'n't forget it in a hurry!"

Linley made a gesture of impatience, but Skinner went on:

"One of these days, perhaps, I'll be able to do something for you in return, though it seems unlikely, as you're leaving to-morrow. But what I want to do above all, before you go, is to apologise for the rotten way I've treated you all along. I've acted like a cad from the beginning, and I'm sorry for it. I faked that letter from the solicitors the other day. I was a cad. Can you forgive me?"

"I can forgive you, with a good heart, if you mean what you say," said Linley simply. And the hands of the two, who had always been enemies, met in a friendly grip.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

All's Well that Ends Well!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! Letter for you, Marky!"

It was the morning after the rescue of Skinner from a watery grave, and, as he thought, Linley's last day at Greyfriars. The chums of the Remove were just passing through the Hall before "brekker," with a view of having twenty minutes or so on Little Side, when Bob Cherry stopped in front of the letter-rack and came out with this remark.

Bob fairly chirruped the words, as though he found something vastly amusing in the fact of Linley's having received a letter.

"Chuck it over, then, Bob!" said Mark Linley. And the leader of Study No. 13 promptly obeyed, giving Lord Mauleverer a very knowing glance as he did so.

Linley split open the envelope, and glanced through the letter. He fairly jumped as he apprehended the contents, and stared at the letter in amazed silence.

"M-m-m-m-my hat! Can this be another jape?" he muttered at last.

"What's up, my dear fellow?" asked Lord Mauleverer in tones of polite inquiry.

"Just read this!" replied the Lancashire lad. And he gave Mauly the type-written communication that seemed to cause him so much surprise.

A peculiar sort of smile flitted across Mauleverer's face for a moment as he took the letter; but it was replaced immediately by the languid expression that his lordship usually affected.

The letter ran as follows:

"Smithson's Bank,
Courtfield."

"Mr. Mark Linley,
Greyfriars School."

"Dear Sir,—We have much pleasure in informing you that a gentleman who prefers to remain anonymous has deposited with us the sum of £500, to be

handed to you as soon as you require it. We may mention that the gentleman in question has followed your school career with the greatest interest; but beyond this statement we are not permitted to give you any clue to his identity. Awaiting your instructions in the matter,

"We are, dear Sir,

"Yours faithfully,
"SMITHSON'S BANK, LTD."

"Begad!" ejaculated his lordship. "What a bit of luck, if it's true, dear boy!"

"If!" said Linley, very dubiously. "After my recent experiences you can hardly blame me for being a bit sceptical, can you? What do you think of it, Bob?"

Bob Cherry read the letter through rapidly, and whistled.

"It looks straight enough, this time, Marky! There's a Smithson's Bank in Courtfield, as you know yourself!"

"Yaas; and, besides, Skinner has given up his wicked ways now, for a time," Lord Mauleverer added. "Looks to me as if some benefactor has heard how you're situated, and come to the giddy rescue, begad!"

Mark Linley nodded, and continued to stare at the letter which Bob had handed back to him.

"I wonder—" he muttered.

In spite of the scepticism he had spoken of, vague hopes that there might be something genuine behind this rose in him.

He read and re-read the letter, his two chums watching him in silence. And then at last he folded it up and put it away in his pocket-case.

"Well, and what's the verdict?" inquired Bob Cherry.

"I've decided to wait until nine o'clock, then ring up the bank, Bob," answered the Lancashire junior. "If it's a jape this time it's managed more cleverly than the first; but in any case it's worth a 'phone call."

"Good egg! We'll emulate the merry politician, and wait and see!" said Bob Cherry. And with that the subject was dropped.

Bob Cherry and Mark Linley followed Harry Wharton & Co. down to Little Side, while Mauleverer, who did not believe in over-exerting himself in the early morning—or at any other hour if it came to that—strolled away to the Remove passage.

Bob Cherry wore a very cheerful grin as he walked along, but Linley's brows were knitted in a thoughtful frown. And Mauleverer, as he sauntered off, showed his pleasure by exhibiting a demeanour that was, if possible, more urbane than ever.

After breakfast and prayers, Mark Linley, having obtained permission from Mr. Quelch, went to that gentleman's study and rang up Smithson's Bank at Courtfield on the telephone.

In a few moments he had got through, and a voice at the other end of the wire called:

"Hallo! Smithson's Bank speaking!"

"I'm ringing up from Greyfriars School, and my name is Mark Linley. I've just received your letter telling me that an anonymous donor has deposited five hundred pounds with you for my use—"

"Oh, yes; that is quite correct!" interrupted the speaker at the bank. "I suppose you are ringing up for our confirmation, Mr. Linley?"

"Is it true, then?" asked Linley, in astonished tones. "I didn't think for a moment—"

"You find it a bit hard to believe, eh?" said the bank clerk, with a chuckle.

"I can quite understand that, but I

assure you there is no mistake about it!"

"Five hundred pounds?" queried Linley, almost dazedly.

"Five hundred pounds!" assented the other. "You may have it in cash at any time, or, if you wish, start an account with us."

Mark Linley paused with the receiver in his hand, uncertain what to say. He had come fully prepared to hear the letter repudiated and the story denied, instead of which it was fully confirmed.

"Well, I'll call and see you later in the morning," he said at last; then, as an afterthought: "I suppose you can't give me any more information about my benefactor?"

"It doesn't rest in my hands, Mr. Linley," was the reply. And with that the conversation ended.

Mark Linley replaced the receiver, and quitted the room in a very thoughtful frame of mind.

The feeling that the whole thing was another hoax had, of course, left him now; but it was replaced by another suspicion no less strong—a suspicion as to the identity of the anonymous donor of the money.

The more he thought of it the greater grew his degree of certainty. He reviewed the facts. From the beginning of this legacy business Lord Mauleverer had taken a friendly interest in him. He had been a member of the trio that went to London, and had been of great assistance all along. When the legacy turned out to be a myth, none had been more upset than he, and as to his ability to give away such a large sum of money, Mauleverer's wealth was known to be enormous, while nobody could have been more generous in character.

"It must be Mauly!" muttered Linley. "And I can't accept charity from Mauly, or anyone else at Greyfriars."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's the news, Marky?"

Mark Linley stopped in surprise as he almost ran into Bob and Mauleverer at the top of the stairs.

"Why aren't you fellows in the Form-room, then?"

"Begad, we're riskin' squalls to hear the result, you know, my dear fellow!"

Mark Linley fixed his eyes on Mauleverer.

"I 'phoned up the bank, and the facts are exactly as stated in the letter. But I don't think I shall be able to accept the money!"

"Wha-a-at?" hooted Bob Cherry.

"I don't intend to accept the money," repeated Linley, very distinctly. "Goodness knows I can do with it badly enough, and to refuse it means putting an end to my school career, as you know, but—"

"There's no 'but' about it," said Bob Cherry warmly. "The money's been given to you anonymously, and you can't refuse it!"

"I can refuse it if I don't know who's giving it," assented Mark quietly. "But as it happens I believe I've guessed the name of my benefactor, and I'm not one to accept charity!"

Bob's jaw dropped, and he looked helplessly at Lord Mauleverer. His lordship, however, preserved his natural equanimity.

"And who's the merry doer-of-good-by-stealth, then?" asked Mauly.

"Yourself!" said Linley bluntly. And he watched the effect of that one word on the dandy of the Remove.

Bob Cherry could have groaned aloud as he realised that Mark Linley, with his usual astuteness, had guessed the truth. Luckily, Linley, who was paying more attention to Mauleverer, did not notice the dismay depicted in Bob's face.

"Me?" cried Mauleverer, in pretended and ungrammatical surprise. "Begad,

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what makes you think that, dear boy?" Bob started. Was Mauly going to bluff it out? Bob scarcely expected him to tell a deliberate lie, for Mauleverer was as open as the day, and did not know the meaning of deception.

"My reason for thinking so is that I cannot call to mind anyone else who would do such a thing," replied Linley, eyeing Mauly with less assurance now. "Own up, Mauly!"

Lord Mauleverer shook his head.

"Sorry, my dear fellow! It's not my practice to confess when I'm not guilty!"

The scholarship junior looked searchingly at the dandy of the Remove, and Mauleverer met his glance unflinchingly. "But who else could it have been?" murmured Linley, knitting his brows. "There's nobody except you, and— Look here, Mauly, tell me outright, did you, or did you not, have the money placed to my credit at the bank?"

For just an instant Mauleverer hesitated, then he told a white lie that will always stand to his credit.

"I did not!"

"I believe you," said Linley simply, unintentionally causing Mauleverer to wince. "Then I can't think of any other person, so I must keep the money."

"Hurrah!" roared Bob Cherry,

waking the echoes in the deserted passages of the School House. "Then you'll stay on at Greyfriars after all, and everything's all right again, Marky! Hurrah!"

Mark Linley's face cleared once more, and his old, welcome, care-free laugh rang out again at Bob's dance of joy.

"For goodness' sake don't kick up such a row, Bob, or we'll get into trouble! Let's get along to the Form-room, and I'll get Mr. Quelch's permission to go to Courtfield."

"Good egg! We've got some news for Quelch and the fellows this time with a vengeance. Come on, Mauly, and don't look like a bear with a sore head!"

"Begad, I'm feelin' as happy as either of you!" declared Mauleverer indignantly. "It's fairly bucked me to see this legacy bizney finish like this, you know, dear boys. All's well that ends well!"

And that last sentence summarised the feelings of all three.

There was great jubilation in the Remove when Bob Cherry announced that Linley was to stay on after all. And Harold Skinner, on hearing the news from Snoop in the sanatorium, was as glad as any.

Whether his sudden respect for Linley

would last was very doubtful indeed. Most of the fellows inclined to the belief that just as the leopard could not change his spots, so Harold Skinner could not change his ways, and in the long run they proved to be good readers of his character.

The white lie he had told Linley worried Mauleverer a good deal for a time, but a certain private interview with Mr. Quelch, at which the Form-master thanked him and his guardian, Sir Reginald Brooke, completely erased that trouble from his mind. And when, some time after, came the news of Mr. Linley's recovery in a more equable clime, Mauly felt quite pleased with himself.

Linley, of course, never discovered the identity of his unknown benefactor, and after a time ceased to think about it.

There was a Form celebration in the Rag that evening at which Mark Linley was the guest of honour. Speeches were made, and toasts drunk in ginger-beer, and afterwards the juniors sang, "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow!" and gave three cheers for Linley.

Then Bob Cherry stood up and called for one more cheer for a purpose he named, and the roar that went up might have been heard in Friardale. For the cheer was in honour of nothing less than Linley's Legacy!

THE END.



Goggs Grammarian

By Richard Randolph

SYNOPSIS.

Johnny Goggs comes to Rylcombe Grammar School from Franklingham with his chums Trickett, Blount, and Waters.

Goggs is a ju-jitsu expert, a clever impersonator, and the organiser of many brilliant japes. He leads an expedition of Grammarians to St. Jim's, and accomplishes one of the most daring night raids ever perpetrated.

St. Leger, Gilmore, and Cutts of St. Jim's fall foul of Bingo, the butcher. A fight ensues between Cutts and the village champion, to which Goggs & Co. play the role of spectators.

(Now read on.)

A Challenge!

Bingo was quite cool still. He met the attack confidently and easily.

Gradually he forced his opponent back. Cutts flagged, and his guard had gone almost to pieces.

One last effort he made, and landed hard on Bingo's jaw, not far from the fatal point. The butcher's head went back, but his body hardly even swayed.

Then came a quick feint with the right, which drew Cutts' guard, then a punch with the left that had any amount of power behind it.

Right on the solar plexus it took Cutts, and he threw up his arms as he crashed back.

He lay quite still, and St. Leger counted rapidly, seeing that there was no chance of his rising to time.

"Eight—nine—out!"

"Hurrah!" yelled Snipe.

"Very neatly done indeed!" said Goggs approvingly.

Bingo turned and glared at him.

"Oo're you, cocky?" he asked.

Goggs smiled blandly at Bingo.

"Let me introduce myself," he said. "My name is Goggs—John Goggs, sometimes called Johnny, at other times Goggles, and frequently much worse names. May I inquire to whom I have the distinguished honour of speaking?"

Bags and Tricks and Wagtail grinned. Larking and Snipe also grinned.

But Bingo scowled. That was why Larking and Snipe grinned.

Cutts was not smiling. He had arisen, with the help of St. Leger and Gilmore, and was putting on his upper clothing.

"You jest wait 'arf a sec!" said Bingo to Goggs. "I've a word or two that I want to say to you. But I must 'ave a spoke with this feller first."

He went up to Cutts. There was a trace of swank in his manner, but on the whole it was manly and decent enough.

"Didn't think I could lick you, did you?" he said. "I was givin' a bit away in weight, an' I own as I found you cleverer than what I'd looked for. But you're noways fit—that's what's the matter with you, cocky. No malice, eh? You'll shake now, I s'pose?"

Cutts' eyes gleamed malevolently from his bruised and battered countenance.

"Thanks, but I don't shake hands with common cads!" he said sullenly.

"Right-ho, cocky! If you ain't on I don't care a button. You've 'ad the common cad's 'ands a bit closer to your dial than what a 'aughty chap like you would naturally fancy;

but I déssay as in a week or two it will be all Sir Garnet again. Toodle-oodle-oo!"

And Bingo turned away.

"Do you know, I rather take to that fellow!" said Goggs to his chums.

Larking and Snipe grinned again. Goggs would not have thought so well of Bingo had he known that the butcher had forced that fight upon Cutts.

Bingo came up to Goggs.

"You've got cheek, you 'ave, old top!" he said. "My name's Percival Binks—"

"And a very nice name, too," struck in Goggs amiably. "Do they call you Binky? When I know you better, I hope to be accorded that privilege."

"Strike me pink, 'ow 'e mags it! No, they don't call me Binky; they call me Bingo, some of 'em. But I shouldn't think of allowin' you to call me either one or t'other, so don't you go a-deceivin' of yourself. Lemme hear you say Binky or Bingo, an' you'll get a punch on the smeller what'll make you feel funny all over—savvy?"

"I am not sure that I quite understand you, Bingo. My desire is to be friendly, Binky, but if you feel no corresponding desire that is all off. I can only hope that some day, Bingo, you will realise the value of what you have thrown away."

Cutts and his chums, who had turned to go, swung round again now. St. Leger and Gilmore found this rather interesting, and even Cutts felt that he would rather like to see what happened to Goggs.

Larking and Snipe were also curious to see how Bingo dealt with him.

But Goggs' own chums were not at all alarmed. They would have been ready to

take a hand in the game if necessary, but they knew that their help would not be needed.

Bingo's mouth opened widely. He gasped like a landed fish.

Goggs was something outside the range of his experience. Never before had he heard anyone talk in this way. He half believed that the queer specimen really wanted to be friendly.

But Bingo's was not exactly a friendly nature. At heart he was by no means a bad sort, but he got more change out of terrorising those whom he met than out of being friendly with them. The fighting instinct was very strong in Percival Binks.

Goggs hardly looked worth fighting. But he must be taught a lesson, or Bingo would feel his prestige lowered.

If there had been the slightest doubt in his mind about what he meant to do it would have been dispelled by the arrival at that moment of half a dozen of the village youths.

He was a hero in their eyes; or, if he was not, he believed himself so. He wished they had been present to see him put it across Cutts, and he certainly could not stand their seeing him checked by this spectacled, slight-figured whippersnapper.

"I ham a-goin'," he said solemnly and impressively, "to pull your nose!"

"Are you?" returned Goggs coolly. "But do you really think, friend Binky, that there is enough of it for you to grasp? Your hands are rather large for the laying hold of such a mere trifle in the way of a nose as is that which doubtfully adorns my extremely unprepossessing countenance."

Bingo gasped again. Goggs was altogether too much for him in a battle of words. It was time to change the style of combat.

He stretched out his big right hand. Goggs stood still, but leaned forward a little, as though to bring his nose conveniently near for pulling.

Bingo's fingers almost touched. But then things happened.

Goggs' arms shot out. They gripped Bingo. They felt like bars of steel. And Bingo felt rather like a sack of wheat. There was no more power in him to help himself than there would have been in such an article.

His feet left the ground; he plunged right over Goggs' head as the Rylcombe junior stooped.

Then the grip relaxed. Bingo came to earth with a jar.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the St. Jim's seniors, the Rylcombe juniors—all but Snipe—and the village lads.

Bingo sat on the grass, looking quite dazed.

But that was only for a moment. The fellow was full of fight.

He jumped to his feet.

"Ow did you do that?" he roared. "That information, Binky, I must politely decline to give to one whose actions suggest that he is no particular friend of mine," replied Goggs.

"Friend o' yours? I should blamed well think not! Is that the sorter way you treat your friends, hey?"

"No, Bingo. It is rather the way in which I treat the disagreeable people who decline to be friendly with me."

Larking and Snipe looked at one another. Even yet they did not wholly understand. But they remembered what had happened to them and Carpenter when the four ex-Franklingham boys were coming from the Head's study, and one or two other things that had happened since; and they knew that the way in which Goggs had treated Bingo was due to the same mysterious power that he had used then.

It chanced that neither of them really knew anything about ju-jitsu. And as for Bingo, he had never even heard the name of that science.

But Cutts and St. Leger and Gilmore knew something about it.

"That was ju-jitsu, and jolly cleverly done," said Gilmore, and the other two nodded assent.

"No bloomin' jujube about it!" howled Bingo. "But I don't care if there was! Let 'im give me some more jujube!"

And he made in at Goggs again.

He had given up the notion of pulling Goggs' nose. He came with hands clenched this time, and he struck full at the smiling face before him.

But his wrist was seized. A painful twist that made him fairly roar with pain, and he found himself lying on the grass at Goggs' feet.

(Continued on page 16.)

The Editor's Chat.

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THE WRONG PIG BY THE EAR!

This is what some of those club members who make fixtures and then fail to keep them will find they have got hold of if they do not mend their ways. It is an indefensible practice to enter into engagements and then omit to turn up. The secretary of a well-known club writes and tells me that this is often the case. It is a bit hard to believe, for such failure argues the possession of a spirit just the reverse of sportmanlike. But so it is. Just listen to this:

"The secretary of a club gets his fixture-list ready for the coming season, and on the Monday preceding the Saturday of the match writes a reminder to the secretary of the opposing team. It is the duty of the other man to write back."

Of course it is! But does he do it? Unfortunately, the answer is often in the negative. As my correspondent points out, in the event of the other team being prevented from attending there should be an early notification, with an apology, and a reason given for the inability to be there. But either the secretary of the home team gets nothing at all, or a tardy p.c. turns up too late for any further arrangement to be possible, with the result that the Saturday passes with no match. The day comes, and with it the captain and his team, only to be informed by the secretary that the other side cannot be there. Small wonder if there is general dissatisfaction.

I am in entire agreement with my correspondent that in these cases teams should be boycotted. He also alleges that no club should ask for fixtures unless it is sure of a regular eleven, and that no football club should consist of less than fifteen players, not merely members. For instances like this are, unfortunately, not isolated, I regret to say.

BUSINESS IS BUSINESS!

As the French say, "Les affaires sont les affaires," and the affairs of a football club, or a cricket ditto, should be regarded as serious, otherwise there is general disgust, everybody is riled, and the supporters, who have given their money to help run the club, begin to think, and with abundance of reason, that they have simply thrown their money away on a lot of lopsided, wambly, forgetful, unbusinesslike wasters and slackers, who think any old time will serve. For there is no excuse for absence without due explanation. Even the American who had died en route sent a cable—"Am dead. Bones follow by mail." This was thoughtful of him. An opposing team has no manner of use for the osseous fragments of its antagonists; but it may thirst for something else if it feels it is being played with and treated to the bird, while those who should be on the field are going out to tea or deciding to bowl their hoops instead of playing the game. Or, perhaps, the defaulters are asleep. Silver sleep is all very well in its way, but not when there is duty going. When people go to sleep at the wrong time one thinks of the historic line—

"He took a corkscrew off the shelf,
And said he'd wake them up himself."

A PLEASANT EXPERIENCE!

With the thermometer standing at a positively prodigious figure in the shade, and

the office eat panting round and yawning at intervals, while everything else is according, it is refreshing to read such a letter as came blowing in from good old Grimsby from a correspondent, who says the Companion Papers have upheld just the best there is in British boyhood; and, incidentally, there is something there of the very best. I fancy the critics we hear about are really the fellows who are too lazy to read. As likely as not they are looking round for a contrivance which will save them the effort even of raising their fork to their mouth at dinner-time! As to this last, I hope in the case of such Tired Tims the remark of Robert Louis Stevenson will not be correct, for he said that what a man truly wants that will he get, or he will be changed in trying.

THE WEATHER!

I have to come back to it. Very likely by the time these lines appear the rain will have been making up for lost time, and swooshing down all over the parched-up country, from the Grampians and the district where the gentleman familiarly called John O'Groats lives to the far south, where the long drought has done so much damage. But to a large extent the rain will have come too late. I am taking it—not the rain, there isn't any as yet, but the merry assumption—that there will be rain. The fine old traditions of our grand British summers are linked up with much rain, more rain, then still more rain, and, often enough, the longest rain on record. Think of those days on the river when one was drowned out, and the boat got awash inside! Just recall the oozy tramps back to the nearest station—which was not near, nor anything like it—down endless soaked lanes, with the kindly dripping branches of trees sweeping one's neck and garments at every other step! Still, we cannot well do without rain.

WHAT THE FARMER LIKES!

A weeping June is what the farmer likes—that is, if the British farmer really likes anything. I am in doubt as to this point. The farmer has been tried so often. This season, for instance, he has seen his cherries dropping from the trees in their babyhood, no good to anyone, and without enough strength left in their poor little bodies to enable them to hold on any longer. "Thanks, I'm off!" was how they would put it. The whole land has been bone dry. It makes one yearn for something in the way of Irish weather. You recall the lines:

"When the glass is high—oh, very!
There'll be rain in Cork and Kerry.
When the glass is low—oh, lark!
There'll be rain in Kerry and Cork."

You see, good Old Ireland gets it both ways. Perhaps it has a contract with the inconstant moon, which luminary is said to look after the rain. This side of St. George's we have had orgies of dry weather, while across the tumultuous Channel they keep their fields rich and lush, and their scenery pleasant and atmospheric. Still, as I said, long ere these words are printed we are very like to have had rain. That is one of the beauties of the British climate—it does rain at times. If the strawberries were spoiled, if the potatoes had not the heart to swell, if—oh, a thousand old things, including the hay shortage—still it will be made good as far as possible, all in accordance with the interesting law of compensations, and by way of second crops, so that the old gasper of the poem, who sat beside his cottage door because his work was done, will be able to sing a song of the pleasures of the English summer, and the Scotch and Welsh one to boot!

H. A. E. (YOUR EDITOR).

"Dear me! How inconsiderate of you, Binky!" said Goggs, looking down at him reproachfully. "You might have smashed my glasses, and then where should we have been?"

"Ang you! Lemme gerratyer fair an' square!" bawled Bingo, rising again.

"Thank you; but I would really prefer to decline your exceedingly kind offer, if I may do so without grave offence," answered Goggs. "My dear grandmother always warned me against association with rude and rough persons. By such association, she was wont to say, one may become rude and rough oneself; and it would pain me to think that I had become so. On that score, Bingo, dear friend, I fear that I must cut you out. Savvy?—as you so tersely put it."

"You think—"

"Sometimes. It is rather a hot day for brainwork, but I am willing to do a little thinking for you, Binky, if you really wish it. I do not imagine that my dear grandmother would object to that. She always told me to be kind to the lower animals."

"I'm a lower animal, am I?"

"Well, Bingo, sweet youth, ask yourself!"

"Look 'ere, I've blessed well 'ad enough of this!"

"And, as someone very neatly put it, enough is as good as a feast," Goggs rejoined, with his blandest smile.

"Are you goin' to fight me, or ain't you not?"

"That's the ticket! You'll have to fight him, Goggs," put in Snipe, with spiteful eagerness. "You can't get out of that. Ju-jitsu is all very well and very clever, I dare say, but it's not fighting. And after you've chucked a fellow about like that you can't refuse to put your fists up with him."

"Is that your opinion, Snipe?" replied Goggs quietly. "I cannot say that it surprises me, for I should not expect you to have an opinion that would be likely to command my respectful acquiescence. For myself, I entirely fail to see that, because our friend Binks here has been rude to me, I should allow our friend Binks the pleasure of reducing me to a pulp. So very unpleasant in this extremely sultry weather, you know."

Bingo scratched his greasy head. That head was rather dense; but the logic of what Goggs said did penetrate it, in part, at least.

The butcher lad knew that he had been overbearing and swanky, and for a moment he felt that Goggs was in the right.

But the feeling passed.

Bingo always was overbearing and swanky. He prided himself on being so. And, anyway, this queer specimen had cheeked him.

"The kid's right," said Gilmore. "Ju-jitsu's one thing, an' puttin' your fists up to a fellow about twice your weight, with a punch like a giddy horse's kick, is another. I dashed well wouldn't fight him if I were you, Goggs!"

It was kindly enough meant. Cutts & Co. were rather in the way of being rotters; but they were not rotters all through. St. Leger certainly agreed with Gilmore, and Cutts growled something that sounded like assent to his views.

"You wouldn't fight him if you were yourself, Gilmore!" sneered Snipe, almost desperate to think that his scheme was failing.

"Was that Snipe?" asked Gilmore loftily. "If you weren't such a dashed pimply beast, Snipe, I'd give you a hidin'! But there's a limit, an' I shouldn't feel clean after I had touched you!"

Snipe ground his teeth with rage. He was pimply, and he never looked anything but

unwholesome. But he did not like being told of it.

"I do not really see why I should fight you, Binks. But if you can convince me—"

Bingo broke in eagerly upon Goggs' speech.

"You ain't a bloomin' funk, I know that! Well, 'ow do you s'pose a chap feels after 'e's bin put over twice like that there? 'Ow would you like it yourself, cocky?"

"I should not like it at all," confessed Goggs.

"Well, then, there you are! It's up to you to fight me after that, ain't it?"

"Your reasoning, Bingo, strikes me as fallacious. Because you got what you asked for, you assume that it is my duty to accept what I never asked for and certainly should not like—videlicet, a licking at your noble hands. But are you sure you could lick me?"

Snipe's pimply face looked more cheerful at that. As for Larking, he had somehow never doubted that Goggs would fight. His doubt was rather as to whether the result of the combat would be such as was calculated to give him any great joy.

"Lick you? Why, I should bloomin' well eat you!"

"That is more than I should think of asking you to do, my dear Bingo. You would, I fear, find very little meat on my bones. Er—do you ever don the gloves?"

"Yes, of course I do, ijjit!"

"If we are to meet I must insist upon gloves. Otherwise you might knock up your knuckles badly on my craggy countenance, and so hurt both of us. What date and hour would meet your views, and what arrangements do you propose to make for the occasion?"

"You really mean to fight me, then?"

Bingo seemed incredulous. Also, perhaps, he was beginning to wonder whether a victory over a fellow so much his inferior in weight and size would be specially glorious.

"That is the idea," replied Goggs.

"Right-ho, then! Look 'ere, I've gotter get back to the shop. I shut it up to come along an' put it across this chap, an' if the guv'nor comes 'ome an' finds it shut I dunno as 'e'll be over an' above pleased about it. But I'll send one of these chaps over to your school to fix up things. 'E'll come to-morrow. That do you?"

"That, friend Bingo, will do me quite nicely," replied Goggs.

"Toodle-oo, then! Toodle-oo, everybody!"

And Binks went off, his satellites following, full of admiration at the manner in which he had held his own with the "young swells" from the rival schools.

Cutts and Gilmore and St. Leger departed without any further word to Larking and Snipe. But Gilmore spoke to Goggs.

"Think you've a chance against that merchant?" he said.

"I think it possible," answered Goggs, with grave politeness.

"Well, I'd like to see the bout, for one. You might let me know when it's coming off, if you don't mind. My name's Gilmore, an' I belong to the St. Jim's Fifth."

"I shall have pleasure in acquainting you with the time and place of the great combat," said Goggs, with a little bow.

"I like that chap," remarked Gilmore, as the three seniors walked away, Cutts with a hand to his bruised face.

"Like him? I hate the greasy brute!" snapped Cutts.

"Oh, I don't mean Bingo! I mean Goggs."

"That meek-faced, measly-mouthed kid? Why, the other fellow will fairly eat him up!"

"Sure of that, Cutts?" asked St. Leger.

"Dead sure!"

"Give five to one on it?"

"Yes. In hundreds, if you like!"

"Thanks, not for me! I can't pay up when it comes to hundreds, an' I've a preference for payin' up when I bet with a pal. I'll put a fiver on Goggs at these odds."

"An' I'll have a fiver on with you, Cutts," said Gilmore.

Cutts accepted readily. He stood to lose fifty pounds if Goggs could beat Bingo.

But he saw no danger of losing. Had not Bingo beaten him? Was it likely that Goggs, slim and apparently weedy, would stand a chance against the hefty brute?

A Feed for Forty!

"COME along, you cripples!"

It was Gordon Gay who spoke, looking in at the door of the study which the four ex-Franklinham boys shared.

"And whither, Joyful?" asked Goggs.

"Feed at Mrs. Murphy's, fathead! You haven't forgotten, surely?"

"I cannot truthfully say that I have forgotten, but I really do not feel precisely keen. It is a very hot day for the absorption of miscellaneous viands, my dear Joyful."

Gordon Gay stared at him.

"You silly ass! As if it was ever too hot for grub!" snorted Wagtail.

"There will be ices, Goggles—plenty of ices. And ginger-beer, properly cooled. And—"

"Tempt me not, Joyful! I have—er—in some sort an appointment."

"You've either got an appointment or you haven't, you chump! You can't have one in some sort. And even if you have, what does it matter beside a spread like this?"

"The St. Jim's fellows are doing the thing in style, aren't they?" said Bags.

"Rather! Better than any of us expected. They've sent along invitations for twenty, and a score of them are coming. There weren't twenty of us in the raid, of course; but it's dead easy to find twenty for this do. I've asked Taddy and Weir among the rest; they're harmless asses."

"Have you extended an invitation to Larking & Co.?" inquired Goggs, with a wink at Bags.

"No, I haven't! I'd sooner go into the highways and hedges and pick up tramps to complete the number! I've no use for Larking & Co. What is it that's keeping you, Goggles? You can't really stay away; the St. Jim's bounders are counting on you. Queer thing—I can't make it out a bit—but they seem rather to like you, old bird."

"It is queer, especially in view of my unfortunate face," answered Goggs thoughtfully.

"What's your face got to do with it, idiot?"

"Not much, perhaps. But it has something to do with what might keep me away."

"Why, you're only waiting for that chap—"

Wagtail broke off sharply. Tricks had kicked him under the table. He darted a furious glance at his chum; but he dried up, realising that he had been going to say too much.

"True, O Waters! I am only waiting for that chap, as you say. But the mission of that chap concerns my poor unfortunate face."

(There will be another splendid long instalment of this grand school story in next Monday's issue of the MAGNET. Order your copy in advance.)



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