

YOU WANT THE BEST BOYS' PAPER—HERE IT IS!

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The Magnet

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NOW EVERY SATURDAY.



THRICE ARMED IS HE WHO GETS HIS BLOW IN FUST!

(A "striking" incident from this week's grand school story featuring Harry Wharton & Co., of Greyfriars.)



This Week:

Manchester City F.C.

which has experienced more than an average share of bad luck.

WHEN I was much younger than I am now, I used to sing a song about Johnny Jones and his sister Sue. One line of it I remember went like this: "Listen to my tale of woe!" We can apply that line to the recent story of the Manchester City football club. Indeed, if it were necessary to give the club another name we could call it the "bad luck" football team.

Listen to this tale of woe. Near the end of the season before last they got to the Cup Final, only to be defeated by Bolton Wanderers by one goal. That was a blow. In the last match of the season they went to Newcastle, desiring only one point to be free of the relegation bogey. They didn't get that point, but they would have done so if they had been able to score from the penalty spot.

A Small Margin!

Not being able to get that all-important goal they went down into the Second Division. And the tale of woe is to be continued. When the very last match of last season was entered upon Manchester City had an equal number of points with Portsmouth—their rivals for promotion. Portsmouth had slightly the better goal average. However, the Manchester City players set to work with a will in that last match—beat Bradford City by eight goals to nothing. The spectators cheered like anything; the players rejoiced because it seemed certain that eight goals would be sufficient to give the side a better goal average than that which Portsmouth would be able to boast. But it wasn't. Portsmouth also won a big victory on that day, and they got promotion in front of Manchester City by one two-hundredth part of a goal. Never had there been such a big problem decided by such a small margin in the whole history of football.

Plenty of Internationals!

However, there's one thing about Manchester City. They may be able to tell a tale of woe; they may have had a recent record over which there is excuse for shedding many tears. But they have come up smiling again, and I know many good judges of the game who have made them promotion favourites for this season. We can all hope they prove this prophecy to be right. They deserve to get back after such an unlucky time.

What is much more important, I believe they possess the players who can do it. Anyway, there is a fine array at Maine Road just now—a real

galaxy of talent, with International players all over the place, as it were.

The team has certainly cost a lot of money, and one of the players for whom a big cheque was signed was Bert Gray, the "Long Tom" goalkeeper. He stands six feet three in his socks, and is considered one of the best goalkeepers who was ever born in the country of Wales. He went to Manchester City from Oldham, but his home is at Tredegar, and it was there that his goalkeeping ability was discovered by accident. One day a junior side turned up for a match without a goalkeeper. Gray was present, intending to be a spectator. But he volunteered for service, played in his first match in long trousers, and made good within five minutes.

The Strength of the Defence!

There is certainly an International flavour about the defensive portion of the team. Gray, as I say, is Welsh. Of the two full-backs Sam Cookson is a Manchester man, and Phil McCloy, the left-back, is a Scot. Thus there is England, Scotland, and Wales represented in the rear—and a very good defence it is too, believe me. Cookson was born quite near to the old Manchester City ground at Hyde Road, and his brother is the goal-scoring centre-forward of West Bromwich Albion.

When McCloy left Ayr United for

Manchester just over two years ago it was said that the fee was around three thousand pounds. This fine full-back though, had previously played for Scotland against England. Rather on the slow side, but a great position player.

The real strength of Manchester City, however, is at half-back, and they ought to be good in that department, for the regular first team trio cost a mint of money. Foremost among them is little Jimmy McMullan, the skipper of the side, and in the opinion of many who ought to know, the best left half-back in football to-day. Anyway, the Scottish selectors think he is good enough to be in their team for every match. He comes from Partick Thistle, and has been a thorn in the side of many an opposing right wing.

On the right flank of the half-back line is Charlie Pringle, another Scot, fair of hair and light of figure, but a bit of a terror all the same. He doesn't often put a lot of fire into his work, but he is a thoughtful feeder. He has been at Manchester long enough to qualify for a benefit, going there from St. Mirren in 1922.

A Young Centre-forward!

The pivot of the team is Sam Cowan. This big centre-half, who can head the ball almost as far as he can kick it, was also an expensive capture. He used to play with Doncaster Rovers, (Continued on page 27.)

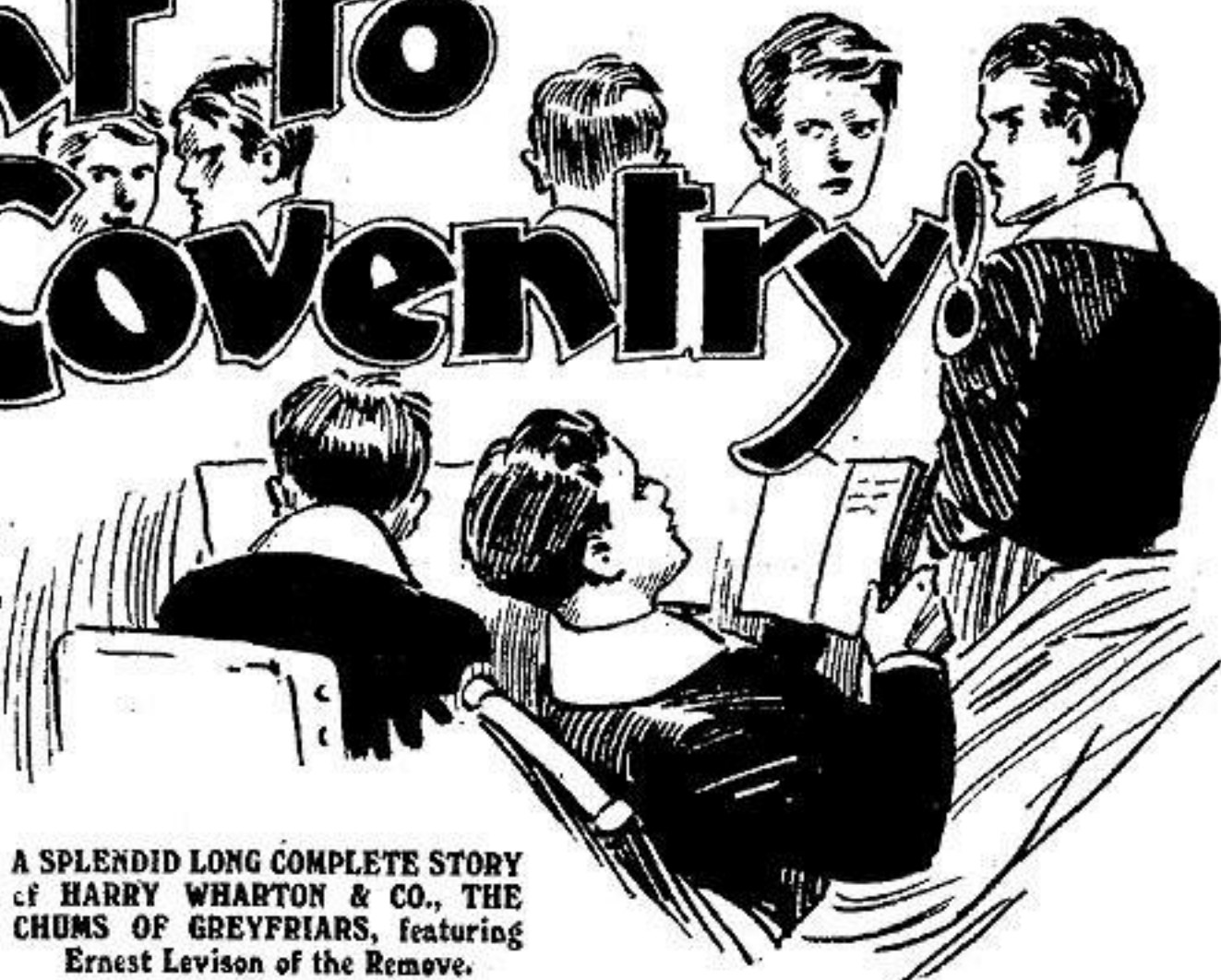
MANCHESTER CITY'S MEN OF MIGHT.



Reading from left to right (back row) photo shows: Pringle, Bennett, Cookson, Gray, McCloy, A. Bell (trainer), Broadhurst. Front row: Bell, Roberts, McMullan (captain), Johnson, Hicks, Cowan.

THE OUTSIDER! They can't stand the sight of Edgar Bright in the Greyfriars Remove, for he's proved himself to be an out-and-out rotter. It's not surprising, therefore, that Bright's latest piece of villainy brings upon him the scorn and contempt of the Form and the sentence of Coventry!

Sent to Coventry



A SPLENDID LONG COMPLETE STORY
of HARRY WHARTON & CO., THE
CHUMS OF GREYFRIARS, featuring
Ernest Levison of the Remove.

By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.*

The Winning Goal!

"SHOOT! Shoot!"

A dozen Greyfriars fellows, on Little Side at Highcliffe, roared together.

"Shoot!"

But Levison of the Remove did not shoot, though he was sorely tempted. It had been a hard and fast game.

Harry Wharton & Co. had come over from Greyfriars expecting a hard game; but they had not quite expected to find Highcliffe in such great form.

In the first half Greyfriars had captured the first goal, taken by Ernest Levison. Just on half-time Highcliffe had succeeded in equalising. In the second half the tussle was hard and grim; both sides had had narrow escapes, and nothing had materialised; and now it was the finish. Any moment now the blast of the whistle was expected, which would leave the game a draw.

Greyfriars were making the most of the last few moments. But the grueling game had told on them, and that final attack lacked some of its usual vim. But it came through, and Levison had the ball at his feet, and, for the moment, nothing but the goalkeeper to beat. But the man in the chicken-run was watching him like a cat, all eyes and hands, and Levison felt, rather than knew, that Wharton, racing up, was prepared for a pass, and expected him to centre.

The Greyfriars crowd who had followed the team to Highcliffe roared with one voice. It looked to them like the last chance, and a good chance. It was a matter of seconds now, with not a second to lose. The goalkeeper obviously expected the ball from Levison, and was ready for it. And Ernest Levison, heedless of the roar, did not shoot.

He looked like shooting, and the goalkeeper fairly grinned in anticipation. He could feel his hands on the leather,

and the leather whizzing away far from home. But his happy anticipations were a little premature.

At the psychological moment Levison centred to Harry Wharton.

Wharton was ready.

Whiz!

The fellows round the ropes were still yelling to Levison to shoot, when Wharton shot.

It was rather too swift for the Highcliffe goalie. He whirled at the ball a fraction of a second too late.

"Goal!"

"Oh, good man!" gasped Bob Cherry, who had just picked himself up in a breathless state, having been laid on his back by a Highcliffe half.

"Goal!"

The Greyfriars crowd roared.

Pheep!

It was the whistle.

The Highcliffe goalie blinked at the ball safe in the net. Harry Wharton clapped Levison on the shoulder.

"Good man! Oh, good man! Jolly glad you came back from St. Jim's, old scout!"

Levison smiled.

It was his first game for Greyfriars since he had come back to his old school. Fellows who had rather doubted Wharton's wisdom in putting him into the Remove eleven had to be convinced now. The junior from St. Jim's had won the game for Greyfriars.

The fellows who had been yelling "Shoot!" were yelling "Goal!" now at the top of their voices.

"Goal! Goal! Goal!"

It was the winning goal. Almost on the stroke of time the hard-fought match had been won by the visitors.

"Greyfriars wins!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "Good old Levison!"

"It was Wharton's goal!" remarked Vernon-Smith.

"Levison made him a present of it. Nine fellows in ten would have shot for goal, in Levison's place, and ten to one it wouldn't have come off. You'd have done it, Smithy."

"And brought it off," said the Bounder.

"Perhaps!" grinned Bob.

"That St. Jim's chap is a good man, anyhow," said Vernon-Smith.

"Terrific!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"One of the best," said Johnny Bull. "I'm jolly glad he came back from St. Jim's. We want his sort in the Remove."

Levison heard those remarks, and more of the same kind, as he walked off the field with the Greyfriars footballers. His face flushed with pleasure as he heard them.

He had known that he would receive a warm welcome when he came back to the old school, which he had left long ago under a cloud. That cloud had passed away for ever. He had known what to expect from Harry Wharton & Co. But it was very pleasant to have it borne in upon his mind like this. He was as popular in the Greyfriars Remove as he had ever been in the Fourth Form at St. Jim's.

"You've got a good man there, Wharton," Courtenay, the Highcliffe skipper, remarked.

"A jolly good man," agreed Wharton. "He helped to beat us when he was at St. Jim's, but—"

"But the esteemed boot is on the other leg now," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Exactly," said Wharton, laughing.

They went into the dressing-room.

"That was really your goal, Levison," the captain of the Remove remarked.

"Yours," smiled Levison.

"You gave it to me. You picked up a jolly good game while you were at St. Jim's. Tom Merry can't be pleased at losing you from his team. Still, we're jolly pleased to bag you!"

"So the pleasurefulness is equally terrific," observed the Nabob of Bhani-pur.

"And to think that Levison nearly missed the match!" exclaimed Bob

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Cherry. "A minute more, and we should have had to play without him. Look here, aren't we going to say anything about that cad Ponsonby and his friends nailing Levison just before the game? If he hadn't got away—"

Wharton hesitated.

"Well, he did get away, and there was no harm done, as it turned out," he said. "Courtenay's crowd had nothing to do with it, of course; and it would be rotten unpleasant for them if we made a fuss. Let it drop—that is, if you have no objection, as the injured party, Levison."

"None at all," said Levison. "I'd much rather not make any fuss here. Besides, I can't help thinking that Pon and his gang were put up to it by a Greyfriars man, and it wouldn't be pleasant for us if that came out."

"I'll punch Pon's nose next time I see him!" growled Johnny Bull.

"No objection to that," said Levison, laughing. "The harder you punch it the better!"

"Least said soonest mended," said Bob Cherry, with a nod. "But we'll find out that Greyfriars man, and deal with him. I fancy I can guess who it was. Skinner has been down on Levison ever since he came back to Greyfriars; and he was here to-day, too—and he never follows the team as a rule. He sneered off when Levison turned up."

"Skinner, of course," said Nugent.

"I suspect so; but we don't want to be hasty," said Levison. "The fact is, we might as well let the whole matter drop, Skinner and all."

"No fear!" said Bob emphatically.

"Not likely!"

"We'll make sure," said the captain of the Remove. "If it can't be proved, of course, we must give Skinner the benefit of the doubt. But if we can settle it for certain—"

"Then we'll settle Skinner," said Bob.

And the Greyfriars footballers, as they rolled home in their brake, were thinking a good deal of Harold Skinner, upon whom, as a rule, they never wasted a thought at all.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

News for Bunter!

BILLY BUNTER stopped.

He stopped suddenly.

There was alarm in the fat face of the Owl of the Remove.

Bunter was taking a walk abroad that afternoon. Walks abroad were not much in Billy Bunter's line; in the cold weather he preferred to spend a half-holiday frowsting over a study fire. Nevertheless, he was walking abroad, not because he wanted the exercise, though no doubt it was good for him, but because he wanted to keep out of the way of a Remove fellow.

Bright, of the Remove, was looking for him. Bunter did not want to be found.

A short time before there had been a cake in Bright's study cupboard. Now it was in Bunter.

Bright had seemed quite excited about it. Finding Bunter in Study No. 1 in the Remove, Bright had paused only to clutch the poker before dealing with him. It had taken him only a few seconds to get hold of the poker; but those few seconds had been enough for William George Bunter. He seldom moved quickly, but he could accelerate when a man was after him with a poker. Bunter had negotiated the Remove staircase on his highest gear.

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so to speak, and without stopping to take breath, though he needed it badly, he had shaken the dust of Greyfriars from his feet.

That was how Bunter came to be taking a walk abroad that keen, cold afternoon. He felt that it was only judicious to give Bright of the Remove time to cool down. But Bunter's luck really was out, for as he rolled along the road towards Courtfield Common another enemy appeared in the offing. Half a dozen fellows were coming across the common, and Bunter knew the nuts of Highcliffe at once. He stopped, suddenly, in alarm. Bright of the Remove was bad enough, especially with the study poker in his hand, but Bunter would have preferred a dozen Brights to half a dozen Highcliffians. If Ponsonby & Co. came upon any Greyfriars man who was not also a fighting-man, a ragging was sure to result. Bunter had been there before, as it were.

It was an afternoon of rapid decisions and rapid actions for Bunter. He stopped, he stared for a second, and he dodged out of sight behind a fence by the road. Ponsonby & Co., sauntering along with elegant leisure, chatting as they came, had not observed him. Bunter crouched low in the bushes behind the fence and waited for them to pass. He did not mean to break cover until they were out of sight.

But it was Bunter's unlucky afternoon.

Ponsonby & Co. sauntered on till they reached the fence behind which the Owl of the Remove was palpitating. At the fence they stopped. To Bunter's dismay they ranged themselves along the fence, some of them leaning on it, some of them sitting on it. Cecil Ponsonby produced a cigarette-case, which passed along the nutty row. The Highcliffians lighted up and proceeded to smoke.

Bunter suppressed a dismal groan.

He felt that it was just his luck that these smoky outsiders had chosen that very spot for their dingy proceedings. Really, he began to wish that he had left Edgar Bright's cake alone. It had been quite a good cake; but after the feast came the reckoning, and Bunter felt that the reckoning was out of proportion to the feast. How long the Highcliffians were going to keep him crouching there he could not guess; but he could see that they had come to stay for a time, at least.

They chatted cheerily as they smoked their cigarettes, their talk running chiefly on "gee-gees," gee-gees being a topic of perennial interest to Pon and his sportive pals. Bunter heard enough to book the whole party for a flogging, had he been able to convey what he heard to the headmaster of Highcliffe. The nuts little dreamed of what fat ears were listening to all that they said. Not that Bunter wanted to listen. He only wanted to get away; but he could not venture to stir until the Highcliffians were gone.

"Hallo! Here comes Skinner!" remarked Gadsby. "He hasn't stayed to see the game at Highcliffe, after all."

"He doesn't look very chippy," remarked Ponsonby.

Skinner of the Remove came along the road across the common. He saw the Highcliffians from a distance, and came up to them with a scowling brow.

"Have a smoke?" said Vavasour politely.

"Hang your smokes!"

"Eh?"

"You're jolly polite!" sneered Ponsonby.

"You fool!" retorted Skinner.

"What on earth's bitin' you all of a sudden?" demanded Ponsonby.

"You idiot!"

"Chuck it," said Ponsonby quietly, but with a gleam in his eyes. "I don't allow Greyfriars cads to call me fancy names."

Skinner gritted his teeth.

"If you couldn't handle that cad, Levison, why couldn't you let him alone?" he snarled.

"We did handle him," said Monson. "We bagged him in the old courts, and left him tied up. He's safe till after the match."

"He's playing in the match!" snapped Skinner.

"What?"

"But he couldn't get away!" exclaimed Ponsonby in amazement. "I did exactly what we arranged; and we left him tied safe, with his cheeky mouth stuffed up. I tell you he was safe as houses."

"Looks like it, doesn't it?" sneered Skinner. "They waited a quarter of an hour for him, and he turned up at the last minute. He was going on the field with the others when I cleared."

"How on earth did he get away, then?" exclaimed Ponsonby blankly. "Nobody could have found him. Nobody ever goes into that corner of the old courts; and he couldn't have got loose by himself."

"Well, he did!"

"Rotten!" said Vavasour. "It was no end of a jest baggin' that cad and stickin' him there. One of your best wheezes, Skinner!"

"And you fellows mucked it up!" snarled Skinner. "Now there will be a row. It means trouble."

"We're ready for all the trouble the Greyfriars cads can give us," said Ponsonby arrogantly.

"Absolutely!" said Vavasour.

"I'm not thinking of you," said Skinner savagely. "What about me? If Levison had missed the match and you'd let him loose afterwards nothing could have been proved. The fellows were already thinking that he had cut the footer to go off with you men on the razzle, in his old style. You could have kept it up that he had; and he'd never have been believed when he told a tale about kidnapping. Now it's all knocked on the head. He's told his story, and proved it by turning up for the game. You fellows belong to Highcliffe, and you can keep out of the way. What about me?"

Ponsonby shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't see that they can prove that you put us up to it," he said.

"They're not likely to wait for proof—they'll guess, and that will be near enough, as it's turned out."

"Well, a man has to take some risks in playin' a game like this," said Gadsby. "Baggin' a man belongin' to your own school and keepin' him out of a football match is rather thick. We did it to oblige you and to pull the leg of Wharton's crew; and I can't guess now how Levison got away. You can't blame us."

"A set of bungling idiots!" growled Skinner.

"If you can't be civil, Skinner, you'd better travel—while you're safe," said Ponsonby. "I don't see what you've got to be afraid of; they may suspect you, but they can't prove anythin', and you're an old hand at tellin' lies to get out of a scrape. Tell a few more—and make them good ones."

"Oh, go and eat coke!" snarled Skinner.

And he tramped on across the common towards Greyfriars, evidently in a very disturbed and alarmed frame of mind.

Behind the fence Billy Bunter was grinning.

He had unexpectedly gained some

rather interesting information as to what had been happening at Highcliffe that afternoon—information which was certain to interest the Remove footballers when they came home.

Ponsonby & Co. discussed the matter for a few minutes, and then returned to the subject of "gee-gees." Evidently they were not much concerned about what might happen to Skinner.

It was half an hour before the Highcliffians detached themselves from the fence and strolled away, leaving the ground littered with cigarette ends. By that time Billy Bunter was growing cramped and cold, and his teeth were almost chattering. He was deeply thankful when the Highcliffe nuts disappeared at last.

armchair, with his feet on another chair, and a cigarette in his mouth.

His sallow face looked more sickly than usual; the natural result of frowsting in a study over a fire during the afternoon, and smoking innumerable cigarettes. The window was tightly closed, and the door had been closed until Harry Wharton opened it.

Bright seemed unconscious, or regardless, of the unpleasant state of the atmosphere. The juniors, fresh from football, were only too keenly conscious of it.

Harry Wharton knitted his brows with anger.

The chums of Study No. 1 had been glad enough to have Levison placed there, when he came back to his old

can't smoke in this study, as I've told you before."

"It's my study!"

"It happens to be mine, too!"

"And mine!" said Nugent.

"And mine!" added Levison. "The majority is against you, Bright, and things have to go by the majority in any study."

Bright sneered.

"From what I've heard of you, Levison, you smoked more than I do, when you used to be at Greyfriars."

Levison coloured.

"That's neither here nor there," said Harry Wharton. "You can't use this study like a pub, Bright, and I've told you so. Stop it!"

Wharton crossed the room and threw the window wide open. Nugent picked up a book and waved it to clear the atmosphere.

Bright gave a sneering grin, and lighted a fresh cigarette. Wharton fixed his eyes upon him.



As Harry Wharton advanced, Bright backed away, snarling. "Hands off!" he said, between his teeth. "I'm not going to fight you, you rotter; but I'll brain you if you lay a finger on me." He grabbed up a chair and swung it over his head.

(See Chapter 3.)

"Beasts!" murmured Bunter, as he emerged at last from cover and shook a fat fist after the silk hats that were disappearing in the distance across the common.

And William George Bunter rolled away in the opposite direction.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

On His Neck!

"UGH!"

"Ooooooh!"

The footballers were home from Highcliffe, and Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent had arrived at Study No. 1, with Levison. The three juniors stopped in the doorway and coughed.

The study was thick with smoke.

Edgar Bright lay sprawling in the

school. They had been anything but glad to have Bright there. The "Toad" was unpopular all through the Remove, and most unpopular of all in his own study. His ways were not the ways of the Famous Five or their friends. Wharton, certainly, had no desire to interfere with another fellow; if that fellow chose to be a dingy outsider, it was not Wharton's business to bring him up in the way he should go, or to preach to him. But when it came to having the study turned into a sort of tap-room, it undoubtedly was Wharton's business.

"Smoking again!" he snapped.

Bright looked at him.

"I suppose I can smoke if I like," he answered.

"No bizney of mine if you choose to make a frowsy fool of yourself," said the captain of the Remove. "But you

"Chuck that away, Bright," he said quietly.

"I won't!"

"You're not satisfied with making the room reek like a tap-room while we're out; you want to keep on while we're here?"

"I can do as I like in my own study."

"And you expect fellows to put up with an atmosphere like this?" asked Wharton.

"If you don't like it, you can get out."

"We're not likely to get out of our own study, because you want to smoke here."

"Lamp it, then."

Levison did not speak. Bright's reminder of his old ways at Greyfriars, which he wanted to forget, had silenced him. His feelings were the

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same as those of his friends, but he did not feel that he could speak to the dingy Toad as they did.

But Wharton meant business. The Toad had had warnings enough, and he had not heeded them. Now he had to be warned again, more emphatically.

"Put that cigarette in the fire, Toad!" said the captain of the Remove quietly.

"Rats!"

"I don't want to handle you," said Harry. "You're not a nice fellow for any decent man to touch. I'll give you a plain warning: Mr. Quelch put you into this study, and we've got to stand you. But we've not got to stand your dirty tricks, and we won't. You'll stop smoking now, and if you ever smoke in this study again, you'll go out of it, neck and crop, and you won't be allowed to come back. Got that?"

"Monarch of all you survey, and all that, what?" sneered Bright. "I know now why Skinner calls you the Great Panjandrum. But the Great Panjandrum bizney won't wash with me. Go and eat coke."

Wharton compressed his lips.

"You'll throw that cigarette into the fire, and give me your word not to smoke in the study again," he said.

Bright laughed.

"Yes or no?"

"Rats!" answered Bright.

"That does it," said the captain of the Remove. "You're going!"

He grasped the back of the arm-chair and tilted it forward. Edgar Bright shot out in a heap on the hearthrug.

He landed there with a yell.

"Yarooogh! Groooogh!"

The cigarette had dropped from his mouth, and found a lodgment on his neck, as he sprawled. One end of the cigarette Bright, apparently, liked, in his mouth. Evidently he did not like the other end on his neck. He gave a fiendish howl as the hot end of the cigarette established contact.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Nugent.

Bright leaped to his feet.

He made a spring at the captain of the Remove, and Wharton's hands went up at once to meet the attack.

But the Toad suddenly stopped.

It was his way to irritate a fellow into drastic measures, and then to back out from the consequences. Wharton's clenched fists, with his eyes gleaming over them, daunted the Toad at once. He backed off with almost ludicrous haste.

"Well?" snapped Wharton contemptuously.

"You—you rotter!" panted Bright.

"Are you coming on?"

"Hang you!"

Wharton pointed to the door.

"Get out!" he said.

Bright gave him an almost wolfish look.

"Do you think you can turn me out of my own study?" he exclaimed savagely. "Don't be a fool!"

"I warned you," said Wharton quietly. "We've been fed up with you a long time. Now you're going!"

"Skinner will take you in," said Nugent laughing. "You're birds of a feather, you know."

"I'm not going," hissed Bright. "And if you shove me out, Mr. Quelch will have something to say about it, I can tell you."

"You can go to Mr. Quelch and tell him you're turned out, and tell him the reason, if you like," said Harry.

"If Mr. Quelch knew you half as well

as we do, he would ask the Head to turn you out of Greyfriars. Anyhow, you're not staying here. Are you going on your feet or on your neck?"

"I'm not going!"

"You are!"

Wharton advanced grimly on the Toad.

Study No. 1 had borne with that unpleasant occupant for a long time, but it was the finish now.

Bright backed away, snarling.

"Hands off!" he said, between his teeth. "I'm not going to fight you, you rotter; but I'll brain you if you lay a finger on me."

He grabbed up a chair and swung it over his head. His eyes blazed at the captain of the Remove.

Wharton did not stop.

"I mean it!" yelled Bright, as he came on.

The captain of the Remove did not heed. He came straight at the Toad, and Bright struck at him desperately with the chair. Wharton caught it and turned the blow aside, and the chair went to the floor with a crash. The next moment the weedy Toad was crumpling up in Wharton's grasp.

With arms and legs wildly flying in the air, Bright was swept to the study doorway. He went through the doorway whizzing.

The persistent ill-luck that had dogged Billy Bunter's footsteps that afternoon had not deserted him yet. It was at that precise moment that William George Bunter came along the passage from the Remove staircase. He arrived outside Study No. 1, just as Bright flew from inside.

There was a terrific collision in the Remove passage.

"Whoop!" roared Bunter.

"Yaroooh!" yelled Bright.

And the Toad and the Owl of the Remove were strewn in the passage together.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Bunter on the War-Path!

"O H, my hat!" gasped Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled

Levison.

Crash! Bump!

Wild yells rang along the Remove passage. Fellows stared out of their study doorways.

"Hallo! What's this game?" shouted Peter Todd.

"Yaroooh!"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"The gamefulness seems to be terrific," chuckled Hurree Jamsot Ram Singh.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter sat up dizzily. Bright lay sprawling breathlessly on the floor.

Bunter had been tiptoeing past Study No. 1, fearful of being spotted by Bright. He did not want that little matter of the cake to be raked up again. But for his exceeding caution, Wharton would have heard him coming, and the collision would have been avoided. Bunter had not succeeded in avoiding Bright!

"Ow! Wow, wow! Yaroooh! Where's my specs? Who was that? I say, you fellows, the ceiling's falling in!" yelled Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Sorry, old fat man!" gasped Wharton. "I didn't hear you coming! What on earth were you creeping along like a ghost for?"

"Yow-ow-ow! That beast Bright is after me!" gasped Bunter. "Besides, I wasn't creeping. I'm not afraid of

Bright. Yow-ow-ow! I say, something fell on me! Wasn't it the ceiling?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It was Bright!" chuckled Wharton. "I've just chucked him out of the study. Can't you see him, you owl?"

"How can I see anything when I've dropped my specs?" howled Bunter.

"Look here, I'm hurt! I'm not going to be knocked about like this! Yow-ow-ow!"

Bunter blinked round him.

Without his spectacles the visibility was not good; but he made out Edgar Bright sprawling breathlessly at his elbow. He glared at him.

Bunter had been seeking all the afternoon to dodge trouble with Bright. But he was enraged now. He was hurt; and Bright, sprawling and spluttering for breath, did not look a very dangerous adversary. Billy Bunter rolled over towards him and punched.

Thump, thump, thump!

"Take that, you rotter!" roared Bunter. "Take that—and that—and that! I'll give you knocking a fellow down when he ain't looking! Take that!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Removites.

"Go it, Bunter!" shrieked Peter Todd. "Ha, ha, ha! Roll up, you fellows! Bunter's on the war-path!"

The Remove were swarming in the passage now. There were yells of encouragement to Billy Bunter. Nobody was likely to sympathise with the unpopular Toad—and Bunter on the war-path was entertaining. Greatly encouraged by the yells of the Removites, and still more encouraged by the circumstance that Bright, instead of resisting, was seeking only to escape, William George Bunter pressed his attack for all he was worth.

Thump, thump, thump, thump!

Thumps with Bunter's extensive weight behind them were not negligible. The fat junior was putting all his beef into it. Certainly Bright, weedy slacker as he was, was more than a match for Bunter in combat had he cared to stand up to it. But obviously he did not care to stand up to it. He wriggled and squirmed and yelled, and tore himself away from Bunter at last, and scrambled to his feet.

"Stop him!" yelled Bunter, full of fight now. A fleeing adversary was all that Bunter needed to make him as brave as a lion. "Stop him! Don't let him get away! I'm going to lick the cad!"

"Keep off, you fat idiot!" panted Bright.

"Yah! Funk!"

Bunter rushed valorously on his enemy.

Bright backed away and fairly ran up the passage.

"Stop him!" yelled Bunter. "I'll give him taking a poker to a chap! I'll give him making a fuss about a cake! I never had the cake! Measly cake it was, too! Stop him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What's the hurry, Toad?" grinned Vernon-Smith, catching Bright by the collar as he fled past. "You're wanted!"

"Let go—let go! I—I—"

"Here he is, Bunter!"

The Rounder slung Bright back towards the Owl of the Remove. Bunter was rolling in pursuit, and Bright pitched fairly into his arms.

"Keep off!" shrieked Bright.

"Yah! Take that!"

Crash!

All Bunter's weight was behind the drive he landed on Bright's nose. The Toad went over as if a cannon-ball had struck him.

"Man down!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter danced triumphantly round his fallen enemy. He brandished his fat fists in the air and yelled to Bright to get up and come on. It was a new experience for William George Bunter to triumph in a fistical encounter, and he was enjoying himself now.

"Yah! Funk! You're not half licked yet!" he roared. "Get up! Funk! Come on! I'm going to smash you! Come on, you Toad!"

Bright lay gasping. He was quite dazed by that terrific drive, and what little courage he had was gone. His eyes gleamed up at Bunter like a rat's, but he made no motion to rise.

"Licked!" grinned the Bounder.

"Licked—by Bunter!" said Tom Redwing, laughing.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come on!" roared Bunter.

"I—I—I'm done!" gasped Bright.

"Yah! Funk! You own up you're licked!" demanded Bunter triumphantly.

"Ow! Yes!"

Bunter jammed the glasses on his fat little nose.

"Look here, Wharton——"

"Looking!" answered the captain of the Remove.

"You chucked that cad Bright out of the study and bowled me over!" snorted Bunter.

"Guilty, my lord."

"Well, I've a jolly good mind to lick you, as I've licked him, that's all!" said Bunter. "I could do it with one hand!"

"Oh, my hat! I rather think you'd need both, old fat bean—and somebody else to lend you a hand, too!"

"No cheek!" snorted Bunter. "If you want me to come into that study and mop it up with you, you've only got to say so!"

"So!" said Wharton cheerily.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter blinked at him. His victory had mounted to his head, and he was bursting with belligerence. But his belligerence faded a little now.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Facing the Music!

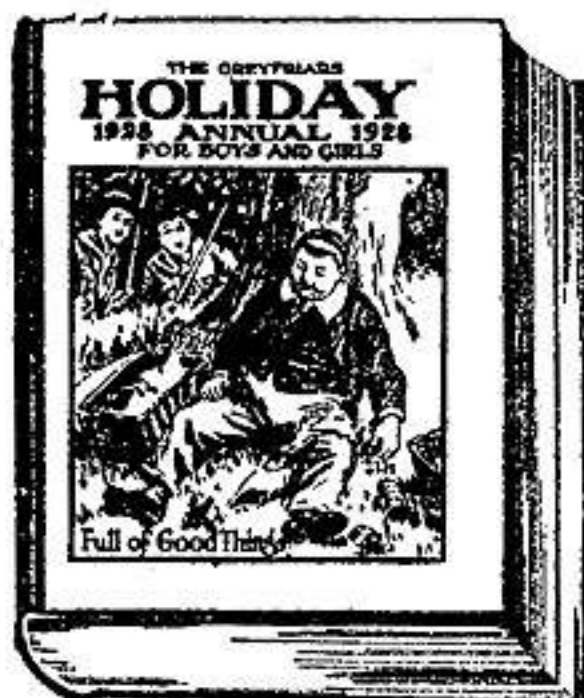
"SKINNER!"

"Sorry I'm rather busy," answered Skinner politely. Skinner was quite self-possessed, and he showed no trace of alarm when the captain of the Remove looked into the study.

Skinner had reflected considerably since his angry outburst to Ponsonby & Co., and the result of his reflections was that he had little to fear so long as he did not give himself away. The fellows were certain to suspect him, especially Levison, who was as keen as steel. But they could prove nothing—how could they prove anything? Only the Highcliffe fellows knew for a fact that he had put them up to collaring Levison just before the match, and leaving him tied up in the old courts at Highcliffe.

How Levison had got loose was still a mystery to Skinner, and he had been greatly alarmed by the miscarriage of his scheme. But reflection showed him

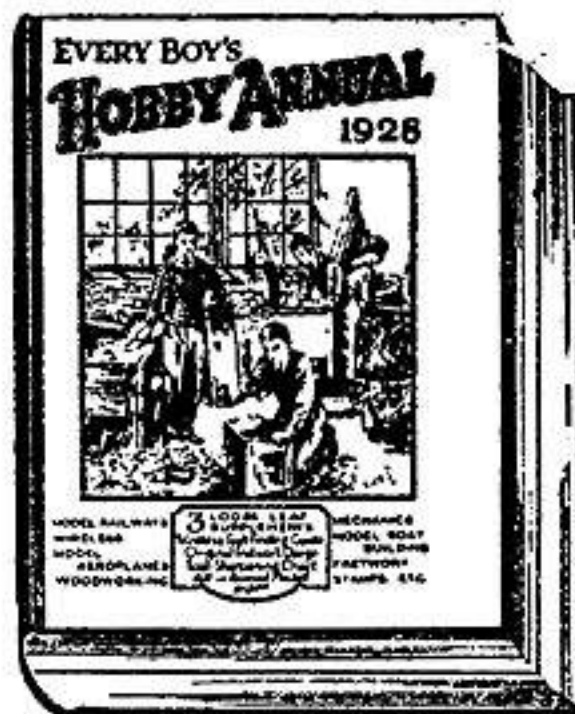
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"Bravo, Bunter!" chortled Peter Todd.

"Some fighting-man, what?" grinned Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" said Bunter, blinking round. "Don't you fellows cackle at me! I've licked that cad, and I could lick any man in this passage, and chance it!"

Bunter's victory, like wine, had mounted to his head. He blinked round at the yelling Removites in a very war-like way.

"Spare me!" gasped Peter Todd; and the juniors yelled again.

"Mercy!" stuttered Bob Cherry.

Bright was limping away with his handkerchief to his nose. He was thoroughly licked, at all events. Billy Bunter bestowed a disdainful blink on him, and another on the hilarious juniors, and rolled back to Study No. 1. His spectacles were strewn about somewhere.

"Here's your blinkers, old bean," said Levison, laughing. He picked them up and handed them to the Owl of the Remove.

"Well, if it was an accident, and you're sorry——" he amended.

"But I'm not sorry."

"Eh?"

"Not sorry!"

"If you want a licking, Wharton——"

"Yearning for it," said the captain of the Remove.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, I won't lick you," said Bunter, on further reflection.

"Oh, do!" implored Wharton.

"I won't, old chap—not after you've just been playing football. You must be tired, and—and——"

"Not at all."

"I'll let you off," said Bunter generously. "Not a word, old fellow. I'm letting you off. I'll tell you what I'll do, I'll come in and have supper with you, just to show there's no ill-feeling."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Bunter did. And over supper he entertained Study No. 1 with a graphic account of a conversation he had overheard on Courtfield Common that afternoon.

that a cool denial of any knowledge of the matter must see him through. What ever the Remove footballers suspected, they could not condemn a man on mere suspicion.

So the cad of the Remove was quite himself when Wharton looked in Study No. 2. He was extremely off-hand.

Snoop and Stott were there, and they only looked mildly surprised at Wharton coming to the study at all. Wharton could guess that Skinner had told his chums nothing of his scheme. It was not a matter that he cared to confide even to his friends. Stott certainly would have "kicked" at it, and Snoop would have been scared at the idea.

Bright was in the study, and he gave Wharton a scowl. Whether he was there as a visitor or as a permanent inmate Wharton did not know, and cared little. What he knew was that Edgar Bright was not coming back to Study No. 1 unless he changed his manners and customs very extensively.

"Look in another time, old bean," added Skinner. "Always at your service when I'm not busy."

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"You've finished prep, I think," said Harry.

"Oh, yes! But I'm reading some tracts to my friends. We do this sort of improv' thing of an evenin' in this study. Other studies should note and copy."

Snoop and Stott grinned, and Bright gave a sour smile. Skinner was evidently in a humorous vein.

"It's very upliftin'," went on Skinner gravely. "Shut the door after you, Wharton; you're interruptin'."

"You're wanted, Skinner."

"I've said I'm busy. If you want to consult me about the football—another time."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Stott, greatly tickled at the idea of the captain of the Remove consulting Skinner about football.

"I'll give you some tips with pleasure, when I've got time," said Skinner airily. "I came over to see you play to-day, you know. But I couldn't stand your sort of Soccer, and I cleared. Too fumbly. Not worth a man's time to watch."

"Will you come down to the Rag?"

"Thanks, no—not at present."

"You won't walk down?" asked Harry.

"I've said I won't."

"You'd rather be carried?"

"Oh, don't be funny!" urged Skinner.

"I've told you I'm busy. You're interruptin' the discourse, and preventin' me from improv' these fellows' minds. Go away quietly."

Wharton glanced back into the passage.

"Skinner prefers to be carried," he said. "Any volunteers?"

"Yes, rather!"

The doorway of Study No. 2 was crowded with volunteers at once. Harold Skinner rose to his feet.

"Don't trouble, my dear men," he drawled. "If you really want me so much, I'll amble along with you. I'm glad to see my company so much

desired by my dear schoolfellows. It's gratifyin'."

Some of the juniors grinned.

"Come on, then," said Bob Cherry. "I suppose you know what you're wanted for?"

"Of course. It's a testimonial from the Form, I suppose," said Skinner. "I'm deeply gratified. It's my due, of course. Still, a man doesn't always get his due."

"Ass! You're accused of fixing it up with the Highcliffe cads to bag Levison and keep him off the football match."

"Oh, come off!" urged Skinner. "Who's been pulling your leg to that extent?"

"You deny it?" asked Wharton.

"Naturally."

"Well, you can deny it to the whole Form; and, if you're not guilty, you'll be glad to have your character cleared."

"Certainly, old bean. I'm rather particular about my character. Hitherto spotless, I shouldn't like to see any stain put on it," said Skinner blandly.

"Oh, get a move on!"

"I'm followin' you, old scout. Come on, Snoopey and Stott—come and see my character cleared."

And Skinner lounged out of the study after Wharton, and his friends followed him. His manner was quite confident and airy; but, as a matter of fact, Skinner was not feeling so easy as he looked. But he told himself over and over again that there was no proof whatever the fellows might suspect.

He marched into the Rag with a crowd of the Removites. Ernest Levison was there, his face rather sombre. The junior from St. Jim's would have preferred to let the whole matter drop, since the scheme had failed, and no harm had been done, after all. But the matter was rather too serious for the Remove footballers to let it drop without investigation.

Skinner gave Ernest Levison a nod.

"Had a good game, old bean?" he asked.

"Ripping, thanks!"

"Glad you decided to play, after all?" smiled Skinner. "When I saw you walk off with Ponsonby just before the match I thought you were goin' on the razzle with your old friends. Changed your mind—what?"

Levison did not answer that, except with a look of contempt.

"Go it, Wharton," said Squiff. "We're all here."

"Yes, go it," said Skinner. "I seem to be the only fellow present who hasn't heard the funny story."

"Ponsonby got Levison away with a yarn that something had happened to his young brother, Levison minor of the Third," said Harry. "Pon's gang were waiting in the old courts, and they collared Levison and tied him up. He would have missed the match, only a fellow happened to butt in and release him. We all think that Pon and his gang were put up to doing it. Some of us thought from the start that you put them up to it, Skinner."

Skinner laughed.

"Are you accusin' a man of playing a dirty trick on that sort of evidence?" he asked. "You're joking, I suppose."

"Not in the least. You were at Highcliffe, and you never follow the team. You had your own reasons to-day."

"I was rather curious to see Levison play. I wondered whether smokin' spoiled a fellow's form for footer, as you've often told me it does."

Wharton fixed his eyes on Skinner.

"You deny it?"

"Oh, yes!" said Skinner carelessly.

"You deny meeting Ponsonby and his friends on Courtfield Common afterwards, and slanging them for mucking up the scheme?"

Skinner fairly jumped.

"Wha-a-t?" he stuttered.

"He, he, he!" came from Billy Bunter.

"That seems to sort of touch a chord in Skinner's memory," grinned the Bunter. "Remember anythin' of the sort, Skinner?"

Skinner tried to recover himself, though the unexpected question had quite confounded him.

"Well?" said Wharton scornfully.

"Nothin' of the kind, of course," said Skinner, in a gasping voice. "I—I haven't seen Ponsonby to-day that I know of."

"You didn't call him a fool?"

"Nunno."

"And an idiot?"

"N-n-no!" stammered Skinner. He understood now that his talk with the Highcliffe nuts had been not only seen, but heard.

"Bunter!" rapped out Wharton.

"Yes, old chap," grinned the Owl of the Remove.

"Tell the fellows what you told us in the study at supper."

"Yes, rather, old bean!"

Bunter fairly purred. All eyes were fixed on him; for once the Owl of the Remove was getting the limelight that he loved. Skinner stared at him in angry surprise.

"What does that fat idiot know about it?" he snapped.

"Lots!" grinned Bunter.

"Cough it up, fatty," said Tom Brown.

Bunter proceeded to cough it up.

"I went for a walk this afternoon. I wasn't dodging Bright. You fellows know that I ain't afraid of that cad. I licked him in the Remove passage."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Keep to the point, fathead!" said Harry.

"I came on those Highcliffe cads on the common," resumed Bunter. "First

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"As it's left to me to give sentence," said Levison, "we'll let Skinner off with a caution."
 "But, I say, you fellows," chimed in Billy Bunter. "I thought he was going to run the gauntlet. I brought a slipper specially." "Ha, ha, ha!" (See chapter 6.)



of all I thought I'd wade in and wallop the lot of them."

"But second thoughts were best?" asked the Bounder.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"Keep to the point, you fat duffer!" exclaimed the captain of the Remove impatiently.

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Get on with it!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Buck up, you blithering dummy!" exclaimed Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Kick him, somebody."

"Keep off, you beasts! I'm getting on with it as fast as I can, but how's a fellow to get on with it when you keep on interrupting him. I decided not to lick those Highcliffe cads. You see, there were six of them, and four is all I could tackle at once."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Six might have been too many for me," explained Bunter. "I don't feel sure of that, but they might."

"The mightfulness is terrific."

"Besides, the Head's told us not to rag with Highcliffe," went on Bunter. "And, besides, you fellows were playing football there to-day. And, besides—"

"We don't want to know all the reasons why you were in a blue funk!" hooted Bob.

"Oh, really, Cherry! I decided to hide behind the fence till the beasts were gone, and that was how I happened to hear Skinner talking to them. He was in a rage at Levison getting back to the football match, and he slanged the Highcliffe fellows right and left. He called Pon a fool and an idiot, and all sorts of things. They said they'd done their best to do what Skinner wanted them to do, and—"

"That's enough," said Harry.

"There's lots more—"

"Keep the rest."

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"You've heard that, Skinner. What have you got to say?"

Skinner shrugged his shoulders.

"You all know Bunter," he said.

"He's made this yarn up, of course. It's just in his style."

"Oh, really, Skinner—"

"We all know Bunter," agreed Wharton, "but he hasn't made this yarn up. Nobody had said a word to him about what happened to Levison at Highcliffe when he told us this story in the study. You're bowled out, Skinner. There was precious little doubt, anyhow, and there's none now. You put Ponsonby and his crew up to nobbling a Greyfriars man just before a match."

"I—I deny—" stammered Skinner.

"You prefer the matter to go before the head of the games?" asked Harry Wharton quietly.

"What?" panted Skinner.

"Wingate of the Sixth is the man to deal with an affair of this kind," said Wharton grimly. "If you want him to deal with it, say so. If not, tell the truth while you've got a chance."

Skinner panted for breath.

Not for any consideration whatever would he have allowed the matter to go before the head of the games for inquiry. The captain of the school was the last man in the world that Skinner wished to inquire into his proceedings.

"We all know the truth now," said the captain of the Remove contemptuously. "But you have a right to appeal to the head of the games if you choose. What do you say?"

Skinner gave him a look of concentrated bitterness. There was only one thing for him to say now, and he said it.

"I—I own up," he muttered sullenly. "It was more a lark than anything else. Now do as you like about it, and hang you!"

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Skinner's Sentence!

"**G**UILTY!" said the captain of the Remove.

"The rotter!" growled Bob Cherry.

"The rank outsider!"

"The terrific scoundrel!"

"Rag him!" roared Johnny Bull.

Snoop and Bright had already edged away from Skinner. One of them, at least, was as bad as he; and the other not much better; but neither was the fellow to stand by a friend in distress. It was because Skinner was down, not because he was a rascal, that they sidled away from him and disappeared behind the crowd of Removites. Frederick Stott was still with Skinner, however, and he turned a stare on him as he owned up to what he had done.

"You own up, Skinner?" he demanded.

"Yes," muttered Skinner. "What's the good of denyin' it any further, you fool?"

"No good, if it's true. It was a dirty trick," said Stott. "If I'd known what you were going over to Highcliffe for I'd jolly well have stopped you. Of all the rank outsiders, you take the cake!" And Stott strode away in disgust.

"Rag the cad!" exclaimed Squiff.

"Lynch him!" growled the Bounder.

"Et tu, Brute!" quoted Skinner, with bitter mockery. "You played just such a trick on that fellow Dallas who was here last term, Smithy; it was from you I got the wheeze, in fact."

The Bounder flushed crimson, and made a stride towards Skinner with his fists clenched. Tom Redwing caught his arm and pulled him back.

"The rotter has owned up, you fellows," said the captain of the Remove. "We've got to make him understand that he can't carry his

private quarrels into football. We might have lost the match—"

"I never cared a rap about the match," growled Skinner. "I was out to dish that cad Levison, and I'm only sorry it didn't come off."

Levison compressed his lips.

"What have I done to you, Skinner?" he asked.

"You've done lots of things," answered Skinner, with a look of hatred. "You've put on airs with fellows who were your friends when you were here before, to keep in with Wharton and his snug crew. You've pulled the leg of the whole Form, and taken in nearly everybody excepting me. I'm about the only chap who knows you for the humbug you are. I'd like to see you kicked out of the school again, as you were once before."

"Oh, cheese it!" said Nugent in disgust.

"I think you've said enough, Skinner," said the captain of the Remove. "You're such a rotter that a fellow hardly knows what to do with you. I think we'd better leave you to Levison, as he was the chap injured by your dirty trick."

"Hear, hear!" said Bob Cherry. "Levison's judge! Trot out the sentence on the prisoner at the bar, your worship."

"And make the esteemed punishment fit the excellent crime," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Go it, Levison!"

All eyes turned on the junior from St. Jim's. Skinner's eyes turned with the rest with great apprehension.

He did not expect any mercy from the fellow he had plotted against. Ever since Levison's return to his old school he had been the object of petty persecution, of incessant sneers and insinuations from Skinner for no better reason than that he was a decent fellow and accepted as a decent fellow by all the Remove.

Levison was silent.

Skinner fairly twitched with anxiety. He knew that the punishment of his treachery would be severe, and he expected it to be all the more severe when it was left to Levison to give sentence. There was no doubt that the sentence, howsoever severe it might be, would be carried out faithfully.

"Go it, Levison!" said Squiff.

"Sentence!"

"You fellows really want to leave it to me?" asked Levison, after a long pause.

"Yes; it's up to you," answered the captain of the Remove.

"Pile it on!" said Skinner bitterly. "Now's your chance, Levison. Make the most of it."

Levison did not heed him.

"Well," he said, "I think we may take it that Skinner, just as he said, was not thinking about losing us the match. He was only getting at me personally in doing what he did. There were reserves on the ground to take my place if I hadn't turned up in time. I think that makes a difference in Skinner's favour."

"Oh!" exclaimed the juniors.

"He really was not thinking of mucking up the match, and, as it turned out, no harm was done," went on Levison. "If you fellows really leave it to me to give sentence, I say—"

"What?"

"Let him off with a caution!" said Levison.

"Why, you ass—"

"Fathead!"

"Of all the chumps—"

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Skinner stared at the junior from St. Jim's, hardly able to believe his ears. He had counted upon a severe ragging as a certainty, probably to be followed by a sentence of Coventry for the rest of the term. He stared at Levison like a fellow in a dream.

Wharton's expression was very peculiar for some moments.

"You mean that, Levison?" he asked.

"Yes; I think that will meet the case."

"Rot!" roared Bolsover major. "Rag the cad!"

"It was left to me to give sentence," answered Levison quietly. "I've given it. It's for the fellows to decide whether they will stand by it or not."

"Of course, we shall stand by it," said the captain of the Remove. "But—but—well, you're getting off cheaply, Skinner."

"I say, you fellows, I thought he was going to run the gauntlet," exclaimed Billy Bunter. "I brought a slipper specially."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You're let off with a caution, Skinner," said the captain of the Remove. "If anything of the kind happens again you'll be ragged bald-headed. Now you can get out!"

Skinner fairly gasped. He seemed unable to believe in his own good luck.

"Cut, you rotter!" growled Bob Cherry. "I've a jolly good mind to boot you out of the Rag, and blow the judge."

"Same here!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"The sameness is terrific."

Harold Skinner turned slowly to the door. Even yet he seemed unable to realise that he was to be allowed to depart untouched. But not a hand was raised as he went to the door.

Some of the fellows hissed, but that was all. The door of the Rag opened and closed behind Skinner.

Skinner went back to his study. Snoop and Stott did not rejoin him, but Bright came in a little later.

Skinner was sitting in the armchair, with his hands in his pockets and a moody, thoughtful expression on his face. Bright eyed him for some moments, but Skinner did not speak. He seemed to be plunged in deep reflection.

"Well, you got off," said Bright at last.

Skinner nodded.

"I thought you were for it," said Bright.

"So did I."

"It was a mug's game keeping the fellow out of a football match," went on Bright. "What was the good of that? I'd rather see the rotter kicked out of the school. Some sense in that. And it could be worked."

Skinner looked at him without answering.

"From what I've heard he used to have a pretty juicy character when he was here before," said Bright. "It stands to reason that the beaks haven't forgotten it. It would be easy enough to fix something on him and get shot of the cad for good."

"Think so?"

"I'm sure of it!" said Bright eagerly. "Something to make out that he's just what he used to be, only worse. We could manage it together. I'll help you all I can, with all my heart."

Skinner was silent.

"Well, what do you say?" asked Bright.

"What I say is this," answered Skinner deliberately. "Chuck it! I've been down on that chap, and he had it

in his hands, if he'd chosen, to make life not worth living for me in the Remove. He'd only to say the word and the fellows would have ragged me right and left, and sent me to Coventry. I've been in Coventry before, and I know what it's like. Levison let me off. Goodness knows why. I don't claim to be a model character, but I've got my limits, Bright. I'm letting Levison alone after this."

The Toad's eyes gleamed.

"You turning soft?" he sneered. "My hat!"

"Soft or not, I mean what I say. I'm doing nothing against Levison after this, and, more than that," went on Skinner, "you're doing nothing, either, Bright. I don't know what you've got against the chap, or why you want him shifted out of Greyfriars, and I don't care. But I tell you this, you're not going to play any tricks on him. I shall jolly soon chip in if you do, see?"

Bright compressed his thin lips with rage.

"You can dig in this study if you like," said Skinner. "We get on all right together, so far as that goes. But let Levison alone."

"I'll do as I choose about that!" hissed Bright.

"Do. But if anything happens to get the fellow into trouble with the beaks, leave it to me to put them wise about it," said Skinner. "Mind, I mean that, and you'd better think twice."

And with that Skinner left the study, leaving the Toad gritting his teeth and realising that he had lost the ally he had counted upon. On the way to the Remove dormitory that night Skinner touched Ernest Levison on the arm. Levison glanced at him.

"Just a word," muttered Skinner. "I wouldn't say it before the fellows, but—but I'm sorry."

"All serene," said Levison, with a smile.

"I've got a tip for you," added Skinner. "There's a fellow in the Remove you want to keep an eye open for. I believe now that you are playing a straight game, Levison; but if you ever play the goat again you can depend on it that the fellow I've mentioned will make use of it against you. That's all."

"Thanks!" said Levison.

Skinner nodded and left him, Levison looking after him rather curiously. He realised that his trouble with Skinner was over. They were not likely to be friends, but they were no longer enemies. And there was satisfaction in that knowledge to Levison of the Remove.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Is Shocked!

"I SAY, you fellows—"

"Scat!"

"But, I say—"

"Rats!"

"Look here—" roared Billy Bunter. But the Famous Five of the Remove did not "look there."

They were busy. It was a week since the Highcliffe match, and during that week Study No. 1 had been a much more pleasant place of abode than heretofore. Bright of the Remove had taken his exclusion from the celebrated study without resistance, no doubt because he had no choice in the matter. He belonged to Study No. 11 now, Skinner & Co. having made him welcome there—his tastes were much in common with those of the black sheep of the Remove. And without the

obnoxious presence of the Toad, Study No. 1 was the happy abode of yore.

On the present occasion the Famous Five were all gathered there. It was a half-holiday, and it was very unusual for the Famous Five to spend a half-holiday in the study. But outside, the rain was coming down in torrents; football and most other things were off; and the chums of the Remove were putting in an afternoon at the "Greyfriars Herald." That famous journal was supposed to be a weekly paper; but it appeared at rather irregular intervals. Indeed, Skinner had remarked that it was so weekly that it had died. But it always revived again sooner or later, especially when the weather was bad; in fact, its youthful editors seemed to save it up for a rainy day.

With the rain dashing against the study windows, and the wind howling among the leafless trees in the drenched quad, and the boom of a troubled sea echoing from the rocky shore, the staff of the "Herald" settled down to editorial duties. The "Herald" had many editors and sub-editors—almost as many as it had readers. Many hands made light work, and so a whole number could be produced on a rainy half-holiday; though Skinner, judging, as he said, by results, declared that too many cooks spoiled the broth. But nobody cared for Skinner's opinion, least of all the editor-in-chief and his numerous staff.

The Famous Five were all busy, and Smithy was in the study, the Bouncer being sports editor. Levison had been offered a sub-editorship, which he had smilingly accepted; but he was not present now, apparently having business elsewhere. Six distinct glares were turned on Billy Bunter, as he appeared in the doorway of the editorial office.

"I say—" repeated the Owl of the Remove.

"Hook it!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Buzz off, Bunter!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "We're busy! Roll away and tell some other study that you're expecting a postal-order."

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"My esteemed chums, I have now completed the beautiful and ridiculous poem," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The lendfulness of the ear is the proper caper, and I will read it out aloudfully."

"Hem!"

"I say, you fellows, that fellow Levison—"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"But that fellow—"

"Shut up!" roared all the editorial staff together.

"My esteemed poem deals with our voyage to the South Seas in the vacation, my esteemed chums," explained the Nabob of Bhanipur. "I regard it as both excellent and preposterous."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it, Inky!" said Bob Cherry. "Cut it short, old man."

The nabob proceeded to read out his beautiful verses. He coughed modestly and started:

"On a worthy ship,
We made a trap,
As bold as venerable Hannibals,
As gay as larks,
In spite of sharks,
And fierce preposterous cannibals."

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the whole staff, interrupting the poet. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh regarded them in mild surprise.

"My worthy chums, this is not a comic

poem," he explained. "It is excellent versification of ridiculous solemnity."

"Our mistake," chuckled Bob Cherry. "Get on with it."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"The second verse extends itself thusfully," said the nabob, and he resumed:

"Midst wild alarms,
Which did no harms,
We sailed the huge Pacific,
The thunder roared,
While Bunter snored,
The uproar was terrific."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Evidently the serious solemnity of that poem was lost on the editorial staff of the "Greyfriars Herald." Like the thunder described by Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, they roared. Heedless, the poet went on.

"After a while,
We found the isle,
And searched about and roundfully,
With terrific pleasure,
We found the treasure,
And brought it homewardboundfully."

The staff of the "Greyfriars Herald" almost sobbed. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh seemed a little perplexed. Bob Cherry wiped his eyes.

"Some poem!" he said. "That moonshee in Bhanipur who taught you English, old man, must have been a regular coughdrop."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Are you still there, Bunter?"

"Yes, you beast!"

(Continued on next page.)

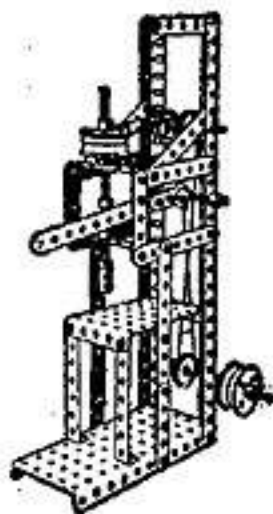
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"Don't go for a moment. Hand me that cushion, Nugent! Now, where will you have it, Bunter?"

"Look here, you beasts!" said Bunter warmly. "I've come up to tell you that that fellow Levison is playing Bright's tricks."

"Eh?"

"What?"

"You know we've found that cad Bright rooting about in Quelch's study?" said Bunter, while the chums of the Remove stared at him blankly. "You know you went down one night and found him there, and another time you—"

"We know all about that," said Johnny Bull. "Blow Bright and his spying tricks! What do you mean about Levison?"

"He's up to the same game," said Bunter.

"Don't be a silly ass!" said the Bounder.

"He's in Quelch's study now," said Bunter. "You know Mr. Quelch has gone out for the afternoon. He's gone to play chess with the vicar, and he won't be back till tea. Levison knows that, of course. He's rooting about in Quelch's study now."

"Rats!"

"Chuck it!"

"Well, he is," said Bunter. "I saw him. I wondered what he was going into Masters' passage for, and I—"

"No business of yours, you fat bounder."

"Well, I don't approve of this sort of thing!" said Bunter loftily. "I may be a bit more particular about such things than you fellows. Very likely I am. I'm rather shocked at Levison."

"Look here, Bunter, chuck it!" said Harry Wharton. "Levison's not a fellow like Bright, and we all know it. If he's in Quelch's study at all, he has some business there—which is no business of ours or yours, either. Shut up!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Fed-up, old man!" said Bob Cherry. "Chuck it!"

"Look here!" roared Bunter. "I tell you that fellow Levison is sneaking and spying—Yaroooooh!"

Billy Bunter broke off with a sudden wild roar, and came headlong in at the study doorway. For a second the juniors stared at him in amazement, wondering what had projected Bunter into the room so suddenly. The next moment, the flushed and angry face of Frank Levison of the Third Form appeared in the doorway. Evidently it was Levison minor's boot which had helped the Owl of the Remove into the study.

"You fat rotter!" exclaimed the fag, his eyes flashing at the fat junior.

"Yow-ow-ow!" roared Bunter.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What do you call this game, kid?" inquired Bob.

"I came up here to speak to my brother," said Levison minor. "I heard what that fat rotter said as I came up, so I kicked him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I—I'll smash you, you cheeky fag!" roared Bunter. "I'll teach you to kick a Remove man, you cheeky little beast!"

"He doesn't seem to need any teaching," chuckled Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter whirled on Levison minor, with his fat fists thrashing the air.

The fag faced him undauntedly.

"Come on, you fat fooler!" he said.

"I'll mop up the whole passage with you!" roared Bunter.

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"Go it, then!"

"Only—only you're such a little shrimp that I suppose you'd fall down dead if I hit you," said Bunter. "I don't want to have to attend an inquest on your account. I'll let you off if you apologise."

"Rats!"

"I'll let you off, anyhow. Cut!"

"Shan't!"

"Then I shall retire," said Bunter, with dignity. "I refuse to remain here in your company."

And Bunter retired—with all the dignity he could muster in the circumstances.

"My brother isn't here?" asked Levison minor, looking into the study.

"No," answered Wharton.

"Know where he is?"

"Bunter's just told us that he's in Quelch's study," said the captain of the Remove. "I believe Quelch is out."

"Oh, very likely," said Frank. "Thanks!"

And the Third Former went his way. The chums of the Remove glanced at one another rather oddly. It was odd that Levison should be in his Form master's study, when his Form master was absent. They did not believe for a moment that he was spying and prying there, as they had found Bright doing; but it was difficult to guess what his business could be in Mr. Quelch's quarters. Frank Levison had not seemed in the least surprised to hear that he was there—and that was odd, too. Still, it was no business of Harry Wharton & Co's, and, unlike Bunter, they did not take a deep interest in matters which did not concern them.

So they resumed their editorial labours, which were again interrupted about ten minutes later by the Owl of the Remove.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, cut, for goodness' sake!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"That little beast, Levison minor, is in Quelch's study with his major now," said Bunter. "I watched him. They're there together now, rooting over Quelch's study."

"Rats!"

"I tell you—"

Whiz! The cushion flew, catching William George Bunter on his well-filled waistcoat. Bunter disappeared into the Remove passage.

"Hand me the poker, Smithy," said Bob Cherry. "I'll go out to him."

"Yah! Beast!"

There was a sound of footsteps in hurried retreat. Bob did not need to go out with the poker. The Owl of the Remove ceased from troubling at last, and the busy editorial staff were at rest.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Mysterious!

BRIGHT, of the Remove, stopped at Study No. 11 and turned the door-handle. The door did not open.

"Hallo! Who's there?" called out Skinner's voice.

"Only me."

"Oh! It's the Toad. Open the door, Snoopey!"

The door was unlocked, and the Toad entered. Skinner and Snoop were in the study, and there was a haze of cigarette-smoke in the air. The two young rascals were playing banker—hence the locked door. Bright closed the door and stood looking on at the game for a few moments.

"Join up," said Skinner.

Bright shook his head.

"I've come to tell you something, Skinner," he said. "That fellow Levison—"

"Chuck it!" said Skinner. "I don't want to hear it. I've told you I'm done with Levison."

"He seems to have scared you," sneered Bright.

"He hasn't scared me, but he's scared you all right," retorted Skinner. "Look somewhere else for a catspaw. Nothing doing here!"

"He's spying about in Mr. Quelch's study," said Bright.

"Rot!"

"I heard Bunter telling some fellows, and went to look. Both of them are in Quelch's study, spying about."

"Oh, draw it mild," said Skinner. "That's your game, not Levison's. The fellows found you there one night rooting about."

"It's a chance to land him," said Bright. "You know what a fellow would get for meddling in a Form master's study. Quelch's gone out, but you could tell Mr. Prout. Old Prout is always ready to chip into anything."

"Tell him yourself," said Skinner.

"I'd rather not be drawn into a row with the fellow," said Bright. "I'm not afraid of him, but there are reasons—family reasons—why I don't want to row with the Levisons. My father was a great chum once of a relation of the Levisons—Mr. Thorpe, who used to be master of the Remove here. I'd rather keep clear of the cad."

"Keep clear of him, then," answered Skinner. "The easiest way is to let the chap alone."

"Look here, it's a chance for you to get even with him—"

"A chance for me to pull your chestnuts out of the fire, you mean," retorted Skinner contemptuously. "Chuck it!"

"Take a hand in the game, old bean, and let Levison rip!" suggested Sidney James Snoop.

Bright bit his lip hard. His own nature was so malicious and unforgiving that he found it difficult to believe in Skinner's change of heart. But it was borne in upon his mind now that Skinner had meant what he said, and he was not to be made use of in Bright's feud with Ernest Levison.

The Toad left the study at last, with an angry, disappointed face. He had good reasons for not wishing to act against Levison personally. He was in need of a catspaw, but it was plain that Harold Skinner was not going to be the catspaw he needed.

"Chucking it?" asked Snoop, as Skinner laid down the cards and rose from the table, a few minutes after Bright had gone.

"Yes, I'm going down for a bit."

Skinner left the study, and there was a thoughtful expression on his face as he went down the stairs. He had not been surprised to hear that Ernest Levison was spying and prying. He no longer bore Levison ill-will; but Skinner had a high opinion of nobody; he thought no worse of a fellow for doing a mean action. He went along to Masters' passage, and stopped at the Remove master's door. He glanced up and down the passage, and then opened the door and looked in.

"Oh, you're here!" he exclaimed.

Ernest Levison was in the study, and Frank was with him. Both of them stared at Skinner.

"Yes, I'm here," said Levison quietly.

"Anything wanted?"

"What's the game?" asked Skinner curiously. "You're not ragging old Quelch's room, surely?"

Levison laughed.



"Levison's spying in Quelch's study!" Ernest Levison's face coloured hotly as he stared at the faces peering at him through the window. "Better chuck it now, Franky," he said. "We shall have all the Remove here in a minute." (See Chapter 8.)

"Not likely!"
"Not a safe game," said Skinner. "You may have forgotten what Quelch is like. He's a Tartar, you know."
"That's all right!" said Levison.
"But what are you up to, then?"
"Nothing that would interest you," said Levison.

Skinner coloured a little.
"Oh, keep your secret, if you want to," he snapped. "I've looked in to tell you that you've been seen here, and you'll most likely be given away. If you don't want to be caught rooting about Quelch's study you'd better clear while you've got the chance."
"We don't mind," said Frank, laughing.

"You don't mind being caught here?" exclaimed Skinner.

"Not at all!"
"Of course, that's gammon!" said Skinner. "You'd both get into a frightful row, and you know it. I've given you the tip, and you can take it or leave it."

"Thanks," said Levison. "We'll leave it."

"Blessed if I can make it out," said the mystified Skinner. "That fellow Bright has been caught rooting about this study when Quelch was out. Now you're at it. What do you expect to find?"

"A hidden treasure, perhaps," answered Levison carelessly.

"Oh, rats!"

Skinner left the study greatly puzzled. Levison minor closed the door after him.

Ernest Levison frowned. With the exception of Bright, no one in the Remove knew of the strange quest Ernest Levison had undertaken at Greyfriars, and the junior from St. Jim's certainly did not want the matter to become the talk of the Form. But he knew that it would be talked of a good deal now.

But he resumed his occupation. That occupation was a rather peculiar one. The walls of Mr. Quelch's study, one of the oldest rooms in the ancient buildings of Greyfriars, were panelled in oak, almost black with age. Many modern improvements had been introduced into the room, but the ancient oak had been left untouched. Levison was examining the old walls, passing his hands over the oaken panels, feeling them, tapping them sedulously, patiently.

"I'm afraid there's nothing doing, Franky," he said at last. "I feel convinced that the secret is here, but we don't look like finding it."

"If it's here we'll find it sooner or later," said Frank.

"Later, rather than sooner, then, I think," said Levison. "There's hardly an inch of the walls that I haven't examined. If there were an opening there should be a hollow sound when the wall is tapped. But it all sounds as solid as stone."

He broke off suddenly and stared at the window. Framed in a pane was the face of Bolsover major of the Remove.

Bolsover stared into the study.

Levison coloured hotly. He could read the surprise and contempt in Bolsover major's face.

"By gad! He's here!" exclaimed Bolsover.

"Bunter was telling the truth. He's spying in Quelch's study!"

Another face appeared at the window, and another. Russell and Peter Todd of the Remove stared in.

Levison set his lips.

"Better chuck it now, Franky," he said. "The word's gone round, and we shall have all the Remove here soon."

"No business of theirs!" said Frank hotly.

"I know. But I think we'd better clear now."

"All right, Ernie, if you say so."

And the two juniors left the study. There were five or six faces at the study window by that time staring at them. What the fellows thought at finding the two Levisons "rooting" about the study was clear in their faces. A "ragging" in a Form master's study was a risky proceeding, but the juniors would have thought no worse of the raggers; but they could see that the Levisons were not ragging. It looked like spying—for what motive they could not guess—but obviously spying and prying. And there was scorn in every face that looked in, at the window.

The faces disappeared from the window when the Levisons had left the study. It was about ten minutes later that a ponderous tread was heard in Masters' passage, and Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth Form, arrived at Mr. Quelch's study. Mr. Prout's majestic countenance was still more majestic than usual, with indignant wrath. He threw open the door of the study, and his deep, fruity voice boomed in.

"You young rascals!"

Then Mr. Prout stared into the study. He discovered that it was vacant.

"Bless my soul!" ejaculated Mr. Prout.

He blinked round the room. Certainly there was no one there, and Mr. Prout's plump countenance became more wrathful than ever. He strode away with the ponderous tread which had led some fellows to liken him to the "huge, earth-shaking beast" in Macaulay.

"Boy!"

Mr. Prout addressed Bright of the Remove at the end of the passage.

"Yes, sir? I—I thought I ought to tell you, sir," stammered Bright, rather alarmed by Mr. Prout's expression.

"You thought you ought to tell me!" exclaimed Mr. Prout wrathfully. "You told me that two Lower boys were in my colleague's study, spying into Mr. Quelch's papers. You told me so distinctly."

"Yes, sir—"

"I have proceeded to my colleague's study," boomed Mr. Prout, "and there is no one there! You have deceived me!"

"I—I—" stammered Bright.

"You have deluded me!" thundered Mr. Prout. "You have played what I

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(Continued from page 13.)

presume you consider a very humorous joke on a Form master. What, what? You are new at Greyfriars, Bright, but you have been here a sufficient time to learn that respect is due to a Form master—especially to a senior Form master. Do you imagine, for one moment, that you will be permitted to play these jokes, sir, upon me with impunity?"

"I—I—" stuttered Bright. "I—I—" "I shall not cane you!" boomed Mr. Prout. "It is not within my province to cane any boy belonging to a colleague's Form. I shall not cane you, Bright. I shall box your ears!"

Smack! "Yaroooo!" roared Bright, as a hefty "box" on his right ear sent him staggering to port.

Smack! Another terrific swipe on his left ear righted him again.

"Yarooooop!" Mr. Prout, with a snort of indignation and contempt, strode into his study. Bright of the Remove limped away, rubbing his burning ears.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Levison Loses His Temper!

THE rain had stopped. A gleam of winter sunshine brightened the old quad when Ernest Levison came out of the House.

Some of the Remove fellows were punting about a footer. Levison went to join them. The punt-about stopped, and the fellows all stared at him.

Levison flushed.

He realised that the juniors were thinking of what they had seen in Mr. Quelch's study. Bright's stealthy, spying ways had earned him the nickname of the "Toad." Now the fellows were thinking of Levison as a fellow of the same kidney. There were some fellows in the Remove who would have thought no worse of him for that—fellows like Skinner and Snoop. But most of the Lower Fourth took a very different view of such things.

"Found anything in Quelch's study?" asked Bolsover major sarcastically. "What were you spying into, Levison?"

Levison's cheeks burned.

"Reading a man's letters, in Bunter's style?" jeered Hazeldene.

"Oh, really, Hazel!" squeaked Bunter.

"Or looking for Quelch's loose cash?" asked Bolsover major. "I don't know what you were sacked for last time. Was it for pinching in a master's study?"

"No," said Levison quietly.

"Look here, what were you up to in Quelch's study, Levison?" demanded Peter Todd gruffly. "I didn't believe Bunter when he told us; I said I'd look before I kicked him for spinning such a yarn about a fellow. Then I saw you

—you and your brother—rooting about the room. You'd been at it a good time, too. What was the game?"

Levison did not answer.

"We've taken you here as a decent chap, Levison," said Russell. "Everybody's agreed to say nothing about your old games when you were here before. But decent chaps don't spy and pry."

"I was not spying or prying."

"Then what were you doing in Quelch's study?" demanded Ogilvy.

"That's my business!"

"Mr. Quelch's business, too, if he caught you," said Tom Brown contemptuously. "Looks to me as if you haven't changed from your old style, after all."

Levison breathed hard.

"Mr. Quelch knew that I was in the study," he said. "I had his permission to be there."

"Gammon!"

"Rats!"

"A fellow might have permission to be in his Form master's study," said Squiff. "But he couldn't have permission to root through the room, turning the things out and spying into every corner. That's what you were doing."

"I've said that I was not spying."

"What were you doing, then?"

"Minding my own business!" snapped Levison. "And I advise you to do the same."

"Well, my business is not to speak to a sneaking spy!" said Squiff scornfully. "Keep your distance from me!"

"We've practically sent the Toad to Coventry for the same thing," said Hazeldene. "It seems that we've got two Toads here!"

Levison clenched his hands. It was impossible for him to explain without acquainting the whole school with a matter that was purely his own private concern, and which it was at least judicious to keep from the general knowledge of Greyfriars. It was not a matter that he could tell all the Remove.

"I say, you fellows, let's send Levison to Coventry," said Billy Bunter. "He was spying in Quelch's study, and you fellows know what I think of a fellow who spies and noses out things—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, you fellows! Besides, that isn't the only beastly mean thing that Levison has done!" exclaimed the Owl of the Remove.

"What else has he done?" demanded Hazel.

"He refused to cash a postal-order for me—"

"Wha-a-t?"

"Absolutely refused," said Bunter impressively. "Just as if he couldn't trust a fellow with five shillings, you know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You footling fat duffer!" roared Bolsover major.

"Oh, really, Bolsover—"

"Shut up, you dummy!"

"I say, you fellows, we shall know what to think if Quelch misses anything when he comes in," said Bunter.

Levison made a stride at the fat junior. His eyes were blazing with anger. Bolsover major shoved between.

"Hands off!" he jeered.

"Let Bunter alone," said Ogilvy.

"You've asked for that, Levison, by spying in a man's study. Nobody here thinks you a thief; but if Quelch missed anything we should think so fast enough, just as Bunter says."

"You fool!"

"Thanks!" said the Scottish junior, with a scornful shrug of the shoulders. "I'd rather be a fool than a rogue!"

"You are calling me a rogue!" exclaimed Levison passionately.

"You've acted like one."

"Bunter can't put up his hands, but you can, Ogilvy," exclaimed Levison. "Put them up, here and now!"

"Quite ready," answered Ogilvy.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry, as the Famous Five and the Bouncer came out of the House. "What's that? Chuck it!"

The editorial staff of the "Greyfriars Herald" had observed the cessation of the rain. It was followed by the cessation of editorial work. They came out of the House for some fresh air, after their editorial labours, just as Ogilvy and Levison were about to close in strife. The Scottish junior was cool and contemptuous, Levison blazing with anger. It was the first time he had been seen roused to passionate anger since his return to his old school, but there was no doubt that he was angry now.

Bob Cherry rushed in between the two.

"Hold on, my infants!" he exclaimed.

"Stand aside!" rapped Levison.

Bob stared at him.

This was rather a new tone for the junior from St. Jim's to take, and Bob was surprised, and he did not like it. A gleam came into his blue eyes.

He did not stand aside.

"Easy does it, Levison," said Harry Wharton, with a surprised look at his study-mate. "You're sure not going to scrap with Oggy?"

"He has as good as called me a thief!" exclaimed Levison.

"Wha-a-at?"

"Cap fit, cap wear!" jeered Bolsover major.

"You rotter!" shouted Levison.

"Leave him to me, Ogilvy!" exclaimed Bolsover. "I'll teach the cad whether he can come here from St. Jim's and slang Greyfriars men!"

"Keep back, Bolsover!" exclaimed the captain of the Remove. "What on earth is all this row about? What's happened?"

"The calmfulness is the proper caper, my esteemed and preposterous chums," murmured Hurreo Janset Ram Singh.

"Levison, what's up?" demanded Johnny Bull.

"Those rotters can tell you!" snapped Levison.

"These fellows are not rotters, and you know it," said Harry Wharton, his eyes glinting now. "You'd better measure your words, Levison."

"I'll please myself about that."

"Hear him!" exclaimed Bolsover major. "That's his sort of talk, because we've told him what we think of him spying in a man's study."

"What? Levison hasn't—"

"He has!" roared Bolsover. "We saw him—a crowd of us. We'd just come out after the rain when Bunter told us he was there, and we looked in the window. There he was with his young brother, both of them rooting through Quelch's study like a pair of spies."

"Oh!" exclaimed Wharton, taken aback. He remembered what Billy Bunter had told the busy staff of the "Greyfriars Herald," and what they had not heeded at the time. "If Levison was there, I've no doubt he can explain why."

"Well, he won't explain."

"He can't!" said Hazeldene.

"Levison—"

"I don't choose to," said Levison between his teeth. "I've said I was not spying, and it wasn't necessary to say that much to a decent chap. You can think what you like, and be hanged to you!"

Ogilvy's lip curled.

"Are we scrapping or not?" he asked.

"I don't care a straw either way; but a fellow wants to know."

"You're not scrapping," said Harry Wharton sharply.

"Don't be an ass! I'm sure Levison can explain—"

"Why doesn't he, then?"

"Because I don't choose!" flamed out Levison.

"Well, when a fellow does a dirty, mean thing, and doesn't choose to explain, he knows what to expect," said Ogilvy. "What Bunter said is perfectly true. If Mr. Quelch missed anything from his study, every man here would believe that you had pinched it. You've asked for that."

"What utter rot!" exclaimed Wharton. "All the same, if a lot of fellows saw you in Mr. Quelch's study, Levison, you'd better explain, for your own sake, what you were doing there."

"Well, I won't!"

Wharton compressed his lips.

"That's for you to decide, of course," he said. "But if you're thought badly of, you've only yourself to thank."

"Rats!" and with that Levison swung away, and tramped back into the House. He left the crowd of Removites in rather angry and excited discussion. Edgar Bright, who had been loafing at the back of the crowd, slipped away quietly, with a glitter in his shifty eyes. It seemed to the Toad that things were moving in his favour at last.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

The Blow Falls!

"WHARTON!"

"Yes, Wingate."

Harry Wharton was going in to tea when the captain of Greyfriars called to him. Wingate's tone was grave.

"Send Levison to Mr. Quelch's study," said Wingate.

"Levison!" repeated Wharton.

"Yes; he's wanted."

"Right-ho!"

Wharton went up to the Remove passage. He expected to find Levison in Study No. 1, as it was tea-time. After the scene in the quadrangle, when Levison had turned his back on his friends and walked away, the chums of the Remove had seen nothing of him, and they did not want to see anything of him. Wharton and Nugent had already arranged to "tea" with Bob Cherry in Study No. 13 in the Remove. What to think of Levison's action, which was so like the spying for which the Toad was generally despised, they hardly knew. They did not want to give up their good opinion of a fellow they had liked and respected. But Levison's angry outburst had roused anger on their side, and they did not intend to be the first to speak again. Certainly they were not to be "slanged" just as an angry fellow chose.

Wharton looked in Study No. 1.

Levison was there, and he looked up and coloured at the glance of the captain of the Remove.

It was plain that his anger had passed and that reflection had followed. Before he could speak, however, if he intended to speak, Wharton said abruptly:

"You're wanted in Mr. Quelch's study, Levison."

Levison started a little.

"Mr. Quelch wants me?"

"Wingate told me to tell you."

"Very well," said Levison quietly.

Harry Wharton paused a moment and then went on up the Remove passage. Levison quietly left the study and went downstairs. He passed some of the Remove on the way, and they all looked at him curiously.

"You're for it, I fancy," said Bolsover major jeeringly.

"Mr. Quelch has come in and he wants you. He knows what you've been up to."

"Put some exercise books in your bags, Levison!" chortled Billy Bunter.

Levison passed on without replying.

At the corner of Masters' passage he came on Skinner. He would have passed Skinner without a word; but Skinner put out a hand and caught his arm.

"Hold on a minute, Levison!"

"What is it?" asked Levison impatiently. "I'm sent for!"

"I know that. You did me a good turn the other day," said Skinner.

"What about that?"

"Nothing. Only one good turn deserves another. You got me out of a thumping ragging, and being sent to Coventry. I treated you rottenly, and that was how you paid me back. I've never been a model character," Skinner sneered, "but I can do a fellow a good turn when he does

(Continued on the next page.)

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me one. You helped me out of a tight corner. I'm helping you out of one."

Levison stared at him.

"You're talking in riddles," he said. "I'm not in a tight corner, and I don't fancy you could help me if I was."

"That's all you know," answered Skinner. "You haven't heard what Quelch has got to say yet."

Levison, with an impatient look, passed him, and went on to Mr. Quelch's study. He tapped at the door and entered.

He breathed rather quickly as he saw the Remove master's face. The deep dark frown there boded trouble.

Levison had been far from expecting trouble with his Form master. If Mr. Quelch had had any doubts of his former troublesome pupil, they had been quite dispelled by Levison's conduct since his return to Greyfriars. The junior from St. Jim's had had nothing but kindness from his Form master so far. But there was no kindness in Mr. Quelch's look now. His gimlet-eyes fixed on Levison's face with a penetrating stare.

"Levison, you know why I have sent for you?"

"No, sir."

"You were in this study this afternoon."

"I had your permission, sir."

"Quite so. I gave you permission to make any investigation you desired to make in this study, to put to the test your belief that there exists some secret recess or receptacle behind the oak panels," said Mr. Quelch. "It appears to be established that certain manuscripts that belonged to Mr. Thorpe, your great-uncle, once master of the Remove here, were left at Greyfriars when he left, many years ago. As they have never been found, it would appear probable that they were placed in some secret spot; and that secret recess may possibly exist in this room, which Mr. Thorpe occupied for many years. I gave you permission to make an investigation here, Levison, believing that I could trust you."

Levison flushed.

"I hope I've given you no reason not to trust me, sir," he answered.

"I hope so, too," said Mr. Quelch, rather grimly. "But in giving you permission to investigate this study for the purpose I have mentioned, I did not give you permission to meddle with my desk and my private papers."

Levison's face became crimson.

"You cannot suppose that I have done anything of the kind, sir," he exclaimed, his eyes flashing.

"Do not interrupt me, Levison," said the Remove master coldly. "I repeat that I gave you no permission to meddle with my desk and my papers. This has been done. But that is not all, and that is not the most serious thing that has been done. One drawer in my desk has been opened, although I left it locked. It has been forced open. My private papers in that drawer have been turned over, and a bundle of currency notes extracted."

Levison stared blankly at the Form master.

"I desire to hear your explanation, Levison," said Mr. Quelch.

"I know nothing of it, sir."

"When did you come to my study?"

"About three, sir—just after you went out."

"When did you leave?"

"I did not notice the time—it was about ten minutes after the rain stopped, I think," said Levison.

"The rain stopped at half-past four," said Mr. Quelch. "At half-past five I

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returned here and discovered what had happened. Do you deny having touched the drawer in my desk?"

"Certainly I do, sir!"

"In that case, someone else must have entered the study after you left, and forced open the drawer."

"I—I suppose, so, sir."

Mr. Quelch gave him a piercing look. He was evidently in great doubt.

"I trust, Levison," he said at last—"I trust that you are speaking the truth. The fact remains that you were here at least an hour and a half, and had ample opportunity to do what has been done. There is no evidence, so far, that any other person entered the study. In view of what has occurred, I cannot help recalling the character you bore when you were formerly at Greyfriars. But you need have no fear that anything but justice will be done."

Levison's lips trembled.

"I know that I can rely upon you for justice, sir," he said. "I am not in the least afraid. If the currency notes have been taken they can be traced."

"They have been taken," said Mr. Quelch, "and certainly they can be traced, as I have a list of the numbers. Before the matter is made public, Levison, have you anything to tell me?"

"Nothing, sir."

"Reflect, my boy," said Mr. Quelch, with a touch of kindness in his manner now. "You know, of course, that I am aware of your circumstances; that your father has lost everything, owing to an unexpected demand for a large sum of money that he can barely meet. You and your brother have had to leave another school; and you are at Greyfriars without the payment of fees. This had, and has, my full approval. But it is obvious that you can have very little money; your allowance is of the smallest."

"I have enough," said Levison, "and if I were in want, I should not be likely to touch money that did not belong to me."

"I trust so—I trust so. But if you have yielded to temptation, I urge you to confess before it is too late," said Mr. Quelch. "It would be better—much better for all concerned—for you to leave Greyfriars quietly, without a scandal in the school. Better for you, and better for the school, than an inquiry, to be followed by the disgrace of an expulsion. Levison, if you have done this, I urge you—I beg you—to confess before the matter goes further."

Levison's look was bitter.

"If I were Wharton, or Bob Cherry, or Field, you would not speak like that!" he exclaimed passionately. "It is because you thought badly of me long ago that you suspect me now!"

Mr. Quelch paused.

"No doubt there is something in what you say, Levison," he said at last. "But I do not find you guilty; if you persist in denial, the matter will be sifted to the very bottom, and you need not doubt that the truth will come to light. If you have nothing to fear from the truth—"

"I have nothing to fear," said Levison steadily.

"For the last time, Levison, before it is too late—"

"I have nothing to confess," said Levison. "I never even touched your desk while I was here. Whatever was done must have been done after I left."

"Very well," said Mr. Quelch quietly. "I accept your word, Levison, until the truth is established, which will either clear you or convict you. If the stolen money is not found in your

possession, search will be made until it is found. You are prepared to be searched?"

Levison flinched.

"You are not prepared for that?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch sharply.

"Is any fellow prepared to be treated like a suspected thief?" exclaimed Levison passionately. "No, sir. But I am ready to submit."

"That will do," said Mr. Quelch coldly.

He touched the bell for Trotter. And Billy Bunter, whose fat ear had been glued to the keyhole, stole softly away, gasping with excitement, with startling news for the Remove.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

"For It!"

"GAMMON!"

"It's true—"

"Cheese it!"

"It's true!" yelled Billy Bunter. "I say, you fellows, the rotter's in Quelch's study now, and old Quelch has sent for Trotter to search him."

"Cheese it!" roared Bob Cherry.

Bunter's startling news had not made much impression on the tea-party in Study No. 13. Only Wharton looked startled. He knew that Levison had been sent for to the Form master's study; that much was true at least.

"I say, you fellows, he's a thief!" howled Bunter. "I tell you I heard it all. He was burgling Quelch's study this afternoon."

"You fat idiot!"

"The idiocy of the esteemed Bunter is truly terrific," remarked Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

The Bunder looked into the study, over Bunter's shoulder.

"You fellows know what's up?" he asked.

"Anything up?" inquired Nugent.

"Yes, rather! Quelch's marching Levison up to the dorm, and Trotter's going with them. Skinner says—"

"Oh, blow Skinner!" said Johnny Bull. "Skinner's generally saying something, and always something rotten."

"I say, you fellows, Levison's a thief—"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"What does Skinner say this time, Smithy?" asked Harry Wharton.

"What does it matter what Skinner says?" growled Johnny Bull. "He's the biggest liar at Greyfriars, bar Bunter."

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"Look here, you beasts—"

"Shut up!" roared the whole study.

"Skinner says Levison was in Quelch's study to be searched," said the Bunder. "He says Trotter searched him under Quelch's gimlet-eye."

"Rot!" said Mark Linley.

"Well, they're going up to the dorm now, and Skinner says—"

"Hang Skinner!" said Johnny Bull.

The Bunder grinned.

"Skinner says it will be a show worth watching. I think Skinner's right this time—it will. I'm going, anyhow."

And Vernon-Smith walked away. Bunter, with a disdainful blink at the doubting Thomases in the study, rolled after him. Harry Wharton & Co. looked at one another, and rose from the tea-table with one accord.

"Let us follow on, my ridiculous friends," suggested Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh. "The seefulness is the esteemed believfulness."

"Let's!" assented Bob Cherry.

And the chums of the Remove

followed on. They found a crowd of other Removites on the dormitory staircase. Evidently the news was spreading far and wide that Levison was "up" for something. There were all sorts of rumours afloat; but most of the rumours agreed on one point, that there had been a theft in the Remove master's study. Some fellows had noticed that Levison was as white as chalk as he went up the staircase with his Form master and Trotter. Fisher T. Fish had heard Wingate tell another Sixth Form man that something pretty serious had happened in the Remove master's study. Skinner had said that Levison had been searched in that study, though it was not clear how Skinner knew, unless he had looked through the keyhole.

All the Remove knew of Levison's mysterious proceedings in the Form master's study that afternoon, and many fellows recalled his outburst of passionate anger in the quad at the suggestion of what would be thought if Mr. Quelch missed anything when he came home. From the looks and words of the Removites, it was easy to see that Levison was already condemned in their minds.

Quite an army arrived at the big doorway of the Remove dormitory.

The light was on there, and the crowded juniors at the doorway could see Mr. Quelch, standing like a grim statue, and Levison, white-faced and silent, beside him. Trotter, the House page, was on his knees at Levison's box, turning out the contents, article by article, and evidently searching.

"That's Levison's box he's going through!" murmured Snoop.

"What on earth did he pinch from Quelch?" asked Bolsover major. "It's clear now what he was doing in the study, of course."

"He pinched a bundle of currency notes, and Quelch's got the numbers!" gasped Bunter. "I tell you I heard him say so!"

"Looks as if he pinched something, anyhow," remarked Ogilvy. "They're not searching his box for nothing."

"They're after a bundle of currency notes, all right," said Skinner, with a grin. "No doubt about that. Poor old Levison!"

"A fellow may be suspected without being guilty, Skinner," said Tom Redwing sharply.

"Right on the wicket," agreed

"It is not within my province to cane any boy belonging to a colleague's Form," boomed Mr. Prout, "so I shall box your ears." Smack! "Yaroooh!" roared Bright, as a hefty "box" on his left ear sent him staggering. (See Chapter 8.)



Skinner. "But a fellow ought to be jolly careful about getting suspected when he's got Levison's juicy reputation behind him."

"Oh, you shut up, Skinner!" growled Johnny Bull. "We all know you'll make it as bad for Levison as you can."

"Do you?" said Skinner, with a laugh. "What you know about that, old bean, is about as much as you know about anything else; and you could put the lot in a thimble and leave plenty of room for a finger."

Johnny Bull knitted his brows.

"I don't believe Levison's pinched anything," he said; "and if you say he has, Skinner, I'll jolly well punch your head!"

"Why not punch Quelch's?" asked Skinner. "He seems to think that Levison has."

"Shurrup, you fellows!" murmured the Bunder. "Quelch will clear us off if he hears us. I want to see the show."

Mr. Quelch seemed unconscious of the crowd at the doorway. Levison was not unconscious of them; but he did not look towards them. His face was white, and there was a restless, uneasy gleam in his eyes. Many fellows, looking at him, thought that he certainly did not look like a fellow whose mind and conscience were at rest.

Levison's mind was not, as a matter of fact, at rest. His confidence in being

cleared of that unexpected accusation had been complete, at first. Now it was shaken. For he remembered that he had an enemy at Greyfriars, and he knew that enemy to be utterly unscrupulous, the rascally son of a rascally father. Ernest Levison and Edgar Bright were rivals in the search for the lost will of John Thorpe, once a Form master at Greyfriars; and well Levison knew that Bright would stop at little to rid himself of a dangerous rival. Levison had allowed himself to be searched in the Form master's study with unbroken composure; but the search of his box was a different matter. Levison himself would not have been surprised had the missing bundle of currency notes been found there; though assuredly they had never been placed there by his hand.

It was with deep anxiety, therefore, that he watched Trotter's slow and steady progress through the box.

Levison's brain was clear and cool, keen beyond his years. He had already thought the matter out, as few fellows of his age could or would have thought it out. He was assured that the notes had not been taken for purposes of theft. Certainly not if Bright had taken them; for Bright was a wealthy fellow, the son of a rich moneylender. If he was wicked enough, he was not fool enough to steal money of which he had no need. If Bright had taken the currency notes, he had taken them for one purpose only—to drive his rival from Greyfriars under the shadow of disgrace.

Levison was poor; the Head and Mr. Quelch were well aware of the ruin that had fallen on his father. That supplied, to some extent, a motive; added to the unforgotten bad character he had had when he was formerly at Greyfriars. All the circumstances played into the

hands of the plotter—if indeed this was a plot against him—and he was sure that it was. The moneylender's son, waiting and watching for an opportunity, had found one at last; and Levison felt that he was in the toils.

With intense anxiety he watched Trotter; all the more because he had noted, as soon as his box was opened, that the contents had been disturbed. Someone had been there, he knew that. He blamed himself now for not having kept the box locked; but he realised that a common lock would not have stopped a fellow who was cunning enough to lay such a scheme—a key would have been obtained. His heart was throbbing painfully; he could not wholly keep his anxiety from his face, accustomed as he was to self-command.

But Trotter lifted his head at last and shook it.

The box had been emptied; nothing had been found.

Levison drew a deep, deep breath.

But he was mystified. He knew that someone had been at his box; yet the stolen notes had not been found there. He was deeply perplexed.

Mr. Quelch's brow was troubled and thoughtful. Levison's belongings were searched first, as a matter of course; but the Form master knew that a fellow who had his wits about him, as Ernest Levison assuredly had, would be much more likely to find some safer place for stolen property. The old school was full of nooks and crannies that would have answered the purpose. That thought was in the Remove master's mind, and Levison easily read it there.

Mr. Quelch seemed to become suddenly aware that the whole Remove were crowded outside the dormitory doorway. Perhaps he had not hitherto been so unaware of it as the juniors supposed. His gimlet-eyes turned suddenly on the abashed juniors.

"Wharton!"

"Hem! Yes, sir."

"It is necessary for me to discover whether anyone went to my study between half-past four and the time I returned," said Mr. Quelch. "Can you give me any information on that point?"

"No, sir."

"Can any boy present?" asked Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir," said Skinner.

The Removites stared at Skinner. No one had expected him to speak. Mr. Quelch fixed his eyes on Skinner.

"Come into the dormitory, Skinner."

"Yes, sir."

Skinner entered the dormitory.

"You are aware that someone entered my study this afternoon?"

"Yes, sir."

"I am not referring to Levison. I am aware that he was there; he was there with my permission."

There was a murmur of surprise among the Removites. This was rather news to them. Certainly, Levison had said so himself, but he had not been believed. The statement had seemed incredible to the Removites.

"I desire to know who may have entered my study after Levison left it, Skinner," said Mr. Quelch.

"I understand, sir!"

"You saw someone enter the study?"

"Yes, sir!"

"Who was it?"

"Bright, sir—the new fellow!" said Skinner.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Something like a Surprise!

"BRIGHT!"

Mr. Quelch repeated the name in astonishment.

It was repeated among the Removites, too. Skinner had surprised the whole Form.

There was a lurking smile on Skinner's face. He was enjoying the sensation he was causing in the Remove.

"You saw Bright enter my study, Skinner?" asked Mr. Quelch, after a pause.

"Yes, sir!" said Skinner calmly.

"When was this?"

"Just before five o'clock, sir."

"You are quite sure of what you say, Skinner?"

"Quite, sir."

"Is Bright present?" asked Mr. Quelch, with another glance at the crammed doorway and the passage beyond.

Bright was not present, as the juniors soon ascertained. He was the only fellow in the Remove who was not there, by this time.

"Wharton, kindly find Bright at once and bring him here."

"Certainly, sir!" said Harry.

He hurried away, half a dozen fellows going with him to look for Bright. Mr. Quelch waited grimly and quietly. Levison, his brain in a whirl, stared at Skinner.

Skinner's statement bore out the suspicion that had formed in his mind. He had felt, he had known, that Bright had a hand in this; but he had never dreamed that an eye-witness could or would come to his help. And Skinner was the last fellow from whom he would have expected help. But the words Skinner had spoken, as he met him on the way to Mr. Quelch's study, came back to his mind now with a new meaning.

It was some little time before the captain of the Remove and his companions returned with Bright.

The Toad came unwillingly, but he had no choice about coming. His sallow face was almost sickly with uneasiness.

"Here is Bright, sir," said Harry.

Bright was pushed into the dormitory. He looked furtively at Levison, and then at Mr. Quelch. Of Skinner he took no heed.

"Bright," said Mr. Quelch, "I am informed that you entered my study during my absence this afternoon."

Bright's knees knocked together.

"I, sir!" he stammered.

"You admit having done so?"

"No, sir!" gasped Bright. "Oh, no, sir! I never went near your study, sir. Certainly not, sir!"

"A junior has stated that he saw you enter my study just before five o'clock, Bright."

"Oh, sir!" gasped Bright.

"You deny it?"

"Yes, sir!" almost whispered Bright.

"Very well; we shall see. Where were you, Bright, just before five o'clock?"

Bright licked his dry lips.

"I—I forget, sir."

"You forget?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"Ye-es, sir!"

"Very well, Bright. Take your time, and recall the circumstances. The matter is important, very important. It is necessary for you to state exactly where you were at five o'clock. Take your time."

The wretched Bright was silent.

"I—I think I was in my study, sir!" he stammered at last.

"You think?"

"I—I am sure, sir!"

"You are sure that you were in your study at five o'clock?"

"Yes, sir."

"Were you alone there?"

Bright scarcely breathed.

"Yes, sir."

"Study No. 11 is your study now, I think?" Evidently the Remove master was aware that the Toad had changed his quarters.

"Yes, sir."

"Your study-mates are Skinner, Snoop, and Stott, in that case. I conclude that you were not in the study at that time, Skinner?"

"No, sir," answered Skinner.

"Snoop and Stott are present. I think?"

The two juniors named came forward. Both of them looked uneasy. They were on more or less friendly terms with the Toad, though certainly they did not like him. But they had no intention whatever of taking the risk of bearing false witness on his account.

"Where were you two boys at five o'clock?" asked the Remove master.

"In our study, sir," answered Snoop.

"We'd gone in for tea, sir," said Stott.

"Was Bright present?"

"No, sir."

Bright's face was ghastly now. He trembled visibly as the Remove master's penetrating eyes turned upon him again.

"You have stated that you were in your study at five o'clock, Bright, and that you were alone there. Kindly explain yourself."

Bright licked his dry lips.

"I—I forgot, sir—"

"You forgot?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, in a terrifying voice.

"I—I mean, I—I left the study just before these fellows came in, sir. I—I didn't notice the time exactly, sir."

"I warn you to be careful in your statements, Bright. You have stated that you were in your study at the time in question, and your statement has proved to be false, at least inaccurate. You state now that you left your study before five o'clock?"

"Yes, sir."

"Where did you go?"

"I—I—I went out into the quad, sir."

Mr. Quelch glanced at the crowd in the doorway again. The Removites were breathless with excitement now.

"Did any boy present see Bright in the quadrangle about five o'clock or soon afterwards?"

"He was there before five, sir," said Harry Wharton. "I remember he was present when some fellows were talking to Levison. I think that was about a quarter to five."

"After that?"

"He went back, to the House, sir," said Ogilvy. "I saw him go in."

"Did anyone see him come out again?"

There was no answer.

"No one appears to have seen you in the quadrangle, Bright, at the time in question."

"I—I can't help that, sir. I—I was there."

"Very well! In what part of the quadrangle were you at that time?"

"I—I took a walk under the elms, sir."

"How long did you remain under the elms?"

"About—about half an hour, sir."

"That would be until nearly half-past five?"

"I—I suppose so, sir!"

"The rain stopped at half-past four," said Mr. Quelch. "No doubt many of you boys were out of the House after that. Were any of you under the elms?"

"Yes, rather, sir," said Bolsover major. "Some of us were punting a ball about, and it went under the trees a lot of times."

"Did you see Bright there?"

"No, sir; he wasn't there."

"Certainly he wasn't," said Russell. "We were bound to see him if he was there."

There was a murmur of assent from the fellows who had been punting the footer with Bolsover major. Mr. Quelch fixed his eyes upon Bright again, with an ominous gleam in them.

"It appears that you have made another mistake, Bright. You were not walking under the elms at the time in question."

The wretched Toad was silent. He had lied, because he had no other resource; but he had not had time to concoct a convincing story. His lying had made matters worse, instead of better.

"Skinner has stated that he saw you enter my study at that time," said Mr. Quelch. "You have uttered a series of deliberate falsehoods, Bright, to account for your movements. It is established that you entered my study after Levison had left it, and you have denied it, falsely. I now require to know what you did in my study."

The wretched junior did not speak. He knew that the toils were closing in on him now. He gave Skinner a bitter, malevolent look, but he did not speak.

"Trotter!"

"Yessir!"

"You will now search Master Bright's box."

"Yessir!"

A faint sneer appeared for a moment on Edgar Bright's sallow face. But his expression changed as his box was opened.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

Trotter picked up a bundle of currency notes that lay on the top of the other contents of the box.

In silence he handed the bundle to Mr. Quelch.

Bright's eyes almost started from his head.

Mr. Quelch, in the midst of a breathless silence, examined the notes.

"These are the currency notes that were taken from my study," he said in a deep voice. "They have been found in your box, Bright. You entered my study secretly, you denied it falsely, and the stolen notes are found in your box. The matter is now definitely cleared up. Levison, I regret that I allowed, for one moment, a doubt of your honour to cross my mind."

"Thank you, sir!" said Levison.

"Bright, you will come with me to the headmaster."

The Toad gave a howl of terror.

"I—I never—"

"Silence!"

"I—I mean I—I never stole the notes, sir!" howled the wretched schemer. "I don't know how they came in my box. I never put them there. I put them in Levison's box!"

"What?"

"I—I own up, sir," panted Bright. "It—it was just a—a—a joke—"

"A joke?" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"I mean a—a joke on Levison, sir. I put the notes in his box. He must

have found them there and put them into mine."

"I have not been to the dormitory at all, sir," said Levison quietly.

"I believe you, Levison."

"Someone did it, sir," wailed Bright. "I never did. I'm not a thief! Everybody knows that I've got heaps of money. My father's rich. I didn't want the money. I never took it to steal it, sir!"

"Am I to understand, Bright, that you took the money with the intention of fastening a false charge upon another boy?"

"I—I meant to own up, sir, after—after Levison had been through it, sir," groaned Bright. "It was to pay him out. It was really a practical joke, sir."

"You can scarcely expect me to believe that statement, Bright. I believe, however, that you did place the notes in Levison's box, as you say, and

deep breath. He realised how terribly narrow had been his escape; he realised how much he owed to the fellow who had been his enemy, whom he had forgiven, and who had done one good turn for another. Skinner had saved him from a danger against which he could scarcely have guarded himself. What he had done for Skinner had unexpectedly brought its reward. Truly, he had cast his bread upon the waters, and it had returned after many days.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Levison Explains!

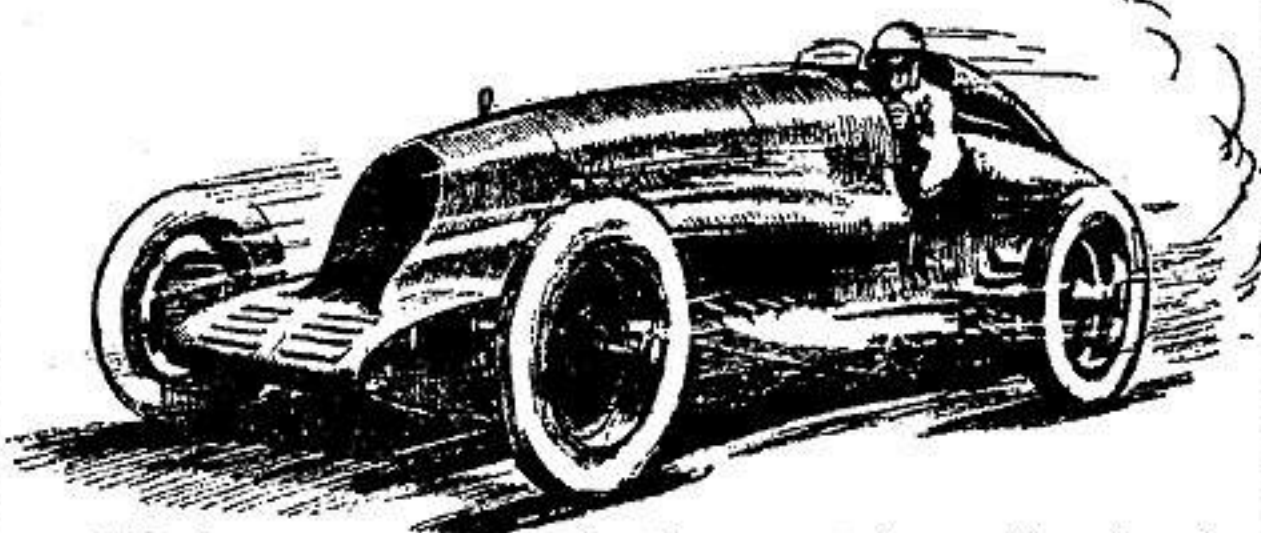
"THANK you, Skinner!" Ernest Levison spoke quietly, but there was an unusual feeling in his voice.

Skinner grinned.

"I told you that one good turn

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your object can only have been a dastardly one. Someone else must have removed them from one box to the other."

Mr. Quelch's eyes turned very keenly on Skinner.

"I did it, sir," said Skinner coolly. "I watched him planting the notes in Levison's box, and after he was gone I nipped in and changed them over to his own. I wasn't going to let them be found in Levison's box, and I didn't know what else to do with them."

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Quelch.

"It was a joke, sir," wailed the hapless Bright. "I never meant to let Levison get into real trouble—"

"Your headmaster will judge of the truth of that statement, Bright. If he credits it he may punish you only with a flogging. I warn you, however, to expect to be expelled from Greyfriars. Follow me! I shall take you to Dr. Locke at once."

The Toad cringed away after Mr. Quelch. Ernest Levison drew a deep,

deserved another," he remarked. "I owed you something."

"You've more than repaid it," said Levison. "I shan't forget this in a hurry."

"All serene, old bean," said Skinner carelessly, and he lounged out of the dormitory with Snoop and Stott, who were regarding him with wonder. All the Remove were surprised by the part Skinner had played in the affair; but his own chums were absolutely astonished.

"I thought you were down on the fellow, Skinner," Sidney James Snoop remarked as they went downstairs.

"So I was."

"You've saved him from the chopper."

"He saved me from a ragging."

"Gratitude's rather a new stunt for you, isn't it?" said Snoop, with a grin.

"Perhaps it is," said Skinner sourly. "But a fellow can do a decent thing once in a while, I suppose. I wasn't

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going to let that cur get him sacked for nothing, after the good turn he did me, and you can sneer as much as you like, and be hanged to you!"

"Yes; shut up, Snoopey!" said Stott. "Skinner's acted jolly decently, and I'm glad of it, for one. I hope that rotter, Bright, will be booted out of the school."

"Pretty certain," said Snoop. "I suppose it's no good askin' you to come to the study and finish that little game, Skinner, now you're so good?"

"Don't be an ass!" snapped Skinner. "I'm ready."

"Come on, then!" grinned Snoop.

There was a footstep on the staircase behind the three, and Harry Wharton tapped Skinner on the shoulder. Skinner looked round.

"Just a word, old bean!" said the captain of the Remove cordially. "I think you acted like a brick."

"So glad to earn your good opinion!" said Skinner. "That, of course, is more than a sufficient reward, if I wanted any."

Wharton coloured.

"Praise from Your Magnificence is praise indeed," went on Skinner. "Excuse me if I am a little overwhelmed."

"Oh, don't be an ass!" said Wharton good-humouredly. "You've acted in a really decent way—"

He paused.

"For once?" said Skinner ironically. "That's what you were goin' to say, isn't it? Finish your sentence. Don't mind me!"

"Well, I wasn't going to say it, but I suppose I was thinking of it," said Wharton frankly. "You've surprised us a little, you know. It seems that you were keeping an eye on that unspeakable rotter, the Toad."

"I was—and a wide-open eye," smiled Skinner. "I warned him that I'd dish him if he played any tricks on Levison, and I kept my word. He can't say I didn't give him a plain warning. That little scene in the quad this afternoon, and what the fellows were saying put it into his head. Of course, he's been watching for a chance."

"But why?" said Wharton, puzzled. "What has the fellow got against Levison? He hardly knows him."

"I give that up," said Skinner. "I fancy there's some family dispute among their people, and the Toad's brought it to the school with him. I knew he's as bitter as death on Levison. But his teeth are drawn now, and if he's not sacked he won't try this game again."

"You don't believe it was an idiotic practical joke, then, as he said?"

Skinner laughed.

"No fear! He wanted Levison bunked out of the school. He came jolly near to getting away with it, too!"

"The awful rotter!" said Harry.

"The limit," agreed Skinner. "But I hope he won't be sacked."

"Eh? Why?"

"So long as he's here," explained Skinner gravely, "I'm not the worst character in Greyfriars. What shall I be if he goes?"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"I don't think you're quite so bad as you make yourself out to be," he said. "You've acted jolly well in this instance, anyhow. Look here! We're having a little spread. Will you come?"

Skinner placed his hand on his heart and bowed.

"Your highness overwhelms me," he answered.

"Ass! Will you come?"

"I fear that I must plead a previous

engagement," answered Skinner. "Besides, I should be uncomfortable in the midst of so much improving society. You come and feed with me instead."

Wharton hesitated.

"I can offer you a frugal but hospitable tea," said Skinner, with great seriousness. "But to make up for the frugality of the spread, there will be smokes afterwards—"

"Eh?"

"Quite good smokes. I'm not mean in such matters. You can depend on the quality of the cigarettes."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Snoop and Stott, greatly tickled by the expression on the face of the captain of the Remove.

"Along with the smokes," resumed Skinner, "there will be an entertaining little game—nap or banker, as you prefer. Or, as there will be four of us, we can make it bridge. Shilling a hundred suit you?"

"Thanks!" said Wharton. "I won't come!"

"Oh, do!" urged Skinner. "On a special occasion like this, with such a distinguished guest, I shall go a little out in the matter of refreshments. I may be able to spring a little whisky. What?"

"Fathoad!"

Skinner & Co. went down the stairs, laughing. Evidently Harold Skinner, well as he had acted for once, was still Harold Skinner; the leopard had not changed his spots, nor the Ethiopian his skin.

Harry Wharton rejoined his friends, and Levison came down to the Remove passage in the midst of the Famous Five. The little trouble that had arisen between them was forgotten now.

"We've got a spread in my study," said Bob Cherry. "You'll come along to No. 13, Levison?"

"I'll be glad," said Levison. "Look here, you fellows. I spoke to you rather hastily in the quad. I was sorry afterwards. I was going to say so before this happened."

"All serene," said Wharton. "We all get a little ratty at times, I dare say."

"I was ratty," confessed Levison. "The fellows saw me rooting about, as they considered it, in Mr. Quelch's study, and perhaps it was natural that they didn't believe that I had his permission to be there. They've all heard him say so now, though."

"Well, you can't blame the fellows," said Nugent. "You must admit that it looked rather queer."

"I know it did," said Levison. "And I'd explain like a shot, only it's rather a private matter. But I suppose you know that, as Mr. Quelch gave me his permission for what I was doing there, I was not spying or prying, as the fellows thought."

"Of course!" said Harry.

"All the same, I don't see why you couldn't have told the fellows what you were doing," said Johnny Bull. "Where's the sense in keeping silly secrets?"

"I know it looks like that," said Levison; "but—"

"Oh, all serene! I'm not curious," said Johnny Bull. "I only mean that when a fellow gets secretive and mysterious, he's jolly liable to be misunderstood."

"The liability is terrific, my esteemed Levison!"

"I know," said Levison uncomfortably. "But—well, look here! There's supposed to be a secret panel in the old oak in Mr. Quelch's study, and Mr. Quelch gave me permission to look for it, and see if I could find it."

"My hat! Is that all?"

"Well, no, it isn't all, but that's what I was looking for in Mr. Quelch's study," said Levison.

The juniors stared at Levison.

"I wonder if that was what the Toad was after when he was rooting about in Quelch's study?" said Johnny Bull.

"Yes," said Levison quietly; "I've no doubt about that. Look here, you fellows! I don't want the matter talked all over the Remove; but there's no harm in telling you—"

"Don't, if you'd rather not!" said Wharton quickly.

"I'd rather. You know that my great-uncle, Mr. Thorpe, was once master of the Remove here. He left some valuable papers in some unknown place at Greyfriars. I'm trying to find them. It means a lot to me and to my people. Bright is after them, too, and if he should find them—" Levison shrugged his shoulders. "Among the papers is Mr. Thorpe's last will, which leaves his fortune to my father—the fortune that Mr. Bright claims under an earlier will. Now you know."

Bob Cherry gave a prolonged whistle.

"I think I understand now," said Wharton quietly. "If the Toad should find that will, it is not likely to be made known, and they will keep the money that rightfully belongs to your father."

"That is what I think."

"And that's why he wants you shifted out of Greyfriars. I see now," said Nugent. "Luckily, it turns out that he's going to be shifted himself, and you will have a clear field. What an awful rotter!"

The juniors arrived at Study No. 13, harmony completely restored now. They sat down to the spread that had been interrupted; but it was destined to be interrupted again. There was a patter of feet in the Remove passage, and the door of No. 13 was flung open, and Levison minor ran breathlessly in.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" boomed Bob Cherry. "Hasn't your major taught you to knock at a door when you call on the Remove, young 'un?"

Levison minor did not heed.

"Ernie!" he panted.

Levison gave him a quick, reassuring look. He understood at once that his minor had heard of what had happened.

"It's all serene, kid!" he said. "Right as rain!"

"Some—some fellows were saying that—that—" panted Frank.

"Never mind what they were saying. I tell you it's all right, kid," said Levison. "I don't look as if I were in trouble, do I?"

"I—I thought—I was afraid—"

"The serenity is terrific, my esteemed and ridiculous young friend!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "But now that you have introduced your honourable presence into the study, deign to honour us further by staying to tea, and thus filling to overflowing the cup of our beatitude."

"Do!" said Bob Cherry, with a chuckle. "You can't refuse an invitation put in such esteemed and ludicrous English."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And a chair was found for Levison minor.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Up to Levison!

"NO Toad!" remarked Bob Cherry, glancing round the Remove dormitory.

"Gone. I suppose," said Wharton.

"Nobody's seen him go."

"Well, he's not here," remarked Nugent, "and he must have been sacked."

Nothing had been seen of the Toad by the Removites since he had gone to the headmaster's study with Mr. Quelch. That he would be expelled from Greyfriars for what he had done seemed certain to all the fellows, and no one had any sympathy to waste upon him—Levison least of all. The junior from St. Jim's could feel compassion for a fellow, even a thoroughly bad fellow, who was down on his luck; but it was a great relief to have done with an unscrupulous and insidious enemy.

"Where's the Toad, Bunter?" called out Vernon-Smith.

Billy Bunter blinked round.

"Eh? How should I know?"

"Well, you know everything else that doesn't concern you," said the Bounder. "Isn't there a keyhole to the Head's study door now?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

Bright's eyes almost started from his head as Trotter picked up a bundle of currency notes and handed it to Mr. Quelch. "Bless my soul!" exclaimed the Remove Form-master. "These are the notes that were taken from my study, and they have been found in your box, Bright." (See Chapter 12.)

night. It had seemed certain to the juniors that the Toad would be "bunked" from Greyfriars.

"He's a deep rotter," said Peter Todd. "He may have pulled the wool over the Beak's eyes somehow. He ought to be sacked."

"The oughtfulness is terrific."

"If he hangs on, he won't find it nice in the Remove," growled Bolsover major. "He's a dangerous rascal; that's what I think of him. I shall keep clear of the rotter, for one!"

"Yes, rather!"

"He will be sent to Coventry by the Form if he stays," said Harry Wharton. "I don't think any decent fellow will want to speak to him after what he's done."

Utterly as they condemned the wretched schemer, whose scheming had recoiled upon himself, some of the juniors could not help pitying him as they saw him. His face was white and sickly, and it was clear that he had slept little if at all. He glanced furtively at the Remove fellows, and a faint tinge of colour crept into his pallid cheeks.

"Poor beast!" said Bob Cherry. "He's an awful rotter, but—but he's going through it. Poor beast!"

The Head's door closed behind the Remove master and the Toad. A few minutes later Wingate was heard calling to Levison.

"Here," answered Levison.

"You're wanted in the Head's study."



"He must be gone," said Redwing. "The Head couldn't let him stay after what he did."

"I'll ask Wingate."

And when Wingate of the Sixth came in to see lights out for the Remove, the Bounder called to him.

"Is Bright gone, Wingate?"

"No."

"Not gone?" exclaimed a dozen voices.

Wingate shook his head.

"Where is he, then?" asked Wharton.

"Locked up in the punishment-room," answered the captain of Greyfriars. "He will stay there to-night."

"Sacked in the morning?" asked Peter Todd.

"I don't know; I think the Head hasn't decided yet." And Wingate of the Sixth turned out the light and left the dormitory.

There was a good deal of discussion before the Remove went to sleep that

"No fear!"

The Toad's bed was vacant in the Remove dormitory that night. When the Remove turned out at the clang of the rising-bell in the winter morning, most of them were thinking of the Toad and wondering what was to happen to him. He was not seen in the quad that morning, and he was missing at the breakfast-table. Apparently he was breakfasting in the punishment-room.

Before class, however, Billy Bunter rolled out into the quad with news.

"I say, you fellows, the Toad—"

"What about the Toad?" asked a dozen fellows at once.

"Quelch's fetched him down. Taking him to the Head, I think."

And there was a rush of the juniors into the House. They were in time to see Bright following the Remove master to Dr. Locke's study.

"My hat! He looks pretty sick!" commented the Bounder.

"Very well."

Levison was not looking, or feeling, pleased as he went to Dr. Locke's study. He had hoped to see no more of the Toad; and certainly he had hoped that the fellow would not remain at Greyfriars. But in spite of the wrong that had been done him, and the danger he had so narrowly escaped, he could not help compassionating the wretched fellow now. He wanted to have done with him; but he did not want to witness his humiliation or his punishment.

He tapped at the Head's door and entered.

Bright stood before the Head, pale, wretched, his hands trembling. Mr. Quelch stood by the window with a face like iron. The Remove master had had some experience of the Toad, and had the lowest possible opinion of him; and had the decision been left to Mr. Quelch undoubtedly Edgar Bright would

have been sent away from the school at once. But Dr. Locke had not yet reached a decision.

"I have sent for you, Levison," said the Head, "in connection with this boy Bright."

"Yes, sir."

"Bright persists in stating that his action yesterday was nothing more than a foolish, indeed criminal, practical joke," said Dr. Locke. "He repeats that he did not intend the matter to go further than that; and that after Mr. Quelch's property was discovered in your box, as he intended that it should be discovered, he would have admitted the facts."

The Head paused, and Levison did not speak. It was a lame story that Bright had told, but apparently it had had some effect on the Head. It was not for Levison to express an opinion.

The Toad gave him a sidelong glance. It was clear that he gave up all hope now that Levison was present. His story might have been believed by the Head; but he knew, of course, that Levison could not believe it.

"Bright's explanation is utterly improbable," went on the Head. "The most foolish and thoughtless boy could scarcely have planned such a thing merely as a jest. But the alternative is to believe this boy guilty of an act of wickedness that I am very loth to believe."

Another pause.

"His story is borne out, to a certain extent, by the apparent absence of any motive on his part to do you a serious injury," the Head continued. "He is a new boy at Greyfriars, and did not know you when you were here before. You have been back at the school only a few weeks. It seems impossible that you can have given him such deep offence, in so short a time, as to cause him to

lay a wicked scheme for your ruin. This causes me to think that his story, improbable as it sounds, may be true, and that he may have been guilty only of a particularly stupid, practical joke, as he says."

Levison was silent.

"If the boy had any motive for seeking to cause you such an injury, Levison, the matter would be clearer," said Dr. Locke. "That is why I have sent for you. Judging by appearances, it was Bright's object to fasten a false charge upon you and cause you to be sent away from the school. But even a bad-hearted boy could scarcely think of such a dastardly thing without a very strong motive, and such a motive appears to be lacking. Any ordinary quarrel or dispute would not account for it. I desire to know whether you can enlighten me."

Levison breathed hard.

The Toad stood white and harrassed, with a hopeless face. Now that Levison was called upon to speak, he despaired. Levison had only to tell what he knew. He knew that the Toad had been seeking the lost will; that he had schemed to prevent Levison from seeking it; that his motive for the scheme he had laid was to clear Levison off the scene, and make it impossible for him to seek further for the missing document. Once the Head knew that, he would know all; it was only the absence of a motive on the Toad's part that perplexed him, and the motive would be supplied.

Levison had only to speak.

A few words and he would be rid of his rival, rid of a dangerous enemy, and left to pursue his quest in peace and security. And the Toad waited, with a stony face, for him to speak.

But Levison did not speak.

Whether he ought to speak, he hardly knew. But he knew that the misery in

his enemy's face went to his heart, and that he could not utter a word to plunge him further into despair. Back into Levison's mind came a memory of a day when he had stood in that very study, as a culprit, as the Toad was standing now. Certainly, at his worst, he had never been like this fellow. But what might he not have become had he not pulled himself up in time? It was not for him to judge and to condemn. There was no feeling of revenge in his heart, scarcely a feeling but pity for the wretched fellow who was standing in the shadow of shame and fear.

There was a long silence in the study.

"You have nothing to tell me, Levison?" asked the Head at last. "I do not allude, of course, to any opinion you may have formed, but to the facts that may be within your knowledge."

The way of escape was opened for Levison by the headmaster's words. He knew the Toad's motive well enough, yet he could not conscientiously have said that it was a fact within his knowledge. He chose his words carefully as he answered:

"No, sir. I cannot say that I know of any such facts."

"Very well, Levison," said the Head. "I am glad to hear your answer. I am very unwilling to believe any boy guilty of such wickedness. I am far from satisfied, Bright, but I feel compelled to give you the benefit of the doubt, such as it is."

The Toad seemed scarcely to breathe.

His brain was in a whirl. Why had not his enemy spoken? It was impossible for the Toad to understand. But he realised that he was spared.

"I am very far from satisfied," repeated the Head, with a stern look at Bright. "But I will not believe you guilty of such wickedness save upon the most convincing evidence, and such evidence appears to be lacking. I shall leave you to your Form master to deal with. Mr. Quelch, the matter is now in your hands."

"Very well, sir."

"You may go, Levison."

A few minutes later loud yells were heard proceeding from the Remove master's study. The Head had decided; and the Toad was to remain at Greyfriars. But Mr. Quelch had his own view of the matter, and the Toad's punishment being left in his hands, he dealt faithfully by him.

"So you're not sacked!" exclaimed Bolsover major in disgust, when Bright came into the Form-room for class.

The Toad did not answer.

He took his place sullenly with the Remove, the fellows nearest to him drawing away to give him plenty of room. Nobody wanted to be near the Toad.

After lessons the Toad lounged on the House steps till Harry Wharton & Co. came in with Levison.

"So you're sending me to Coventry?" he asked, with a sneer.

Wharton looked at him.

"Yes. You may be able to stuff the Head, but every man in the Remove knows what you did and what you meant by it. If you've got any decency you'll ask your people to take you away from Greyfriars."

"I'll please myself about that!"

"You'll be in Coventry as long as you stay here," said the captain of the Remove.

And he walked into the House with his friends, leaving the outcast of the Remove scowling.

THE END.

BRAVO, LEVISON!

Somewhere in Greyfriars, said to be hidden behind a secret panel, is a will that means a fortune to Ernest Levison's father in whose favour the will is made out.

Naturally, Levison is keen to get his hands on that valuable document, and so is Edgar Bright, the Toad of the Remove, whose one object at Greyfriars is to find the missing will and destroy it!

You'll enjoy every chapter of

"LEVISON'S LUCK!"

next week's topping school yarn, for it shows FRANK RICHARDS bang at the top of his form.



ORDER YOUR MAGNET EARLY, CHUMS!

GOLD FOR THE GETTING!

By STANTON HOPE.



(Introduction on page 26.)

A Hive of Industry!

SPORT, as the outside world knows it, is rare in the Great Lone Land of the far North. Thus, as an item of news, the boxing tournament organised by Bull Morgan and Lefty Simons attained an importance in which it never would have done in any ordinary community in England or the United States.

Financially it was a loss to its promoters, owing to their secret wagers about the light-weight event between Jack and the Swede. But as a sporting occasion it was a roaring success, and was talked about for many a long day.

Because of the scarcity of other news, the thrilling story of how young Jack Orchard beat the famous pug, Yap Hemmons, spread through the far-flung wastes of the Yukon and Alaska. The tale, which lost nothing in the telling, was swapped in the camps of miners, Hudson Bay trading posts, trappers' cabins, Mounted Police barracks, and even in the Indian wigwams from Dawson to the Baring Strait, and eastward to the Mackenzie Basin.

It came as a welcome topic in the long interval before the entries were announced for that greatest of all sporting events of the North, the famous Dog Derby from Nome to Candle Creek and back. The race, as usual, would be held in the early days of April, and for weeks before and weeks afterwards, would occupy the thoughts of all lovers of sport in the Far North.

For the present there was one other topic of conversation in Dawson beside the boxing tournament, and that was

the chances of striking it rich with the new claims at Kettle Creek.

Owing to the rock formation and other technical reasons, it was presumed that the district was gold-bearing, but as the land had been a Government reserve and had never been prospected, no strike had been made there. Mining on Kettle Creek would be a gamble, as all agreed, and the fact that it was a gamble made the forthcoming adventure none the less alluring.

Before the legal period of grace was up, many miners, including that well-known character, Jock McLennan, went out to their claims.

Jack and Terry remained on for a few days in Dawson, quietly occupying themselves with getting together stores, tools, and household articles which they would need on the new diggings. For they had definitely decided to work claims three and four at Kettle Creek during the winter, and in the spring to make a cleaning-up both there and at the Yellow Horseshoe.

Among the other starters back for the new district, were Bull Morgan and Lefty Simons. Eventually they made three or four journeys with their dog team, taking out the supplies they needed, and in the end left the dogs in Dawson to be trained by a crack Finn "musher" (driver) for the big race in April.

By the time that all the miners were back on their new claims, Kettle Creek became a hive of industry. For a time the weather remained good, and this fair spell was taken advantage of to the full.

Not far from the creek was a small

forest of pine, and from there the logs were obtained for building the miners' shelters. The doors of the cabins were made of slabs, which were really split fragments of wood from suitable logs. The roofs were also made of logs, and all the chinks in roof and walls were firmly stuffed up with moss driven in by wedges. Some of the better-off miners brought window glass, hinges, and so forth from Dawson, but others adopted more primitive means of finishing off their winter homes.

In some cases, strips of untanned deer hide were used in place of windows, or merely rows of glass bottles, or pickle-jars, were built into the walls, for window panes were scarce and expensive. Tables and beds were usually home-made. The deep snow was scraped away to find grass for lining wooden beds in lieu of mattresses.

Tin plates and mugs were used, and most of the cooking was done in frying-pans. Stoves were fitted in most cabins, but some miners made fireplaces of rock and clay.

The cabin which Jack and Terry built between them was only about fourteen feet square, for Terry's left arm was still weak, and he could do none of the axo work, so that it occupied the best part of two weeks. If it were not so well constructed as the one Uncle Dave had helped them to make on Starvation Creek, it was at least well fitted to keep out the terrible cold of the Yukon nights, and this was the chief thing.

The cabin built, work on the claims was begun in earnest. The method was that adopted by Uncle Dave and the

boys at the Yellow Horseshoe early in the winter—burning holes in the ground with fire. Blows with a pick on the ground were futile, for the soil was frozen into a solid mass as hard as granite. Dynamite, too, was useless, for it was found that a heavy charge only made a pot-hole in the iron ground and did not loosen the surrounding gravel at all.

So wood was collected from the near by forest and made into bonfires, and after a fire had burned a whole night through, there would perhaps be a foot or eighteen inches of dirt to shovel. When, by this means, a hole had been made sufficiently deep, a rough windlass was erected, and a bucket used for removing the dirt. In the case of the two chums, Jack did most of the shovelling below ground, while Terry worked the windlass and emptied the dirt on the big cone of soil at the mouth of the hole.

At stages of the work, they took a pan of dirt to the cabin and panned it out in warm water. The other Kettle Creek miners did the same, but nothing was reported in the way of a strike. None of those on the higher claims of the creek, however, had got to bed rock, and there was always the hope of striking a streak of pay dirt at the foot of the frozen muck.

In addition to their work on the claim, Jack and Terry exercised their dogs for sometimes a day at a time. Jack, to the amusement of the miners, had sent in his entry for the Dog Derby, as had Jock McLennan, Shorty Gibbs, and Bull Morgan.

The intelligence of Skookum, the leader, was amazing, and on him chiefly, Jack and Terry banked their chance of winning the loving-cup and ten thousand dollars (about £2,000) in cash which was the prize offered by the Nemo Kennel Club for the event.

The "Salted" Mine!

OLD JOCK McLENNAN was a great sportsman. When he was training his own dogs on the ice-covered reaches of the Klondike River of which Kettle Creek was a tributary, he did not neglect to give Jack all the wrinkles he could.

Time and again under Jock's guidance, Jack practised stopping his huskies almost dead at a sharp word of command. In the great race itself, many rivers and lakes frozen to a depth of between three to five feet would have to be crossed. And in ice of this kind there are always air-holes—certain death-traps to unwary drivers and dogs.

So Jock taught Jack how to rush at full speed toward holes, specially cut in the ice along the banks of the Klondike River, and bring the team up all standing.

At first, in spite of Skookum's own obedience, the other huskies were slack in obeying. On these occasions, Jack took a flying leap off the sledge and let the whole team shoot forward into the icy water, which was too shallow for them to come to any real harm. After a few of these sharp duckings, the dogs decided that obedience was the best policy, especially as Skookum invariably took his revenge on them with his own formidable fangs.

Sometimes the whole camp of Kettle Creek would come out to watch the training of the dogs. Then Bull Morgan, whose team was being trained for him by an expert many miles away, would

crack unpleasant jokes, and by offering attractive odds, induce other men to back Jack for the stakes.

Day by day, as the fierce winter dragged on toward its close, the great topic of talk became the Dog Derby. And all over the Yukon country and Alaska, Shorty Gibbs was spoken of as favourite for the event with Jock McLennan a likely runner-up.

One bitter evening at Kettle Creek when the thermometer was registering in the region of fifty degrees below zero, there came a knock on the door of the chums' cabin. Jack and Terry had finished their pork-and-beans supper and were having a game of draughts together at the rough table before turning in to their bunks. They seldom had visitors, for everyone was too dog-tired for much social life after the hard day's work in the diggings.

"Jock McLennan perhaps," muttered Terry. "Shure he said he'd look in sometime to show you how to make quick trail repairs to the dog harness, me bhoy."

But when Jack opened the door, he saw on the threshold the young American greenhorn who had employed Lone Bear as a packer on the first rush to the new gold district. Since then the chums had seen him occasionally in the camp, but his claim was two or three miles from theirs and they had never had any pow-wows with him nor indeed did they even know his name.

Other Americans they knew had spoken rather contemptuously of him as "the kid from Stanford," which is one of the big Universities of California. And by general agreement of the hard-bitten soundoughs from the States, the 'Varsity boy ought to have been on a bank stool in 'Frisco or Los Angeles.

"Good-evening," said the visitor pleasantly, "I guess I've heard a deal about you—Jack Orchard, the famous mixer?"



INTRODUCTION.

Jack Orchard arrives in San Francisco to find his uncle, Dave Orchard, missing, having apparently absconded with a bag of gold. Jack falls in with Terry O'Hara, a cheery Irish boy, and Clem Hardy, an old prospector, with whom he joins forces in a gold rush up the Yukon. At intervals the trio have trouble with Bull Morgan and Lefty Simons, two shady camp followers. Later Hardy is identified as Dave Orchard and arrested; but he manages to escape again. Jack then falls foul of Lone Bear, an Indian packer. The pair agree to Morgan's suggestion to meet in the boxing-ring. When the time arrives, however, Jack finds himself forced to fight Yap Hemmens, a professional pug, whom he knocks out.

(Now Read On.)

My name is Washington K. Gellibrand. Shake!"

Jack shook and after closing the cabin door, turned with a smiling face toward the astonished Terry.

"Mr. Washington K. Gellibrand!" he introduced. "And this is my pard, Terry O'Hara!"

"Top of the evening to ye, Mither Jelly-brain," murmured Terry.

"Gellibrand," corrected the visitor, with a smile, and he spelt it out. "Up to now I haven't seen much of you boys, but I guess I'll have more of that pleasure in future for I've come to be a near neighbour of yours."

"Glad to hear it, Mr. Gellibrand," smiled Jack. "Take a pow!"

The lad from Stanford seated himself on the vacant soap-box.

"Call me Wash," he said; "everyone used to be at college."

"Well, Mr. Gelli—er, Wash!" remarked Jack, reflecting the American's smile. "We're jolly glad to hear you're going to be a neighbour of ours. Bought another claim?"

The Californian youth nodded.

"Yep!" he answered. "I've been right down to rock bottom on the claim I staked, number forty-nine, and the panning out showed that there wasn't no more gold in that ground than there are whiskers on a tomato."

"How could ye expect it, me bhoy?" inquired Terry. "Forty-nine is no lucky number at all, at all. Shure the figure four added to nine makes thirteen, and any fool would tell ye that thirteen's an unlucky number."

"And which claim have you bought, Wash?" asked Jack.

"The two claims below you," replied the American. "I've bought numbers five and six from Bull Morgan and Lefty Simons."

"Well, 'tis a good thing to know that we shall no more have those spalpeens for neighbours," remarked Terry, putting on a pot to boil. "I hope, Wash, me bhoy, that you didn't give them what they asked for them."

The American laughed.

"Rather not!" he exclaimed. "They asked a thousand dollars each for the claims, but I beat 'em down to fifteen hundred for the pair."

Both chums whistled. "My hat!" muttered Jack. "That's stiff enough, considering that no gold worth sneaking of has been found at Kettle Creek so far."

"Say, trust Washington K. Gellibrand for not parting with his wad easily," chuckled the lad from the States. "You bet I satisfied myself there was gold on the claims before I put my good dollars into the paws of those neighbours of yours. As a fact, boys," he confided, "they told me to go and get a pan from the diggings myself, and I washed out the dirt and found a good couple of ounces of coarse gold."

"Bedad, and did you!" exclaimed Terry. "Thin that sounds hopeful for us!"

While Terry made a mug of cocoa all round, the American lad chatted on.

It seemed that he had only completed the purchase early that evening and obtained a transfer of the claims. That very night he was taking over the rough cabin which Morgan and Simons had built. The rogues themselves were lightning out for Dawson, presumably tired of hard, unprofitable work and eager to re-open their sporting club and get their faro table going.

"I've got some of the gold here,"

Gellibrand said, producing a small leathern poke from his pocket. "I mined it myself on the claims, and I reckon if I can get as much as this to the pan at about twelve feet, I'm liable to strike it rich 'way down at bed rock."

He spread the coarse gold out on the table for Jack and Terry to see, and both boys bent over it.

Jack picked up a piece, held it near to the oil lamp and examined it carefully.

"Great snakes!" he muttered. "You say this is the stuff you mined?"

The American youth rose and looked at them anxiously.

"Sure!" he said.

"Then take it from me," said Jack, turning to him, "the claims you bought from Morgan and Simons had been salted."

"Salted!"

"That's about the truth of it. This isn't gold such as you dig up out of the ground—it's amalgam!"

(There will be another thrilling instalment of this great adventure yarn next week, chums. Don't miss a line of it, whatever you do!)

FAMOUS FOOTBALL CLUBS.

(Continued from page 2.)

although his birthplace was the town of the crooked spire—Chesterfield. Bang went another three thousand pounds when the City signed him on.

Last season Manchester City scored 108 goals—second only to Middlesbrough in the whole country. That shows there is power in the front rank. There is, too, for there is what is called in Manchester the Joynson-Hicks combination. Actually, the inside-left—or a centre-forward if need be—is Tom Johnson. He got twenty-five goals himself last season, and this term has been in even better form. The Joynson-Hicks idea comes from the fact that the outside-left is George Hicks. He is a Manchester lad. Nay, perhaps, I ought to withdraw that, as Salford likes to claim him.

The City have had centre-forward difficulties in recent times, but it is hoped that young Broadhurst will relieve them of worry in this direction. He is only twenty-one, but has justified his promotion to the first team. He

certainly had a fine start in the Manchester colours, for in his first match with the reserves he scored five goals. That's not bad.

Inside-right Frank Roberts still lives at Bolton, and it was from Bolton Wanderers that he was secured by the City. He carries the "old head" of the attack, and as such is capable of getting the best out of Peter Bell, an outside-right who has a Scottish accent.

There ought to be a true ring about Manchester City, for in addition to Bell at outside-right they have Alec Bell, a former star player, as trainer. And the manager is Peter Hodge, formerly in a similar capacity with Leicester City.

I have left myself little space to deal with the new ground of the club at Maino Road. Well, it cost eighty-thousand pounds; it is one of the best in the country. It has twenty-two exits from which fifty thousand people can get away in a very few minutes. And the hope is that from now to the end of the season the supporters of Manchester City will always be sent away rejoicing.

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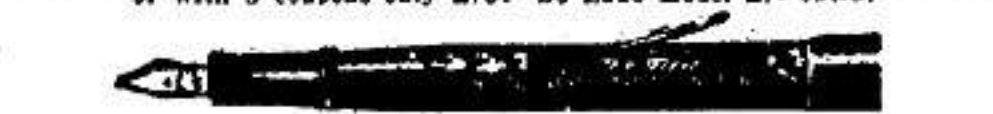
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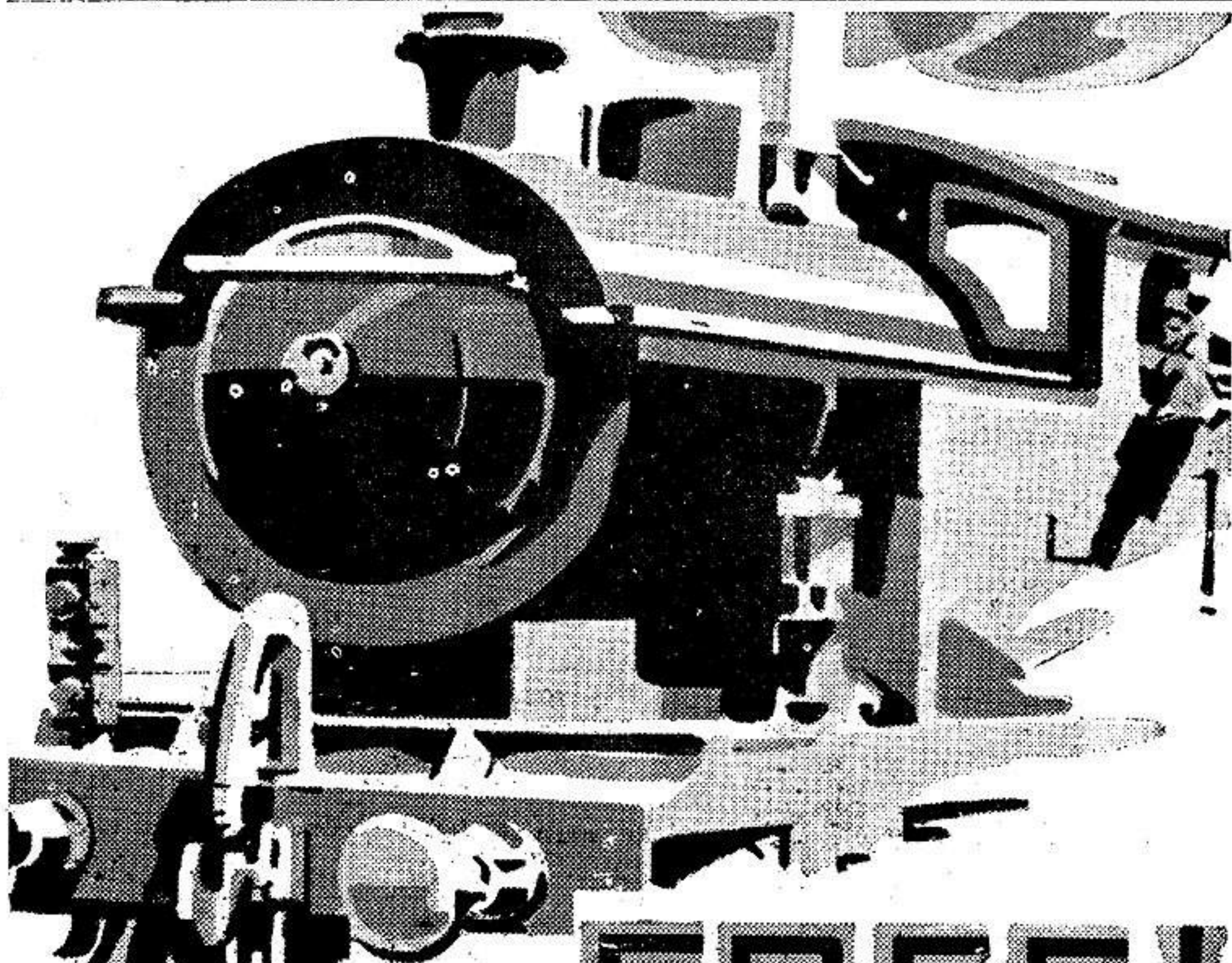
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"O crumbs!" It was Dr. Birchmell, the dignified Head of St. Sam's, who made that remark.

Evidently he was startled out of his usual composure, for the exclamation was one he rarely used. As a rule, Dr. Birchmell expressed surprise by such dignified ejaculations as "Oh crumbs!" or "Grate pip!" The fact that he had resorted to stronger language showed that something was annoying him.

And something was! That "something" was none other than John Steddy, the rag-and-bone boy of St. Sam's, who had just arrived at that famous school after winning the Charles Peace Scholarship.

Dr. Birchmell was too much of a snob to want marine-store dealers at St. Sam's, and he had sent the Fourth Form down to Meggleton Station to pick the newcomer on his arrival with ancient eggs, and, generally speaking, give him the bird.

John Steddy, however, had borne his crushing joke without a murmur. Furthermore, he had licked Snarl and Leer, the snobs of the Fourth, and had made friends with Jack Jolly & Co., who realized that, although he showed a few yellow streaks, he was for all that true blue.

And now, John Steddy was standing b-4 the Head in the latter's study—and the Head was looking at his new pupil with extreme disfavor.

"Oh crumbs!" he repeated. John Steddy certainly presented a somewhat unusual appearance. His flon jacket, which was several sizes too large for him, seemed somehow out of place with his heavy corded trousers and elastic sided boots.

"So you are the new boy, are you?" said Dr. Birchmell, glaring at John Steddy from under his shaggy eyebrows. "Silence!" he roared, as Steddy opened his mouth to say "Yes."

"And it's true then that you come from a rag-and-bone shop?" John Steddy again opened his mouth to reply, and again the Head interrupted him with:

"Not so much of your lip, or I'll flog you black and blue!" Have you been told that you are to be in the Fourth Form?" demanded Dr. Birchmell, after a minute's pause.

"How dare you back-answer me!" thundered the Head, without allowing him to reply. "Bend over there, and I'll give you the licking of your life, you disrespectful young cub!"

John Steddy started at the Head in blank amazement. He wasn't quite used to him yet.

"But I—" he stammered. "Enuf!" barked the Head. "Another word, and I will put you on bread-and-water diet! Bend over and take your grool!"

For the next hour or so no sound was heard in the Head's study but the steady swishing of birch-rod on the back of the unfortunate Steddy. But the new boy's experience in the rag-and-bone trade had hardened him. He seemed made of old iron. And though he yelled and bellowed and groaned with anguish, not a sound escaped his lips.

"There!" gasped the Head at last, falling back into his chair from sheer exhaustion. "Let that be a lesson to you, Steddy! Please remember, for the future, that even if you are a rag-and-bone merchant, I expect you to be respectful to your superiors. Now, bur off—hop it—vanose—git—vanish—or, to put it vulgarly, you may go!" THE MAGNET LIBRARY—No. 1,035.

With feelings that were too deep for words, John Steddy went.

No sooner had he gone than Dr. Birchmell rang the bell for Binding the page.

"Tell Snarl and Leer of the Fourth that I want them," he ordered, when Binding appeared.

"Anything to oblige an old pal!" said Binding, cheerfully, as he went in search of the two villains of the Fourth.

Within five minutes Snarl and Leer were standing before the Head. The two black sheep were wondering why they had been summoned to the dreaded apartment, and they were looking a little sheepish.

"They were relieved, however, to see that Dr. Birchmell welcomed them quite effusively.

"Take a pew, my boys!" he said hospitably. "Help yourself to cigarets!"

Snarl and Leer wonderingly made themselves at home, and lit up cigarets.

"Pardon my being inquisitive, sir," said Snarl; "but what's the merry idea?"

"I seem to remember an old tag about 'beware of the Greeks when they come with gifts in their hands,'" put in Leer, with a grin.

"Can it?" said the Head tersely. "I'll flog the pair of you if you insinuate that I'm a Greek!"

Snarl and Leer stopped grinning, and looked a little more respectful. In spite of his graciousness, it was evident that the Head was in no mood to be trifled with.

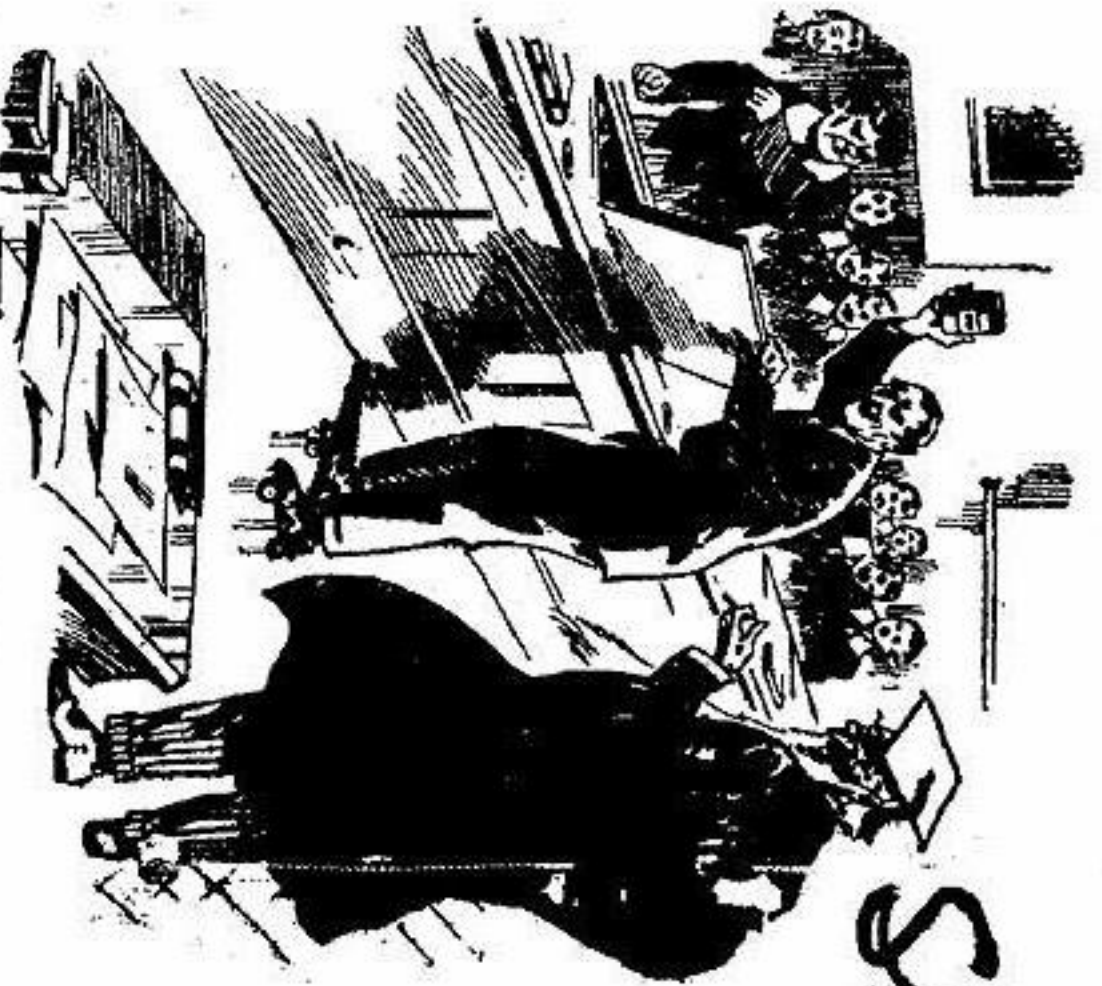
"Don't think that I'm making a fuss of you because I require your assistance," continued the Head. "I am merely doing it because I want your help!"

"Oh!" Snarl and Leer couldn't quite see what difference there was between requiring assistance and wanting help, but, of course, an authority on English Grammar like Dr. Birchmell perceived subtle shades of meaning that did not exist for others.

"I have just seen John Steddy, the new scholarship lad," went on the Head, "and although I am no snob I feel an innate desire to give him the book."

An ugly look appeared on the dial of John Steddy, and with painful memories of the boxing match they had fought with him, they rubbed their shins tenderly.

"This stowidous young marine-store dealer—this ambishes young rag-and-bone merchant—strikes me as being the outside edge, the giddy limit, in fact!" said Dr. Birchmell seriously. "Quite



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DICKY NUGENT.

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II

LATER, clatter, clatter! Bang! Boom! Crash!

The muffled sound of the rising-bell rang out over St. Sam's, and, with many a weary yawn, the fellows tumbled out of bed.

In the lower Fourth dormitory of this particular morning there was some thing electric in the atmosphere—some thing unusual and sinister. The fellows, instead of filling the dorm with laughter and slapping each other jocularly on the back, were looking furtive and biting their nails. Nobody new what it was, but everyone felt that something was going to happen.

Snarl and Leer were the only members of the Fourth who did not appear to be affected. The cads of the Fourth had diabolical grins on their dials, and now and again they whispered together and burst into a roar of mocking, cynical laughter.

Jack Jolly & Co. and John Steddy did their best to throw off the feeling of depression that clung to them, but these efforts were of no avail.

It was while they were in the quad that they spotted a strange figure enter the School gates and make for the Head's house—the figure of a hawk-eyed man who moved about on a pair of roller-skates.

"Wonder who it can be?" murmured Jack Jolly thoughtfully. "I don't quite like the look of him myself," said John Steddy uneasily.

Before that morning was over, John Steddy liked the look of him even less! Later on, when Mr. Lickham was taking the Fourth in his favorite subject—cross-word puzzles—the door of the Fourth Form room was dramatically opened, and the Head entered.

Bound him rolled the hawk-eyed man on roller-skates, whom Jack Jolly & Co. had spotted in the quad.

"Pardon me a moment, will you, Lickham?" said Dr. Birchmell.

"Certainly, sir!" said Mr. Lickham deferentially, giving way to the Head. The Head fixed his beady eyes severely on the Fourth.

"Hem!" he said, coffin gravely. "I have to announce to you boys that I am the victim of a serious misfortune." The Fourth fetched out the pins they kept for that purpose and pricked up their ears.

"The event took place in the dead of night," continued the Head. "I was lying—"

"You jenerally are, sir!" murmured Jack Jolly, and there was a chuckle from the Fourth.

"I was lying fast asleep in bed" went on the Head, aiming an inkwell at Jack Jolly, and hitting Mr. Lickham instead, "when some unscrupulous individual must have entered my room. There I was, in all innocence—"

"Grate pip!" "Draw it mild!" urged one or two of the Fourth.

"Silence!" booted Dr. Birchmell fiercely. "Can't you let a bloke speak now? I tell you I was lying there, in all innocence—"

"He, he, ha!" The Head made a rush at the grinning Fourth-Formers, and lashed out wildly with his birch, and the latter came to a sudden end.

"To continue," said Dr. Birchmell, glaring balefully at the juniors, "some one with evil intent has appropriated a personal possession of mine. Or, to put it in more classical English, some fearful rotter has pinched some of my junk."

The Fourth looked serious now. The grins had vanished from their faces.



The inkwell missed Jack Jolly and hit Mr. Lickham instead.

"The missing article," went on Dr. Birchmell, "is a pair of small intrinsic value, but I prize a considerable sentimental value on it. It is the jam-jar in which I keep my false teeth!"

"By gum!" murmured the Fourth, their jaws dropping.

"Fortunately, my teeth were not in it. But my loss is bad enuf, and I thought it worth while to call in a famous detective."

Here the Head pointed to his strange companion, who was skating gracefully round the Form-room, peering the juniors with his hawk-like eyes.

"This gentleman, boys, is Handy Andy, the famous sleuth."

"At your service!" added the strange sleuth, bowing. "The reason we come to this here Form-room is that I have my suspicions!"

Snarl and Leer exchanged knowing winks, as if they had some idea of what was coming.

"With my usual remarkable punny-trying powers," went on Handy Andy modestly, "I found a clon on your Headmaster's shelf. Here it is!"

He produced a sheet of foolscap from his pocket and lifted it up for all to see.

"There was a gasp from the Fourth as they saw it contained, in big letters, the words:

thought of it," said the grate detective proudly; "but I thought that the best thing to do was to come along and see the Fourth Form. So here we are!"

Jack Jolly & Co.'s lips curled. They didn't think much of the grate sleuth's methods. If they found a clon, signed "A Fourth-Former," they would have immediately perceived that a Sixth-Former had put it there.

"And now to find the giddy snook-theef!" said the Head grimly. "What's the next move, Doctor D?"

"The next move, Doctor D, is to find out if there is anyone in this Form who makes a hobby of collecting jam-jars."

Dr. Birchmell stroked his head thoughtfully, but he couldn't think of anyone, and he snook his head.

"N.G., I fear!" he remarked sadly. "I certainly can't think—"

"Well, my boy, what is it?" "Might I make a suggestion, sir?" said Snarl, with a grin. "Rag-and-bone men make their living out of old jam-jars."

"That's too, sir!" added Leer. The Head started violently, and his glare fell on John Steddy, who met it without flinching.

"Grate pip!" he gasped, then a grin spread over his features. "That's a very bright wheeze of yours, my boy! Steddy, stand up!"

Flushing uncomfortably and looking deadly white, Steddy obeyed. "Did you take my jam-jar?"

"No, sir!" answered Steddy hoarsely. "Not a word, Steddy!" roared the Head. "Do not try to saddle the responsibility on someone else!"

"The Head turned to the grate sleuth. "The wretch who covers before you with gilt written all over his dial," he said, "is a rag-and-bone merchant. How can we prove his guilt?"

"By searching his belongings!" answered Handy Andy, after a thoughtful pause. "If the jam-jar is among them we shall know that he is the thief!"

"Good egg!" said the Head gleefully. "What about starting on his desk?"

"An excellent idea!" The sleuth skated easily up to the place where John Steddy stood, and, without further ado, pulled up the hinged top.

Then he gave a triumphant chirp, while Steddy fell back with a low moan.

For there, lying among a miscellaneous collection of comic papers, per-tops, bits of chewing-gum, and other aids to study, was the missing jam-jar!

"Ha! Caught!" chuckled the Head cheerfully. "You are in a nice mess now, Steddy! Nothing less than a public flogging and the giddy sack will meet your case, my lad!"

"But—I am innocent!" gasped Steddy. "I didn't know it was there!"

"Tell that to the Moorons!" retorted the Head, while there was an incredulous murmur from the Fourth. "You're going to the jolly old Punishment-room, fight away, John Steddy, and don't you forget it!"

John Steddy groaned allowed and hurried his face in his hands. In all direckshuns he could see nothing but mocking faces accusing him.

All his life he had been trading in scrap iron, yet it was not until this moment that the iron entered his soul. But it did now with a vengeance! For, as John Steddy was taken away to the Punishment-room, he realised that he was skinned by St. Sam's!

THE END. (Be sure you read the next exciting story in this splendid series, chums. It shows Dicky Nugent in tip-top form.)