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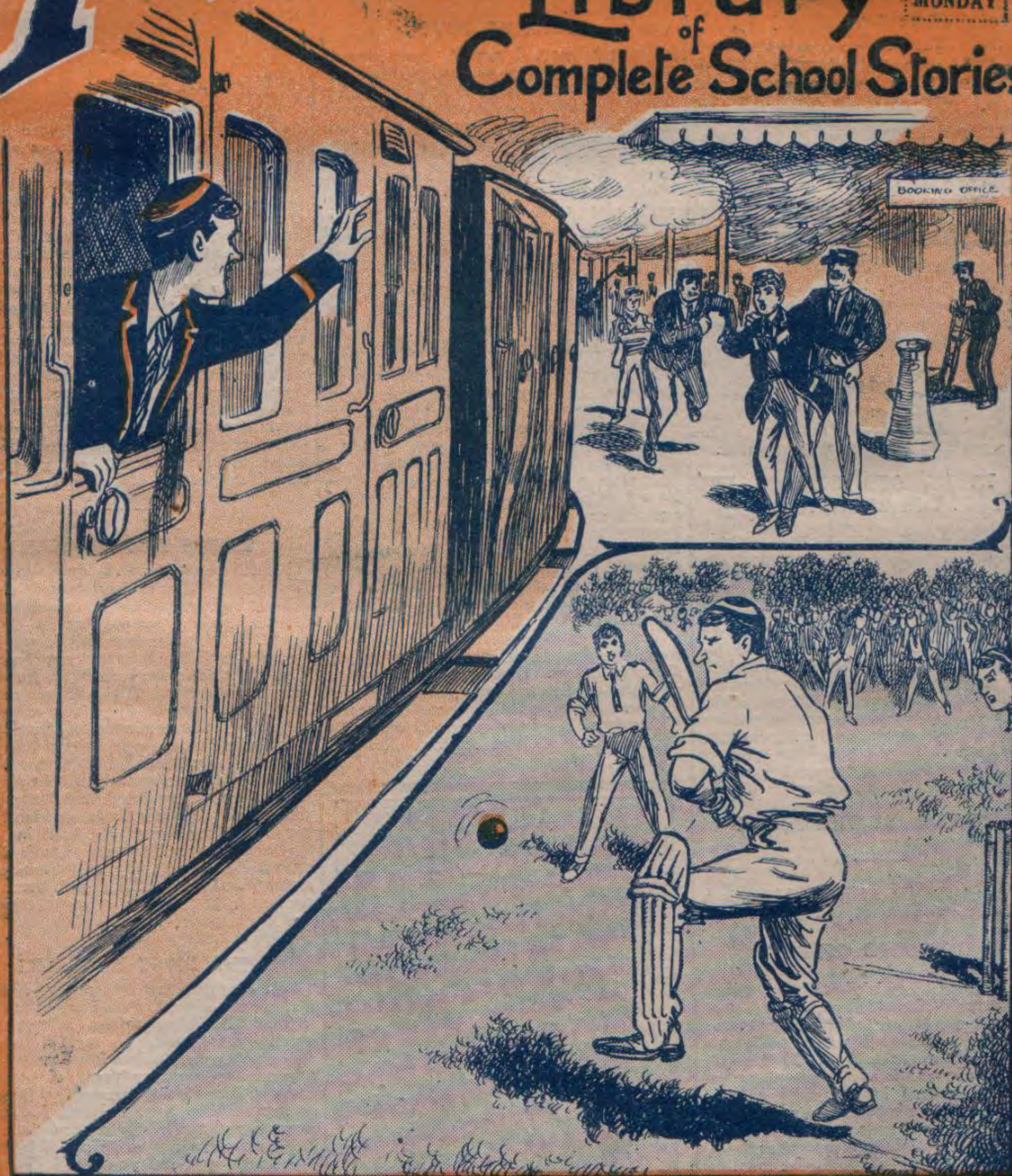
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The Magnet 2^d

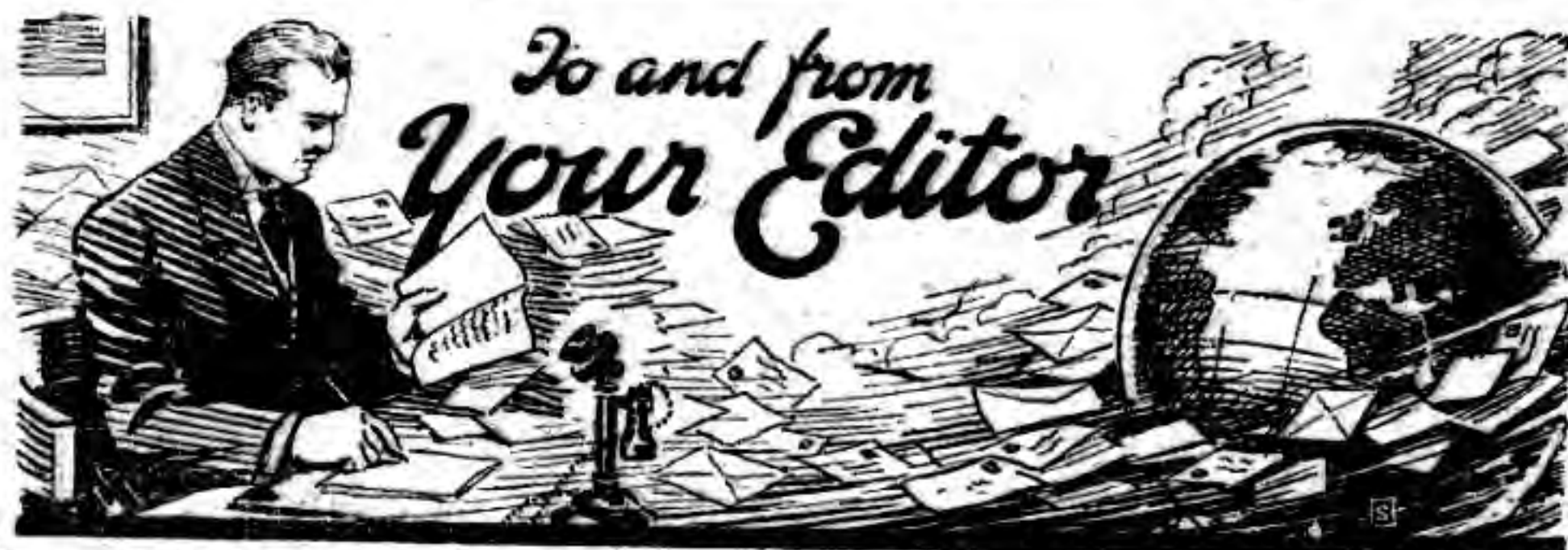
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EVERY
MONDAY



VERNON-SMITH TRICKS HIS PAL—AND PLAYS THE GAME OF HIS LIFE!

(See this week's magnificent story of Harry Wharton & Co., inside)



Your Editor is always pleased to hear from his chums. Write to him when you are in trouble or need advice. A stamped and addressed envelope will ensure a speedy reply. Letters should be addressed "The Editor," THE MAGNET LIBRARY, The Amalgamated Press (1922), Ltd., The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

OUR COMPETITION!

LITTLE need for me to chat about our simple "Characters" competition—it speaks for itself. But I would like to emphasise the point that a splendid Royal Enfield bicycle will be awarded every week. This is really a golden opportunity, my chums, and I hope you will fasten on to it.

"SENTENCED BY THE FORM!"

By Frank Richards.

That is the title of the next grand long complete story of Harry Wharton & Co. We see Vernon-Smith and Tom Redwing once more occupying "star" positions on the stage, whilst in bold relief stands Peter Todd—the schoolboy lawyer. Peter is a regular lawyer's understudy, and I prophesy a great future for him. At cross-examinations Peter has no equal at Greyfriars, at any rate.

THE TRUTH, AND NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH!

Rumours are afloat in the Remove that some "dirty" business underlies the "split" between Vernon-Smith and Tom Redwing. Peter Todd is approached by Harry Wharton & Co. to sift the matter to the bottom, and the schoolboy lawyer does not let the grass grow under his feet. Witnesses are called, and the whole affair is formally gone into under the skilful administrations of Peter Todd. He extracts facts from unwilling witnesses, theorises inside the information obtained, and—hey, presto—the truth is out! What Peter discovered you will learn yourselves from reading

"SENTENCED BY THE FORM!"

Next on the list of good things is a brilliant instalment of our grand new serial

"SHERWOOD GOLD!"

Mr. Francis Warwick has already given us a picture of the old-time pageantry, of the tournaments, etc. Now he takes us deeper into the crafty and malignant character of the Black Wolf. Earl Hugo, it would appear, is suspicious of everyone. The gallant knights who entered the lists and remained nameless for obvious reasons come within his suspicious vision. Spies are sent after them, and—well, perhaps it would be spoiling a good thing to let you too far into the secret. But rest assured, chums, next Monday's instalment is a real top-liner, full of punch, of movement, and all the necessary ingredients that go to make a good story. Don't miss it!

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"CAMPING OUT!"

Many of you, I expect, have already sampled the joys of camp life this summer. For those who have not been fortunate enough to go under canvas the new "Herald" will make a special appeal. Harry Wharton & Co. have chosen a subject that is, I know, dear to the heart of every healthy boy. Camp life, with all its own little thrills, its uncertainties—so far as the weather is concerned—its freedom, wants a world of beating. The same remark applies to the coming supplement. Make sure and read it, chums.

GRAND HOLIDAY SERIES!

Mr. Frank Richards has something up his sleeve for the summer vacation of the Greyfriars chums. Most of you will remember the Congo stories, and the series dealing with Harry Wharton & Co.'s adventures in the mysterious house of Pengarth, which were so popular. This time I think I am right in saying that our cheery band of Removites will journey to the East—to the deserts of Northern Africa. Africa is a land of romance, and your favourite author could not select a more suitable country in which to stage the activities of Harry Wharton & Co. We have heard lately a deal of talk concerning sheiks, who roam the deserts of Northern Africa in different guises. Some are chivalrous to a fault—others are merciless fiends in human shape. Well, with Frank Richards at the helm you will be introduced to another kind of sheik—the real

goods this time, for Mr. Richards is a widely travelled man, and has a happy knack of storing away impressions of the peoples and customs of the different countries through which he has travelled, for future reference.

THE GREATEST EVER!

That's what you will be saying when you have finished reading this coming series of stories—stories, too, let me mention it now, that are going to be longer than usual. As another appetiser, as it were, let me whisper in your ear that Cliff House, too, and certain of its pretty inhabitants figure in these stories. 'Nuff said for the present. Look out for this treat to come!

BIKING!

This subject has an immediate appeal to Magnetites, especially those readers who bring off a prize in our splendid competition. Apropos of the sport in question a chum asks me about the distance he should go in a day. Well, that is a query which wants some answering. Personally, I have done sixty miles myself, but afterwards wished I had not. It so much depends on what your work happens to be. If sedentary, then it is little short of madness to strain after a risky maximum first day out. As the tortoise said, slow and sure does it. I am not advocating crawling, but a fellow with a week's holiday should go easy first day out, and test his powers, remembering that his heart is not a mere bit of mechanism, but just a very delicate department which only gives out the best when it is accorded every possible consideration.

THINGS TO REMEMBER!

There was once—I dare say the pernicious thing is still extant—a very tedious book about history which stressed certain leading happenings in the old days. The writer thought he was hammering in facts, but my impression of that portentous work is that he badly missed. But some things do get remembered, and conned over later with real esteem. I was reminded of this fact by a letter which blew in to me the other day from Australia. The writer was a fellow to please any author. He referred to yarns which were published long years since. He recalled every incident, and some of the stories he had in mind appeared in the MAGNET. That's all. I appreciate these jolly old reminiscing communications. They put heart into one.

THE SCOUT EXAMPLE!

Nowadays, when so many holiday-makers are abroad, it is a pity the Scout method of doing things is not more generally followed. In certain parts of the country one finds a hopeless litter of paper after a merry party of pleasure-seekers have been through. It is all wrong. There is no need to be untidy because you are having a good time. A Scout never acts like this. When you dine with a friend you don't dream of leaving his dining-room in a miserable mess. Then why disfigure the beautiful Nature-world?

ALL SPORTS
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Your Editor.

Herbert Vernon-Smith never lets sentiment interfere with his ambitions. When the Bounder sets his mind upon a thing friends and foes are all one to him—obstacles that must be overcome. Whether the results obtained from such shallow principles fully compensate for the loss of a good friend you will learn from reading—



The Parting of the Ways!

A Magnificent New Long
Complete Story of the
Chums of Greyfriars, with
the Bounder and Tom
Redwing in the limelight.

By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Rotten!

"BUTTER-FINGERS!"
"Go home, Smithy!"
"Rotten!"

Herbert Vernon-Smith of the Remove knitted his brows, and his eyes gleamed savagely. He stared at the ball that lay at his feet, and for a moment made no motion to pick it up.

"Butter-fingers!"

Usually, when the Bounder's name was shouted on the playing-fields at Greyfriars, it was coupled with cheers or clapping. Smithy was a good man, either at football or at cricket, and he was accustomed to filling a prominent place in the limelight. But a fellow cannot always be at his best, and perhaps it was Smithy's own fault that he was not at his best on this occasion.

But it was very unfortunate for his side. The Remove were playing the Upper Fourth on Little Side, at Greyfriars. It was only a Form match, and Form matches were not very important. It did not really matter very much whether Harry Wharton & Co. beat the Upper Fourth, or whether Temple, Dabney, & Co. beat the Remove. But the Removites were used to beating the Fourth all along the line, and they did not want the record to be broken.

And for once Temple, Dabney & Co. were getting the upper hand. Cecil Reginald Temple, captain of the Fourth, was in unusual form, and he had done remarkably well. The Remove had batted first, and scored a total of 60, Smithy's wicket going down for a duck's egg, as it happened. Now the Fourth were in, and they had a score of 55 with two wickets in hand.

And then Cecil Reginald Temple, taking a little more risk than he ought to have taken with fieldsmen like the Removites, drove away the ball from Hurree Singh's bowling, fairly into the hands of Vernon-Smith at point—if Smithy had been ready to take it.

The ball dropped.

It almost touched Smithy's finger-tips as it dropped. And it was an easy catch,

It would have been an easy catch to a less skilful man than Vernon-Smith.

Many a time and oft had Smithy brought off difficult catches in the cricket-field. Some of his catches, in fact, were historic in the Remove. Now he had muffed one of the easiest, and left Temple of the Fourth safe at the wicket.

The Remove fellows of Greyfriars did not, as a rule, cultivate very polished manners. They generally said what they thought, oft-times in painfully plain language. That was what they now proceeded to do unto Smithy.

There were a dozen Remove fellows looking on at the match, and they all told Vernon-Smith what they thought of him. "Butter-fingers" was the favourite epithet.

"Butter-fingers!" roared Bolsover major, in his stentorian voice, which rang more than the extent of the cricket-field. "Rotten!"

"I say, Smithy, did you grease your fingers for this game?" yelled Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go home, you ass!"

"Rotten!"

Vernon-Smith, instead of returning the ball, stared round at the hooting Removites. His face was full of savage anger. There was a sharp call from Harry Wharton, the captain of the Remove.

"Send that ball in!"

The Bounder did not seem to hear.

"Smithy!"

Tom Redwing ran up and picked up the ball and returned it. Temple and Fry of the Fourth were running, and they had run twice. Cecil Reginald was safe at his wicket again by the time the ball came whizzing in from Redwing.

He clumped his bat on the crease and smiled. Cecil Reginald was feeling "bucked." He wanted to beat the Remove at cricket. He wanted it very much. Now it looked as if he were going to do it. Temple knew very well that he ought to have been caught out, and that Smithy had practically given him his wicket and his runs. Nevertheless, he was greatly bucked. With 57

on the score-board and two wickets in hand, Temple counted on a walk-over now.

"For goodness' sake wake up, Smithy!" called out Harry Wharton. "What's the matter with you?"

"Nothing!" snapped the Bounder.

"I suppose you couldn't help dropping the catch, but you could have sent the ball in!" exclaimed the captain of the Remove.

"Oh, rats!"

"Wha-a-a-t!"

"Rats!" repeated the Bounder savagely. "Don't talk to me!"

Harry Wharton looked at him, and for a moment he was on the point of ordering the Bounder off the field. But he controlled his anger and fell back into his place as the ball went down again from the hand of Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. Smithy evidently was not in form, and not in a pleasant mood. But Wharton was not the skipper to rag a man on the field. Smithy was a good man as a rule, and allowances could be made. So the captain of the Remove swallowed his wrath, and let the Bounder's "cheek" pass unregarded.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, the best bowler in the Remove, put all he knew into the next ball, but Temple was taking no more chances. The ball gave him a single, and brought Fry to the batting end. Dabney of the Fourth, who was next on the list, grinned.

"Looks as if I sha'n't be wanted," he remarked to Scott.

But Dabney was mistaken. The last ball of the over spread-eagled Fry's wicket, and Dabney of the Fourth took his place. Squiff of the Remove went on to bowl the next over against Temple.

"Fifty-eight!" said Fry, as he joined the Fourth-Formers at the pavilion. "Two to tie and three to win! Our game!"

It looked like it, for Cecil Reginald Temple cut away the next ball for a single, and then Dabney, taking no risks, blocked the bowling for the rest of the over. Once a chance came Vernon-Smith's way, but he did not seem to see

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it. He was standing with a sullen frown on his face, and the ball passed him unheeded.

"I say, you fellows, Smithy's gone to deep standing up, like a horse!" chortled Billy Bunter.

"Fifty-nine, and Temple's got the batting again!" snorted Bolsover major. "And he's good for a dozen at least."

"All over bar shouting!" said Skinner. "His Magnificence is lookin' quite cross."

Skinner alluded to Harry Wharton, who certainly was not looking pleased. Wharton was more accustomed to victory than defeat; but he was a sportsman and a good loser. But he knew that this match ought not to be lost. It was being thrown away, and that made a difference. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh bowled again to Temple of the Fourth, and Temple drove the ball past point.

"Smithy!" gasped Bob Cherry.

The Bouncer, who generally looked, in the field, as if he were made of elastic, seemed incredibly slow and clumsy. The batsmen were running, and Smithy scarcely seemed to heed the ball. But a lithe, active figure raced up in time, and there was a roar from the Removites as the ball dropped fairly into the ready palm of Tom Redwing.

"Caught!"

"Oh, well caught, Redwing!"

"Good man!" roared Johnny Bull.

Cecil Reginald Temple looked quite blank. One run would have tied, two would have won the game, and the hapless Cecil Reginald had been caught out on the very verge of victory. The glorious uncertainty of the great game of cricket had been exemplified once more—not very agreeably to Cecil Reginald.

"Remove wins!" said Bolsover major. "Blessed if I expected it, after Smithy tried to make the Fourth a present of the game."

"Good old Redwing!" roared Bob Cherry. "Good man! Oh, well caught!"

"Wake up, Smithy!" yelled Billy Bunter derisively. "The game's over, Smithy! Wake up!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Vernon-Smith walked off the field, his brow black as thunder.

He did not give his chum Redwing a word of congratulation or a glance.

He seemed unconscious of mocking looks and jeering words. Only, as he came near Bunter, he suddenly reached out, and smacked the Owl of the Remove on one fat ear.

There was a startled and indignant yell from Bunter.

"Yaroo! Beast! Ow!"

Then Vernon-Smith tramped away to the House, looking neither to the right nor to the left.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Trouble Impending!

TOM REDWING opened the door of Study No. 4, in the Remove passage, and looked in. Redwing's face was flushed from the cricket, and he looked very handsome and pleasant just then. But his look clouded a little as he glanced into the study.

His study-mate, Herbert Vernon-Smith, was stretched in the armchair, his hands driven deep into his pockets, and his brows knitted in a dark line.

The Bouncer was in one of his worst tempers, and no one knew better than his chum how savage Smithy's temper could be at times.

Redwing seemed to hesitate to enter. It was his own study, and the Bouncer was his chum. But he paused. In such a mood as he was now Smithy was better left alone. More than once—many times, in fact—Redwing had avoided trouble in the study by judiciously leaving Smithy to himself for a while.

But as he stood in the doorway Vernon-Smith looked up. His frown did not relax, and there was an unpleasant glitter in his eyes. From along the passage, in Study No. 1, the powerful voice of Bob Cherry could be heard in jovial tones. In Study No. 1 Harry Wharton & Co. had gathered for tea in a cheery party.

"Why don't you come in?" snapped the Bouncer.

"I'm coming in, Smithy."

Redwing entered.

The Bouncer resumed his former attitude, staring straight before him with a black brow. Redwing moved rather restlessly about the study. He was a patient fellow—patient and tactful—and his friendship with Smithy was very deep and sincere. But many times he had found the Bouncer's uncertain temper very trying.

"Wharton's asked us to tea, Smithy," said Tom Redwing at last.

"Has he?"

"They've got rather a spread in Study No. 1."

"Celebrating the giddy victory over the Fourth—what?" asked the Bouncer with a sneer. "Hardly worth celebrating, I should have thought. The Third could beat Temple's crowd."

"Well, we beat them, anyhow," said Redwing cheerfully. "It was a close thing, too."

"You beat them, you mean," said Smithy. "You put in the winnin' catch, after I'd muffed it."

"That was lucky, old man," said Redwing. "You weren't in your usual form to-day, Smithy. We can't always be at our best."

"I was out of sorts," growled the Bouncer. "I'm out of sorts now, and you know why."

Redwing was silent.

"You know I broke dorm bounds last night," said the Bouncer, looking at him again.

"I've nothing to say about that, Smithy," said Redwing, looking distressed. "I'm not your judge."

The Bouncer's lip curled.

"If Wharton knew!" he said.

"He doesn't know."

"You can tell him, if you like."

"Why should I tell him?" said Redwing. "Don't be an ass, old man."

"If our jolly old cricket captain knew

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MAGNET "Characters" Competition!



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This is one of the simplest competitions ever put before MAGNET readers. All you have to do, chums, is to take the name.

ALONZO THEOPHILUS TODD,

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Remember that the initial letters of each word of your effort must be contained in the words Alonzo Theophilus Todd, although you may use any other letters of the alphabet to follow, and also use the same letters more than once.

When you have thought out a good answer fill in the coupon below, taking care to write your effort and your name and address clearly, and post it to "Alonzo Theophilus Todd," "Characters" Competition, THE MAGNET LIBRARY, Gough House, Gough Square, London, E.C.4, so as to reach that address not later than July 28th, 1924.

To the sender of the best answer will be awarded a magnificent "Royal Enfield" Bicycle.

The excellence of your effort will consist in its apt relation to the character named. You may send in as many attempts as you like, but all efforts must be written on the proper entrance form.

The decision of the Editor of the MAGNET must be accepted as final in all matters, and entries are only accepted on this condition.

MAGNET "CHARACTERS" COMPETITION (Alonzo Theophilus Todd.)

Write your effort here.....

I enter the MAGNET "Characters" Competition, and I agree to accept the Editor's decision as final.

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Address

In the event of my winning, I prefer a Lady's—Gent's—Bicycle. Cross out the word not applicable.

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why I was off colour to-day there would be a row," sneered the Bounder. "Don't you think so?"

"Well, you couldn't expect him to like it," said Redwing. "Dash it all, Smithy, you're a member of the eleven—and a principal member—we all rely on you. It's not quite the thing to let the team down, is it?"

"A rotten Form match," said the Bounder contemptuously. "What does it matter, anyhow?"

"Well, no team ever wants to lose a match. Besides, it was really a trial match for the Rookwood game," said Redwing. "Wharton's got to pick out the men to play Rookwood, and he was putting them through their paces to-day against the Fourth. You ought really to have been at your best."

"You mean I may be dropped out of the Rookwood match?"

"No, I don't! I don't think Wharton could spare you," said Redwing. "But as the match is on Saturday, you should really have been more careful. I wish I had a chance of getting into the team to play Rookwood. You wouldn't catch me playing the goat."

"You may have a chance, after the game you put up to-day," said the Bounder.

Redwing smiled.

"Not likely! But never mind all that, Smithy, it's over now and done with. Will you come along to Study No. 1?"

"No!"

"Wharton asked me to come and bring you."

"You can go, if you like."

"Won't you come?"

"No!"

Redwing compressed his lips a little. This sullen fit of temper had to last till it had run its course, he knew that. It was one more trial for his patience.

"Very well," he said quietly, "we'll tea here."

Redwing thought of the cheery party in Study No. 1. It contrasted very much with a dismal tea in Study No. 4, with a scowling face across the table, and a bitter tongue making bitter remarks. But friendship came first.

He knew, too, that the Bounder was "mad" with himself for having made such a rotten display on Little Side. He knew that the jeers and mocking of the Removites rankled deeply in Smithy's breast. Smithy was a fortunate fellow in most respects. He was wealthy, he was good at games, he had a high place in class, he had a dominating personality, and always had to be reckoned with seriously.

Fellows preferred to be on friendly terms with him, though it could not be said that he had ever actually made a friend at Greyfriars, with the exception of Tom Redwing. Nobody wanted him for an enemy. Even fellows in the Fifth did not care to provoke his hostility. Vernon-Smith was accustomed to success, to keeping a high place, and failure was bitter to him. He was a bad loser. And the fact that his failure, on this occasion, was the fault of his own folly, added to his intense exasperation. He was in a mood to quarrel with anybody—even with his best chum.

Redwing knew him well, and understood it all. But he knew, too, Smithy's good and sterling qualities, and he was patient.

He began to get tea, while the Bounder sat in his armchair and scowled at the opposite wall.

"You needn't tea here," said Vernon-Smith suddenly. "Your friends will be expectin' you in Study No. 1."

"That's all right. I don't want to go if you don't, Smithy."



"Smithy!" gasped Bob Cherry. The batsmen were running, but Vernon-Smith seemed hardly to heed the ball which was whizzing in his direction. But a lithe, active figure raced up in time—and there was a roar from the Removites as the ball dropped fairly into the ready palms of Tom Redwing. "Well caught, Redwing!" "Wake up, Smithy!" came the cries from the pavilion. (See Chapter 1.)

"What rot!"

There was a heavy tread in the passage, and Bob Cherry's ruddy face looked into Study No. 4.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" boomed Bob. "Tea's ready! Aren't you fellows coming?"

"I'm not!" snapped the Bounder.

Bob looked at him. The Bounder's tone was as unpleasant as he could make it.

"My hat! Do you always decline invitations in that polished manner, Smithy?" asked Bob with sarcasm.

"Oh, cheese it!"

"Dear man! Did he miff a catch, then, and did it upset his little temper?" grinned Bob.

The Bounder flushed angrily.

"You cheeky ass! Get out."

"As soon as you like, old top; you're not pleasant company," retorted Bob. "Are you coming, Redwing?"

"No, thanks."

"Right-ho!"

Bob's heavy tread rang along the passage back to Study No. 1. Vernon-Smith bit his lip savagely.

"Cheeky cad!" he growled.

Redwing opened his lips, and closed them again.

"They'll be wantin' you, Redwing," sneered the Bounder. "You'd better go. You know you want to."

Redwing stopped before the Bounder, and looked at him steadily.

"Are you trying to row with me, Smithy?" he asked.

Smithy shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't care a brass farthing whether I row with you or not," he returned.

"Well, I do," said Redwing. "I think I'd better go."

"Go, and be hanged to you."

"Very well!"

Tom Redwing quietly left the study and closed the door after him. He walked along to the stairs, passing Study No. 1 without entering it. Certainly he would have liked to join the cheery party there, and they would have been glad to have him. But he knew that the Bounder would resent it, and went downstairs instead. Tea in Hall was not yet over, and down to Hall Tom Redwing went. The Bounder's resentment would have been utterly unreasonable, but that made no difference to Redwing, he would not provoke his chum if he could help it.

Left alone in the study, Vernon-Smith sat and scowled. He was angry, with himself, with the Remove, with his chum, with everybody and everything. And he was still out of sorts from the excitement and loss of sleep of the reckless night before. He had not wanted Redwing to remain with him, but he resented his going, resented more than all the fact that Tom was now, as he supposed, enjoying a merry spread in Study No. 1. He was hungry, too, but he did not care for the trouble of getting his tea, or going down to Hall. He sat and scowled.

The door opened again, and a fat face and a large pair of spectacles blinked in. Billy Bunter eyed the scowling Bounder warily.

"I say, Smithy—"

"Get out."

"You smacked my head on the cricket field—"

"I'll smack it again if you don't clear."

"I expect an apology," said Bunter loftily. "Otherwise, I shall have to
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challenge you to meet me in the gym, with the gloves on."

The Bounder burst into a laugh. "Well, if you're sorry, all right," said Bunter amicably. "I'm not a fellow to bear malice against an old pal like you, Smithy! I know you were feeling ratty after that rotten show you made. Hazeldene says he thinks Wharton will drop you out of the Rookwood match, Smithy."

"Does he?" said the Bounder between his teeth.

"Yes, and Squiff says—"

"Hang Squiff!"

"Certainly," said Bunter. "I say, those beasts in Study No. 1 asked Redwing to tea, and didn't ask me, after all I've done for them, too. Has Redwing gone and deserted you, Smithy?"

"Mind your own bizney, you fat fool."

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"Get out."

"I'll tell you what, Smithy, I'll stay to tea, if you like, as you're left all on your own," said Bunter. "I'm really sorry for you, old chap, deserted like this. You see, it's hard on you, Smithy, as you haven't many friends. Now, I've got hosts of friends. Not a word, old fellow. I'm going to take pity on you."

William George Bunter came into the study, with the noble and benevolent intention of taking pity on the Bounder.

Vernon-Smith jumped up.

The next moment there was a terrific bump in the Remove passage, and the Bounder's door slammed. And for many minutes afterwards a fat voice was raised in anguish.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Bounder Asks for It!

TEA was over in Study No. 1 in the Remove, and Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent were left to themselves there, Bob Cherry, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh going along to their own studies. During tea there had been rather a thoughtful expression on Harry Wharton's face, and his chums had noticed it and guessed the reason. But they had made no remark on it; the Remove captain's problem was one for him to think out. After his comrades were gone, Wharton stretched himself in the armchair, looking still more thoughtful. He was a little tired after the game that day, and he was a little worried.

He had counted upon Herbert Vernon-Smith, without a doubt, for the Remove team on Saturday, when Rookwood had to be played. But the Bounder's utter want of form that day gave him something to think about. If Smithy showed up anything like this on Saturday, it was not much use thinking of beating the Rookwooders with his aid. Yet to drop a man like Vernon-Smith was a serious step only a few days before the fixture.

Wharton had another matter for cogitation, of a more pleasant nature. Tom Redwing had been on his trial in the Form match, and he had shown up remarkably well. If a recruit was wanted for the eleven, Redwing was the man, and a good man. Redwing, at his best, was nowhere near the Bounder's form, generally speaking. But there were a dozen fellows better than the Bounder had been that afternoon.

Wharton took up his cricket list and conned it over. Frank Nugent strolled out of the study; he did not want to butt in with advice. Also, it was rather a delicate subject for Frank. He was Wharton's nearest and dearest chum—his oldest comrade at Greyfriars. He was very keen on getting into the big cricket

matches, as was natural in a keen cricketer. But he was not down to play Rookwood, and he did not expect to see his name in the list. He did not resent the fact, he knew that Wharton would gladly have played him, but for a stern sense of duty as captain of the Remove team.

Nugent was keen, but he was not conceited; he knew that his form was nothing like that of the Bounder, or Peter Todd, or Squiff, or Tom Brown. Neither was he a deadly bowler like Hurree Singh, or a mighty hitter of boundaries like Bob Cherry, or a slow and steady and thoroughly reliable man like Johnny Bull. He always did his best, but his best was not good enough for the big fixtures, unless somebody had to be dropped or had to stand out.

Now it seemed likely enough that Smithy would be dropped, so Frank Nugent's hopes rose. If Smithy went, another man would be wanted, and Nugent did not see why he should not be the other man. So the subject was rather too delicate for him to offer an opinion upon it.

It did not occur to Wharton what his chum was thinking of, as Frank left the study. His own thoughts were concentrated on the problem he had to solve.

The names on the list ran, so far: H. Wharton, R. Cherry, J. Bull, Hurree Singh, H. Vernon-Smith, S. Q. I. Field, T. Brown, P. Todd, M. Linley, R. Penfold, P. Hazeldene.

The question now was, whether to cross out the name of H. Vernon-Smith, and insert another.

It did not enter Wharton's mind that the Bounder's want of form that day was due to an outbreak of his old blackguardism, that he had "played the goat" the night before, getting out of school bounds after lights out. The Bounder was supposed to have given up that kind of thing long ago, and Wharton trusted him.

Wharton's view simply was that he was off colour, as the best men are at times. It is not uncommon for a good man to play like a "dud" on occasion; indeed, good cricketers would sometimes go off their form for weeks together. There was nothing surprising in it, nothing to blame; it was simply a circumstance that had to be recognised and dealt with.

Certainly, Smithy had put up a show that day that would have disgraced a fag in the Third Form. That was very unusual; it really looked as if Smithy might be ill. A sick man was of no use in a hard-fought cricket match.

After a good deal of thought on the subject, the captain of the Remove decided to speak to Smithy. He was too good a man to be left out if it could be avoided; and if he was hopelessly off colour, he would not want to be a passenger in the team.

So Harry rose at last, and walked along the Remove passage to No. 4. He found Bolsover major coming away from the study with a scowling face.

"Going in to see Smithy?" asked Bolsover.

Wharton nodded.

"You won't find him in a good temper!"

"Hallo! Anything up?"

Bolsover major gave an angry snort. "Like a dashed wild-cat," he said. "I was just speaking about the match to-day, and he jolly nearly flew at me. If you're going to tell him he's out of the cricket, better be ready to guard with your left."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Well, you'll see," grunted Bolsover major, and he stalked away down the passage, evidently very much annoyed

by the reception he had had in the Bounder's study.

Harry Wharton tapped at No. 4 and entered.

He found Vernon-Smith seated in the armchair, with a cigarette between his lips, the blue smoke curling upward.

Wharton stared at him quite surprised. "That's not the way to keep in form for cricket, Smithy," he exclaimed.

"Isn't it?" yawned the Bounder.

"No," said Harry sharply. "It isn't!"

"So glad to hear your opinion."

The Bounder blew out a little cloud of smoke. Harry Wharton stood looking at him, breathing hard.

It was not for Wharton to set up as a censor of morals in the Remove, and he never did so. He had his own opinion about the dingy blackguardism of Skinner & Co.—and did not conceal it; but that was all. If a fellow were ass enough to smoke cigarettes in his study, it was for prefects or masters to find him out and deal with him. But as cricket captain, Wharton had a right to expect members of his team to keep themselves in condition; and smoking cigarettes was not the way.

"I looked in to speak to you about the cricket, Smithy," said Harry, after a long pause, deciding to take no note of the cigarette further.

"Oh, get on with it!" said Smithy. "I cheeked you on the field to-day. You ragged me, and I gave you some back-chat. I'm not sorry, and I'm not going to apologise. Fire away!"

"I was not going to speak about that."

"Oh!"

"It's about the Rookwood match on Saturday. You needn't mind my mentioning that you played rotten cricket to-day—you're a good enough player to be quite aware of it."

"Quite! And if I weren't, nearly every fellow in the Remove has told me so."

"Well, it was rather thick, and the Remove don't pride themselves on Chesterfieldian manners," said Wharton, with a smile. "But we beat the Fourth after all, and anyhow the Fourth don't matter much. It was practically a trial game. What worries me is, you showed such rotten form that I'm doubtful about Saturday."

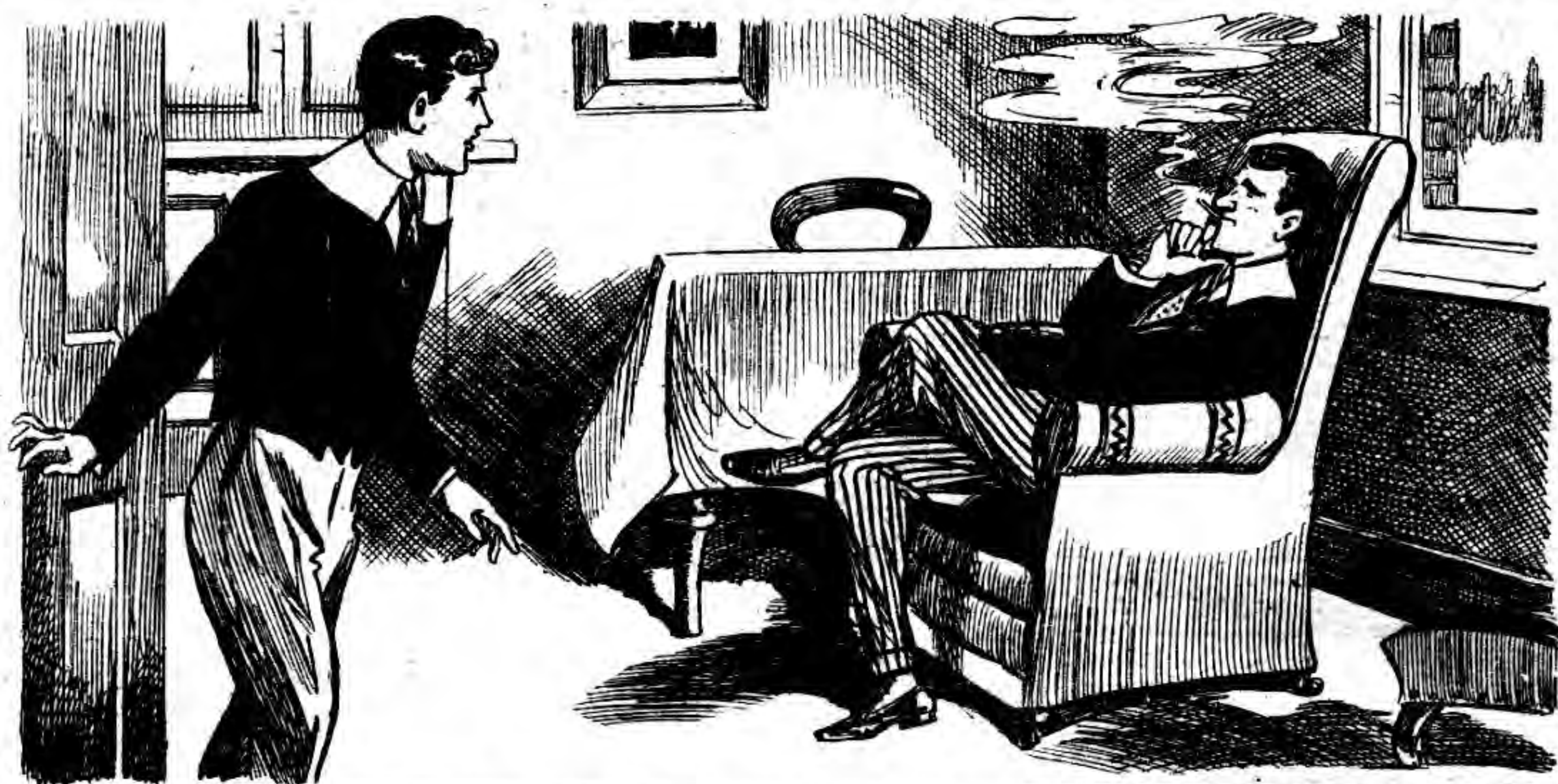
"Get on with it! You want to drop me out of the team, as every fellow in the Remove is advising you to do," sneered the Bounder.

"I've not taken any advice on the subject, and I don't want to drop you, Smithy," said Wharton, keeping his temper. "If you stand out of the match we shall miss you badly."

"I haven't said I'd stand out, have I?"

"The question is, can you play? It's the third day from now, and if you're right off your form, are you likely to pull round by Saturday? That's what I want to know; and you ought to be the best judge."

Vernon-Smith was silent. His impression had been, when Wharton entered, that the captain of the Remove had come there to "rag" him for his failure that day, and to tell him he would not be wanted on Saturday. He fully expected it; and he was already nursing a grievance on the subject. In a better or more reasonable temper, Smithy would have been glad to know that he was mistaken. Now he felt a curious sulky disappointment—he was robbed of his grievance—the bitter and satirical words he had intended to utter in reply had to remain unuttered now. Instead



Harry Wharton found Vernon-Smith seated in the armchair, with a cigarette between his lips. The captain of the Remove stared at him, quite surprised. "That's not the way to keep fit for the cricket, Smithy," he exclaimed. "Isn't it?" yawned the Bounder, coolly. "No, it isn't!" said Harry sharply. "So glad to hear your opinion!" replied the Bounder, blowing out a little cloud of smoke. (See Chapter 3.)

of being placated, he felt more sulky and savage than before.

"You see how it stands," said Harry. "If you're in good form, we want you almost more than any other man in the Remove. I'd as soon lose Bob Cherry or Inky, as you, if it could be helped. But if you're off colour, let me know in time, and I'll do the best I can. Are you feeling seedy?"

"No."

"Not ill or anything?"

"Nothing of the kind."

"It's dashed odd how you cracked up to-day, then," said Harry. "I can't understand it. You seemed not to have a run in your legs, and you muffed catches that Coker of the Fifth would hardly have missed. But I know such things happen sometimes."

The captain of the Remove was puzzled; and Vernon-Smith eyed him cynically, disdainfully. The real cause of his unfitness that day did not dawn on Wharton, and in his present mood Smithy felt scorn and derision for such unsuspiciousness. He was strongly tempted to tell Wharton what that cause had been. Why should he take the trouble to keep a secret, as if he were a naughty schoolboy, and Wharton his headmaster? That was how the Bounder put it to himself. And several other fellows knew, or suspected, the facts, and might mention them to the captain of the Remove.

"Yes, such things do happen," drawled the Bounder, and he began to light a second cigarette from the first.

Wharton's face set a little as he saw it.

"Smithy, old man, that's not good enough," he said. "You can't play cricket on smoke, and you know it. I don't want to interfere with you, but you're practically in training till the Rookwood match is over, and you're bound to play up."

"I don't see it."

"You don't see it?" repeated Wharton, beginning to realise that the Bounder was seeking a quarrel.

"Not at all. I'm my own master, I suppose?"

"No man's quite his own master when he's led others to rely on him and expect things of him," said Harry. "You don't think it would be the game to let us down on a match-day, do you?"

"Oh, you could find another man!" sneered the Bounder. "Your own chum, Nugent, for instance. He's jolly keen to play."

"That's neither here nor there. You make me think that your rotten play to-day may have been due to smoking before the match," exclaimed the captain of the Remove. "I hope that isn't so, Smithy."

"Why not?"

"Do you mean to say that it was so?" exclaimed Harry.

"I don't mean to say anything."

Wharton looked at him steadily. The Bounder's look, in return, was cool, defiant, insulting. Deliberately he blew out little clouds of smoke to the ceiling.

"We won't go into that," said Wharton, at last, and fellows who regarded him as hasty-tempered would have been astonished to see his forbearance. "We don't want any dispute."

"I don't mind."

"Well, I mind!" said Harry sharply. "But, at least, Smithy, if I keep your name in the list for Saturday, you'll give me your word to keep yourself fit—which includes no smoking till the match is over, at least."

"Dear man! You ask such a lot."

Wharton breathed hard.

"Will you give me your word to that effect, Smithy?"

"No."

"I understand," said the captain of the Remove quietly. "You're looking for trouble, Smithy. I've seen you like this before; and you ought to know by this time that I'm not the fellow to take your insolence. You're dropped out of the Rookwood match, and I'll fill your place on Saturday. That's final."

Without another word, Harry Wharton left Study No. 4. The Bounder stared after him with a black brow. He had fairly asked for it. He knew that he had left the captain of the Remove no other reply to make. Yet it came as a

blow to him, and it roused the fiercest anger in his breast.

Dropped from the team! Some "dud," like Nugent or Russell or Bolsover major, to be played in his place. Classes at Greyfriars for him, while the cricketers went over to Rookwood.

He gritted his teeth.

The Bounder's temper had been his undoing more than once. It looked like being his undoing again.

Harry Wharton returned to his study, where he coned over the cricket-list, and over his list of reserves, with a wrinkled brow. On the official list the name of "H. Vernon-Smith" was pencilled out. That matter was quite decided. It remained to find another man to take the Bounder's place, and it was only after long cogitation that the captain of the Remove decided, and went to look for Tom Redwing.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Redwing's Luck!

TOM REDWING came into the Rag after tea in Hall, and joined a crowd of Remove fellows there.

He did not seek his study or his study-mate. There was plenty of time still before prep, and Tom had sagely decided to give Smithy time to get over his "tantrums."

The talk in the Rag was chiefly on the subject of the match that afternoon, so far as Removites were concerned. Temple, Dabney, & Co. were in the room, but they did not discuss cricket; they preferred to forget all about the match. The great topics among the Removites were that day's match, Saturday's match with Rookwood, Smithy's failure, and what the skipper would do about it. It was unanimously agreed that Vernon-Smith had put up the rottenest show a Remove player ever had put up since the Remove had had their own cricket club and team. And as the Form match had been in the nature of a trial match, many of the fellows thought that Smithy ought to go, especially the fellows who had hopes of filling his place.

Bolsover major was emphatic on the subject.

"Suppose Hazel or Pen or Linley had shown up like that!" Bolsover major exclaimed, as Redwing came in. "Would they have been kept in the team for Saturday?"

"Not likely," said Hazeldene.

"And who's Smithy?" went on Bolsover major.

"Echo answers, who?" grinned Skinner.

"Well, Smithy's a jolly good man," said Peter Todd. "I'd be sorry to see him outside the eleven."

"Rot!" said Bolsover major. "There's as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it. I'm willing to play, for instance."

"But we're not making Rookwood a present of the match, you know," hinted Toddy.

"Look here, you cheeky ass—" roared Bolsover major.

"Redwing showed up well," said Squiff. "I know Wharton's had an eye on him for some time, and he gave him a trial in the Form match. He's a good man, if a man's wanted."

"Thanks!" said Redwing, smiling, behind the Australian junior's shoulder.

S. Q. I. Field looked round.

"Oh, you're here, Reddy," he said. "I say, what was the matter with Smithy to-day. I suppose he hasn't been on the razzle in his old style and got crooked?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Redwing coloured uncomfortably, and did not answer.

"The fact is, somebody was out of the dorm last night," grinned Skinner. "I woke up, and heard him shift."

"So did I," said Snoop.

"Was it Smithy?" exclaimed half a dozen voices.

"Couldn't say; but I think it's jolly likely, considering how he was taking naps all through the cricket-match to-day," grinned Snoop.

"Well, if that's the case, he jolly well ought to be dropped out!" said Peter Todd. "But I wouldn't believe Smithy was such an ass, unless he owned up to it."

"I dare say Redwing knows," said Skinner.

"If he does, he's not likely to say anything against his pal," said Tom Brown. "Shut up, Skinner!"

Harry Wharton came into the Rag and looked round him. He was looking for Tom Redwing.

"Redwing here?" he called out.

"Sum!" answered Redwing, with a smile, as if he were answering to his name at call-over.

"We shall want you on Saturday, Redwing," said the captain of the Remove.

Tom started and flushed, and his eyes grew bright. This was the goal of his ambition, but he had been far from expecting it to happen.

"For the Rookwood match?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Oh, good!" exclaimed Tom.

"Congrats, old man!" said Squiff heartily. "My belief is that you couldn't have done better, Wharton, if you wanted a man."

"What about me, Wharton?" bawled Bolsover major.

"Nothing about you, old bean."

"Do you mean to say that Redwing is a better man than I am?"

"I didn't mean to say so. What's the good of pointing out a self-evident fact?" asked the captain of the Remove.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Thanks, Wharton!" said Tom Redwing quietly. "I'll jolly well do my best."

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on Saturday. Is my name down in the list?"

"I'm just going to put it there."

"Well, I'm jolly glad!"

Tom Redwing's face was bright as he walked out of the Rag. He was anxious to tell Smithy the news. Even in his present bad temper Smithy was sure to be glad to hear it; indeed, it would probably buck him to such an extent that he would forget his temper. Redwing owed much of his progress as a cricketer to Smithy; his chum had helped him on in every way, giving up many an hour on a half-holiday for that purpose—teaching him, so far as he could, all that he knew himself.

In season and out of season, Smithy had urged Redwing's claims on the captain of the Remove—a thing Tom would never have done himself, but which it was pardonable in his friend to do for him. Indeed, it was partly owing to Smithy's urging that Tom had been given his trial that day. Wharton had a good deal of respect for Smithy's judgment, and he had taken his advice and given Redwing his chance.

Redwing went up the staircase, keen to tell Vernon-Smith the news. Not for a moment did he dream that Smithy was out of the team—that it was Smithy's place that had been given him. Indeed, he could hardly have imagined the Remove eleven with the Bounder left out. All he knew was that Wharton, in making up the cricket-list, had put him down to play.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! You look bucked, old sailorman!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, meeting Redwing in the Remove passage.

Redwing laughed.

"I'm in the match on Saturday," he said.

"Congratters, old scout! Come into my study, and wash it down with ginger-pop!" exclaimed Bob.

"Hold on! I want to tell Smithy."

"Bless Smithy! Come along with your Uncle Bob!"

And Bob Cherry, seizing Redwing by the arm, rushed him along to No. 13, where Mark Linley and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh were beginning prep. But prep in Study No. 13 was dropped at once as Bob vociferously announced the news. Redwing's promotion to the Remove eleven was celebrated in ginger-beer with great enthusiasm, and it was five minutes or more before Redwing was able to get away from No. 13.

In those minutes there had been happenings. Harry Wharton, after posting up the cricket-list in the Rag, came up to Study No. 1 with Nugent for prep. Nugent was rather silent and thoughtful. His last chance of figuring in the Rookwood match was gone. Perhaps it crossed his mind that his chum might have stretched a point in his favour. Frank would not have contended for a moment that he was so good a cricketer as the Bounder, but he was by no means disposed to acknowledge that Redwing was much ahead of him. But it was a matter for the cricket captain to decide, and Nugent did not think of resenting the decision.

The two chums came into Study No. 1, and Wharton put on the light. Then he noted that Nugent's face was a little more quiet and thoughtful than usual.

"Frank, old man, you don't mind?" he said. "I thought of you, of course. It's rotten to have to leave one's best pal out. But I know you wouldn't like me to act against my own judgment—even if I'm wrong, as, of course, I may be."

Nugent smiled.

"All serene, old top!" he said.

"Don't worry! You won't expect me to

think that Redwing's a better man than I am—but if you think so, it's all right. You're bound to play the man you think best for the side."

"You know I'd rather have you in the team," said Harry.

"I know you would, old fellow. That's all right!" said Frank reassuringly.

"Anyhow, you'll be coming over to Rookwood with the crowd. I've fixed that all right," said Harry. "You're first on the list of reserves, Frank."

"Then I must hope that somebody will fall out of the train, or get left behind when we change," said Nugent, laughing.

There was a knock at the half-open door, and Vernon-Smith looked in. Wharton gave him a cold glance.

He wondered whether the Bounder had repented of his insolence, and realised that he did not want to be dropped out of Saturday's match. If so, it was too late.

The Bounder did not look very placable.

"Just a word with you, Wharton," he said. "I saw you come up. About Saturday's match—" He paused. "I'm not goin' to be ragged, or chinned, or bullied, as I've told you. But I'm willin' to come to reasonable terms. You have a right to ask me to keep fit for the match. Well, if I undertake to keep fit for Saturday, that settles it, I suppose?"

Wharton's brow clouded.

"I'm sorry Smithy—it's too late," he said. "Why couldn't you have said that an hour ago?"

"Because I didn't choose," sneered the Bounder. "I'm not specially keen on saying it now—only I don't choose to be put in the wrong. I'm not very keen about your kids' game at Rookwood on Saturday."

"If it's a kids' game, and you're not keen about it, well and good," said the captain of the Remove. "Let it go at that."

"You've filled my place, then?"

"I was not likely to leave it open, on the chance that you might or might not change your mind," said Harry with a touch of scorn.

"I suppose not. I wouldn't—in your job. And I'm in the presence of the happy substitute—what?" said the Bounder, with an unpleasant glance at Frank Nugent.

"Sorry—no," said Frank, laughing.

The Bounder seemed surprised.

"Oh, I fancied Wharton had jumped at the chance of dropping me to put his own pal in!" he said.

"That's the sort of thing you would fancy," said Harry, his lip curling. "Well, I'd rather play Frank than any other fellow at Greyfriars, if I could, but I haven't put him in. I've put in a friend of yours, not a friend of mine."

"How's that? I don't know that there's any other fellow in the Remove I'm specially friendly with, excepting Redwing."

"It's Redwing."

Vernon-Smith was silent for some seconds. His eyes glittered at the captain of the Remove. His face was quite pale.

"You've given my place to Redwing?"

"Yes."

"Redwing!" muttered the Bounder. "Redwing!"

"It's not your place, if you come to that," said Harry. "You gave up your place in the team. I suppose you didn't expect me to play ten men instead of eleven, did you? Redwing was next best man, and I've put him in. Are you going to find fault with that, too,



There was a rapid step in the passage, and the crowd at the doorway parted for Harry Wharton to enter. Wharton's face was dark, as angry as the Bounder's—and with better cause. He did not speak. He grasped Vernon-Smith by the shoulder, and fairly swung him away from Redwing. "Wharton—" panted Redwing anxiously. "Keep out of this!"

(See Chapter 5.)

Smithy? From the beginning of the cricket season you've been dinning in my ears that Redwing ought to be given a chance."

Vernon-Smith did not answer. He gave Wharton a bitter look, turned on his heel, and walked back to his own study.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Bitter Blood!

"SMITHY, old chap—"

Tom Redwing was in the study. He had reached it a few moments before Smithy's return. His face was bright and his look eager as he turned to the Bounder.

For the moment, in his own keen satisfaction, he did not notice the Bounder's black and bitter look.

"Smithy, I'm in the team for Saturday!"

"I know," said Smithy. "Wharton's just told me."

"It's ripping, isn't it?"

"Oh, ripping!" said the Bounder, with savage sarcasm. "I was quite delighted to hear it!"

Redwing could not mistake his tone, and he looked rather sharply at Smithy, his face falling.

"Aren't you pleased, Smithy?"

"Why not?" grinned the Bounder. "It's a very pleasant state of affairs, isn't it? Naturally I'm pleased."

"I owe it to you mostly," said Redwing.

"You do!" assented the Bounder, with bitter irony. "No mistake about that."

"You've helped me no end since I came to Greyfriars," said Tom. "I hadn't much chance at cricket before I came here—a sailorman's son, living in a fishing village, up at Hawkscliff."

"No, a poor devil of a longshoreman, never knowin' where his next meal would come from, wouldn't have much chance of figurin' in cricket matches, I suppose."

Redwing started and flushed.

"I've had a lot of that kind of stuff from Bunter and Skinner and that set,"

he said. "I never expected to hear it from you, Smithy."

"Lots of things happen unexpectedly in this wicked world. I never expected, for instance, to be cut out of the Remove eleven by my own pal. But it's happened!" sneered the Bounder.

Redwing started again.

"You're not out of the eleven?" he exclaimed.

"You didn't know?" jeered Smithy.

"No, I didn't know. Do you mean to say that it's your place that Wharton's given me?" exclaimed Redwing, looking deeply troubled.

"You didn't know—but you might have guessed, I think. What other fellow was Wharton likely to pitch out of the team to make room for you?"

"I can't understand it. Wharton's keen to play you, Smithy. You must have fairly driven him into dropping you out."

"Naturally Wharton's in the right, and I'm in the wrong. That's the view I expected you to take."

"I'm afraid it's the right view," said Tom. "I know he wanted you to play. I suppose you were dropped on your rotten form to-day. It really was a trial match, and you knew it, Smithy. You can't be surprised at being dropped after the show you made."

The Bounder's eyes glittered.

"You're keepin' my place, then?" he asked.

"Keeping it! I suppose I shall play, as Wharton's put my name down, if that's what you mean."

"Yes, that's what I mean. You've bagged my place in the eleven. You've often told me you'd like to repay me for the tips I've given you at cricket, and that's the way you've done it. I fairly forced Wharton to give you a trial in the Form match—and you take advantage of it to get my place in the Rookwood game. You cur!"

"Smithy!"

"You rotter!" shouted the Bounder, his savage temper blazing out now unrestrained. "Do you think I'm going to take this lying down, and be made to look a fool to all the school? Cut out

of the eleven by the fellow I've made a friend of and helped on—to step into my shoes! You're going to tell Wharton you won't play at Rookwood!"

"How can I, Smithy?"

"Or else—" The Bounder came a step nearer to Redwing, his eyes glittering, his hands clenched.

"Or else what, Smithy?" said Tom, very quietly. A gleam had come into his blue eyes now; his own anger was rising.

"Or else I'll give you such a hiding that you won't be fit to play Rookwood, or anything else, for a week to come!" hissed the Bounder. "That's the alternative, you rotter!"

"I don't think I've ever given you any reason to think me a coward, Smithy," said Tom Redwing gravely. "I can't do as you ask—all the more because you threaten me."

"You won't?"

"No."

"Then put up your hands, you cad!"

The Bounder advanced on Redwing, his hands up. Tom Redwing put his hands behind him.

"Are you going to put up your hands?" shouted Vernon-Smith furiously, and his angry voice rang far beyond Study No. 4.

"No, Smithy! I'm not going to fight you, old man," said Tom Redwing patiently. "You'll be sorry for this when you're cool."

"Then take that!" shouted the Bounder.

He struck fiercely at Redwing's grave, pale face. Tom's arm came up like lightning, the blow was warded, and the sailorman's son pushed Vernon-Smith back with an open hand on his chest. It was only a push, but there was great strength behind it, and the Bounder staggered two or three paces.

"I say, you fellows!" Billy Bunter's excited squeak rang in the Remove passage. "I say, they're fighting in No. 4! Smithy and Redwing—he, he, he!"

The Owl of the Remove jerked the

door open, and his spectacles glimmered in. His fat face was happy and excited. "Go it, Redwing!" he yelled. "Lick the cad! I'll hold your jacket, old bean! Wallop the cheeky cad, Redwing, old fellow."

"Get out, you fat fool!" snapped Tom.

"Eh, what?"

"Clear!"

"I'm backing you up—"

"Well, don't. Clear off, bother you."

"Oh, really, Redwing—"

Vernon-Smith stood gasping. Bunter was the first on the scene, but behind him came a crowd of Remove fellows, eager and curious. A dozen voices demanded to know what the row was about—all the crowd of juniors stared into the study.

Tom Redwing's face was crimson; he gave Smithy an almost beseeching look.

But the Bounder was in his worst mood now. He came on again, with his hands up and clenched.

"Smithy!" breathed Tom. "Don't be a fool! Smithy, old chap! I tell you I won't fight you!" He backed away.

"Funk!" howled a voice from the passage; a voice that was very like Harold Skinner's.

"Go for him, Smithy!" chuckled Snoop.

"Stop playing the goat, Smithy!" said Peter Todd. "You ought to be jolly well ashamed of yourself."

"The shameful ought to be terrific, my esteemed and execrable Smithy," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

The Bounder, unheeding, followed up Tom Redwing, his face expressing sheer evil. Redwing hardly knew his chum at that moment. This was the Bounder of old days—of the days when he had been the blackest sheep of Greyfriars, before Tom had come to the school; the bounder of whom Tom had heard the fellows talk, but whom he had never seen—till now. Now he realised that, well as he had known Smithy, he had not known him so well as he had supposed.

The Bounder closed in on him, hitting out. Redwing defended himself, but without striking. There was a rapid step in the passage, and the crowd at the doorway parted for Harry Wharton to enter. Wharton's face was dark, as angry as the Bounder's, and with better cause. He did not speak; he grasped Vernon-Smith by the shoulder, and fairly swung him away from Redwing, sending him spinning across the study.

There was a crash as the Bounder stumbled over a chair, and collapsed into a corner. Some of the juniors laughed—but there were also very serious faces now.

Vernon-Smith scrambled up, with an inarticulate cry of rage.

"Wharton," panted Redwing, "keep out of this! You fellows clear off, for goodness' sake! No need for anybody to interfere here."

"Plenty of need, I think," said Harry Wharton, his eyes blazing. "Stand back, Vernon-Smith!"

"You hound!" roared the Bounder.

"Better language, you blackguard!" There was sharp menace in the look and tone of the captain of the Remove. "You've got to the limit, Smithy, and you've got to stop! Do you hear?"

"I'll smash you! I—I—"

"You'll put your paws down, you rotter, and you'll keep clear of Redwing. Do you think I'll let you handle a man in my team because he's down to play and you're not?" exclaimed Wharton savagely.

"I'll do as I choose!" shouted the Bounder; "and if you interfere, Wharton, so much the worse for you."

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"You'll see that I shall interfere."

"Wharton—" repeated Tom Redwing in deep distress.

"No need for you to butt in, Redwing—this has got to be settled. You're not going to fight Vernon-Smith—not before the Rookwood match, at any rate. Smithy's going to keep the peace."

"Who's going to make me?" hissed the Bounder.

"I am—your Form captain. Stand back!"

The Bounder's answer was a rush.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Heavy Hand!

"COLLAR him!" roared Bob Cherry in the doorway.

Three or four fellows collared Herbert Vernon-Smith at once, at a sign from the captain of the Remove. The Bounder struggled savagely, but in vain, in the grip of many hands.

Wharton's face was set and savage.

He had tolerated a great deal from the Bounder; but there was an end to toleration now. Vernon-Smith had to be dealt with with a strong hand.

"Will you let me go?" yelled the Bounder, utterly infuriated now. His face was burning with rage. "Wharton, you coward—"

"Are you going to keep clear of Redwing?"

"No!" yelled the Bounder.

"Then you'll have six. Bend him over."

"He, he, he!" chortled Bunter.

"That's about right," said Squiff.

"Hear, hear!"

The Bounder struggled to the last. But there was no escape for him, and he was forcibly bent over one of his own chairs. The captain of the Remove took a ruler.

A breathless crowd looked on while Vernon-Smith took "six." The Bounder writhed under the infliction.

"Is that enough for you, Smithy?" asked the captain of the Remove, laying down the ruler.

Vernon-Smith did not answer; he was too enraged to speak. The cup of his humiliation was full now.

"Will you keep the peace now?"

"Let me go—and see!" hissed the Bounder in choking tones.

"The dear man is greedy; he wants more," said Johnny Bull. "What's the next order, old bean?"

"Lock him in the box-room till he gets over his temper," said Wharton contemptuously.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Bounder was whirled out of his study, and, amid a grinning crowd, he was hustled along the Remove passage to the box-room at the end. There he was unceremoniously pitched in, and the door closed and locked on him.

For two or three minutes his furious voice was heard from within, and answered by laughter from the Removes; and then there was silence.

The crowd broke up, dispersing to the studies for prep—or, rather, for excited discussion of the latest happening in the Remove. There was no criticism of the drastic measures taken by the captain of the Remove; the Bounder had asked for it, and he had got it. But all the Form knew that trouble must follow. This humiliation was a thing that Herbert Vernon-Smith never would or could forgive, and few fellows doubted that his thoughts would now be wholly of vengeance.

"Something like old times—the jolly old times, what?" Skinner grinned in

Study No. 11. "The old Bounder will never swallow this. He's up against Wharton at last, just as he used to be in the old days before that milksop Redwing came. Good egg, what?"

"Good!" chuckled Sidney James Snoop.

"It will be bad for the cricket," remarked Stott, in his slow way.

Skinner jeered.

"The cricket! What do we care about the cricket! I want to see Smithy give Wharton a fall. I want to see his Magnificence pulled off his perch. The Bounder could do it, and I know this study is jolly well going to back him up."

"That's all right," agreed Stott. "But, I say, the fellows are all down on Smithy now. It was rather thick his going for Redwing just because the chap's picked out to play Rookwood."

"It is as thick as you like," said Skinner. "But it's all to the good. I was the Bounder's pal before Redwing came, and—"

"And you made a good thing out of it," grinned Snoop.

Skinner rubbed his hands.

"It will be like the old times again. Smithy's got a rotten temper, and it was bound to break out sooner or later. I'm jolly glad he's done with Redwing. It was chiefly Redwing who kept him—" Skinner was going to say "straight," but he substituted—"kept him away from us. Of course, that poverty-stricken scholarship cad was only hanging on to Smithy for his money."

"Do you really think so?" asked Stott.

"Oh, of course!" Skinner did not believe so for a moment, but Skinner and veracity had long been strangers. "Now that's over. The jolly old times are coming back, my sons, and Mister Magnificent Wharton is going to get it right in the neck. I hope so at least."

Skinner was quite delighted. There were a few other fellows in the Remove who shared his views. But there was no doubt that the Form, as a whole, condemned Vernon-Smith with a very thorough condemnation.

"Who the thump does he think he is?" Squiff asked, in Study No. 14. "Why, I've been left out of matches, and I suppose I'm as good a man as the Bounder. I never thought of punching a fellow's head because he was put in when I was left out."

"Sheer cheek!" growled Johnny Bull. "If I were skipper I shouldn't be in a hurry to play Smithy again this season at all."

In most of the Remove studies there was talk of the same kind, rather to the detriment of prep. There was an unanimous opinion that the Bounder thought a great deal too much of himself and his claims, and that it was time he learned that he was not the biggest pebble on the beach. It was a case of pride going before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.

Meanwhile, Tom Redwing had left Study No. 4, and taken his books down to the Form-room. He did not care to be working in the study when Smithy returned there.

It was half an hour later that Harry Wharton stopped at the door of the Remove box-room and knocked.

"Smithy!" he called out.

"Well?"

The Bounder's tone was quiet—dangerously quiet.

"Nobody wants to keep you shut up here," said Harry. "Will you keep the peace if you're let out?"

"Yes."

The Bounder's tone was as quiet as

before. Apparently his savage fit of passion had passed.

"That's good," said Harry.

He unlocked the door and threw it open. In the fading light in the box-room Vernon-Smith was seated on an empty trunk. His face was pale, but very calm.

"I'm sorry for this, Smithy," said the captain of the Remove.

"No doubt."

Wharton turned away, and the Bounder followed him from the box-room. He was very calm, almost sedate, a strange alteration from his former self.

"Just a word," said Vernon-Smith softly, as the captain of the Remove was walking back to his study. Harry turned at once.

"Yes, Smithy?"

"Am I still down in the list of reserves?"

"Oh, yes!"

"Then I go over to Rookwood with the team on Saturday?"

"Certainly, if you like."

"That's all right."

The Bounder nodded and walked into his study. Harry glanced after him, a little perplexed. He was glad to see Smithy so calm and reasonable after his tempestuous outbreak, but there was something that seemed a little strained and unnatural in Vernon-Smith's quiet calmness. Harry Wharton had not forgotten, though he would have liked to forget, the time when the Bounder had been his bitterest foe, and he remembered that Smithy was a much more dangerous enemy when he was calm than when he was in a rage. He wondered whether the old trouble was to be revived, and the thought worried him a little. He did not want to be on hostile terms with Vernon-Smith.

But he was satisfied that he had had no choice in what he had done. It was impossible to keep any terms at all with Smithy without risking getting on hostile terms with him. Even Tom Redwing had not succeeded in keeping his friendship unbroken with the wilful and passionate Bounder.

Vernon-Smith went into Study No. 4, and smiled sardonically as he noted that Redwing was not there. He strolled along the Remove passage, looking into the studies.

"Seen Redwing, you fellows?"

"He's gone down to the Form-room, I think," said Peter Todd, eyeing the Bounder curiously.

"What on earth for?"

"Perhaps he doesn't want to under-study Daniel and stay in the lion's den," suggested Toddy.

The Bounder laughed.

He went downstairs, and found a light on in the Remove-room. Tom Redwing was sitting at his desk there at work. He looked up as Vernon-Smith came into the Form-room.

"You're keepin' out of the study on my account?" asked the Bounder.

"Yes. Don't you want me to?"

"Why should I want you to? It's your study, isn't it?"

"Yes, but—"

"Oh, you're too accommodatin'," smiled the Bounder. "I thought I'd step in and tell you that I'm quite safe now, warranted not to bite at close quarters."

He left the Form-room with that. Redwing hesitated a few moments, and then gathered up his books and went up to the study. He found his study-mate at work there, and Smithy did not look up or speak. Apparently he was deep in his work.

Prep was finished rather late that even-



"Will you let me go?" howled the Bounder, utterly infuriated now. "Are you keeping clear of Redwing?" asked Wharton grimly. "No!" roared Vernon-Smith. "Then you'll have six!" said Wharton quietly. "Bend him over!" The Bounder was forcibly bent over a chair, and the captain of the Remove administered "six" with a ruler. Smithy's cup of humiliation was full now. (See Chapter 6.)

ing. When Tom Redwing put his books away he glanced a little uncertainly at the Bounder. He was ready to forget and forgive, but he did not feel so sure of Smithy.

"Coming down, Smithy?" he asked, as cheerfully as he could.

"Well, no. I'm goin' along to speak to Skinner."

"Right-ho!"

Redwing was glad, at least, that the Bounder had spoken civilly. That was something. He went down by himself, and the Bounder strolled to Skinner's study, where he remained till bedtime. When he came up to the Remove dormitory he came with Skinner & Co., and seemed to be on very amicable terms with them. But when Tom Redwing called out from his bed, "Good-night, Smithy!" the Bounder answered quite cheerily, "Good-night, Redwing!" It looked as if the trouble had blown over, which was a surprise to fellows who knew the Bounder of Greyfriars.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Taking It Calmly!

"LYING down!" said Skinner of the Remove, in great disgust. "That's what the Bounder's done—taken it lying down!" "Rotten!" said Stott.

"He's not the old Bounder at all," said Snoop, with a shake of the head. "He's lost his grip. Getting soft, I fancy."

It was a couple of days later, and there had been no recurrence of the trouble in the Remove, and Skinner & Co. were feeling, naturally, disappointed.

Those amiable youths had been looking for more trouble, and worse trouble, and so far as they could see there was to be no trouble at all, which was a great disappointment after their happy anticipations.

The Bounder, apparently, was taking it all "lying down." He had been given "six" by order of the captain of the form, he had been locked in the box-room, he was dropped from the eleven. All these grievances he was taking with calmness, whereas, in the good old times, a tenth part of so much offence would have started him on the war-path. Skinner & Co. felt that they had been deceived in the Bounder; they were shocked, indeed, at his degeneracy.

Most of the Remove fellows looked at the matter in quite a different light. They were glad, as well as surprised, to see the Bounder displaying so much sense and self-command.

It was all very well for Skinner & Co. to sneer about Vernon-Smith taking it "lying down"; but as he had to take THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 858.

it, it was difficult to see how else he could take it. Certainly, he could not force his way into the Remove Eleven. At all events, it was not easy to see how he could have done so. He could have quarrelled with Redwing, and Skinner & Co. would have welcomed even that as a crumb of comfort. But everybody else was glad to see that Smithy was not fool enough to quarrel with his best chum for nothing. Yet it was surprising to see the Bounder so cool, so calm, and apparently satisfied. It was utterly unlike him to forget and forgive an injury, real or fancied; yet, seemingly, he had done so.

In Study No. 4 there was no hint of trouble.

Redwing had been greatly relieved. He could not forget the bitter words the Bounder had uttered, but he was more than willing to forgive them.

But although there was no trouble, there was a difference. Smithy was as civil to his study-mate as could be desired; his outward manner was even friendly. But there were no more familiar talks, no walks together under the elms. When the two juniors worked in the study they worked chiefly in silence, and there seemed a sort of chill in the atmosphere. And when prep or classes did not detain the Bounder, he generally seemed to have some occupation that kept him away from Redwing, though he did not openly avoid him.

Tom could not help noticing it, and it hurt him, though he said nothing. He thought that the Bounder was inwardly still chafing over his humiliation, and could only hope that he would get over it in time, and become his old familiar friend once more. In the meantime he was glad that there was, at least, peace.

Harry Wharton & Co., who had fully expected to find the Bounder full of fierce resentment, and planning vengeance, were relieved to find him so placable. Dangerous as he could be, as an enemy, they did not fear him or anything he could do; but they did not want the old trouble to come to life again in the Remove.

"The esteemed and execrable Bounder is displaying the uncommon sense," Hurree Jamset Ram Singh declared. "The surprisefulness is great. The ridiculous Smithy has more sense than I supposefully believed."

"I suppose he isn't lying low, and waiting for a chance to spring something on us?" Johnny Bull remarked in his thoughtful way.

"What could he spring on us?" asked Bob.

"I don't know; but it's not like him to take it like this."

"I think it's all right," said Harry Wharton, "and I'm jolly glad. The old Bounder isn't a bad sort, in his way, and we want him when the St. Jim's match comes along, if he will only play the game and stop playing the goat. I'm jolly glad it's blown over."

"Hear, hear!" said Nugent.

"Well, I hope it's blown over!" said Johnny Bull, but his tone seemed to imply a lingering doubt.

On Saturday morning there were no classes for the members of the Remove Eleven and the selected fellows who were to accompany them to Rookwood. The cricketers were catching an early train from Courtfield Junction, and they were booked to start before the rest of the school went into the Form-rooms. It was a fine, sunny morning, and the cricketers turned out with their bags in cheery spirits. The brake came round to take them to the station, and a crowd

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of Remove fellows gathered to see them off.

"You're goin', Smithy?" asked Skinner with a sneer, as the Bounder came out of the House.

Vernon-Smith looked at him.

"Yes; I'm in the reserves," he said.

Skinner's lip curled.

"You're willin' to go over as a reserve—to stand about and look on while Redwing plays in your place?" he sneered.

"Why not?" said the Bounder calmly. "Hasn't the fiat gone forth? Hasn't our Form captain ordered it so? Who am I to go against the commands of our captain?"

Skinner gave him a quick look.

"Besides," went on the Bounder in the same tone, "fellows might get left behind changin' trains, they might fall sick on the journey—lots of things might happen. Then a reserve would be wanted badly. You wouldn't like me to risk leavin' the Remove Eleven in the lurch, after they've treated me so well?"

"Smithy!" Skinner's voice was almost husky with eagerness and renewed hope.

"Is there anything on, old chap?"

"Yes; the Rookwood match, of course!"

"I don't mean that, you ass! I mean, have you got anythin' up your sleeve? What's the game?" breathed Skinner.

The Bounder smiled, but he did not answer; he stepped into the brake and took his seat. Skinner turned to Snoop and Stott with a grinning face.

"There's somethin' on!" he whispered. "The old Bounder's got it in for them, after all! Good old Smithy!"

"What the thump can he do?" asked Snoop, puzzled.

Skinner shook his head.

"I don't know! I can't guess! But the Bounder's never in want of a scheme, you know that! There's somethin' on, and I'll bet you three to one, in half-crowns, that Smithy's going to make those cads sit up, somehow, at Rookwood!"

Snoop, on reflection, decided not to take the bet.

"Don't I wish I were goin'!" sighed Skinner. "Rotten classes and blessed old Quelch for us. Never mind, something's goin' to happen, an' we shall hear all about it when they come back."

And Harold Skinner felt quite cheerful as he went into the Form-room that morning. He was convinced now that there was going to be trouble, after all; and when there was trouble for anybody it had a cheering effect on the amiable Skinner.

No thought of the kind occurred to Harry Wharton & Co. They rolled away in the brake in good spirits, thinking of anything but trouble. They were surprised, as most of the fellows were, that the Bounder condescended to accompany the team at all, as he was not to play; it was not like the arrogant Bounder. But they had plenty of other matters to think about, and the Bounder was welcome if he liked to come. Vernon-Smith sat beside Redwing in the brake, and gave him a nod and a smile, and Tom's face brightened. It seemed like his old friend again, at last, and Tom Redwing looked as merry and bright as any member of the cheery party that rolled away in the brake.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Rough on Redwing!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! Change here!"

"Ashford," said Peter Todd. The Greyfriars cricketers jumped out of the train. In a cheery party they surged along the platform.

The Bounder was with Tom Redwing, and he had relieved Tom of his bag. The two juniors were chatting in a very cordial way as they walked along with the party. The last cloud had vanished from Tom's brow. With his chum in this cheery mood, he was going to enjoy the match at Rookwood, and he hoped to put up a game that would make Smithy satisfied with him, glad of the trouble he had taken to improve Tom's cricket. Tom was only too eager to admit that, in cricket, he owed more to the Bounder than to anyone else at Greyfriars. With Smithy looking on from the pavilion, in a good temper and wishing him luck, Redwing felt that he would be able to do his chum credit.

"This way to our train," said Harry Wharton. "It's another platform. Trot along."

Vernon-Smith slowed down, and Tom Redwing slowed to keep pace with him. Harry Wharton & Co. were soon well ahead.

The captain of the Remove glanced back, and called to Redwing:

"Don't lose yourself, Reddy. The train goes in about six minutes."

"Right-ho!"

Redwing accelerated his pace, but the Bounder still walked slowly, and the sailorman's son slowed down again. After all, there was plenty of time.

The cricketers gathered on the platform, and found the train in. There was a rush for carriages.

"Let's get in here," said the Bounder, catching Tom Redwing's arm, and stopping him at the next carriage to the guard's van.

Harry Wharton & Co. were well along the train.

"Don't you want to be with the other fellows, Smithy?" asked Tom.

He saw no reason for keeping the party at a distance during the rather long run to Rookwood.

"Oh, let's give them a rest—I want to talk to you!"

"Right you are, old fellow."

Redwing gave up the point, as he generally did in dealing with the Bounder.

Bob Cherry looked back from a carriage window half up the long express, waved his hand, and shouted:

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! This way, Redwing! Room for you here."

"All right, Bob."

Redwing waved his hand, and stepped into the rear carriage after Vernon-Smith.

In the middle of the train the Greyfriars cricketers were crowded into two carriages; all the party were together, with the exceptions of Tom Redwing and the Bounder.

"We've got this to ourselves," said the Bounder as he sat down, his eyes glimmering strangely as he looked at Tom.

"Yes, that's all right," said Redwing. He would have preferred the merry company of the cricketers, but he did not think of saying so.

Vernon-Smith glanced at his watch.

"Off in one minute," he said.

Redwing nodded, and disposed his bag on the rack over the seat. Then he sat down in the corner facing the Bounder.

Vernon-Smith let down the window and leaned out. Doors were closing along the train; the guard was about to wave his flag. The Bounder suddenly turned to his companion.

"My hat! I've done it now!"

"What?"

"This part of the train doesn't go to Latcham. Didn't you hear the porter calling out? It's the front part for Latcham Junction."

(Continued on page 17.)



THINGS WE WANT TO KNOW!

By Tom Brown.

WHAT would be the size and cost of a meal that would thoroughly content the soul of William George Bunter?

WHETHER Fisher T. Fish, who bought something at an auction sale the other day, is contented with his "lot"?

WHEN is Bolsover major going to cultivate a sunny smile in place of a savage scowl?

WAS Skinner quite satisfied when Quelch gave him a thousand lines the other day, or would he have preferred a billion?

DID the honest visage of Gosling the porter beam with contentment when Snoop handed him a halfpenny "tip"? And does he regard Snoop as a man of means, or a man of meanness?

IS Sammy Bunter satisfied with his salary of two jam-tarts per week as sub-editor of his major's "Weekly"?

WOULD twenty-four hours' sleep a day satisfy that languid scion of the aristocracy, Lord Mauleverer?

WHY is Mark Linley one of Quelch's favourite pupils? Is it because he sticks to the maxim, "Work, work, work, and Beak contented"?

WOULD Loder of the Sixth, who is never happier than when wielding his ashplant, care for the job of Public Executioner?

WILL Coker of the Fifth ever be really satisfied until he has broken his neck through reckless riding?

WHEN Skinner was swished in class the other day, did he wear a look of "rapped" contentment?

WILL Tom Brown be contented with a "liver" for writing these notes? Yes, rather!

(Methinks Browney will have to be content with a humble tanner!—Ed.)

Supplement i.]

WHEN Harry Wharton & Co. are taking their trip to the deserts of Northern Africa. And who is likely to be included in the party?

WHAT Prouty said the other day when he found one of his choice Havana cigars missing. And what Harold Skinner thought about that choice brand?

WHEN will Mr. Horace Quelch complete his "History of Greyfriars"? And is it a fact that he has already written a million words of it?

IF contentment is the joy of life or a life of joy?

IS it a fact that Hop Hh intends to take up singing. Will he sing Hi(gh) or sing low?

CONTENTMENT!

By Lord Mauleverer.

I LOVE to lie beneath the shade,
Alone with pints of lemonade;
And watch the silver clouds on high
Go sailing o'er the summer sky.

The greensward is my humble "doss,"
My pillow is a mound of moss.
Depart, ye things that crawl and creep,
Nor wake me from my blissful sleep!

Ye burrowing ants, and busy bees,
I prithee, don't disturb my ease
By crawling on my noble nose
As I recline in sweet repose.

Ye caterpillars, and green grubs,
Who love to feed on leaves and shrubs,
Don't tumble on my face, I pray,
Or you will wake me right away!

How grand it is to stretch my limbs!
Better than bruising them in gyms,
By boxing, wrestling, and the like.
From such pursuits I've gone on strike!

The distant sounds of bat and ball
Upon my ears distinctly fall.
Better by far to sink to sleep,
Than wait for catches in the "deep."

Better by far to snooze and snore
Than to achieve a hit for four.
To rest in some secluded thicket
Delights my soul far more than cricket!

My eyelids flutter, then they close:
I drop into a dreamy doze.
At peace with all the world I lie,
Prostrate beneath a smiling sky.

But soon, alas! I must awaken,
My form will be severely shaken;
And Cherry's voice—a thunderclap—
Will bellow, "Time for tea, old chap!"

EDITORIAL!

By Harry Wharton.

I DON'T often read poetry, but the other day I happened upon a well-known verse, which is supposed to depict complete contentment:

"Here, with a loaf of bread beneath the bough,
A flask of wine, a book of verse, and thou
Beside me singing in the wilderness,
And wilderness is paradise enow."

That might have been the Oriental poet's idea of contentment, but it isn't mine. Neither is it Bob Cherry's, or Frank Nugent's, or Billy Bunter's.

If Bunter were anything of a poet, he would re-write the verse thus:

"Here, with a rabbit-pie beneath the trees,
A dish of doughnuts also, if you please,
And flagons filled with foaming ginger-pop,
I'd simply love to lie and take my ease."

You see, Billy Bunter has no use for a loaf of bread or a flask of wine, least of all a book of verse. And he wouldn't like anybody singing beside him in the wilderness. I don't think I should care about it, either. Bob Cherry is often singing beside me in the study, but it doesn't make me feel happy and contented. Far from it!

The fact is, we all have our own pet ideas of contentment. What is bliss to one fellow is a beastly bore to another. Lord Mauleverer, for example, loves to lie a-snoring on his study sofa, but such a pastime would be gall and wormwood to the energetic Bob Cherry.

I thought it would be very interesting to collect the views of the Greyfriars fellows on the subject of Contentment, and to serve them up to my readers in this special number. You will feel inclined to chuckle when you read some of these views; but that's just what I want you to do.

Very few of us, I suppose, are really contented. Perhaps it is just as well. If we had everything we wanted, and nothing to worry about, and were placidly content, we should mark time in the race of life, and there would be no ambition, no striving, no progress. Mind you, I've no use for fellows who are habitually discontented, eternally grumbling and grouching; but, on the other hand, I've no use for smug, self-satisfied people who are content to jog along in their own sweet way, without any purpose or ambition in life. There is a happy medium.

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A Discontented Fellow's Diary!

(Extracts from the Private Diary of Billy Bunter.)

MONDAY:

Woke up in a savidge mood. Beastly wet morning, and I particularly wanted it to be fine to-day, bekawse I'm going over to Cliff House to tea—uninvited, of corse. The rain pelted down all day long. It looked as if I would have to swim over to Cliff House. However, I managed to wade there in a suit of oil-skins. They were Micky Desmond's oil-skins, and I borrowed them without permission. He shouted after me from his study window: "Oil skin you when you come back, Bunter!" (That's supposed to be a joak.) When I got to Cliff House I found that the girls had finished tea. They had not even a crum of consolation to offer me, let alone a crum of currant-cake. As I waded moodily back to Greyfriars I was the most discontented fellow under the sun, or, rather, under the rain!

TUESDAY:

Woke up in worse mood than ever. The sun was shining brilliantly this morning, and I particularly wanted it to be a wet day, bekawse it's compulsory cricket this afternoon, and I don't feel like cricket. Being such a star player, I hate having to bat against such feeble bowling as Wharton and Cherry and Inky send down. I wouldn't mind playing with people of my own class—county men, for instance. But these Greyfriars chaps make me tired. I hoped the weather would break up in the afternoon, and that we should get some soop, but, alas! the sun grew hotter and hotter, and there was no escape from cricket practiss. I was obliged to play, and the beasts bowled at my body instead of at my wicket, with the rezzult that I am now a mass of broozes from head to foot. As I rest my paneful limbs on the study sofa I feel more discontented than ever.

WEDNESDAY:

The postman brought me several letters and a parcel this morning. This would have brought contentment to most fellows, but it didn't to me. My Aunt Bertha sent me a postle-order for five bob. Why couldn't she have made it a check for five quids? My Uncle Claude sent me his kind regards. Bah! I've no use for his kind regards. What I want is a tuck-hamper. My Aunt Prudence sent me a currant-cake weighing two pounds. She should have shown more "prudence," and sent me a cake that weighed a ton! Surely she knows by this time what a healthy appy-tite I've got? My discontentment grows worse and worse.

THURSDAY:

A dreadful day! Didn't get enuff to eat. A mizzerable brekker, a mizzerable dinner, no tea, and a mizzerable

supper! True, we had eggs and bacon for brekker, but why couldn't we have had sossidges and tomatoes as well? For dinner we had stake-and-kidney pooding, but why didn't they give us duck and green peas? For tea I had nothing at all, eggsept half a duzzen jam-tarts I raided from Smithy's study, and you can't call that a tea, can you? For supper I had biskits and cheese, and if anybody calls that a filling diet he's a fibber! Went to bed feeling as discontented as Robinson Crusoe probably did on a Thursday evening before Friday came along.

FRIDAY:

Yesterday over again. A dreery, dismal, doleful, depressing, disappoynting day! How can any fellow possibly be contented when he duzzent get enuff to eat, and when the world seems out of tune?

SATTERDAY:

Managed to borrow a bob from Lord Mauleverer. Why didn't the stingy beast advance me a fiver? Also managed to borrow Tom Brown's push-bike to go over to Courtfield. Why didn't Mr. Prout offer to lend me his motor-bike? Went to the cinema on the strength of the borrowed bob. Why didn't the Head give me permission to go to the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley instead? Mine is a hard life, mine is. And I don't suppose I shall ever be really contented until I shuffle off this mortle coil.

NO CAUSE FOR FEAR.

The Trustnot Terrace Cricket Club was busy upon its usual pitch, the thoroughfare from which it took its name, and as the old gentleman came along he looked upon them benignly, and recollected with satisfaction what a dashing boy he had been himself.

But his thoughts took another course when the ball struck his hat and sent it gyroscoping into the gutter.

"Boy," he said to the grinning batsman, "don't you think it very foolish to play cricket in the street?"

But the youthful rival of Hobbs and Hendren gazed up at the telegraph-wires and said nothing.

"Look here, my lad," said the old gentleman, "aren't you afraid the ball will crash through one of these windows?"

"Not me!" said the sportsman. "I ain't afraid, guv'nor. You see, it ain't my ball!"

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GROWLERS AND GRUMBLERS!

By Bob Cherry.

I HONESTLY believe there are some fellows who are never happy unless they are miserable. That sounds Irish, I know, but I think you'll tumble to my meaning. There are fellows who do nothing but grumble and grouse, and whom nothing can satisfy. Instead of cultivating sunny smiles, they wear eternal expressions of discontent.

But Billy Bunter is probably the champion grumbler of the Greyfriars Remove. You often see pictures of the furious Bunter, the indignant Bunter, and the disappointed Bunter, but seldom of the satisfied Bunter.

Bunter's greatest grievance is that he never gets enough to eat. But if you were to give him a dozen meals a day, do you think he would be contented? Not a bit of it! He would no longer grumble at the quantity of the food, but at the quality.

Another grievance of Bunter's is that his titled relations neglect to send him remittances, with the result that he is always "broke." But if you were to give Bunter a thousand pounds, do you suppose he would be satisfied? Not a bit of it! He would grumble because it wasn't a million!

Bolsover major is another member of the discontented tribe. For a long time he has been agitating for a place in the Remove Eleven. He is not a bad batsman, and at last Harry Wharton decided to give him a trial. Bolsover grumbled and growled because his name was put at the tail-end of the batting-list. He had to go in last, and he considered he ought to go in first. In the next match Wharton gave him his heart's desire, and allowed him to go in first. He was bowled first ball; and when he got back to the pavilion he growled at his skipper: "What did you want to put me in first for? I ought to have gone in about fourth wicket down!"

What are you to do with a fellow like that? If you were to make him captain of the team, and captain of the Remove into the bargain, he would still find something to grouse about.

I know a fag in the First Form who is very unhappy because he has to act as head cook and bottle-washer for one of the prefects. "I'm kept on the go from morning till night!" is his tearful wail. "I'd give anything to be in the Remove, where they're exempt from fagging!" But when, a few years hence, that kid gets into the Remove, will he heave a sign of deep contentment, and say, "All's right with the world!" No jolly fear! He'll say, "I hate being stuck in the Remove! I want to be a fellow of position and importance—a prefect, for instance." Years later, when he becomes a prefect, he is as discontented as ever. He wants to be a junior master. When he has aspired to this position, he still isn't satisfied. "I sha'n't be happy until I'm a headmaster!" he declares. And when, in the fullness of time, he achieves this ambition, and is monarch of all he surveys, he will no doubt say: "The duties and responsibilities of a headmaster are too heavy for me! I should like to be a fag in the First again!"

What's the use of growling and grumbling? It never gets you anywhere. You miss all the fun and everything that makes life worth living. "Laugh, and the world laughs with you." Show a scowling face to the world, and it will seowl back at you.

The fact is, the world has no use for a grouser; but it welcomes the cheery and contented chappie with open arms!

Quit the ranks of the grumblers to-day! There is more sound common-sense than we realise in that familiar verse:

"What's the use of worrying?
It never was worth while.
So pack all your troubles in your old
kit-bag,
And smile—smile—smile!"

[Supplement ii.]



The Boy who was Never Satisfied!

By DICKY AUGENT.

"NEVER be afraid to stand up for your rights, or you'll get left!"

That was the parting advice of Mr. Hiram K. Grumbell, the sellybrated millionaire, to his son Cyrus, who was about to commence his school career at St. Sam's.

"All serene, pop," said young Grumbell, leaning out of the carriage window and ringing my father's hand. "Guess I shall look after 'Number One' all right when I get to St. Sam's."

Mr. Grumbell nodded approvingly. "That's the spirit!" he said. "I'm not paying these big term-fees for nothing. I shall eggspect you to be well fed, and to have everything you want. When a man pays a ginny a term for his son's eddification, he natcherally eggspects that son to be well nurished and well looked after in every way."

There was a paws, while father and son shook each other's paws.

"If anything goes wrong, Cyrus," said Mr. Grumbell, "don't be afraid to speak up like a man and say 'I'm not satisfied!' Make that your slowgan. It has been mine all through life. When I was a dustman's assistant in Noo York in my youth I said to myself, 'I'm not satisfied!' I was determined to get out of the rut. I became a foreman dustman, and then a head dustman; and I gradually worked my way up the ladder, until I am now a millionaire. But still I am not satisfied. I shall carry on until I become a millionaire many times over. D'you get me, Cy?"

"Yep, pop!"

A minnit later the guard waved his flag, and the trane steamed out of the station.

Young Cyrus Grumbell sat in a corner seat, digesting a stick of chewing-gum and the parting words of his pop. Long before he reached his destination the words "I'm not satisfied!" were dinning in his brane. He did not mean to forget the slowgan which had helped his pater up Fortune's ladder.

When the trane drew up at the station of Little-Clackfold-in-the-Mud, which was the station for St. Sam's, young Cyrus was greeted by three smiling schoolboys. Jack Jolly & Co., the heroes of the Fourth, had come to meet the new boy.

"How do you do, kid," said Jack Jolly stepping forward to greet young Grumbell. "You will observe that three of us have done you the onner of coming to the station to meet you."

"I'm not satisfied!" said Cyrus.

"Eh? You didn't eggspect the whole school to come down and meet you, did you?"

"I'm not satisfied!" repeated Cyrus. *Supplement iii.]*

"Checky bounder!" growled Merry. "Give him a thick ear, Jack, and see if he'll be satisfied with that!"

But Jack Jolly, being a good-natured sort, held his hand. He also held his tung. In addition, he held the new boy's portmanter, until a porter could be found to convey it to St. Sam's.

Jack Jolly & Co. then escorted Cyrus Grumbell to the school. When the stately and historrick eddifiss came in sight Jack Jolly indicated it with a wave of his hand.

"There's St. Sam's," he said. "Fine old plaice, isn't it? What do you think of it?"

"I'm not satisfied!" said Cyrus.

"My hat!" gasped Bright. "The kid duzzent seem to be satisfied with anything. He didn't eggspect St. Sam's to look like Buckingham Pallis or Winsor Castle, did he?"

The new boy was ushered into the school. He arrived just in time for dinner. All the St. Sam's fellows were flocking into the dining-hall.

"Come along, kid!" said Jack Jolly kindly. "I dare say you feel a bit peckish after your long jerney."

"I'm not satisfied——" began Cyrus.

"Oh, ring the changes, for goodness' sake!" growled Merry. "Is that all you can say?"

They marched into the Hall, and took their plaices at the Fourth Form table. At the head of the table sat Mr. Lickham, the Form master. Mr. Lickham was looking very pleased with himself.

The headmaster of St. Sam's had just had a timid brakedown, and the doctor had ordered him away to the Continong for six munths. Mr. Lickham was to take the Head's plaice meenwile; and he rather fancied himself in the roll of headmaster. He nodded amiably towards the new boy.

Dinner konsisted of stake-pooding, which was a favorite dish at St. Sam's. Young Cyrus Grumbell was given an extra big helping, and he pitched into it with rellish—Yorkshire rellish.

"Well, my boy," said Mr. Lickham, when Grumbell's plate was empty, "and how did you enjoy your dinner?"

"I'm not satisfied!" said Cyrus.

"Bless my sole!" gasped Mr. Lickham, raising his eyebrows. "In that case you had better have a second helping."

The new boy was given a further instalment of the pooding. He struggled through it with some difficulty, bekawse the first helping had been a jolly hefty one. When his plate was empty once more Mr. Lickham smiled at him.

"Satisfied now?" he asked.

Cyrus shook his head. He remembered his father's slowgan.

"I'm not satisfied!" he said defiantly.

"Dear me! Then you had better go on eating until you are!"

So saying, Mr. Lickham piled a further helping of pooding on the new boy's plate. By this time the rest of the fellows had not only finished their first corse, but were well away with the dessert.

Cyrus Grumbell found it a terribul job to get through that third helping. It seemed to stick in his throte. He was still plodding through it when the rest of the fellows trooped out of the dining-hall. Every mouthful was a marterdom, but he felt he ought to go through with it, after saying he was not satisfied.

Cyrus finished his dinner at last, and he rolled rather than walked out of the dining-hall. He felt like an inflated balloon.

"Oh dear!" he groaned. "These infernal internal panes are getting worse and worse!"

Suddenly a voice fell on his ears—without damaging those organs, however.

"Grumbell!"

The new boy spun round, to find himself confronted by a figger in gown and mortar-board. It was Mr. Lickham.

"Welcome to St. Sam's, my boy!" said that gentleman. "Doctor Bircham-all has had a frightened brakedown, and has been ordered away by the doctor in konsequence. The guvverners have

(Continued at foot of page 15.)

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TALES OF THE SCHOOL IN THE BACKWOODS



APPEAR IN THE
POPULAR
Every Tuesday.

**BILLY BUNTER:**

I don't think you will have much trouble in guessing what my idea of complete contentment is. A good, solid, substantial, square meal! You can't possibly be happy if you're hungry, any more than you can be cheerful if you've got the toothache. "Stuff, stuff, stuff and be contented," is an eggcellent maxim, and I always put it into practice—when funds permit. At the prezzant moment I happen to be on the rox. Konsequently, I am not kontented. But if some Good Sammaritan will take me by the hand and lead me gently to the tuckshopp, and treat me to a rabbit-pie, followed by a cupple of Mrs. Mimble's apple-dumplings, then my plump face will beam like a full moon, and I shall be a living picture of kontentment.

DICK PENFOLD:

I always feel complete content, whenever I'm on pleasure bent; with work and worry left behind, and nothing weighing on my mind. I care not if it snows

or rains; when cycling through the country lanes, I always feel a healthy glow of absolute content, you know. I love to flash along the ground, and watch the pedals racing round. Bent double o'er the handle-bars, I love to chase the motor-cars; scorching like fury through the dust, until a beastly tyre goes bust. Then my contentment disappears. I feel like shedding copious tears.

BOB CHERRY:

My idea of contentment is to leap from my bed before the sun is up, and to sprint down to the sea and revel in the luxury of an early-morning dip. It's the glorious, glowing feeling one gets afterwards that brings contentment. At such moments I envy no one in the land. I'm as cheery and contented as can be, and as merry a soul as Old King Cole, if ever there was such a monarch. How any fellow can possibly be discontented when he has youth and health and vigour passes my understanding.

GERALD LODER:

I'm never more contented than when I'm wielding my ashplant, and listening to the shrill screams of my victim, which are like music to my ears. But when all the fags are as good as gold, and I can find no excuse for awarding punishment, I'm as miserable as can be. If only I could have a wholesale execution of fags—say about fifty in one day—I should be transported into the seventh heaven of delight. It's great fun hearing the little brats squeal for mercy.

(Callous cad! It's you who will do the squealing one of these days. There is a law of retribution, you know, and your day of reckoning will surely come. —Ed.)

LORD MAULEVERER:

Tuck me in my little bed, begad, and complete contentment is mine. Too much fag to pursue this topic. Goo'-night, everybody!

MR. PROUT:

My after-dinner cigar always yields a feeling of peaceful contentment. As I recline in my armchair, puffing at a fragrant Havana, I am at peace with the world. I trust, however, that none of the Greyfriars boys will seek to emulate my example. They will be well advised to stick to chocolate cigars.

SAMMY BUNTER:

My idea of kontentment is the same as Billy's, eggsept that I prefer six solid, substantial, square meals instead of one.

WILLIAM GOSLING:

I should be quite contented if they'd stop worritin' me to write my views on contentment.

THE BOY WHO WAS NEVER SATISFIED!

(Continued from previous page.)

asked me to take his place. What do you think of my appointment as tempory headmaster?"

"I'm not sattsified!" said Cyrus boldly. "What!"

Cyrus repeated his remark. And Mr. Lickham culled to the roots of his hare.

"How dare you?" he thundered. "Take a hundred lines, Grumbell, for roodness!"

"I'm not sattsified!" said Cyrus.

"Take five hundred, then!"

"I'm not sattsified!"

"Then perrhaps you will be sattsified with a thowsand?"

Cyrus shook his head.

"Very well," said Mr. Lickham, kompressing his lips. "You will follow me to my study, and I will see if a severe flogging will give you the necessary sattsifackshun."

At this point Cyrus began to have serious doubts as to the wisdom of his father's slowgan. But he stuck manfully to his guns, and followed the furious Mr. Lickham to the torcher-chamber—in other words, the Head's study.

Jack Jolly and his chums came along the passage in time to hear the latter part of the argument.

"Serves him right!" said Jolly. "The silly idiot deserves to get it in the neck!"

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"Regular hobsession with him," continued Jolly. "He's never satisfied. He'll change his tune now, I fancy."

Cyrus Grumbell began to think the same himself. He was fairly shivering in his shoes as he entered the dread apartment, and wished that his father had chosen a different slowgan. But Cyrus had to go on with it now.

Mr. Lickham picked up a formiddable-looking cane, and signalled to Cyrus to hold out his hand—not for the purrpuss of giving him a frendly greeting, but in order to castigate him.

Cyrus put out his paw.

Swish! Swash! Swoosh!

Although it had no teeth, the cane bit into the new boy's palms, and he hollered with anguish.

Six times the cane dessended, and then Mr. Lickham pawsed, panting for breth.

"There!" he gasped. "Let that be a lesson to you, you impertinent rascal!"

Cyrus squeezed his hands tightly together.

"I'm not sattsified!" he cried.

"What!" roared Mr. Lickham. "Not sattsified yet? Then we will try a variation. Touch your toes!"

Cyrus obeyed; and once more the crool cane came down, harder than ever.

Whack! Crack! Smack! Thwack!

"Hellup!" roared Cyrus, turning a complete summersalt and finishing up in the waist-paper basket. "Ow! Yow! Groo! Give over, sir! I've had enuff!"

Whatever Mr. Hiram K. Grumbell, the sellybrated millionaire, might have to say on the subject, his hopeful son Cyrus was sattsified at last!

THE END.

SNAPSHOTS!

"What are you crying for, my poor little boy?"

"Boo-hoo! Pa fell downstairs!"

"Don't take on so, my pet. He'll get better soon."

"It's not that! My sister saw him fall all the way! I never saw nuffin'!"

His Hostess: "Don't you think you've had enough ice-cream?"

Freddie: "No, mum. I don't feel sick yet!"

Teacher: "Tell me a few of the most important things existing to-day which did not exist a hundred years ago."

Thomas: "Us!"

Pater: "Well, my boy, so you have interviewed your girl's father, eh? Did you make the old codger toe the mark?"

Son: "Yes, dad. I was the mark."

George: "A thoroughbred gentleman puts on his clothes and then forgets them."

Ned: "That's what I try to do; but my tailor won't let me."

[Supplement iv.



(Continued from page 12.)

"Great Scott!"

Tom Redwing jumped up in dismay. The Bounder threw open the carriage door.

"Quick! I'll bring your bag! Sharp's the word!"

Tom Redwing jumped from the carriage to the platform. It did not occur to him for a second to doubt the Bounder's statement. It was, of course, common enough for sections of a train to be booked for different destinations. He had followed the Bounder's lead without question in getting in, and he followed his direction without question in getting out again.

"Come on, Smithy!"

Redwing ran desperately along the train. He supposed that the Bounder was following him.

But he was too late.

The guard was already waving his flag, and as Redwing made a desperate rush for the forward carriages, a porter caught him by the shoulder and jerked him back.

"Too late, sir."

"Let me go! I—"

"You can't go by this train, sir," said the porter stolidly; and indeed Redwing could see that he was right.

The express was moving, and it was too late; the train had been almost on the move when Redwing jumped from the rear carriage.

From windows up the train some of the cricketers were staring at Redwing as he stood breathless and dismayed on the platform, with the carriages gliding past him. They wondered why he had got out at the last moment like this, and they realised that he would be left behind at Ashford.

Redwing panted, almost overwhelmed with dismay. Vernon-Smith's mistake had done this—his mistake in taking the rear carriage and keeping away from the party—but to his amazement Redwing noticed now that the Bounder was not on the platform. As he stood in consternation and dismay, the carriage at the rear of the train passed him, and the Bounder's mocking face looked at him from the window.

Vernon-Smith smiled at him—a bitter, ironical smile, and waved his hand in mockery.

"Good-bye, Redwing!"

"Smithy!" stammered Tom.

"You won't play in my place to-day, after all!" shouted back the Bounder from the receding train. "What?"

Tom Redwing stood rooted.

His eyes followed the train as it glided off, and to the last he watched the Bounder's mocking face looked at him from the carriage window next to the guard's van.

"And lines, sir," said the porter. "But what did you get out for, sir, at the very last minute?"

Tom looked at the man almost dazedly.

"Does all that train go to Latcham?" he asked.

He was beginning to realise now what had happened.

"Yessir."

"Isn't the last carriage to be detached somewhere—to go somewhere else—"

The porter stared at him.

"No, it ain't! Did you think it was? Oh, lor'!"

"He told me—I thought—" Redwing, stammered confusedly. "I—"

He tried to collect himself.

"When is the next express to Latcham?"

"There ain't another till the evening."

"Oh!"

Dimly it came into Tom Redwing's mind that the Bounder had known this—he had studied the time-tables and laid his cunning plans accordingly. He had been left behind by the Bounder's trickery—that was what Smithy's renewed friendship had meant that morning—it had been intended to lull his suspicion—not that poor Tom would ever have dreamed of suspecting him of treachery.

"But there are other trains, surely," exclaimed Redwing, stopping the porter as he was moving away. "I've got to get to Latcham—I'm due there for a cricket match. I must—I suppose there are other trains—with changing—"

"Course there are, sir," said the man. "You inquire at the office, sir, it'll take you some time, though."

The express was out of sight now. Tom Redwing turned away drearily.

He had been tricked—betrayed by his friend. Under his cool and smiling exterior the Bounder had still nursed a deadly resentment—he still considered that his comrade had "cut him out," and in retaliation he had planned to bar him from the Rookwood match. And he had succeeded. Tom would scarcely have thought of guarding against such treachery from an enemy—certainly not from a friend.

His heart was heavy.

It was not only that he was to lose the Rookwood match, and to disappoint his cricket captain; it was the foul blow from the friend he trusted that hit him hard. He scarcely cared, now, whether he played at Rookwood at all—that was a small matter, in comparison with the ending of a friendship he had hoped would be lifelong, the end of which he had never thought of nor contemplated.

But it was ended now.

After this, he and the Bounder could never be friends again—that was finished with.

But, miserable as he was feeling then, Tom Redwing did not forget what was due to others. Wharton wanted him in the match at Rookwood—and it was his duty to turn up there if he could. So, with a heavy heart he proceeded to make inquiries concerning trains. His inquiries only revealed with what skill the Bounder had laid his cunning, secret plans.

Only twice a day—morning and evening—were there express trains from Ashford to Latcham Junction. At other times a traveller had no choice but to take the ordinary slow trains that stopped at all stations, and to change several times on the journey. For a quarter of an hour Redwing pondered over time-tables, and the result was the discovery that he could not possibly get to Rookwood earlier than three in the afternoon. That was useless, or worse than useless; he did not want to arrive at Rookwood to find a reserve playing in his place. It was futile to make the journey for that.

With a heavy, sinking heart, Redwing stepped into a train for Courtfield, to return alone to his school. He walked from Courtfield back to Greyfriars, and came in as the juniors were pouring out of the Form-rooms at morning break. Skinner was the first to sight him, and he came racing up.

"You back, Redwing!"

Tom nodded without speaking, and would have passed on, but Skinner detained him eagerly. He wanted to know. How the Bounder had done it Skinner could not guess; but he knew that the Bounder had done it somehow.

"Wharton dropped you at the last minute?" he asked.

"No."

"Then why have you come back?"

"I lost the train, changing at Ashford," said Tom Redwing quietly. Not a word about Vernon-Smith! Friendship was a thing of the past, now; but he would say no word against the fellow who had been his friend.

Skinner stared, and laughed.

"Well! You must be an ass."

Redwing walked on to the House. But he was not to escape so easily—a crowd of fellows wanted to know the reason of his unexpected return by himself, and Redwing had to answer.

"Silly ass!" said Bolsover major.

"Awful chump!" said Wibley. "Catch me losing a train, if I'd been down to play Rookwood!"

"I say, you fellows, it's all Wharton's fault, you know," said Billy Bunter. "I told him Redwing was no good, you know, and offered to play, and he only called me names, you know."

Redwing got away at last, and went into the House. Skinner and Snoop and Stott discussed the matter with grinning faces.

"He won't say so, but, of course, it's the Bounder's doing," said Skinner with a chuckle. "He bagged Smithy's job, and Smithy meant all along to dish him. And he's dished him. Redwing can say what he likes about losing trains, but I'll bet you ten to one in dough-nuts that the old Bounder fixed it to leave him behind."

"No takers!" grinned Snoop.

"I say, isn't that a rather dirty trick?" said Stott.

"Of course it is, and serve Redwing jolly well right," said Skinner. "Smithy's not taking it lying down, after all. There's going to be trouble in the Remove, my sons!"

And the amiable Skinner seemed quite to rejoice at the prospect. That afternoon, Tom Redwing was little seen by the other Remove fellows. He had received a blow that was not easy to recover from; and he would let no one see that he was hard hit, if he could help it: he would not wear his heart on his sleeve for daws to peck at. But that sunny summer's day was a dark and dreary one to him.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The Eleventh Man!

"THE silly ass!" said Bob Cherry. Bob made that remark as the express rushed on out of Ashford, and Tom Redwing disappeared from sight on the platform behind.

"Lost the train!" said Frank Nugent. "What the thump did he get out for?"

"Goodness knows."

"Anybody got a time-table?" asked Harry Wharton abruptly. The captain of the Remove was frowning.

Johnny Bull had a time-table, and for some time Harry Wharton studied it. He handed it back to Johnny at last.

"Nothing doing," he said. "Redwing can't come on in time for the match. He's out of it."

"Must be a silly chump!" commented Johnny.

"The chumpfulness is terrific," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "Redwing must have been rather off rockerfully."

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"I shall have to play another man," said Harry, and his glance rested on Frank Nugent. Frank smiled. It looked like his chance at last!

"The Bouncer's on the train," said Squiff. "I looked—only Redwing got out. Smithy's on somewhere."

"And Smithy's a reserve," said Peter Todd. "I know he mucked up the Form match the other day; but he was off colour, then, Wharton. He looks as right as rain to-day."

"He does!" said Bob.

Harry Wharton was silent. He had dropped Smithy from the team for good reasons, and put in Redwing. But Redwing was gone now; a reserve had to be played instead. The Bouncer was available; he was a reserve, and undoubtedly would be willing to play. Wharton's personal desire was to put in Nugent; he longed to give his best friend a chance, and this was a good opportunity. But he realised that as cricket captain he was bound to select the fellow who had irritated and "checked" him, rather than the fellow who had been his loyal pal ever since he had come to Greyfriars.

The Bouncer's insolence did not really matter. He had refused to agree even to keep himself fit for the match, thus allowing Wharton no choice but to drop him. But he had professed himself willing, afterwards, to take that back; and, in actual fact, the Bouncer was now obviously as fit as a fiddle.

Frank Nugent watched his chum's face, and smiled again.

"Cut it out, old fellow," he said. "If Smithy's on the train, you're going to play Smithy."

Bob Cherry nodded thoughtfully.

"I know exactly what you're feeling like, old bean," he said. "But we want to beat Rookwood if we can. Frank won't mind me saying that the Bouncer can hand out more runs than he can."

"I don't agree," said Johnny Bull. "Smithy was turned out for a good reason; he ought not to play in this match, whatever arrangements you make for others. But you're skipper, Harry."

Wharton hesitated long. It was with Johnny Bull that he was disposed to concur. But the game came first.

"If Smithy's not on the train, you go in, Frank," he said. "But if Smithy's on the train—"

"He goes in," said Nugent.

"Well, yes."

"That's all right."

It was not quite certain whether Vernon-Smith was still on the train. Wharton, perhaps, nourished a secret hope that he was not. But when the express stopped at Latham Junction, and the cricketers turned out, the Bouncer came sauntering along the platform, with Redwing's bag in his hand, and joined them, thus settling the point.

"Redwing's not with you?" he asked pleasantly.

"No, he was left behind at Ashford," said Harry. "Didn't you see him?"

"Odd, isn't it?" smiled the Bouncer. "He seemed to have an idea at the last moment of running along the train to join you fellows."

"The ass!" grunted Johnny Bull. Then, with a sudden gleam of suspicion in his eyes, he looked sharply at the Bouncer. "I suppose you hadn't anything to do with that, Smithy?"

"I!" ejaculated the Bouncer.

"What on earth could Smithy have had to do with it?" asked Bob Cherry, puzzled.

"Well, I don't know, but it's queer that a fellow like Redwing should play the goat like that—"

The Bouncer laughed.

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"Hallo, here's some of the Rookwood chaps," exclaimed Squiff, as Jimmy Silver, of the Rookwood Fourth, appeared on the platform.

Arthur Edward Lovell and Mornington came with him. There were cheery greetings on both sides, and Johnny Bull's question to the Bouncer remained unanswered and was forgotten for the time.

"We've got a brake here, you chaps," said Jimmy Silver. "This way."

Harry Wharton & Co. walked out to the Rookwood brake. On the way Harry dropped into step beside the Bouncer.

"Redwing's out of it," he said abruptly. "He can't come on in time for the match. If you care to play Smithy, your place is open to you."

The Bouncer's eyes gleamed. He had expected that; indeed, he knew that Wharton could scarcely do anything else. But it suited him to seem far from keen.

"Oh, I don't know!" he said. "I really came along chiefly on Redwing's account." He laughed as he realised how far the captain of the Remove would be from guessing the true meaning of that remark: "What about Nugent?"

"I'm offering you the place," said Wharton rather curtly. "If you don't care to play, Nugent's available."

"I'm ready if you want me!"

"That's settled, then!"

Vernon-Smith smiled as he sat in the brake, and the party rolled off by green lanes to Rookwood School. There was not a twinge of remorse in his breast—not a whisper of repentance. That, perhaps, might come later—for the Bouncer, reckless, headstrong, hard as he was, was not always in such a mood as this. But for the present the Bouncer seemed to have adopted for himself the maxim of the fallen angel of old: "Evil, be thou my good!"

Half an hour later stumps were pitched at Rookwood, and the great game had started. Herbert Vernon-Smith went on the field in a determined mood—determined to play the game of his life. The whole team, and all Greyfriars, were to see that the Bouncer could not be spared—that the fellow who had been left behind was not a patch on him. Vernon-Smith was not thinking of the consequences of his treachery. He fully expected Redwing to state what had happened when the cricketers returned to Greyfriars. He fully expected a "shindy" on the subject. He did not know, and did not care, whether he was dropped from the team for the whole season or even turned out of the Remove cricket club. He was utterly reckless of consequences when the evil in his nature was in the ascendant. He was quite conscious that this might be his last game for Greyfriars, and he was determined that it should be a great one.

And that day the Bouncer was at his best. He deserved, if any fellow ever did, to fail, and fail disastrously; but he did not receive his deserts. Jimmy Silver opened the first innings for Rookwood, and a catch in the field sent him home with only two runs to his credit. And the Bouncer held up the ball and smiled. It was a promise of what was to come.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

The Bouncer's Triumph!

"SMITHY!"

"Good old Smithy!"

"Well hit, old man!"

"Bravo!"

Vernon-Smith's face was ruddy and

flushed, his eyes sparkling. The long summer's day was drawing in. The sun was red in the west, the shadows of the old beeches lengthened in the School Close.

It had been a great day—a great game. Jimmy Silver & Co. of Rookwood were in good form. Silver and Lovell and Mornington, Erroll and Conroy, had distinguished themselves. The Remove cricketers had met foemen worthy of their steel. The last innings was drawing to its close, and the result was still on the knees of the gods.

The Bouncer was at the wickets, and, good man as his comrades knew him to be, he surprised them once more. Even the Bouncer had never shown quality like this before.

In their first innings the rival teams had tied with an even 100. Rookwood, in their second innings, had taken 120. Now Greyfriars were seven down for 102, and the Bouncer, who had been second man in, was still going strong.

From the pavilion the Remove fellows watched him with growing enthusiasm. Smithy had sixty to his own credit. He had done the best, by far, of all the Greyfriars batsmen. He looked as if he would be good for a century, if a century had been wanted. Even Jimmy Silver, the best junior bowler at Rookwood, exhausted all he knew against the Bouncer's wicket, in vain. Vernon-Smith seemed impregnable, and he did not seem to be playing a cautious game either. Fours came to him as if as a matter of course, and hard running seemed to have no effect on his iron frame. He was flushed; but after a hard day he seemed almost as fresh as paint, while a good many other fellows were glad to sit down. The Rookwooders in the field looked as if they had had enough leather-hunting; but Smithy was prepared to give them much more.

"Good old Smithy!" chortled Bob Cherry as another four went up. "I say, when we get back we'd better pass a vote of thanks to old Redwing for losing the train."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The old Bouncer's going strong, and no mistake!" said Harry Wharton. "I've never seen him in such form before. Sixty-four off his own bat—bravo!"

"Rather a mistake to drop him from the team—what?" said Hazeldene.

"Not at all," said Harry quietly. "I had no choice about that. But I'm glad he's playing after all!"

"The gladfulness is terrific," said Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh. "There he goes again! This will be three."

The dusky junior was right. It was the last ball of the over, and it was worth three to the Bouncer.

"He's still got the bowling!" grinned Bob Cherry, as the field crossed over.

"Johnny's got nothing to do but to keep the innings alive, and Johnny's the man for that!"

"Yes, rather."

"Eleven wanted to tie, twelve to win," said Nugent, glancing at the board. "I think we're all right."

"Right as rain, I fancy."

"I sha'n't be wanted to bat, I suppose?" grunted Hazeldene.

Nobody minded that, except Hazel himself. All attention was concentrated on the Bouncer.

Three, and Johnny Bull came to the batting end. Then Mornington of Rookwood put in a ball that spread-eagled Johnny's wicket, and Johnny came back to the pavilion, Dick Penfold taking his place. Fortune, which had been smiling so serenely on Greyfriars, began to frown. Penfold was caught

out first ball. Faces at the pavilion grew longer.

"Last man in," said Harry quietly. Hazel smiled as he took his bat. He was wanted at the wickets after all.

The Bounder's face was a little grim. His magnificent innings had fair to win the match for his side if the game lasted. But Hazel had the bowling, and it was quite on the cards that his wicket would go down and leave Smithy "not out," but with a lost game. The Bounder was feeling anxious. He wanted almost passionately to win, but it did not depend on him now.

But Fortune smiled again as it had seemed to smile all that day on the Bounder of Greyfriars. Hazeldene hit a single and brought Vernon-Smith to the batting end. And the spectators were not surprised when the ball went to the boundary. Then came three, for the last ball of the over, and there was a roar of cheering from the Greyfriars fellows.

"It's a jolly old tie, anyhow," said Bob Cherry, "and with the Bounder still batting—"

"Our game!" said Johnny Bull.

"What-ho!" The field crossed over, and the Rookwood bowler went on; but it was probable that Rookwood had little hope left of the game ending in a draw. Any hope they might have had was knocked on the head as the batsman sent the round red ball whizzing and the two white figures ran.

Then there was a roar.

"Bravo, Smithy!"

"Greyfriars wins!"

"Hooray!"

"Good old Bounder!"

There was a rush for Herbert Vernon-Smith. He came off the field in the midst of a cheering, triumphant crowd of his comrades.

"Good old Smithy!" said Bob, thumping him on the shoulder. "It's your game, old chap, it's your game!"

The Bounder smiled grimly.

He wondered what his exultant comrades would say when they got back to Greyfriars and learned of the means by which he had obtained his place in the team. Winning the game for Greyfriars would not make much difference to their opinion of that. But for the present all was triumph, and the Bounder enjoyed his triumph to the full.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

From Friends to Foes!

"HOW did it go?"

A dozen voices asked that question when a tired but cheery crowd of cricketers came tramping in at the gates of Greyfriars long after the summer sun had set.

"Our win!" answered Harry Wharton.

"Hurrah!"

"A close finish, but we beat them," said Bob Cherry. "At anyrate, the old Bounder beat them."

"Smithy played?" exclaimed Skinner.

"Yes; that ass Redwing got himself left behind."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Skinner.

"What are you cackling at, you ass?"

Skinner did not explain, but he laughed again. He joined Vernon-Smith as the cricketers went into the House.

"You did it, after all?" he said.

The Bounder shrugged his shoulders. "Redwing came back, I suppose?" he said.

"Yes—he looked pretty glum. How the thump did you manage to land him at Ashford, Smithy?"

"Did he say so?"

"No—he's said nothing, only that he



"Will you keep the peace if you're let out?" called Wharton from the other side of the box-room door. "Yes!" The Bounder's tone was quiet. Wharton unlocked the door and threw it open. Vernon-Smith was seated on a trunk, his face pale, but very calm. "I'm sorry for this!" said Wharton. "No doubt!" was the Bounder's brief reply. (See Chapter 6.)

lost the train. But I fancy he didn't lose it all on his own. Though, of course, he won't say that you did it for him."

Vernon-Smith's face changed a little. He paused, and eyed Skinner curiously. He had come back to Greyfriars fully expecting to hear that his treachery was the talk of the Remove—fully expecting that it would be the first news that the returning cricketers would hear. And Redwing had been silent!

"Redwing's said nothing?" he asked.

"Nothing."

"Oh!"

The Bounder walked on. He did not seem to hear Skinner's further remarks. He turned his back unceremoniously on the cad of the Remove. Slowly, thoughtfully, the Bounder made his way back to Study No. 4 in the Remove passage. He had enjoyed his triumph. He was free to enjoy it still, if he chose. He understood now that Redwing had said nothing, and would say nothing. That loyal heart, cruelly wounded as it had been, was loyal still. He had nothing to fear from the friend he had tricked and betrayed.

He turned on the light in Study No. 4 and looked round the room. He did not expect Redwing to be there; he wondered where Tom was. As he looked about him he noted some changes in the room. Two or three articles were missing—a desk, an inkstand, a number of books from the shelves. Everything that belonged to Tom Redwing had been removed from the study.

The Bounder knew what that meant. He did not need telling. The empty

spaces where Tom Redwing's few little possessions had been struck the hard heart of the Bounder with a strange unlooked-for pang. His face grew darker, his lips set hard. He realised dimly what he had done. It was as if the scales had fallen from the eyes that had been wilfully blind.

Skinner looked in at the door.

"I say, Smithy—"

"Leave me alone!"

"What! I—"

"Get out!" shouted the Bounder savagely.

And Skinner, as he caught the blaze in his eyes, got out fast enough. Vernon-Smith kicked the door shut after him.

He was alone. Long the Bounder remained alone, and he seemed to be listening for the footsteps that he knew would never approach his door again.

He left the study at last.

In the Remove passage some of the cricketers were talking. They were speaking of Redwing. The Bounder paused to hear, and he knew from what he heard that the juniors had no suspicion of what had really happened at Ashford. He knew that Redwing had been questioned, and that he had answered simply that he had lost the train—without adding a word as to how and why he had lost the train. Vernon-Smith looked curiously at the fellows, wondering why nobody guessed the truth—but nobody seemed likely to guess it. Only Redwing knew, and Redwing's lips were sealed—for the sake of a friendship that was now dead.

(Continued on page 28.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 858.

THE OUTLAWS OF SHERWOOD! Not a man of Robin Hood's company but boasted a good eye and a brave heart. Outlaws to the Norman barons who had invaded our England, these merry men of the Lincoln Green were true friends to the poor and oppressed. Join hands with Robin Hood, boys, and seek adventure 'gainst the tyrannical Earl Hugo—the Black Wolf.

SHERWOOD GOLD

By
**FRANCIS
WARWICK**



INTRODUCTION.

Story is staged over the period when Richard Lion-Heart, the king, was away in Palestine on the Third Crusade.

TOM HADLEIGH—a youth of sixteen, who was found as a babe by the monks of Hadleigh Priory deserted in Sherwood Forest. Brought up by the good monks and apprenticed to a goldsmith. Simon Rye, Tom discovers in Simon Rye an unscrupulous and slave-driving master. He breaks away from him, determining to seek fortune under more savoury conditions, and throws in his lot with

LANTERN—a carefree adventurer of diminutive stature, but withal a sterling swordsman.

Soon after Tom and Lantern shake hands on their compact they are captured by men-at-arms in the pay of **EARL HUGO**, of **CHARDENE**—an unprincipled vassal of Prince John. On account of his tyrannies he is styled by the people of Nottingham the Black Wolf. Taken before this ruthless tyrant, Tom is robbed of a peculiar talisman, consisting of a half circle of polished horn, upon which are roughly inscribed the words "The cave betwixt . . . a split oak . . . follow the water . . . GOLD." This broken talisman was found near Tom when the monks of Hadleigh discovered him in the forest.

But before Earl Hugo can read the inscription on the talisman, his fool, **ION, THE JESTER**, snatches it from his master's hand, and, breaking through the soldiers who have been ordered to capture him, jumps on the back of Lantern's piebald horse, **HERWARD**, and flies into the forest.

Meantime, Tom and Lantern are thrown into Hugo's dungeons. Help comes to them, however, in the shape of Ion, the Jester, who swims the moat of the castle and passes to them a knife. After a stirring fight, Tom and Lantern escape from the castle and seek shelter in the depths of Sherwood Forest, where they are fortunate enough to meet **ROBIN HOOD** and his men of the **LINCOLN GREEN**. Hard at the fugitives' heels come the soldiers of Earl Hugo, and in a very short time a thrilling fight is taking place between the outlaws and Earl Hugo's men.

(Now read on.)

A Wondrous Secret!

IT was after noon ere the outlaws returned. Not one of them had been slain, though here and there a wound testified to the fierceness of that fight. With their deadly shafts they had slain half a score of Hugo's men, and wounded others, so that Hugo left the forest with but half the men he had taken in.

"We should have slain them all had they not been so heavily armoured," said Robin Hood. "As it was, we should have been over rash to have engaged them in combat hand-to-hand. So for the most part we sent our shafts whistling round their ears from the gloom of the trees, and harried them right to the spot where they had left their horses in the care of two of their number. But now and then, well-nigh desperate, they charged at us, and we crossed steel with them. Alan-a-Dale, indeed, matched his blade 'gainst that of Hugo himself—aye, and wounded him."

"Would that he had not been armoured," said Alan with a sigh. "His wound would have loosed his evil spirit for ever then! Well, perchance some day—"

"Aye, as it is, Hugo lives to feel your blade another day!" laughed Lantern. "Though I must confess I have hopes that 'twill be my sword that strikes his heart, upon Hugo's last day on earth!"

Two of the bowmen, who had been sent out into the forest, returned now with the most part of a slain deer. A fire was lighted, and a rare meal was made.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 858.

Robin Hood was returning with his little band to the main body of the outlaws, far in the depths of the forest. It seemed that he had been out upon some expedition the night before, and had been on his way back to the camp when we had the rare luck to come upon him. He wanted us to accompany him, but we had other business on hand just then.

"We have promised to meet Lon, the jester, of whom we told you," said Lantern. "We meet at sunset. After that we can come to your camp, and that right willingly! Tom Hadleigh, here, I'll warrant, is wild to go!"

I was, in truth! So it was arranged that after we had seen Lon we would go to Robin Hood's camp, and one of the bowmen—the big, fair-haired, blue-eyed fellow who had stayed with us before, and whose name was Roger of Avon—was to come with us to guide us to the camp when the time came.

"Be sure you come," said Robin Hood, ere he marched away with his men, "for, Lantern, Little John, and the Friar and Will and the Miller, and all the rest were talking of you but a few days ago, and will be wild to see you once more."

We said farewell to them then, and the last view I had of the little band was the lean, strong frame of Alan-a-Dale disappearing through the trees with his little harp slung upon his back. Then we, too, set off, weary and hungry no more, for the little pool shaped like a goose's wing where Lon the jester would come with Hereward at sunset.

It lay some miles away, and, after a long march from the glade where we had

found the outlaws, it was nigh sunset when at last we reached it.

There it lay, set in the greenery, the water clear like crystal. A fish leapt for a fly, and fell back with a faint splash as we drew near. A noble stag had been drinking there, and stood for a startled moment on the farther side, mirrored wondrously in the pool, ere he flashed away amidst the trees.

"This is our trysting place," said Lantern, and sat down upon a grassy bank above the water, and laid his sword at his side.

We all three listened. A wolf howled somewhere in the glades, and then, a minute later, we heard someone coming along a grassy track through the trees, which did not grow so thick at this quarter of the forest. We heard the hoofbeats of a horse, and then a whinny of joy from his great black-and-white destrier as Lantern ran to meet it.

Lon was perched on Hereward's back, and he seemed mighty pleased to see us.

"I had scarce dared hope that you would be here," said he, as he slipped to earth, and Lantern stood at the piebald's head, stroking the great nose and the waving mane, and whispering into its ear as the horse bent its mighty arched neck.

Lon was still clad in his motley, though he had cut off the bells—no doubt in order to approach the castle without being heard when he had come to our dungeon window at Chardene—and he no longer had the scarlet cap shaped like a cockerel's comb. The paint was washed from his face, leaving it strangely white—deathly white.

"Now tell us all," said Lantern, as

we sat on the bank of the pool, with Hereward cropping the grass hard by. "Tell us your story, Lon, what this strange business means. The talisman—"

"It is here," said the hunchback, and drew from his wallet the half-circle of polished horn that I had worn around my neck since childhood's days, with those strange, puzzling words scratched deep upon it: "The cave betwixt . . . a split oak . . . follow the water . . . Gold."

The leathern plait had been slashed by Hugo's knife, but I knotted the ends and trimmed the knot with a knife Roger of Avon lent me. Then I slipped it around my neck once more, very thankful to have it back.

"Aye, I escaped the quarrels of the cross-bowmen without so much as a skin-wound," said Lon, his strange black eyes burning down at the water as he gazed into the pool. "I did it upon an impulse, when I saw the broken talisman in Hugo's hand. But I regret it not. I can never go back to the castle, but I shall seek Robin Hood, and he will give me protection. And if—if we find it, 'twill be well worth the loss of shelter 'neath that tyrant's cursed roof!"

"If we find what?" I asked him.

"Listen!" said he eagerly, his death-white face turned suddenly to mine. "Lad, I know not how you came by this half of the broken talisman, but the whole tells a great secret, a wondrous secret, the secret of a vast treasure, of a mighty store of gold hidden here in Sherwood Forest—a store of gold such as would make the finder the richest man in all the Lion-Heart's kingdom!"

His voice had risen to a shrill excitement; his fists were clenched so that the knuckles showed shining white; his eyes burnt with a strange, fierce flame.

For some moments no one spoke. His words had struck us as if dumb. It was all too amazing, and yet, somehow, so did his burning eyes hold us, that not one of us three who heard his words doubted for an instant but that they were true. I heard Lantern draw a sharp breath 'twixt his teeth, and I gave a little cry of amaze.

"That is why I snatched it from Hugo's hand," Lon went on, more quietly. "Aye, and why his passion was so great upon losing it! For Hugo knows what I know."

"And yet with it in your possession, Lon, you came to help us escape!" said Lantern, and laughed queerly. "Many a man would have been but too pleased to let us rot there in the dungeon, and so win the gold for himself."

Lon smiled.

"Nay, nay, I may have been Fool to Hugo, but I trust I am still an honest man," said he. "But I confess that I rescued your talisman—or, rather, your half of it—in the hope that a share of the gold will fall to me if ever it is found."

Lantern looked at me.

"'Tis not for me to say," said he. "The talisman belongs to the lad."

"No need to ask that, Lon!" said I, laughing. "If the treasure is as big as you say, there will be shares in plenty for all. And the greater share should be yours in any case, for we owe you our lives. But, methinks, we are still far from seeing the glitter of this gold that lies hidden, you say, here in Sherwood. For these words scratched upon the horn might well be meaningless, seeing that the other half is missing."

"But we must get the other half," said Lon, almost in a whisper, as though he were afraid the trees and the shadows themselves might overhear his secret.

"But how, since we know not where it is to be found?" I cried.

"But I do know where it is to be found!" said Lon. "The other half of the talisman is in the possession of the Black Wolf himself!"

The Blind Man of Tarn!

LON'S strange face, so deathly white, with its piercing eyes aglitter like some hungry kite's, stared into mine.

"Aye," he muttered, "the Black Wolf himself has the other half of this talisman that tells of the gold—of this vast treasure that lies hidden somewhere here in Sherwood!" A queer, exultant laugh broke from the hunchback. "Who knows but that this precious hoard is buried in some silent forest glade through which you or I have passed to-day, or hidden in the hollow bole of a towering oak, 'neath which we shall rest awhile to-morrow, or perchance buried even in this grassy bank on which we now sit? Who knows?"

My eyes met Lantern's, and the little swordsman laughed aloud, clapping me gleefully upon the shoulder.

"Who knows?" echoed Lantern. "But the talisman shall tell us, when the two pieces are set together! To think that Hugo himself has the other half, the old wolf! Tom, 'tis for us to see how long he keeps it. Oh, but this is rare, rare! 'Tis just such an adventure as this that we could have wished for, lad!"

Again he laughed, his eyes shining at the prospect of the rare sport he saw in store.

"How know you of this?" I asked Lon.

"Once, when he knew not that I was near, Hugo showed his half of the talisman to Gilbert de Vaux, his kinsman. I know not how he came by it, or if he knows aught else—who hid the gold in the forest, or how the talisman came to be thus divided. But be assured of one thing—now that Hugo knows where the other half of the talisman is to be found, he will rest not so much as the joint of a little finger until he has it in his grasp!"

And at Lon's words I shuddered. For they brought memory of the toad-infested darkness of the dungeons of Charndene. I knew only too well that a horrible fate would be ours should Hugo succeed in capturing us a second time. There rose before my mind's eye that gaunt, wolfish face, with its cruel lips and evil eyes, that I dreaded so and hated the more. My hot blood pulsed more swiftly, too, at thought that this adventure of ours, this strange affair of the broken talisman, must lead us to



TOM OF HADDEIGH.

more than one desperate struggle with Hugo of Charndene ere 'twas finished, for good or for ill, one way or the other.

"He shall never get it!" I said through set teeth, and my hand went to the talisman around my neck.

"Nay, it must be the other way," laughed Lantern. "We must rob him of his talisman, and so find this gold. And when it is found, Lon, as Tom has said, you shall have your share, never fear."

I nodded. But 'twas not the thought of the hidden gold that had set out hearts afire. 'Twas the peril and the wild, desperate deeds that would spice this adventure that appealed to us. For Lantern and I, though so different outwardly, were in one thing cast in similar mould, fighting blood was in our veins, and would never be gainsaid.

"If only we knew where Hugo keeps his talisman!" I muttered, gazing down at the still water of the pool, shaped like a goose's wing, that had been our trysting-place with Lon. "That is the first thing to discover, Lantern."

"Aye," he agreed. And suddenly he clapped a hand upon his knee. "Stab me, a rare plan!"

He turned towards us with shining eyes.

"Listen!" said he quickly. "As you, Lon, will know, there is to be a tournament at Charndene seven days from now. Already many nobles are journeying to Charndene to take part. It is held in honour of Prince John himself, who comes from Winchester to visit Hugo upon some treacherous business, I'll warrant me! Be that as it may, this tourney will be our chance. Tom, what say you to donning a suit of fine armour, and, astride some noble charger lent by Robin Hood, riding in all the furniture of chivalry to enter the lists at Charndene?"

He sat looking at me, with his head on one side, his black cap, with its eagle's feather set at a rakish angle, and his eyes atwinkle in that fascinating way he had. There was something so merry in his face that I found myself laughing as I cried:

"I could ask for nothing better. But what is your plan? How—"

"Listen!" said he slowly. "Suppose you and I ride to the tourney as nameless knights. They will not insist on our names, nor even upon our visors being raised, if we declare that a vow binds us, for the present, to hidden identity. For these Norman knights bind themselves by strange vows, and this will seem no whit strange that we thus decline to reveal our faces. And by taking part in the tourney will we assuredly be invited to the banquet at the castle."

"And so gain access to Charndene!" I cried, breathless.

"Exactly!" laughed Lantern. "And once within its walls our wits must help us as best they may. But I feel that somehow we shall find means of discovering, at any rate, where Hugo keeps this talisman of his. 'Twill be mighty dangerous, Tom, but rare sport—rare sport!"

And again he laughed, and picked up the sword at his side, and ran his eye along the gleaming steel.

It was growing very dark amidst the trees.

The sun had set in a blaze of crimson glory, touching the ripples of the pool as if to blood. Lantern laid down his sword, and drew forth the slender reed upon which he liked to play, and a merry tune came from it as his fingers flickered o'er the holes.

It was a glorious spring night, rich with scents of the green woodland, with a great moon rising o'er the tree-tops. Can you wonder that we were gay? For

on the night before Lantern and I had been lying in Hugo's dungeon, well-nigh hopeless, and now we were free in the greenwood once again, thanks to Lon and Robin Hood, and knew the secret of the talisman, with its promise of peril and of gold, which two things together are the very breath of adventure. And adventure was the thing for which I longed and for which Lantern lived.

Suddenly Lantern laid down his pipe, and turned to the bowman in Lincoln green, Roger of Avon, Robin Hood's guide.

"Well," said he, "you are our guide. What say you—shall we make now for your gallant captain's camp, or wait until the dawn?"

Roger glanced around him queerly, peering as if half-afraid into the darkness beneath the mighty trees that hemmed us in.

"To-morrow," said he hastily. "The night is dark; better to-morrow. Let us start at dawn."

"So be it," said Lantern, and he eyed the man curiously. "But you speak strangely. Surely none of Robin Hood's gallant band fears the dark?"

Again Roger of Avon glanced round. Then he leaned towards us.

"I do fear the dark in this quarter of the forest," said he quietly.

I stared at him.

"I tell you I should not relish the journey to the outlaws' camp to-night," went on the bowman slowly. "You ask me why? Have you never heard of the Blind Man of Tarn?"

I shook my head.

"Who is he?" I muttered.

"'Tis not far from here that he lives in his dark cavern, and our way would take us too near for my fancy. He is mad, they say, the Blind Man of Tarn. 'Tis said that evil spirits hold converse with him—that he has been seen talking with unseen things, while horrid shapes stirred behind him in the darkness of his cave. The village of Tarn is not far away, and the people leave food in the forest which he fetches when night has fallen. That is why he is called the Blind Man of Tarn."

His voice had sunk scarce above a whisper, and he crossed himself as he spoke.

"Ay, I have heard of him," answered Lantern slowly. "'Tis said that the wild things of the forest come and go at his

call. They say that evil dewes fall in the glade where his cavern lies. Not that I fear any madman, or even the shadowy servants of St. Nicholas himself, with St. Christopher my guardian. But be it as you say. We will rest here to-night, and go our way upon the morrow."

We found a sheltered hollow a few paces distant, and there we lay down to sleep, with Hereward moving softly in the darkness by us.

I think I was the first to fall asleep. But it seemed that I had scarce closed my eyes ere, all suddenly, I was awake again.

Who does not know that startled awakening at dead of night, one's quickened senses all alert to find the cause of it?

Hereward still cropped the grass across the dell, but I was sure 'twas not the destrier that had thus disturbed me. Nor was it the soft breathing of my three comrades. A vague alarm filled me, I knew not why. An eerie, uneasy sense of foreboding was in the air, or so it seemed to me. Silently I sat up on my mossy couch.

All seemed strange and shadowy in that sunken hollow, with the moonlight streaming down through the over-arching trees, and the great ebony shadows stirring a little as the night wind strayed through the forest. And suddenly I felt that someone, something—

I turned my head, startled. A low, swift cry escaped me.

For as I turned my head something vanished 'midst the bushes on the high bank opposite me. 'Twas but a glimpse I had, yet I was sure that it had been a face—a strange, grey face, very horrible—staring out from the matted leaves into the dell where we lay sleeping.

The Howl of a Wolf!

FOR some moments an unaccountable horror filled me. My lips went dry, and I felt I must call out wildly to my companions.

And then gradually the horror passed and doubt came. Was it all but the imaginings of my startled mind?

Waking as I had done in the dead of night, with great stirring shadows and fitful gleams of moonlight upon all sides, it would have been but too easy to think

that some queer trick of light and shade had been a human face.

I drew back the hand that I had already stretched forth towards Lantern, half ashamed.

And yet—

What if I had not been mistaken? What if the face I thought I had descried among the darkness of the leaves had been real—the face, perhaps, of some villain of the Black Wolf's brood sent out by Hugo in search of us? In spite of his trouncing at the hands of Robin Hood and the merry men of Sherwood, what was more likely than that he would send spies into the forest to search for us—for us and the talisman I held?

I listened. I could hear nothing, save the song of the night wind.

I lay down again. But I was too wide awake for sleep. I own I was mighty uneasy, although I felt no whit justified in awakening my companions—or was it that I thought they might laugh at me, might tell me what I half feared already, that I had been deceived by the moonlight?

And then I heard a sound that again set me all on the alert. Had it been the sound of someone stealing through the bushes above our hollow? I could not be sure, but I knew that I would stand this uncertainty no more.

Silently I rose to my feet. If Hugo's spies were abroad, I would find them out!

I crept through the shadow to a gap in the bushes that fringed the little dell. A few moments later I was slipping noiselessly to the farther side.

If I had seen a face there, 'twas certain enough there was nothing now. But at that moment I heard again a whisper of movement among the trees not far away. I swung round mighty quick, to catch a glimpse of something grey and ghostly that flickered from my sight even as I turned.

A long, grassy aisle led between the great trees in that direction, and in another moment, I was racing down it. I would know what this shadow-thing was!

Again I thought I caught a glimpse of a grey thing moving, still farther on now, away to the right. On I ran.

'Twas some way from the hollow where my comrades slept that I at last gave up the vain pursuit. I was hot and panting, and mighty angered to own myself thus beaten. But whatever it was that had lured me away into the trees, all sight and sound and trace of it had vanished.

Strangely puzzled, I turned to retrace my steps.

But when, some minutes later, I came to where the hollow should have been, it was not there!

Turning and twisting 'midst the trees as I had done in my chase of the mysterious shadow, I had been easily led astray in my reckoning when it came to turning back. The aisles of trees were so alike that I was but too readily deceived into turning down the wrong track.

When I found my mistake I struck off to the right, thinking myself to be too far left. I came to a bewildered standstill at last in a little moonlit clearing. And 'twas here that the horrid truth dawned upon me.

I was lost—utterly lost!

But still I could not quite realise that I could fail to find my comrades. So, young fool that I was, I plunged doggedly on into the unknown, hopelessly mazed, and all the while, as I knew later, drawing farther and farther away from the hollow by the pool shaped like a goose's wing.



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My obstinate pride held me from calling out in hope that they might hear—until it was all too late. When at last I did so, the echoes mocked me from the trees, like ghostly voices wailing in the dark aisles, and I shuddered.

And then, from somewhere in the forest, there came a long-drawn, sobbing cry. 'Twas the howl of a wolf!

I had heard it before that night, but farther away and fainter. It seemed nearer now, and, lost as I was in this eerie darkness, 'twas like a menace. My hand went to my belt—to clutch nothing! I had failed to bring my dagger with me!

Again the horrid sound came drifting through the trees. Then again—the terrible long-drawn howl of a hunting pack. Game had been scarce in the forest ever since the winter—a winter strangely severe—and the wolves were hungry.

I hurried on, hoping that the horrid sound would die away. But it did not die away.

"'Tis a little louder!" I muttered. "They come this way!"

Again that melancholy cry. And in a flash I guessed the truth. The wolves were on my trail!

I trust I was never a coward. But I needs must own that in that moment a sickening horror filled me. I gazed round helplessly, like a wild thing trapped. Which way could I turn?

Unarmed as I was, if the wolves attacked me I was well-nigh powerless. My only hope was to find my comrades, and what a sorry hope that seemed. I commenced to run. The outflung brambles tore my face and hands, once I crashed headlong when my foot caught in the undergrowth. I staggered up and raced on. But still I could hear the relentless pursuers on my trail, drawing nearer and still nearer as the moments passed.

'Twas like the chase of a nightmare. I know not how long it was before at last I saw them, first one pair of gleaming eyes hanging 'midst the bushes like balls of fire, then another and another, moving swift and silent through the trees upon either side of me.

My breath came in gasps, and I stopped, panting, and they stopped, too. I shouted and waved my arms, and they moved back a little. But as soon as I moved on they came after me.

I cannot tell you the horror of those shadowy forms. I became desperate. At last, in a leafy glade, hemmed in with holly and beech, with the moonshine falling in silver streams upon the grass and the great bare patches 'neath the beech-trees, I turned at bay.

By now I had armed myself with a heavy stick. I waved it threateningly, and the ring of eyes drew back a little. Like pools of flame they were, those eyes—a score of pairs at least, all intent upon me with their hungry stare.

One by one they commenced to draw in again upon me. At last one, which seemed to be their leader, a great, lean-bellied beast, bolder than the rest, crept forward and sat silently down in a patch of moonlight scarce six yards from me. I waved my stick and shouted, but this time he did not move. There he sat, watching me, his fangs gleaming.

The others came nearer now. I began to long for their attack, and at last it came. The lean, gaunt shape of the boldest suddenly came leaping at me. With a mighty spring he came hurtling through the air t'wards my throat.

My stick whistled through the air, and an exultant cry broke from me as it landed with a queer thud upon the brute's snarling jaws. I saw it twist



The lean, gaunt shape of the boldest suddenly came leaping at me. With a mighty spring he came hurtling through the air t'wards my throat. My stick whistled through the air, and an exultant cry broke from me as it landed with a queer thud upon the brute's snarling jaws. (See this page.)

sideways in the air, yelping, and it crashed to the ground in a savage, struggling heap. The next instant I had leaped forward and seized it by the neck.

There came a choking snarl deep in its throat as my fingers tightened. The brute's claws tore down my forearm. And then putting forth all my strength I lifted the fighting creature by the throat and sent it hurtling 'gainst two more that were leaping to the attack.

I heard their frightened snarls, saw the craven ring draw back. But, mad with fury, the big, lean brute that had attacked me first came flashing 'cross the glade towards me. Others, too. I breathed a silent prayer as I snatched up my stick for what seemed must be my last fight.

And then, all suddenly, the snarling of the wolves died away. Each of those savage brutes stopped dead in its tracks, and cowered down with ears flat and lips drawn back, like creatures of carven stone. I passed a hand across my eyes, wondering if 'twas all a dreadful dream. For out of the darkness of the trees there had come a voice, a wailing voice, shrill and eerie, and 'twas at sound of this that the wolves had frozen still.

I turned my head and a startled cry choked in my throat. A shiver ran through me, and a cold sweat broke out upon my forehead. Forth from the trees a figure had come gliding into a long white moonbeam, the horrid shape of an old man, with his grey, sightless face turned t'wards me, his matted hair a gleam like hoar frost in the silvery light, his skinny arms raised above his head.

There he stood, a long grey cloak around him, vastly horrible in the moonlight, the wolves cowering down in a

great circle around that silent glade. That strange, eerie picture is stamped upon my mind for all time.

I wanted to turn and flee, but I could not. I felt myself shudder as I muttered wildly:

"The Blind Man of Tarn! 'Tis the Blind Man of Tarn!"

The Outlaws' Camp!

HE stood there with ashen lips mumbling. And then suddenly his wild voice wailed out in the stillness, and strange it was to see those wolves quiver as though with an ague. He waved his up-flung arms, and without a sound they crept away upon their bellies, and vanished, grim shadows, into the forest.

Slowly his arms dropped to his sides. But still he stood there quite motionless in the moonlight. And then, at last, his hairy lips mumbling silently, that wild figure came gliding t'wards me with two skinny claws of hands outstretched, like some horrid spectre of the night.

I shuddered and cowered, as the wolves had done, back against the bole of a great beech. It was as though some uncanny instinct was guiding him upon me, straight to where I stood.

Very sere was his face—the face, I knew now, that had lured me away into the forest. The silken hairs upon his cheeks were so thin and sparse as scarce to hide the wrinkled flesh beneath. The matted hair of his head was flung back from his brow, and fell tangled to his lean shoulders. The stringy neck was sunken into hollows, like a man who has fasted for many days.

Yet somehow, as he drew nearer, that first strange repulsion passed. There was something in the face of this old, old man that was sad—sad, but no whit evil. I felt the chill of my flesh depart. I drew a little peaceful sigh and smiled at him. Two steps forward I took, and then I seized his shrivelled hand.

"You have saved my life," I murmured, scarce knowing what to say.

"Tom of Hadleigh, why are you here?"

His voice was but a ghostly whisper. But I started mightily to hear my name upon his lips.

"You know my name!" I cried in bewilderment.

"More than that," he answered slowly. "I know your face, blind though I am. Blind—blind!" he muttered. "I know the golden hair and the English eyes of deepest blue, and the proud carriage of your head. I know your broad shoulders and the gallant strength that some day shall win for you those things which are yours. I know all this, I who am a blind old man. Ay, some day the leopard shall triumph o'er the wolf—shall triumph, shall triumph, shall triumph!"

His mad mutterings died away. Mad-man I knew him to be. But the mystery of it bewildered me. How could the blind know my face?

"You—you saved my life," I repeated haltingly, for my heart still burnt with the gratitude within me, which I knew not how to express. But for you—"

"All creatures of the night obey me—the old blind man. The owls and the wolves and the bats all know the blind man."

He lifted his face in a shaft of moonlight, and I gave a gasp of horror to see what had been but shadow ere now—the scarred sockets of his eyes. I knew what that meant.

He heard my swift intake of breath, and 'twas uncanny how he read my thoughts.

"Ay, I was not always thus," he said. "Evil men put out my eyes. But you shall avenge me, when the leopard finds its strength and strikes its enemies to the dust—to the dust—to the dust!"

The last words rose in a wail that echoed eerily through the glade.

"To the dust—to the dust!"

"Why are you here, Tom Hadleigh?" he asked again. "The time is not yet ripe. Can it be that you have wandered from that hollow by the pool where I heard the sleepers? Were you one of those?"

I told him, yes. But I kept from him what it was that had all but lured me to my death.

"Come," said he, "I will guide you to your comrades, for I know these few roods as only a sightless man could know them. Come!"

He turned, and I followed him. I soon realised that I had come in a vast circle that night, for we were scarce half a mile from the hollow. And strange, uncanny enough it was to see the way the blind man glided down the narrow forest tracks, knowing every stick and stone.

I wanted to question him further, to learn how he knew me. But he did not speak again until we reached the lip of the hollow, where Lantern and Lon and Roger of Avon still slept. There he passed his skinny fingers down my arm and touched my hand.

"Farewell," he whispered. "Farewell, until the time is ripe for us to meet again."

And with that he turned and glided swiftly into the trees, leaving me to

stare in dumb bewilderment into the darkness that had swallowed him.

I took a swift step, as if to follow, but then I shook my head and turned back.

A soft whinny of greeting there came from Hereward as I descended into the hollow. I patted the mighty, arched neck of the noble horse ere I crossed to Lantern's side. The little swordsman stirred in his sleep, but did not awaken.

And so I lay down for the second time that strange night, and slept like a tired dog till dawn.

We had brought with us some of the venison slain by Robin Hood's men the day before, and after breaking fast we wasted no time in moving.

Our way led, so Roger of Avon told us, not far from the glade where was the cavern of the Blind Man of Tarn. I had told the others of what had happened in the night, and mighty puzzled they were. But, though I had told them that this strange blind man was no evil thing to dread, Roger was vastly uneasy. I saw, until we had left that quarter of the forest behind us.

All day we travelled, and 'twas nigh sunset ere at long last we came to the outlaws' lair.

Well hidden it was, in a spot where the trees grew thickest. Oak and ash and yew grew all around in great profusion, and we passed through a green twilight ere we reached the palisade of stakes that encircled it. But inside this defence the trees had been cleared for the most part, though a giant oak towered in the centre, and several others there were as well. A carpet of green grass sloped down on all sides to the banks of a bubbling stream, and the warm sunlight bathed the clearing with liquid gold.

Watchers had challenged us some little way from the camp, but when they saw who we were they conducted us straightway to the great gate in the palisade. We passed through—and what a welcome awaited us inside!

Several rough huts were grouped around the edges of that great clearing, mighty picturesque. Among these huts, or on the banks of the stream, were scattered the hundred odd bowmen of Robin Hood.

A brave sight it was to see them all, those merry men of Sherwood, all clad in Lincoln green, who called no man master save Robin Hood. Many were stringing bows, or tipping new bows with horn, while others were busy fashioning arrows to their fancy—every shaft a cloth-yard long. Beneath the mighty central oak a group of them made sport with the quarterstaff, and others competed in various feats of strength and skill at arms. Ay, a brave sight for any English heart, for these were the men who still fought for freedom 'gainst the iron Norman heel.

A mighty shout went up to greet us. They all knew Lantern, and he stood there chuckling gaily as a swarm of them came running up to grasp his hand. Then Alan-a-Dale came hurrying to me and clapped his hand upon my shoulder.

"So you have come, lad!" cried he. "See, here comes Robin Hood to welcome you!"

The handsome, vigorous frame of Robin Hood I had already discerned as he came striding through them to welcome us. Mighty pleased to see us all, he seemed. And then, from the direction of a big fire that crackled 'neath a huge iron pot, there came a bellow that made me start around.

"Oh-o! Ho-ho!" roared someone. "By this blackbird-pie I have but half eaten, which leaves me yet as empty as a helmet, if 'tis not Lantern! Lantern

of the darting blade! Welcome, my son, welcome!"

And rolling in our direction, his jolly face wreathed in smiles, his green cassock girded round his waist, disclosing his monstrous calves, there came the fattest friar I had ever clapped eyes upon. No need to tell me who this was.

"Ay," laughed Alan-a-Dale, "'tis that rollicking rogue Friar Tuck sure enough. Get on the right side of the Friar, Tom, and you will never want for rare delicacies of cooking! Is not that so, good father?"

Tuck winked at me.

"Though a saucy rascal, the gleeman speaks the truth," chuckled he. "My son, have you ever tasted karum pie? What! Then there is a treat in store for you! Oh, that I, too, had never tasted karum pie, for the first taste of it is the most wondrous moment of a man's life. 'Tis as rare a dish as ever tickled man's throttle, and 'tis made from nightingales and blackcaps. And no one can make it as can old Father Tuck, as you shall discover!"

With that he puffed out his cheeks and winked again, digging me in the ribs. Then he rolled away towards his fire, for, he told us, 'twas no less than a sin to let good karum pie be over-cooked.

What a wondrous evening that was.

They were all there—Will Scarlet, tall and dark, with a skin more red than tanned; the Miller, too, short and squat, but very strong, and famous for his skill with the quarterstaff; and Little John, the giant, with his brown face all smiling, a man so immense that I instinctively pictured him in battle, and wondered if there was foeman who could stand against a fighter so terrible.

These three sat with the rest of us round the great fire in the centre of the clearing as darkness drew on. Tuck, the friar, joined us later, his sandalled feet thrust out to the fire till they must have been well-nigh roasted, and the firelight gleaming on his shaven pate.

Lon repeated to Robin Hood what he had told us of my talisman, and we spoke of our plan—that of riding to the lists at Charndene as nameless knights, and so gaining access to the castle in quest of Hugo's talisman. Robin Hood laughed aloud, vastly pleased with the scheme.

"Ay, armour shall be lent you, and a destrier for the lad. You will require squires, but I'll warrant me we shall have no difficulty in providing those as well. Two of our bowmen shall ride with you for squires."

And then the voice of Alan-a-Dale broke in, very eager.

"'Tis a famous plan indeed!" quoth he. "Rare sport should await you at Charndene—such sport as I am loth to miss! What say you? Three nameless knights make a stronger band than two!"

"Oh, you shall come, Alan, an' you wish it!" cried Lantern. "No one could be more welcome."

The night was warm, and we slept in the open on skins of wolf and deer, spread in the clearing 'neath and around the great central oak.

There were six days yet to the tourney, and these we passed with the merry men of Sherwood, whiling away the hours with hunting and trial of arms. I was ever fond of quarterstaff play, and I had all I could desire with those bowmen of the Lincoln green. I held my own well enough until I tried my skill with the Miller, and he was too much for me by far.

We hunted in the forest, and much I learnt of woodcraft. Robin Hood himself taught me how the long-bow should be held and bent, but the quarterstaff or a

heavy sword was ever more to my mind than the bow, although my eye was straight enough, and I found little difficulty in bending those great war-bows to the shoulder, a thing only Englishmen can do. The French and the Scots draw only to the chest, which is a sorry span.

And so the days passed, till at last the time was ripe for our departure.

Armour had been prepared for Lantern and Alan-a-Dale and myself, with good lances and small, triangular shields of the Norman pattern, but with no device upon them. A noble white stallion had been placed at my disposal, while Alan-a-Dale rode a black.

And thus, one fair morning, with the shouts of the bowmen ringing in our ears, did we three ride forth from the camp of Robin Hood, bound for the lists at Charndene.

The Tournament!

THE tournament was to be held in a great level meadow on the outskirts of the little town of Charndene, which lies in the valley on the farther side of the castle. 'Twas here that we intended to spend the night in some hostel, ready for the tourney on the morrow.

There were six of us, myself, Lantern, and Alan-a-Dale in our armour. A brave sight we made, too, though I am not the one who should tell you so, with our mail glittering in the sunlight and the plumes nodding o'er our helmets, and pennants waving. No more noble horses could have been found in all the countryside, I'll warrant, than Hereward and my great white destrier, and the mighty black which Alan-a-Dale bestrode.

With us were three of the outlaws for our squires, Roger of Avon among them. We had no fear that they would be recognised, though 'tis true their faces were somewhat of a deeper tan than most squires.

"They will think you come from the Holy Land," laughed Little John on saying farewell. "The sun leaves the

same mark on all who spend their days in the open, whether outlaw or crusader."

We did not ride by the direct road, for we did not wish our enemies to know that we came from the direction of Sherwood. So that it was some hours ere we found ourselves on the hill road above the town, with the roofs and spires direct below us, and the grim walls of Hugo's castle rising from the heights upon our left.

Most of the way we had ridden with visors lowered, in case of chance encounters on the road. But now Lantern raised his visor, the better to see as he peered down into the valley.

"Stab me!" says he. "May my blood turn to sap if that is not the tournament-ground, and if a mighty concourse has not already assembled! And see there. Surely 'tis the melee?"

Alan-a-Dale and I raised our visors and stared down in the direction of Lantern's outflung hand. Sure enough, the tournament was already in progress.

"Fool that I am!" he cried. "I miscalculated the day. It can only be that. And with the melee being fought the jousting must assuredly be finished."

I suppose my face fell mightily, for Lantern burst out laughing.

"Well, perchance things are not so bad as they might appear," said he. "Let us hope that we may arrange something, for otherwise we have no claim to be present at the banquet to-night at the castle."

And with that he lowered his visor over his face and touched Hereward's flanks with his spurs. Away he thundered down that winding hill road, with the rest of us hot upon his heels, for there was no time to be lost.

As we drew nearer we could hear the clash of weapons and the screams of the horses and battle-cries of the combatants, and all the while the hoarse shouting of the spectators. We could see the gay pavilions surrounding the greensward and the glitter of arms and armour, and the gay colours of the ladies' scarves. 'Twas a stirring sight, and my heart beat high as at last we rode on to the tournament-ground.

A knight with a blue shield with the device of a fiery sword upon it—Sir Walter Grantmesnil, one of the marshals of the tourney—came pricking t'wards us. Lantern motioned to us and rode ahead, while we drew our horses to a standstill and watched them.

For some minutes Lantern conversed in low, earnest tones. We saw Sir Walter Grantmesnil shake his head at first, but later he smiled and shrugged his shoulders. While they were talking thus the melee finished amidst a riotous clamour from the wooden galleries, and ere long Lantern came trotting back to where we awaited him.

"I have rare hopes that we have not come in vain," murmured he. "Watch!"

We moved our horses forward into the press of knights at the southern extremity of the lists, and many curious eyes were turned upon the three unknown knights, who appeared thus with visors lowered and shields that bore no device of any kind. Whispers were exchanged on all sides. And then, when the honours of the melee had been awarded by the Queen of Beauty to some knight, whose name I knew not, there was a fresh stir as Sir Walter Grantmesnil came riding forth before the great pavilion, where Prince John of England sat with his nobles and their ladies, opposite the centre of the lists.

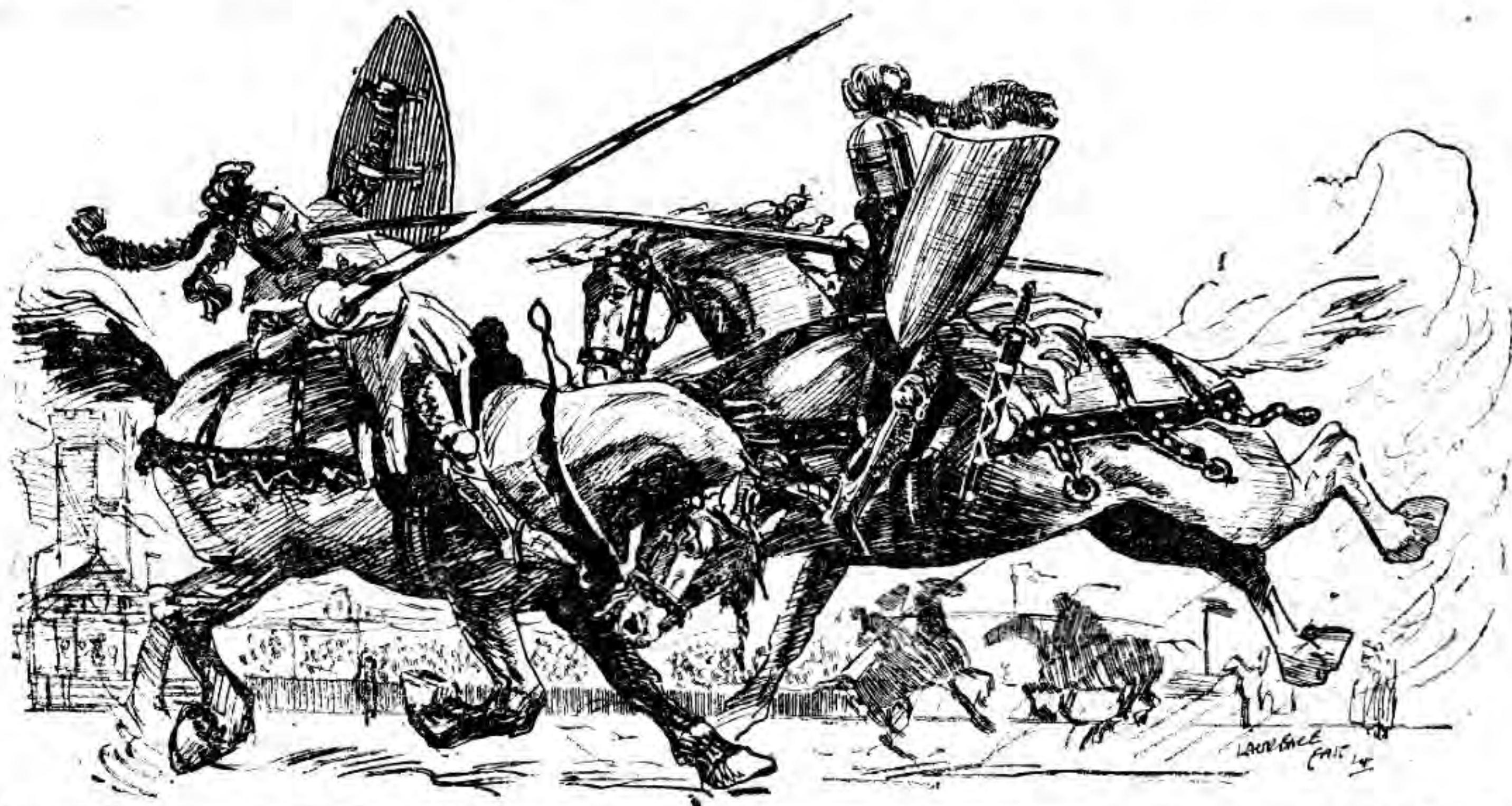
I had never seen John of England, and I could not see him clearly now. I could only hear the marshal's voice announce, in the sudden hush, that three nameless knights, who had travelled from some unknown demeane to take part in the tournament, craved a boon.

I could not hear the prince's reply, but 'twas soon clear that he consented to hearing us. A way was cleared, and we three—cool enough for all the recklessness of our enterprise—rode side by side t'wards the pavilion where Prince John sat among his barons.

My first sight of him did nothing to alter my already formed opinion of the man. Handsome he was, perhaps, in a sinister way, but about his face, with its dark, flashing eyes and thin-lipped, cruel mouth, there was something crafty and ruthless, the face of just such a man as



"Ho-ho! Ho-ho!" roared someone. "By this blackbird pie, if 'tis not Lantern! Welcome, my son, welcome!" And rolling in our direction, his jolly face wreathed in smiles, there came the fattest friar I had ever clapped eyes upon—Friar Tuck. (See page 24.)



I saw Hugo thundering upon me, saw the point of his levelled lance gleam an instant as the sun caught it. My own was directed 'gainst the centre of his shield. And then, almost at the last moment, I changed my mark. My point was now directed, not 'gainst his shield, but 'gainst his visor. And then we met. (See page 27.)

he proved himself to be, for even that day at Charndene, as I knew later, he was plotting with Hugo and his other supporters the downfall of his brother—Richard Lion-Heart.

"Raise your visors, Sir Knights!" cried he impatiently. "What discourtesy is this?"

"No discourtesy, sire," answered Lantern. "We crave your gracious pardon, but we are bound by a vow"—this was true enough—"and by revealing our faces our vows would be broken."

There was a murmur of interest on all sides, though Prince John did not look well pleased. But he could not order us to raise our visors now, and he was mighty interested, I think, to see of what mettle these three mysterious knights were fashioned.

"Your boon?" he demanded coldly.

I must own that I gasped when I heard the boon that Lantern craved.

'Twas that we, by misfortune too late to take part in the jousting or the melee, might be allowed, by the prince's grace, to challenge the three champions of the tournament to combat.

'Twas a daring defiance, and the prince's lips curled in half a sneer as he heard Lantern's bold words. He shrugged his shoulders.

"I grant this request," said he coldly. "Though it remains to be seen whether or no our three champions are willing to don armour again in this somewhat unusual fashion."

Without further delay we each drew off a gauntlet and flung it down on the grass before us.

There was little doubt but that the challenge would be taken. The three champions, whoever they were, would no doubt determine to humble the nameless knights who had so aroused the curiosity of all present. That they resented our boldness was very clear a few minutes later when their answer came.

A herald sounded his trumpet for silence.

The answer to our challenge was this: That if we were prepared to do combat with sharp weapons instead of the usual arms of courtesy, then they would grant us one encounter. A mighty shout went up when Lantern signified our agreement. And, with that ringing in our ears, we turned to ride back to the tents at the extremity of the lists, one of which had been allotted to us.

We had scarce any preparations to make for the encounter, being already in full armour, but 'twould doubtless be some time ere our antagonists were equally prepared. And then, as we sat talking, Roger of Avon burst in upon us with excitement writ large upon his face.

And what a thrill it was for us to hear his news! For he told us who were the three champions we were about to meet.

One, Ivor Fitzurse, was a well-known Norman but recently returned from the Holy Land. The second was Gilbert de Vaux, kinsman to Hugo of Charndene. And the third was none other than Hugo himself.

How eager we all were to meet Hugo. But in the end we drew lots, and you can imagine how wild was my delight to find that the lots decided upon me.

I had spent many an hour in the tilt-yard in my time, for I loved all such sports. Never before had I jousted with sharpened spears; but for all that I felt confident that I need not disgrace myself at Hugo's hands. Lantern and Alan-a-Dale were mighty anxious, and that made me all the more eager to prove my mettle.

And ere long the moment came when we were drawn up at one extremity of the lists, facing our three formidable antagonists, ready for the onset that might mean the death of one of us.

There sat Hugo in the centre of the three, a mighty figure mounted high on a huge grey warhorse, the emblem of the black wolf's head upon his crimson shield. On his left was his kinsman, Gilbert de Vaux, and mighty interested

was I to see five white roses upon De Vaux's shield. So this was none other than the hawk-faced man with whom I had fought but a week ago, when Lantern and I escaped from the dungeon at Charndene.

He it was whom Lantern was to meet, while Alan-a-Dale was opposed to Ivor Fitzurse, the crusader. Our lances were ready lowered, resting in our gueridons. I settled myself more firmly in my saddle, and I could feel that the noble steed beneath me was impatient as I for the onset.

It never occurred to me to wonder if Hugo's point would find its mark. I thought only that mine might prove the means of slaying the man I hated. I had forgotten that we were but impostors. I had forgotten the broken talisman and the reason of our presence here in the lists. All I knew was that in a few moments—

And then at last the signal came, loud and clear.

Once, twice, thrice the trumpet sounded. The next instant the great destriers swept forward as we three, side by side, went thundering down the lists 'gainst our foes.

In the Lists!

WHAT a thrill there was in that moment, when the trumpet sounded, and side by side down the lists we thundered—I and Lantern and Alan-a-Dale!

Peering through the bars of my vizier, I saw the great grey warhorse coming upon me like an arrow from a bow, with Hugo crouching low behind his crimson shield, painted with the device of the black wolf's head of Charndene. In another moment—

Crash!

I knew little of that moment, save the sound and the shock of it, and that my gallant destrier reared high, and that I was all but unhorsed. But I heard the

shouts from the crowd around the barriers, and the applause from the knights and nobles, and the cries of "Well run! Well run!"

When I had collected my wits again, I found I held a lance splintered to the grasp. Swift I glanced to right and left to see how Lantern and Alan-a-Dale had fared. Both were turning to ride back to their stations, and I saw now that this first course had indeed been well run. For there had been no advantage on either side; the lances had all struck well and true, and in failing to unhorse any one of us, each had been duly splintered!

I heard Hugo's growl of anger as he turned to ride away. In the centre of his shield was now a great scar where my point had struck.

Back we rode to the head of the lists, and the attendants brought us fresh lances. The excited shouts from the barriers and galleries died fitfully away as we prepared to run the second course. The tense hush was like the brooding stillness of a summer's night ere the breaking of a storm.

"Well done—well done!" murmured Lantern to me, as we took our stations. "After holding your own in so knightly a fashion 'gainst such an adversary as Hugo, of Charndene—whatever befall, you will not be disgraced to-day."

A long silence followed. It seemed that Gilbert de Vaux, Lantern's antagonist, could not find a lance to his liking. I could feel my white destrier trembling 'neath me in his eagerness. But at last all was ready.

"This time, surely, shall we or they prevail," muttered Alan-a-Dale, as he lowered his lance. "'Tis impossible for us to run two courses without advantage to either side. Hurrah for Merry England, and death to all tyrants!"

On my right Hereward, Lantern's huge piebald stallion, was pounding a mighty hoof impatiently. Lantern, in spite of his mail, looked a small wisp of a man, and in such a contest as this his slight stature would have been to most men a sad disadvantage. But such a wondrous horseman was Lantern, and such a wondrous steed was he astride, that between the two they could have met on equal terms any knight and warhorse in Christendom.

I crouched so that my shield covered all save my casque—waiting. Then, in the breathless hush, the trumpets blared forth, and the next moment we were sweeping down the lists.

I saw Hugo thundering upon me, saw the point of his levelled lance gleam an instant as the sun caught it. My own was directed 'gainst the centre of his shield; and then, almost at the last moment, on a sudden impulse, I changed my mark. My point was now directed, not 'gainst his shield, but 'gainst his visor—a mark more difficult to strike, but far more deadly.

And then we met.

The clash of it was deafening. I had a brief glimpse of Hugo's crimson shield lurch but a moment ere my point struck, and I remembered that fact afterwards. I felt a terrible blow upon my thigh; and then my white destrier had thundered past, carrying me onwards far down the lists, while from all around there arose a clamour of cheering, and a fluttering of scarves and a mighty clapping of hands.

I brought up my horse and swung him round. As I cantered back my eyes peered eagerly through my visor to see the result of this second onset.

Two men lay on the ground. One was Gilbert de Vaux, lifted clean from his saddle by Lantern's lance; already he was staggering to his feet, to stand swaying stupidly till his squires ran to him. Alan-a-Dale and Ivor Fitzurse had both splintered their lances well and true without advantage to either side.

The other figure upon the grass was that of Hugo!

How my heart leapt to see it! I had overthrown the Black Wolf himself—as renowned for his skill-at-arms as any in the Lion Heart's kingdom! Besides which, he was my enemy. Well revenged did I feel for that night Lantern and I had spent in the dungeons of Charndene!

Hugo's squires knelt swiftly beside their master. But though his eyes were still closed, and his face ghastly, and a little blood flowed from beneath his gorget, they soon saw that he was not badly hurt.

They unfastened his gorget, revealing a long bruise and a slight tearing of the flesh. And as I looked down upon him from my horse I gave a sudden startled exclamation 'neath my breath.

For the baring of Hugo's throat had revealed to my eyes as I peered down through the bars of my visor something that the Black Wolf wore upon a slender chain of steel around his neck.

'Twas a piece of polished horn, shaped like a rough half-circle—the other half of the broken talisman that told of that vast treasure Lantern and I were seeking!

(Another thrilling instalment of this fine serial next week, boys.)

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(Continued from page 19.)

The Bouncer strolled on. He passed the open door of Study No. 3. That study belonged to Russell and Ogilvy, but there were three juniors in the room now, "mugging" "Milton" for Sunday prep. One of them was Tom Redwing. Herbert Vernon-Smith stopped and looked in, and Russell gave him a cheery nod.

"Congrats, old man!" he said. "I hear you put up a top-hole game at Rookwood!"

"Thanks!" said Smithy.

His eyes were on Redwing, but the sailorman's son did not look up. Ogilvy looked at one and then at the other.

"I suppose you know Redwing's in our study now?" he said. "You knew he was changing?"

"No."

"You fellows had a row?" asked Russell.

"No."

"Well, we're glad to have Reddy!" said Ogilvy. "You can have Skinner back, Smithy, if you want somebody."

"Thanks! I don't think I'll trouble Skinner," said the Bouncer, with a yawn. "So you've changed out, Redwing?"

Tom Redwing looked up at that. His eyes met the Bouncer's quietly, steadily.

"Yes," he said.

"We're not friends any longer?"

"No."

"You've saved me the trouble—and

I'm glad to keep the study," yawned the Bouncer, and with a careless nod to Ogilvy and Russell he sauntered on.

Ogilvy and Russell looked a little perplexed. Tom Redwing's handsome, sunburnt face expressed nothing. It was over and done with, and evidently the breaking of an old friendship had cost the Bouncer no pang—at least, so it seemed. In the Rag that evening, where the Remove fellows gathered before dorm, Redwing was not seen; but the Bouncer was there, cheery and contented and in gay spirits, to all seeming. And if in the silent watches of the night the Bouncer lay sleepless, the prey of remorse and unavailing regret, no one was ever likely to know.

THE END.

(Don't miss next week's grand story of the Greyfriars Chums—"Sentenced by the Form!"—featuring Vernon Smith, Tom Redwing, and Peter Todd, the schoolboy lawyer. A real top-liner, boys!)

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