

LINLEY MINOR!

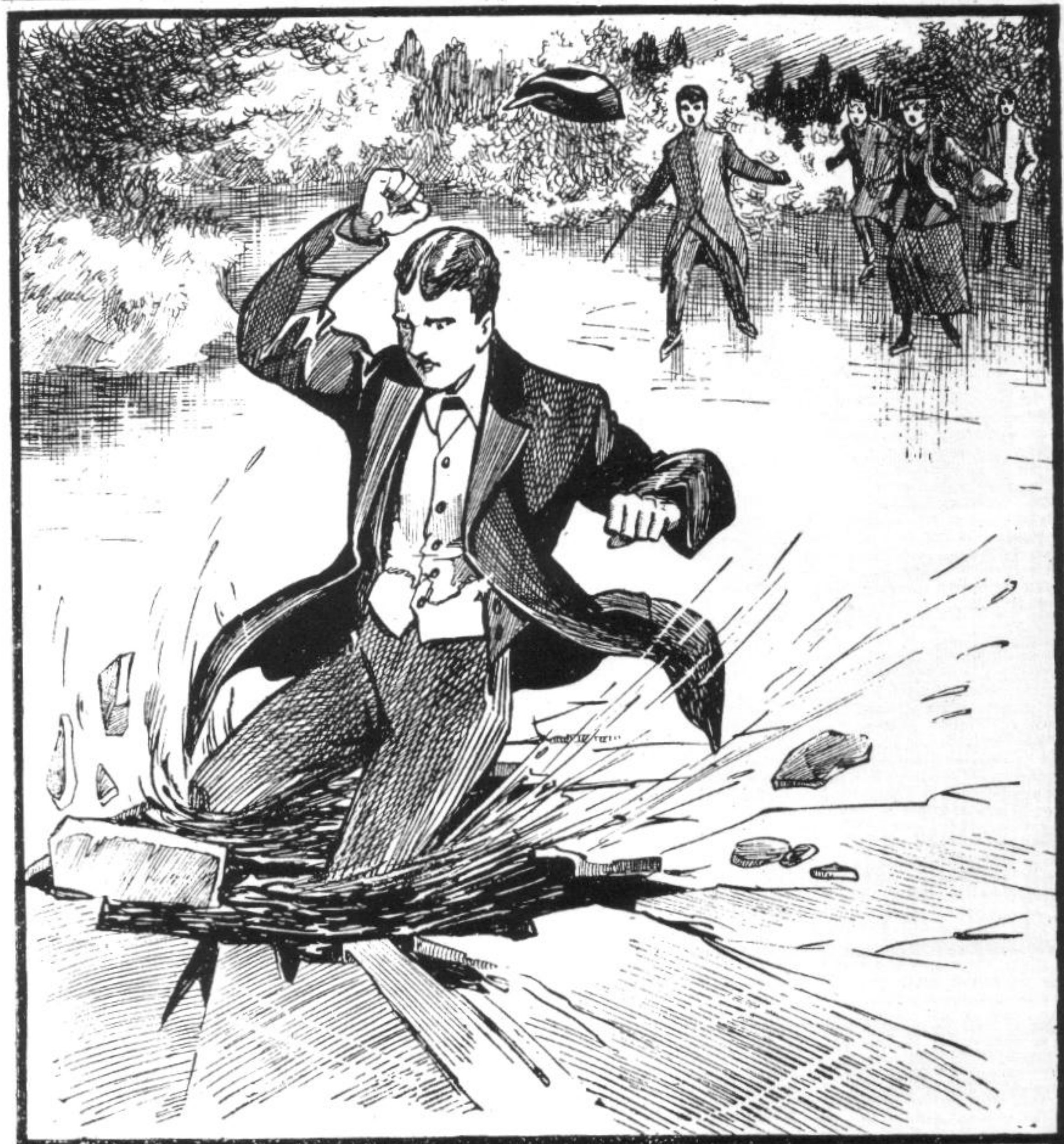
A Grand Long Complete School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co.



The Magnet 1st

Library

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MAULY IN PERIL!

(An Exciting Scene in the Grand, Long Complete Story in this Issue.)

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MY READERS' PAGE

OUR COMPANION PAPERS: "THE BOYS' FRIEND," 1d., Every Monday. "THE GEM" LIBRARY, 1d., Every Wednesday. "THE BOYS' FRIEND" 3d. COMPLETE LIBRARY. "THE PENNY POPULAR," 1d., Every Friday. "CHUCKLES," Price 1d., Every Saturday.

The Editor is always pleased to hear from his chums, at home or abroad, and is only too willing to give his best advice to them if they are in difficulty or in trouble. . . . Whom to write to: Editor, The "Magnet" Library, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.

For Next Monday:

"BUNTER'S BIG BROTHER!"

By Frank Richards.

Other fellows have fathers, brothers, cousins, uncles, at the Front—Billy Bunter has none. In spite of all the well-known lionlike courage of the clan of Bunter de Bunter, no Bunter de Bunter appears to be helping to put the kybosh on the Boche! It is a sad state of affairs, and it touches Bunter the more nearly because, unlike most fellows, he yearns to gather something more than mere honour and glory from the presence of a relative in the firing-line. The chance of pretending that he has such a relative comes his way, and he snaps at it. But the attempted swindle is exposed, and the game is "Mate!" Then Fisher T. Fish gives Bunter counsel—or, rather, sells it to him, for Fishy is a real "noctral," and is giving away nothing. It is very bad counsel, but bad counsel is just the kind to appeal to Bunter. He follows out Fishy's suggestion, and the temporary result is the spoofing of the Remove. But the truth leaks out, and both Bunter and Fishy catch it so badly that they come to wish that they had never heard of

"BUNTER'S BIG BROTHER!"

AMATEUR MAGAZINES.

I had something to say on this subject a week ago, and promised then to return to it. I know that it does not interest all of my readers; but, then, there are very few subjects that can be depended upon to do that, and those who are interested in amateur magazines are so very keen that they really need a word of advice.

My experience of these things goes farther back than the lives of most of you. In the days when I first began to write for publication there were several of them in existence, and I am bound to say that if the specimens of present-day amateur sheets which have reached me lately are to be taken as fair samples, there has been no progress since. On the contrary, there has been retrogression. I recall one such paper which I helped to finance in the youthful fervour of seventeen or so. It had twelve or sixteen pages—I cannot remember exactly which—about two-thirds the size of this page. It was well printed, and it contained some good stuff, as well as other stuff which was not so good. Among the contributors were Robert L. Jefferson, who later became a prominent cycling journalist, and Clive Holland, the present-day novelist. It ran for a couple of years or so in connection with an amateur literary league, which was enough established to hold meetings and entertainments in London. There was a subscription to the league, and a number of the members—of whom I was one—formed a syndicate to supply some capital for the paper. We lost our money—that was the result, briefly told. When no more capital could be raised, then—exit the magazine!

Now, that was a really serious attempt to found a paper which offered something worth reading, and gave a chance to the author who had not yet managed to gain the notice of the editors of professional papers. It was a long time ago—true! But conditions were more favourable then than now, for where there was one paper then, there are ten, twenty in these days—not amateur papers, but professional ones, which offer good value for their price!

And that is just what an amateur magazine generally fails in doing. Its editor and its contributors are alike "pruntice hands, and the matter it prints is not chosen for its merit—in fact, it is usually not chosen at all, but is the result of taking anything which anyone sends along. What attraction can this offer to the general public? And if it is not meant for the general public, but only for a few friends, how can you hope to pay a printer's bill out of your takings?

The modest path is the only way of success for an amateur paper. If you can get and work a hand printing-press—though this will mean very hard labour—you may be able to

produce some sort of a printed sheet, provided you have plenty of spare time, and don't grudge giving it all to the cause. Otherwise, a graph is the most feasible way. And if you know how you can make graphs without

glycerine—well, you know something that I cannot tell you!



NOTICES.

Here is a letter from two readers who give no address:

"Dear Editor,—We hardly think it fair that you should put an announcement in your paper to the effect that you are not going to insert any more notices about back numbers and leagues. Yet you decide to insert notices about football. If you insert that, you can insert notices about leagues and back numbers. Why pick one special subject out? Then, again, notices from soldiers and sailors. You really pass my comprehension! What do soldiers and sailors care about the MAGNET? They don't care whether it goes down or prospers. What they think about is the idea of getting a notice inserted in a paper free of charge—some silly rot like 'A lonely soldier would like to correspond with a reader,' etc. I do not see why these notices cannot be done away with. They are of no importance. We like fairness, Editor!—We are, yours faithfully,
H. FISHER and J. BOYD."

I have only one comment to make on this letter—that is, I am glad to think that I pass the comprehension of its writers! For they did no thinking worth speaking of before they wrote to abuse me for an announcement that was never made; and I should be sorry to believe myself within the scope of such very limited comprehension as theirs!

But I should like to have the opinion of a few of my thousands of loyal Service readers as to the statements concerning them; and it would be interesting to gather whether footer secretaries have appreciated my reasons for considering their notices more important than back-number requests. Twenty-two to one may give a clue to those who still fail to understand!

Leagues, Correspondence, Etc.

Miss Rose Brennan, 14, Chasely Street, Stepney, E., would be glad to hear of a "Gem" or "Magnet" League anywhere near her.

Evesham "Magnet" Club wants more members. Small paper monthly. Postcard exchange. Full particulars from T. Marshall, Hillsborough, Princess Rd., Evesham.

Will Charlie Reza write to his friend Arthur Jones, at 5, Rosebery Avenue, Lytham Rd., South Shore, Blackpool?

A. E. Stone, 36, Brunswick St., Swindon, is starting a "Magnet" Exchange and Correspondence Club. Will readers interested please send a stamped, addressed envelope?

Wm. Ronald, c/o Mr. A. Robb, 124, Union St., Aberdeen, wishes to start a "Gem" and "Magnet" League, open to the whole British Empire. Stamped and addressed envelope, please.

L. E. Lawrence, 72, Whistler St., Highbury, N., would be glad to correspond with a lonely colonial soldier.

J. G. Kirk, 33, Orchard Street, Leicester, wants a correspondent in Pitman's shorthand (reporting).

Members wanted for the Britannic Correspondence Club: small journal. Send stamped and addressed envelope, please. J. Britton, 24, Bolton St., Workington.

The U.C.P.C. want more home and colonial members. Printed magazine monthly. President, 7, Oxford Rd., Kilburn, N.W.

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hand this book,
when finished with,
to a friend. . . .

LINLEY MINOR!

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

By FRANK RICHARDS.



Gerald went crashing down to the ground. (See Chapter 11.)

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Breakers Ahead!

LINLEY—Mark Linley! Shake a leg, you champion slacker!

The powerful voice of Bob Cherry boomed along the Remove passage at Greyfriars.

It was a half-holiday, and the countryside sparkled in the frosty gleam of winter. The branches of the

old elms in the Close were overhung with icicles; and a number of slides had been formed in the Close, to the personal discomfort of those masters who didn't happen to be athletes. Indeed, only that morning Mr. Prout had come a cropper, and narrowly missed figuring in the casualty list for many weeks to come.

But Harry Wharton & Co. were tired of sliding. They wanted a wider field for their activities; and the fact that the lake in Friardale Wood was frozen over gave rise to

great excitement. Quite a little crowd of juniors followed Bob Cherry as he paraded the Remove passage; and nearly everybody was carrying skates.

"Linley!" roared Bob again. "Marky, old chap! Where are you?"

But there was no reply save the answering echo of Bob's voice.

"Where the merry dickens has he got to?" growled Johnny Bull.

"It's not like Linley, to play us up like this," said Nugent. "Blessed if I can understand it!"

Bob Cherry, as an afterthought, opened the door of the study which he shared with Mark and little Wun Lung, and glanced in. It was the last place in the world where he would have expected to find his chum; for Mark could scarcely have failed to hear his repeated shouts along the passage.

But the miracle happened. There was Mark Linley, standing by the open window, with his elbow resting on the sill, and a look of utter dejection on his face.

The Lancashire lad did not even hear his chum's approach; and it was not until Bob Cherry gave him a sounding slap on the back that he came out of his gloomy reverie.

"No time for day-dreams, you silly slacker!" exclaimed Bob cheerfully. "Didn't you know that somewhere a voice was calling?"

Mark shook his head.

"I—I was thinking——"

"Yes, that's just the trouble with you. You do nothing but think, morning, noon, and night, and you'll be a grey-headed, wrinkle-browed old jossler before you know where you are. What you want, Marky, is more exercise and not so much moping. You look as if you had all the cares in the world on your shoulders."

Bob could not understand why some fellows worried. He himself was as sunny as the day, and there had to be something very much wrong with the works, as he expressed it, to make him down in the dumps. Bob would have laughed through a howling wilderness.

"You don't understand, old fellow," said Mark Linley. "I'm not worrying for worrying's sake. It's simply that I can't help it."

Bob Cherry was struck by the haggard look on his chum's face. Greatly concerned, he laid his hand on Mark's shoulder.

"Trouble at home, Marky?" he asked quietly.

"Yes."

"People in poor circumstances again?"

"They are; but that's not all."

"Is the mater ill?"

"I shouldn't wonder. She's got cause to be," said Mark bitterly.

Bob Cherry locked the door, and took a seat on the window-sill, indifferent to the clamorous crowd outside.

"Now we'll have a little talk," he said. "Tell your uncle all about it."

"You're a good chap, Bob," said Mark, trying to smile. "I hate to saddle you with my troubles, but they say it does you good to get them off your chest sometimes. You've heard me speak of my young brother Gerald?"

Bob nodded.

"Bit of a Tartar, isn't he?"

"He is," said Mark Linley, with a sigh. "He's as hot a handful as you'd find anywhere."

"What's his latest? Has he burnt down a mill, or run away to join the Bantams, or what?"

Mark smiled faintly.

"No; he's coming here."

"Here! Your young brother's coming to Greyfriars?"

"Yes."

There was a long pause. Bob Cherry understood now the heavy weight of trouble which lay on his chum's mind. To be saddled with a young brother—a headstrong, wilful youth who didn't know where to draw the line—would not be all violets, so far as Mark Linley was concerned.

But there was worse to come.

"The real trouble is this," said Mark. "Young Gerald has no right to come to Greyfriars at all. He hasn't bagged a scholarship, or anything like that. It's sheer cussedness, and instead of his helping the pater, the pater will have to help him. The fees here aren't light, as you know."

"My hat!" gasped Bob. "Do you mean to say, Marky, that he's bullied your people into sending him here?"

"That's what it amounts to. They can get together sufficient money to keep him here a term or two, but it will mean a fearful struggle. And they've already had a hard fight for existence."

Bob Cherry nodded sympathetically.

"Poor old Marky!" he said. "Your giddy troubles are

like the brook—they go on for ever. What a bounder Gerald must be!"

"Oh, he's all right in his way!" said Mark Linley loyally. "But he's got one or two faults that'll land him into hot water when he gets here. For one thing, he's a snob."

"Ugh! There's nothing I detest more!" growled Bob.

"He thinks poverty's a crime," continued Mark, "and is always abusing my pater for not having made the most of his opportunities when he was young. He's never taken any interest in the home—always gadding about the streets, and that sort of thing—and as for soiling his hands by working in a mill, why, he wouldn't dream of it!"

"He wants taming," said Bob Cherry grimly. "But I shouldn't distress myself on his account, if I were you. Come on down to the lake. We're going to put in an hour on the ice."

"I don't feel like skating just now, thanks," said Mark.

"Rats! You're jolly well coming along."

Bang! Bang!

The little crowd of juniors waiting in the Remove passage had grown fed up, and were banging the door so furiously that it seemed in danger of being swept off its hinges. Accordingly, Bob Cherry turned the key and flung it open.

"About time!" growled Johnny Bull. "What in thunder have you two bounders been gassing about?"

"There's trouble brewing," said Bob. "Marky's young brother's coming to Greyfriars, and it's made him feel sort of sick."

"I know the feeling," said Frank Nugent sympathetically. "I had it just the same when young Dicky came. Young brothers are a beastly nuisance. They ought to be publicly pulverised before they reach the age of three."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I shouldn't let it worry you, Linley," said Harry Wharton. "Get your skates, and come along with us. It'll help to chase the clouds away."

"That's just what I've been trying to make him see," said Bob. "Now, Marky, are you coming quietly, or do you want us to march you down to the lake by force?"

Mark Linley gave in.

"All serene," he said. "I s'pose it makes no difference whether I brood over things in the open air or in here? Gerald will come, just the same."

The junior from Lancashire armed himself with his skates, and tramped briskly along the hard, white road which led to Friardale Wood, in company with his cheery comrades.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Comedy and Tragedy!

"WHITHER bound?"

A cheery, girlish voice asked the question, and Phyllis Howell, the pretty and popular pupil of Cliff House, came level with the Greyfriars juniors, and dismounted from her bicycle. Behind her came Marjorie Hazeldene and Clara Trevelyn, who were old and tried chums of Harry Wharton & Co.

"We're skating, Miss Howell," said Bob Cherry, raising his cap. "Ripping afternoon for it."

"Oh, what sport!" exclaimed Miss Clara delightedly. "We're coming along, too!"

"Good! There's quite a family party. Coker of the Fifth went down about an hour ago. I expect he's food for fishes by now."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And Bunter and Mauly and several of the freaks went along about the same time," said Vernon-Smith. "There'll be plenty to write home about this afternoon. May I push your machine, Miss Marjorie?"

"Thank you, very much," said Marjorie, with a bright smile.

She liked Vernon-Smith, these days. Though the name of Bounder still clung to him, he was a bounder no longer, but one of the very best. His reformation had been no nine days' wonder. It had been thorough and complete.

The merry party struck off through the woods, and presently, like a glistening silvery sea, the wide expanse of lake gleamed through the trees.

Skating was already in full swing. The shouts and yells of laughter which arose would have done credit to a tribe of man-eating savages who had just netted a plump missionary.

"Coker's there!" said Peter Todd. "Coker in all his glory! Buck up, boys! We're just in time to see the curtain go up!"

Coker of the Fifth was a superb skater—in his own opinion. Unfortunately, that opinion was not shared by anyone else at Greyfriars.

The great Horace had come down to the lake with the

object of creating a sensation; and he was succeeding, though not quite in the way he intended.

He was endeavouring to cross over to Potter and Greene, his two chums, but somehow or other his long legs would do nothing right. They floundered about on the ice, and Coker had half a dozen narrow escapes of overbalancing in as many minutes.

Presently he looked up, with an agonised face, and saw the Cliff House girls watching his merry antics.

"Oh, crumbs!" he groaned. "Wish I'd stayed indoors instead of coming down here! It's up to me to show up well, or else Phyllis Howell will have the laugh of me."

Which proved that Coker set much store by the good opinion of Miss Phyllis.

He righted himself with a great effort, and, spurred onwards by the frantic beckoning of Potter and Greene, shot across the ice like a streak of lightning.

All would have been well, but for a little mound on the ice, which was right in Coker's line of fire, so to speak. Unable to check his headlong flight, the Fifth Former crashed into the obstruction.

Bump!

There was a wild cry from Coker, and the next instant he was sprawling on his back on the frozen surface of the lake, with his legs lashing the air.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Greyfriars juniors were almost hysterical.

"Where's the cinematograph merchant?" gurgled Bob Cherry. "What a gorgeous film that would have made! I always said there was no comedian quite like Coker!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The mighty Horace picked himself up very gingerly. He was scowling; and the irresistible ripple of laughter which went up from the Cliff House girls made him scowl all the more fiercely.

It did not improve matters when Coker caught sight of Potter and Greene stuffing their handkerchiefs into their mouths in a vain endeavour to stifle their laughter.

"You—you—" he spluttered angrily. "What is there to cackle about?"

"Lots!" chuckled Potter. "Your acrobatic feat was topping, Horace, old man! It was a sight for gods and men and little fishes!"

Coker flourished his fist at the humorous Potter, and the action caused him to come a cropper again. He collapsed on all fours this time, by way of variety, and a fresh peal of laughter rang out at his expense.

But there was a counter-attraction a short distance away, where Billy Bunter was waddling across the ice in a most comical manner. Odd skates adorned his feet, and his glasses were sliding down his snub nose.

"Oh, my stars!" gasped Johnny Bull. "Just look at him!"

"Awfully loving sort of chap, Bunter," murmured Bob Cherry. "He'll be kissing the ice in a minute!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter was travelling at such a snail's pace that for the present there was no danger. But he became suddenly electrified when the sharp voice of Wingate of the Sixth exclaimed, from the rear:

"Out of the way, you fat idiot!"

Wingate was progressing at such a speed that it was difficult to steer clear of the Owl of the Remove. The Sixth Former swerved to one side; but, unfortunately, Billy Bunter rolled to that same side, and, the laws of space forbidding two bodies to occupy one spot at the same time, there was a terrible collision.

Wingate went sprawling, and Billy Bunter pitched, like a ton of coals, on top of him.

It was very fortunate that the ice was thick at that particular spot, or there would have been a cold plunge-bath for two.

"Yoooooop! Gerroff me chest!" panted Wingate.

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

Billy Bunter planted himself more firmly on Wingate's chest, and groaned.

"Ow-ow-ow! I—I believe my ribs are all broken! And you're lying on my glasses, too, Wingate. Please hand them over."

Wingate handed them over—not the glasses, but a couple of sounding slaps on the face, causing Billy Bunter to leap to his feet like a jack-in-the-box.

"You dangerous maniac!" roared the captain of Greyfriars. "You're not safe to be on the ice, or anywhere else outside a padded cell, for that matter. Get in my way again, and I'll pulverise you!"

"Ow!"

Groaning and grunting, Billy Bunter waddled away, only to come a terrific cropper on his own account before he had proceeded a dozen yards.

"No pantomimes for me, when we can get front seats in the dress-circle and see all this for nothing!" said Frank Nugent.

"I shall bust a boiler if I sit the performance out," said Bob

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EVERY MONDAY, The "Magnet" LIBRARY. ONE PENNY.

Cherry. "Let's make a start, and show these champion comedians how it's done."

The Famous Five were capital skaters, and so were the Cliff House girls, particularly Phyllis Howell, who flitted about on the ice like a fairy. Not a few eyes were hovering in her direction as she glided to and fro, describing all sorts of figures, and making the mighty Coker hang his head in abashment.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked after Marjorie and Clara, while Phyllis Howell made herself especially agreeable to Mark Linley. Bob Cherry had whispered in her ear that Mark had a fit of the blues, and she determined to bring him out of himself and to chase the clouds from his brow. Phyllis herself knew what it was to be "down." She had lost her only brother in the war a year before, and had stood in sore need of sympathy during the dark days that followed.

Mark Linley began to enjoy himself thoroughly. He forgot his home affairs, forgot the insufferable Gerald, whose coming to Greyfriars would be such a calamity, and forgot that, only an hour before, he had been about as miserable as it was possible for any human being to be.

"Having a good time?" called Harry Wharton cheerfully, as he shot past.

"Topping, thanks!" answered Mark; and his radiant face showed clearly that he meant it.

The Famous Five, after performing all the feats they could think of, gathered together in a group to take a breather. Mark Linley and the girls joined them.

"Wish it froze every blessed day!" said Johnny Bull. "Life would be worth living."

"We should enjoy our esteemed selves skatefully, like Mauly is doing," said Hurree Singh.

"Mauly!" echoed Bob Cherry. "Where is he?"

The nabob pointed far across the lake, where the slim figure of the schoolboy millionaire could be seen.

Mauly was going great guns. It was very, very seldom that he exerted himself; but when he did so, he frequently astonished the natives.

And he astonished them now. Nobody had ever thought Mauly guilty of being a good skater. He was a rank duffer at most branches of recreation, but, to judge by his present performance, skating was one of his few strong points.

"He's great!" said Harry Wharton, in admiration. "Fancy old Mauly being such hot stuff! He's been hiding his light under a bushel."

But Marjorie Hazeldene, who was watching the now distant figure, was not so enthusiastic. She caught the captain of the Remove by the arm, and her face grew suddenly pale.

"Look!" she exclaimed. "Don't you see! He's running into danger!"

"Danger?"

"Yes, yes! The ice is thin just before one comes to the bend. It won't bear his weight. Somebody must warn him! Somebody must—"

Before Marjorie could finish the sentence her fears were confirmed. Mauly was seen suddenly to reel, and there was a shattering of ice beneath him. He tried to spring clear, but the gap widened, and the next instant the dandy of the Remove was floundering in eight feet of icy-cold water.

"Oh, heavens!" muttered Bob Cherry. "We—we must get him out of that, at all costs. Come on, you fellows!"

Bob's chums needed no second bidding. Regardless of all risk, they streaked over the ice with the speed of deer.

But even the most sanguine of them knew that they would arrive too late to render assistance. Mauly was more than three hundred yards off, and it was only too obvious that he could not remain in his terrible position for any length of time.

"It—it's rotten!" gasped Frank Nugent, as he sped along. "Poor old Mauly!"

"He'll be a goner!" said Vernon-Smith, with dry lips.

But help was at hand. A slight, good-looking youth in Etons suddenly dashed round the bend from the opposite direction, and, without hesitation of any sort, made his way towards the hapless Mauly.

He was obliged to ease up when he came close, and to lie at full length on the ice, so that his weight was evenly distributed upon the treacherous surface.

"Cheer-ho!" he said out. "Hang on another five secs, and I'll have you safe and sound."

Harry Wharton & Co. gazed at the new-comer with the wildest admiration, and a cry of amazement burst from the lips of Mark Linley.

"It's Gerald!" he exclaimed.

"Then he's a giddy brick!" panted Bob Cherry. "A brick of the first water! But will he be in time?"

NEXT MONDAY.

"BUNTER'S BIG BROTHER!"

A Grand Long Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.



Mark Linley strode into the study. A glance told him what he wished to know.
(See Chapter 5.)

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Not a Modest Hero!

GERALD LINLEY'S task of rescuing Lord Mauleverer was far from being an easy one. With the aid of a rope it would have been a fairly simple matter; but no rope was available, and Mark Linley's minor had to worm his way along the ice and trust to luck.

Maully had been clinging to a ridge of ice which was none too sound; and, with the additional weight of the rescuer upon it, it was miraculous that it remained intact.

Gerald got as near to the edge as he dared; then he gripped the schoolboy earl by the wrists and commenced to haul him up.

It was terribly difficult work, and none of the Greyfriars juniors dared approach, for the ice would certainly have given way under the weight of a third party.

But although Harry Wharton & Co. were obliged to play the part of lookers-on, Coker of the Fifth had not been idle. His long legs had taken him at express speed to a little cottage on the outskirts of the wood, and he had managed to secure a length of stout rope.

Coker arrived on the scene at a most opportune moment, for as soon as Maully was safely landed on the ice he fainted owing to the exposure, and matters would not have gone well had not Gerald Linley been able to bind the end of the rope round his companion's waist, so that Maully could be hauled into safety. When this was done, Gerald worked his way back to the sound ice once more, and the danger was over.

Johnny Bull was the first to speak. Johnny was a fellow of few words, but what he had to say was usually honest and to the point.

"That was topping, kid!" he said. "Put your hand there!" Gerald took the hand extended to him. He didn't say, "Oh, it was nothing!" or blush and look embarrassed, like most

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OUT ON
WEDNESDAY.

"LEVISON FOR ST. JIM'S!"

A Fine Yarn of Tom Merry & Co. In
The "GEM" Library.

heroes are supposed to do. In fact, he even went to the other extreme.

"I thought it was rather a smart bit of work, myself," he said. "Hallo, Marky, old top! How's things?"

Mark Linley smiled.

"You came at just the right moment, Gerald," he said, shaking hands. "Maully couldn't have held out much longer, and we should have been too late to save him."

"Maully! Is that the name of the cove I rescued?"

"Not exactly. His full title's Lord Herbert Mauleverer; but life's short."

Gerald gave a whistle. "This is luck!" he said. "A real live lord—what! I s'pose he's simply rolling in filthy lucre?"

"He has plenty of money, it's true," said Mark. "In fact, he's a millionaire."

"My only aunt! This is a good beginning, and no error. When's he coming round?"

"He won't be long now," said Harry Wharton. "The colour's coming back to his cheeks."

In a few moments Maully opened his eyes, and a shiver ran through his frame.

"Poor chap!" said Bob Cherry softly. "Feeling rotten?"

"I don't know whether I'm on my head or my heels, begad!" murmured Maully.

"Half a jiffy, though! I was in the water, wasn't I, and some kid—some brick of a kid—came an' fished me out?"

Gerald Lindley pushed his way forward.

"That's right, old chap!" he said. "I was the giddy rescuer."

Lord Mauleverer sat up.

"Yaas, it was you, right enough," he said. "By Jove, but you've got pluck enough for fifty! Who the dickens are you, by the way, if it's not an impertinence?"

"I'm Mark Linley's brother."

"Then you're a chip of the old block. I should like to shake hands."

"All serene!" said Gerald. "And now we'd better get you back to the school. It's suicidal to stay here in your wet togs."

"We'll see to Maully, kid," said Bob Cherry kindly. "Don't you worry."

Maully was assisted from the lake by willing hands; and Gerald Linley strutted along with the little procession, looking and feeling immensely pleased with himself.

"Is—*is* Mauleverer safe?" asked Phyllis Howell, as the juniors approached.

"Yes, rather!" said Vernon-Smith. "Linley's young brother fished him out."

"Linley's young brother! But I—I didn't know—"

"No, I don't suppose you did, miss," chimed in Gerald cheerfully. "I'm the chap. Only came to-day. Don't you think I've opened my innings in style?"

"Indeed, I do!" answered Phyllis smiling, though she was a little disconcerted by the rescuer's self-confident, bragging manner.

Gerald nodded genially to the Cliff House girls, and passed on with the rest. He conversed with Mark as he went along.

"The people at home didn't like the idea of my coming to

a public school," he said. "The pater, in particular, was dead set against it."

"I should think so, too," said Mark quietly.

"Why?"

"Because it makes it so hard for them. Heaven knows, they've had a grim enough struggle in the past, and your coming here will make it worse. I don't wish to be bitter towards you, Gerald, after what you've done this afternoon, but I must say what I think."

Gerald Linley scowled.

"Why should one be treated better than the other?" he said. "If you're to have all the advantages of a public school education, why, so should I. I'm not the sort of fellow who's accustomed to take a back seat. 'Never be backward in coming forward,' is my motto!"

"So I've noticed," said Mark, still in the same quiet tone.

"I s'pose I shall be in the Third," Gerald went on. "What sort of tame lunatics hang out there?"

"You'll find the fellows decent enough," said Mark, "if only you rub them up the right way. But there's one thing they can't stand."

"And that is?"

"Snobbishness."

The colour mounted to Gerald's cheek.

"You think I'm a snob, then?"

"You're not far removed from one. Why couldn't you have got a job at the mill, the same as I had to before I won the scholarship?"

"The mill!" said Gerald scornfully. "I wouldn't touch it with a barge-pole! D'you think I'm going to soil my hands in a beastly place like that? Not for a pension!"

"Somebody's got to keep the home fires burning," said Mark, with a sigh. "It makes it so hard for the people, with both of us here. We're a burden to them, instead of being a help."

"Why don't you play the part of the noble, self-sacrificing brother, then, and sheer off to Lancashire, leaving me here to have a good time?"

Mark gave a start.

"You don't mean that, Gerald?" he exclaimed.

"Of course I do!"

"You—you want me to leave Greyfriars, after it's taken me all these terms to win a footing in the school?"

"Please yourself! All I meant was that it would lessen the burden of the people at home."

The gates of Greyfriars presently appeared in sight, and Lord Mauleverer was assisted to the Remove dormitory, where he changed his wet garments. Then he turned to Gerald Linley, who had followed the little party upstairs.

"I say, kid, you saved my life," said Mauly. "It was dashed sportin' of you, don't you know!"

Gerald didn't deny it.

"An' I should like to show my appreciation of your giddy pluck—"

"Good man!" murmured Gerald.

"By handin' you this!" concluded Lord Mauleverer.

And he extended to Gerald Linley the leather wallet in which he kept his celebrated fivers.

The watching juniors expected to see Gerald refuse such a princely reward. Fellows who saved the lives of their comrades didn't usually do so with a view of lining their pockets.

But Gerald Linley was an exception to the rule. He opened the wallet, and his eyes glistened as he counted out four five-pound notes.

"Gee!" he exclaimed. "Twenty quid! And this is all for me?"

"Yaas, dear boy. It's a poor return for savin' my life, but my very best wishes go with it, begad!"

Mark Linley went close, and nudged Gerald with his elbow.

"Don't take it!" he whispered hastily. "You can't take advantage of Mauly's generosity like that."

"Why not, idiot?" asked Gerald insolently.

Mark shrugged his shoulders. He saw that argument was completely wasted on his minor.

Gerald Linley calmly tucked the wallet away in his breast-pocket, and nodded his thanks to Lord Mauleverer.

"Hope you'll be ass enough to have another spill on the ice," he said. "It's a paying game!"

"M-m-my hat!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"This fellow prances off with the whole giddy biscuit factory!" said Nugent. "I've never heard anything to match this before! The cool way he collared that twenty quid—"

Gerald faced round angrily upon the speaker.

"You keep your potato-trap closed," he said, "or there'll be trouble!"

"What!" roared Nugent, clenching his hands hard. "I'll jolly well—"

"Take no notice of him, Frank," said Mark Linley quietly.

"I've told Bob Cherry what to expect. My minor wants taming, and it's going to be a rotten business. But, as I'm his brother, you'd better leave the taming to me."

"He can thank his lucky stars you've interceded for him," growled Nugent, "or I'd have wiped up the floor with him!"

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EVERY
MONDAY,

The "Magnet"
LIBRARY.

ONE
PENNY.

The Famous Five went down to their study to tea, discussing the strange events of the afternoon. And their opinion of Gerald Linley, despite his indisputable bravery in rescuing Lord Mauleverer from a watery grave, was far from being a favourable one.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Birds of Prey!

GERALD LINLEY was in due course duly installed into the ranks of the Third, and he received a rousing reception when he entered the dormitory that night.

The news of the rescue had spread all over Greyfriars, and the fags were full of it. They swarmed round Gerald, slapped him on the back, and wrung him by the hand, and could not make enough of him.

The new boy was tired out after his long train journey and the exciting scenes which had crowned it, and he was soon asleep, rejoicing in the knowledge that twenty pounds reposed under the pillow.

But Mark Linley did not obtain slumber so easily. For hour after hour he lay awake in the Remove dormitory, thinking—brooding on the appalling future.

It was up to him, he felt, to play the brother's part. But how was it possible to be brotherly towards a snob like Gerald, who even went so far as to despise his own parents? Mark would need the patience of Job to bring up Gerald in the way he should go.

"But I'll do it," he muttered to himself, as the dawn crept in at the high windows of the Remove dormitory. "I'll do my level best by him, and perhaps, after a bit, he'll shake down and be decent."

But Mark Linley's fond dreams were soon to be shattered.

The first friend Gerald made was that very undesirable individual, Harold Skinner. The cad of the Remove was aware that Gerald carried the gorgeous sum of twenty pounds in his pocket, and was thinking out a little plan whereby he might transfer a portion of the amount into his own. Bolsover major stood in with him in the shady scheme.

As a matter of fact, Gerald Linley was in great demand in many quarters next day. Fisher T. Fish requested the loan of some capital, and was promptly given the order of the boot. Billy Bunter, thinking he saw some green in the new boy's eye, was early on the scene with an appeal for ten shillings, to be repaid out of his next remittance—a remittance which, needless to say, existed only in the fat junior's fertile imagination.

Gerald Linley had a short way with Bunter. He pushed him over in the Close, and dribbled him along like a football.

But Skinner and Bolsover were more discreet in their methods. They let no hint drop at first that they were after Gerald's money.

"How goes the awful game?" asked Skinner, clapping Gerald on the shoulder when afternoon lessons were over. "Feel at home yet?"

"Oh, I'm not shy, if that's what you mean!" said Gerald. "I can generally manage to keep my end up. Can't say I'm exactly in love with my dear Form-mates, though. Too much of the Good Little Georgie about 'em to suit me. When I asked young Tubbs for some cigs this morning he landed out at me with his left. And only last night he was falling on my neck and kissing me! Such is life!"

Skinner's eyes gleamed.

"You're fond of a cig now and then?" he asked.

"I should say so!"

"Then you'd better come along to my study."

"Might kill time for a bit by having a hand at cards," threw in Bolsover, as if the idea had only just struck him.

"Cards?" echoed Gerald. "Oh, I say, that's topping!"

Skinner and Bolsover each took one of Gerald's arms, and marched him off to their study. Occasionally they winked at each other as they went along, evidently regarding Gerald Linley as good game.

"Lock the door," said Bolsover. "Best to be on the safe side. Not that we care a rap, really, about getting nailed. We're of the daring, dashing sort—aren't we, Skinner?"

"What-ho!" rejoined Skinner.

He extended a cigarette-case to his victim, and Gerald took one of the weeds and lighted it.

As he did so, a momentary feeling of repulsion swept over him. Was this sort of thing playing the game? he reflected. Was it fair to Mark—honest, industrious Mark, who had burned much midnight oil and suffered great hardship in the past, solely for his parents' sake? Why, there had been

NEXT
MONDAY.

"BUNTER'S BIG BROTHER!"

A Grand Long Complete Story of Harry
Wharton & Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.

times when the very bread which Gerald had eaten had been provided by Mark!

But Gerald hated to be thought a funk, and he knew very well what Skinner and Bolsover would have to say to him if he refused to do their bidding. So he made a pretence of enjoying the cigarette—which, in reality, was half choking him—and offered no demur when Skinner went to the cupboard and produced a pack of cards.

"What shall it be?" asked Bolsover.

Skinner shrugged his shoulders.

"Ask Linley. He's the guest."

"I vote we play banker," said Gerald. "Not much skill, but tons of excitement—especially if you play for money."

"Play for money!" gasped Bolsover, looking as if he had never heard the expression.

"Exactly!"

"But—but it's against the rules," said Skinner, in awed tones.

"Blow the rules! They're made to be broken, so far as I'm concerned. I tell you fellows straight, I'm going in for a good time at this show. 'Tain't every fellow whose father works in a mill who can enjoy the boon and blessing of a public school education. Pile in! We'll make it a tanner a time for a start."

"Very well," said Bolsover, in well-feigned tones of reluctance.

"We don't want you to think us unsociable," said Skinner.

The game began, and the study soon took on the appearance of a tap-room. The gambling spirit was strong in Gerald Linley, and the fact that he roped in three or four shillings in the first quarter of an hour quickened his desire to go on playing.

Skinner and Bolsover were enjoying themselves. Had Gerald known their shady reputation he would have pulled up in time. But he played on, in his ignorance, and gains soon began to give way to losses.

Banker is a game of the get-rich-quick variety—for those who are lucky. It is also a game where a good deal of money can be lost in a very short space of time, as Gerald Linley discovered.

When an hour had elapsed he rose wearily to his feet and looked, with a haggard face, out of the window.

Down in the Close the icicles still clung to the elm-branches, and a crowd of merry juniors, their woollen scarves fluttering in the breeze, were careering along the slides. The contrast between such healthy recreation and that in which he had just been indulging appealed very forcibly to Gerald. What a thundering ass he was, he reflected, to get into the meshes of such unscrupulous rascals as Skinner and Bolsover!

But it was too late to retract. He had established himself with the black sheep of the Remove, and as he had lost over a couple of pounds it would be well worth his while to try and win them back.

So Gerald resumed his seat at the table, and helped himself to another cigarette, which Skinner could well afford to offer.

But instead of lessening his liabilities, Gerald only became more involved. Luck was against him.

"This is where I chuck in my nit," he said at length.

"I'm nearly a fiver to the bad, and it's sheer lunacy to go on. I might just as well be throwing my money down a drain!"

"Rats!" said Bolsover. "Fancy chucking up the sponge just when your luck's at the turn. That's lunacy, if you like!"

"Rather!" said Skinner. "Play on till tea-time, and see if you can't even things up a bit. Never say die, you know!"

Gerald gave in, and the game was set in motion once more.

But it was not destined to continue up to tea-time, as Skinner and Bolsover fondly hoped. Barely five minutes had elapsed when a loud and imperative knock sounded on the door of the study.

"M-my hat!" said Skinner, turning pale. "Who's that, I wonder?"

"Open this door! Open it at once, you cads, or things will go hard with you!"

It was a voice which Gerald knew well—the voice of Mark Linley!

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Something Like a Scrap!

"IS he alone?"

That was Harold Skinner's first question. Mark Linley by himself would prove a pretty hot handful; but Bolsover and Skinner would be able to deal with him, even if Gerald remained a non-combatant.

But if Mark had a crowd of juniors at his heels, there would be short shrift for the cads of the Remove.

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OUT ON
WEDNESDAY.

"LEVISON FOR ST. JIM'S!"

A Fine Yarn of Tom Merry & Co. in
The "GEM" Library.

"Are you going to open this door, or do you want me to fetch a crowd of fellows along to bash it in?"

"Better unlock it, Skinney," said Bolsover. "He's by himself, it seems. Clear the cards away, and—"

"Piffle!" cut in Gerald. "I'm not afraid to let him see what's been going on. And if he tries to come the elder brother over me, he'll find he's woke up the wrong passenger!"

"Just as you like," said Bolsover.

Skinner turned the key, and threw open the door. Mark Linley strode into the study.

A glance at the table, and another at his minor's flushed and excited face, told him all he wished to know.

"I thought as much!" he said bitterly. "Couldn't you have found some more decent way of spending the afternoon, Gerald?"

"Mind your own business!" snapped Gerald.

"It is my business—very much so! If you think I'm going to stand idly by and see you going to the dogs, Gerald, you're very much mistaken. I'm surprised that you should get mixed up with a smoky boulder like Skinner. It's not cricket!"

Bolsover major lounged forward, with a leer. He was never handsome at the best of times, and the leer made him look positively ugly.

"We don't want to be taught the error of our ways by a beastly upstart like you!" he growled. "Sheer off!"

"Oh, I'll go!" said Mark scornfully. "It's no easy job to breathe in this atmosphere. But I'll only go on one condition."

"Namely?"

"That Gerald comes with me."

The younger Linley soon settled the question.

"I'll see you hanged first!" he said.

"There you are!" said Bolsover, in tones of triumph. "I reckon the kid knows which side his bread's buttered. He's here, and he's going to stop."

Then Mark Linley became thoroughly roused. He was slow to anger, but there was a touch of the British lion about him when he lost his temper. He shot out his hand, and gripped Bolsover by the collar.

"You hound!" he exclaimed. "Do you think for one moment you can take my brother under your wing, and train him in your shady tricks? Do you think I'm going to allow you—or anybody else, for that matter—to drag the kid downhill as fast as you can? Don't you dare to speak to Gerald again!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bolsover. "Finest show of heroics I've seen for ages! You ought to be on the stage. As for Gerald, he and I are chums, and we're going to cling together like the ivy, as the song says. 'Tain't often I take the trouble to pal on to a fag, but there's something sporting about your brother which rather appeals to me. We're going to be great chums—eh, Gerald? And Skinney will stand in with me, too. As for your low-down mill-hand of a brother—"

Bolsover got no farther. Mark Linley's hand came with a sounding report across his cheek, and he staggered back.

"Yarooooop!"

"That," panted Mark, "is just a preliminary. Come along to the gym, you cad, and we'll settle this question once and for all! I'll try and lick a little decency into you."

Harold Skinner, who had been lurking in the background, didn't like the gleam in Mark Linley's eyes. He sidled to the door, with a view to putting himself on the other side of it. But Mark Linley was too quick for him.

"Coward!" he exclaimed, in ringing tones. "I've got a long account to settle with you. Take that!"

A smashing right-hander sent Skinner sprawling into the fireplace. He alighted with a terrific bump on the bar of the fender.

"Ow-ow-ow! Oh you rotter, to hit me when I wasn't looking! I—I'll get quits with you over this, mark my words!"

"Threats don't hurt me," said Mark. "You can go ahead with as many shady schemes as you like. Don't be bowled out, that's all! Now, Bolsover, are you ready?"

"Ready to pound you to a jelly, if you mean? I should just think I was! Come along to the gym, and if I don't alter the shape of your face in three minutes I'm a Dutchman!"

"What a game!" murmured Gerald Linley, with an amused smile. "I didn't know you were such a bruiser, Mark!"

But Mark took no further notice of his minor. He had plenty to think of at that moment. Bolsover was a great fighting-man, and it would need unlimited pluck and perseverance to bring him to his knees. Mark knew this, and prepared himself for the fight of his life.

It didn't take the rest of the fellows long to discover what

was afoot. They read the challenge in Mark Linley's eyes, and noticed the flushed and mottled appearance of Bolsover's face.

"Aha!" said Bob Cherry dramatically, pausing in the passage with a football under his arm. "I scent a scrap! This way to the arena, chappies! We shall come in handy for ambulance work at the finish!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What's it all about?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Bolsover and I are going to settle who's to have the custody of my brother," said Mark.

"My hat!"

"Come on!" grinned Nugent. "Let's go and see the floor strewn with little bits of Bolsover!"

But, in his heart, Nugent felt serious, as did most of the other fellows. They felt that in undertaking to tackle the burly Bolsover, Mark Linley had bitten off rather more than he could chew. Bolsover was the possessor of a powerful nine-point-seven punch, and Mark would have a sorry time if he came within close range of it.

"You want a second, Marky," said Bob Cherry. "I'm your man!"

"Thanks, Bob, old fellow!"

Vernon-Smith, being the only junior present whose watch was at all reliable, took on the task of referee. Gerald Linley, his hands in his pockets, and a cynical expression on his face, leaned against the parallel-bars and watched the combatants peel off their coats.

Bolsover major's arms, when he had rolled up his sleeves, resembled those of the village blacksmith. Linley looked small by comparison with the hefty Remove; but, to atone for this deficiency, he had heaps of pluck, and the satisfaction of knowing that he was fighting in a good cause.

"Seconds out!" said Vernon-Smith. "Time!"

Spectators were still swarming into the gym as the fight commenced. Some of them missed the opening stage, which was rather a pity, for there was a good deal of hurricane hitting on both sides.

"Buck up, Marky!" rang out Bob Cherry's cheery voice. "Lick Bolsover, and it'll be the biggest sensation of modern times!"

"Lick Bolsover!" echoed Skinner, with a sneer. "Not in a thousand giddy years! That factory cad's going to be taught a lesson."

So would Skinner have been had not Bob Cherry's attention been centred upon the fight, which had now taken a most dramatic turn.

The bully of the Remove was going great guns. He had got Mark Linley penned up in a corner of the improvised ring, and was pounding him without mercy.

But Mark held grimly on, and was still on his feet at the call of "Time!" though he had had a terrible gruelling.

"Finding the pace too hot?" asked Bob Cherry sympathetically, as he applied a sponge to his chum's heated face.

"Well, it's rather warm," Mark confessed; "but I'm not into my stride yet."

"And never will be!" chimed in Gerald Linley, who overheard the remark. "Why don't you chuck the game, Mark? Bolsover's got you beaten all the way."

"Dry up, you young cad!" said Harry Wharton. "My hat, Linley! If I had a minor like that I shouldn't know whether to boil him in oil or flay him alive!"

"He'll see his folly one of these days, I expect," said Mark, with a sigh. "He doesn't seem responsible for his actions now."

"Oh, shut up!" growled Gerald. "You make me sick!"

"Time!"

Vernon-Smith's sharp command prevented what might have been an unpleasant scene between the two brothers, and Mark Linley went up grimly for the second round.

As he looked at Bolsover's leering face his heart beat quickly, and a flush of anger mounted to his forehead. He must thrash this hulking lout, he reflected, and check his evil influence somehow, or Gerald's career would be irretrievably ruined.

With these thoughts in his mind, Mark went all out. He shot out his right in a straight drive, and smote his opponent with great violence on the nose; and when, a moment later, his left came crashing against Bolsover's jaw, he fairly brought down the house.

But he didn't bring down Bolsover. The bully of the Remove could stand a vast amount of battering, and was very far from throwing up the sponge.

"Stick it out, old man!" exclaimed Skinner. "You've got him whacked. That was only a flash in the pan!"

But Mark Linley proved otherwise. He kept up the pressure, and Bolsover had about as hot a peppering during the next few minutes as he had ever had in his life.

"Good man!" cried the loyal army of Linleyites. "That's great!"

"The lickfulness of the ludicrous Bolsover will be terrific!" added Hurree Singh.

But Bolsover was far from beaten, and in the third

and fourth rounds he more than held his own. Some of his swinging, sledge-hammer blows had landed home, and Mark Linley began to feel dizzy and faint. His head was swimming, and his knees were unsteady.

He tried gamely to conquer the feeling, but it was of no use. Like a flash the awful truth dawned upon his brain. He was being beaten!

But he resolved, as he sat upon Bob Cherry's knees after the sixth round, to stake everything on one desperate onslaught. If it failed, he would fail, too. If it came off, then he would have the supreme satisfaction of licking the biggest bully in the Remove, and, incidentally, of giving Gerald food for reflection.

"Time!" said Vernon-Smith.

When the fight had started, the combatants had skipped about the room like young rams. Now they came up to the scratch wearily, and their faces were pictures.

But the light of battle had not yet faded from Mark Linley's clear eye. The next moment, he felt, would decide the issue.

"Pile in, Marky, old son!"

"Wipe up the floor with him!"

Bolsover came on in his bull-like fashion, with head lowered and fists clenched. Mark Linley let him gather impetus, and then slipped deftly aside.

The bully of the Remove went lumbering on; and before he could pull himself together again Mark Linley sailed in like a whirlwind.

Then the fun began. Mark jabbed home his right, and then his left shot out with full force, straight from the shoulder.

The energy he had been called upon to muster for that terrific blow left Mark weak and faint and helpless, but he had won! He at least kept his feet; but Bolsover went down with a bump and a crash, and all the fight was knocked out of him. He could not have lifted a finger against the smallest fag.

The air was rent with wild cheering. Little did half the fellows dream what a narrow margin had stood between victory and defeat. But Bob Cherry knew, and he was profuse in his congratulations.

"Topping, Marky!" he said. "There's no harm in telling you, now, that I thought you were whacked at one time."

"I thought so, myself," smiled Mark. "That last-minute rally served its purpose. I don't think young Gerald will be quite so keen on Bolsover's company in future."

"P'r'aps not," said Skinner, who was standing by. "But you needn't think you hold all the cards, Master Priggy Linley! You've got me to settle with yet!"

Mark ignored the threat, and, putting on his coat, passed out of the gym with his arm in Bob Cherry's.

But he would have been wiser to arm himself against the blow in the dark which Harold Skinner was ready to deal him.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

A Midnight Adventure!

"T O-NIGHT'S the night!"

Skinner uttered the words in melodramatic fashion as he strolled down the Remove passage with Gerald Linley.

"What d'you mean?" exclaimed the Third-Former.

"Why, we'll go out on the spree, you and I. I don't s'pose old Bolsover feels quite up to it, after what's just happened. He might get huffy if we asked him to join in."

"I'm still wondering what you mean."

"I mean," said Skinner, lowering his voice, "that after dark we'll sally forth to the village."

"The village?"

"Yes. The village pub, to be precise."

"Oh!"

Skinner gave a chuckle.

"You needn't look so reproachful," he said. "A fellow like you isn't easily shocked. What do you say to a rattling good time, with jolly good friends, at the Cross Keys? You needn't start whisky-drinking, or any of those games. P'r'aps we can bag the billiard-table for a bit, and—and have a hand at cards," added Skinner cautiously. He was aware that in speaking of cards he was on dangerous ground.

But Gerald wasn't thinking of his recent losses just then. His imagination was fired at the prospect of breaking bounds—of stealing out of his dormitory in the pitchy darkness, and running innumerable risks. It would be great!

So far as the public house was concerned, Gerald wasn't keen. But, after all, there would be no need for him to get

up to any shady tricks. He could have a good time, in the mild sense of the term, and steal back to Greyfriars under the cover of night, with the satisfaction of having had a really stunning adventure.

"I'm game!" he said.

"You are?" exclaimed Skinner. "Oh, that's ripping! Think you can find your way to the Remove dormitory, at, say, eleven o'clock?"

Gerald nodded.

"Then we'll call it a deal. Don't forget to turn up, will you?"

"Rely on me," said Gerald.

Skinner grinned, and passed on into his study, humming something to the effect that there was a tavern in the town.

Gerald Linley didn't pass a very pleasant evening. The fags, who only a short time before had applauded him as a plucky hero, now saw the other side of his nature, and didn't feel called upon to act civilly towards a fellow who courted the society of such rank outsiders as Skinner and Bolsover.

But Gerald cared little or nothing for the cold looks he encountered on every side. He occupied himself with a book until bed-time, and propped himself up on the pillows after lights-out, looking forward keenly to the time when eleven should chime from the old clock-tower.

It was not a nice night. A wind had sprung up from the north-east, and it howled discordantly through the chinks and down the chimney, as if warning the reckless fag to keep to his bed. But Gerald Linley was not to be swerved from his purpose, even if a tornado raged without.

Eleven at last! Above the fierce howling of the wind the chimes rang out.

"Now for it!" muttered Gerald. "Is anybody awake?"

There was no reply. Tubb was snoring like a heathen, and somebody else was chattering in his sleep by way of an accompaniment. But nobody saw or heard Gerald as he slipped on his things and stole from the dormitory.

The way was dark, and Gerald took several faulty turnings on his route to the Remove dormitory; but he reached his destination at last, and felt a hand groping at him in the gloom.

"That you, young Linley?"

It was Skinner's voice.

"Yes," answered Gerald. "You're still keen, I s'pose? It's blowing great guns outside."

"All the less chance of getting nailed," said Skinner. "Glad you came along. It's been beastly cold hanging about here."

He led the way to the box room window—the recognised means of exit for the night-birds. Within a couple of minutes the two adventurers had alighted upon the flag-stones in the Close.

"Better get inside this," said Skinner, handing over a long raincoat. "It'll be very much of a misfit, I'm afraid, but we can't do the Bond Street touch at this time of night. Gee! What a wind!"

They crossed over to the school wall, and scaled it without mishap. Looking back, they saw nothing to cause them alarm. The great pile of buildings loomed blackly against the lowering sky.

"So much for the first round," said Skinner. "Come on! We mustn't arrive too late or Banks will be gone to bed."

"Banks! Who's he?"

"Oh, a lively sort of merchant at the Cross Keys. We're old pals, you know."

The law-breakers had to fairly fight their way to the village owing to the violence of the gale. The Cross Keys appeared on first sight to be in darkness, but on closer inspection Skinner and his companion distinguished the subdued glow of a light through the shutters.

"It's all serene," said Skinner. "I can hear Cobb's voice. Cobb's the landlord. And Banks is there, too. He's grouching about the suggestion of putting the age-limit up for military service."

Skinner rapped on the door, and the argument which was taking place in the bar-parlour was broken off. A sound of shuffling footsteps followed, and Mr. Banks threw open the door.

"Who's that?" he growled.

"Me—Skinner," said the cad of the Remove. "I've brought along a new client."

Banks became affable at once.

"Step right in, gentlemen," he said. "There's not much doin' these days, but I dessey we can rake together some form of entertainment."

"Trust you for that!" chuckled Skinner.

Gerald Linley followed the other two into the stuffy little parlour, where Mr. Cobb sat over a pink paper.

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The landlord looked up and smiled. It was an oily smile, which filled Gerald Linley with loathing and contempt.

But he had taken the plunge now, he reflected, and it was up to him not to back out.

Mr. Banks and the landlord fondly hoped, as they darted keen looks at Gerald, that they had struck a gold mine, and their hopes were realised.

Gerald found himself taking a hand at nap almost before he knew it. Small stakes were played for at first, and Gerald had quite a refreshing flow of luck; but later, when Treasury notes and half-crowns began to pile up on the table, his gains were soon turned to losses—and heavy losses, too.

The twenty pounds which Mauly had presented him with for saving his life were soon depleted by half. Skinner had contrived to whisper to Mr. Cobb that Gerald was flush, and the landlord turned this information to good account.

"I'm done!" said Gerald at last, rising wearily to his feet.

"Piffle!" said Mr. Banks. "You don't mean to say you're cleaned out yet?"

"Not exactly, but I shall be if we play on much longer. My luck's dead out."

"It's a long lane that has no turnin', you know," said Mr. Cobb slyly.

"I tell you I'm done!" repeated Gerald, rather huffily. "Here you are. I'll square my little account and then we'll be getting back to Greyfriars."

"Hear, hear!" said Skinner. "I'll bring Linley along another night, Mr. Cobb."

"I'll see that you don't!" muttered Gerald, under his breath.

Skinner buttoned the collar of his raincoat, and stepped out into the village street. The storm was still raging, and he congratulated himself that there was no fear of detection on such a wild night.

But Fate has a habit of doing ironical things. A tall figure loomed up in the darkness, and Skinner nearly swooned with fright.

"Oh, crumbs!" he groaned in dismay. "Quelch!"

"Mr. Quelch, Skinner, if you please!" came the Form-master's stern voice. "I shall require a full and complete explanation of this outrageous conduct! I—"

Whilst Mr. Quelch was speaking a figure in a raincoat darted past at a terrific pace, nearly bowling him over.

"Skinner," rapped out Mr. Quelch, "remain here until I return! Do not dare to disobey me!"

And then the Remove-master went off in pursuit of the fleeting figure.

Gerald Linley ran like the wind. He had scented the danger, and was determined not to be run to earth.

He knew what detection would mean. It would put the finishing touch to his career at Greyfriars. And to go back to Lancashire and share the struggles of a poverty-stricken household didn't suit Gerald's book at all.

So he ran as he had never run before in his life; and Mr. Quelch, though he maintained a good pace for a gentleman of his years, was soon obliged to pull up, panting and gasping, in the rear.

His quarry had escaped him; but only for a time, he reflected grimly. There were ways and means of finding out the midnight marauder's identity.

Breathing hard, Mr. Quelch made his way back to the Cross Keys. Skinner was still standing outside, shivering. He knew better than to set Mr. Quelch at defiance.

"Wretched boy!" thundered Mr. Quelch. "So this is how you spend the hours which should rightly be devoted to slumber! You have doubtless been visiting this low establishment!"

"I haven't, sir," answered the cad of the Remove, lying glibly. "I shouldn't dream of doing such a thing, sir. Ask the landlord."

Mr. Quelch did so, but he got no satisfaction from Cobb. The latter strenuously denied that Skinner had been in the public-house, and at last Mr. Quelch had to give it up; but he gave Mr. Cobb a piece of his mind before setting out for Greyfriars with the unhappy Skinner.

"There is no direct evidence against you," said Mr. Quelch; "but to have broken bounds is bad enough, and I have no doubt Dr. Locke will deal with you as you deserve. Your companion, whom I actually saw vacating the premises, will fare worse. Now, Skinner, I command you to give me his name!"

"Must you know, sir?"

"Yes, yes, at once! I am aware that you are anxious to shield him against the humiliation of discovery, but this matter is far too serious to allow any withholding of the facts. Come, Skinner, I want that boy's name!"

Then Skinner told a lie blacker than the blackest midnight.

"His name, sir," he said, "is Mark Linley!"

SLEEP failed to visit the eyes of two fellows for the remainder of that night. In their dormitories Harold Skinner and Gerald Linley lay in wakeful wretchedness, feeling that their "great adventure" had proved an awful frost.

Skinner was the more miserable of the two, for he knew that all was up. Even his cunning brain could invent no plausible excuse for being outside the Cross Keys at an hour when the rest of the Removites were slumbering. He saw vividly, in his mind's eye, the scene next morning—the assembly in Big Hall, the stern voice of the Head announcing that he was expelled.

Expelled! The word was like a death-knell. It wouldn't be so bad for some fellows who had nice homes to go to and sympathetic parents. But Skinner had neither. His home was cold and forbidding, and in this respect it resembled his father—a keen man of business, who would, after horse-whipping his hopeful son, sentence him to spend the rest of his days in the dingy paternal office.

"Grooh!" mumbled Skinner, as he conjured up these possibilities in his mind. "I'd rather run right away than face that!"

As for Gerald Linley, he was in a state of harrowing suspense. Had Mr. Quelch seen and recognised him? Had Skinner given him away? Would he be bowled out when an inquiry was made in the morning?

Gerald was thoroughly selfish. He didn't care a rap who suffered in connection with the affair so long as he got off scot-free. But to be convicted, to be sent home in disgrace, and to have to slave in a mill from sunrise to sunset—oh, it was terrible! He was prepared to go to any lengths to avoid such a calamity.

The weary hours crept by, and the dawn was stealing in at the windows when the rising-bell clanged out its shrill summons. Gerald rose and dressed with the others, and then made his way to Skinner's study in the Remove passage.

Skinner was there, his face pale in the morning light. Gerald darted a quick challenge at him with his eyes.

"You've given me away?" he asked sharply.

"No."

The Third-Former drew a deep breath of relief. So far, so good, he reflected.

"I wasn't so lucky," said Skinner. "Quelchy caught me red-handed, and I hadn't an earthly! It means the sack for me, I reckon!"

"Hard cheese!" said Gerald. "But, I say, surely Quelchy asked who was with you?"

"He did."

"And you told him?"

"I said it was Mark Linley."

"What!"

Gerald drew back in sheer amazement. He stared hard at Skinner for a moment; then his hands clenched so tightly that the knuckles stood out white and distinct.

"You—you cad!" he exclaimed.

"Oh, draw it mild!" said Skinner. "I had to tell him somebody's name, and your major's name was the first that occurred to me. You ought to be jolly grateful to me for not giving you away!"

But Gerald looked far from grateful. He seemed to be debating in his mind whether to pitch Skinner out of the window or dribble him across the carpet.

"Don't scowl at me like that!" said Skinner. "Your brother can stand the racket all right, and if he can't wriggle out of the business it'll be his funeral! You've got to keep your mouth shut at all costs, if you want to save your skin!"

"But it might mean that Mark will be sacked!"

"It probably will," said Skinner. "If he's not kicked out, then you'll jolly well be! It's either you or him, and he wouldn't mind it so very much, I s'pose. He's got the mill, or factory, or whatever it is, to go back to, but you—you'd be stranded. Sit tight, and let him go. That's my advice."

It was the advice of a cad, but Gerald resolved to act upon it. He couldn't bear the burning shame of expulsion; and, as Skinner said, in Mark's case it would be different. Mark had had a long innings at Greyfriars, and he could now go back to Lancashire to help keep the home fires

burning. It would be much less of a blow to him than it would be to Gerald, so Gerald felt.

Wingate's voice could be heard out in the passage, giving orders that everybody was to assemble in Big Hall.

"Time for the execution!" said Skinner, with forced jocularly. "Well, I won't whine. I've sailed pretty close to the wind before, and the luck's been with me. In half an hour's time I expect I shall be saying 'Good-bye!' to Greyfriars. As for you, kid, you can please yourself what you do."

"I shall act on your suggestion," said Gerald, "and keep mum."

"Good! That's the best way. Coming along?"

They strolled into Big Hall together. None of the other fellows knew what was wrong. That the chopper was coming down on somebody they were well aware, for the stern looks of Mr. Quelch and the Head told them as much; but they hadn't the remotest notion as to who the culprit, or culprits, might be.

The Head did not keep them long in suspense.

"A most regrettable occurrence has been brought to my notice," he began. "Late last night Mr. Quelch had occasion to go into the village to see Dr. Short. He was returning to the school, when his attention was drawn to a boy—a member of the Remove Form—standing outside the Cross Keys Inn."

"Gee-whiz!" murmured Bob Cherry. "This is where somebody gets it in the neck!"

The Head raised his hand for silence.

"I need not enlarge upon the gravity of that boy's offence," he said. "In breaking bounds at such an hour he has set at defiance one of the most stringent rules of the school. There is no direct evidence that he actually went into the public-house, and that fact alone has saved him from the extreme penalty."

Skinner's heart gave a jump. Then he wasn't to be expelled, after all!

But the alternative was far from pleasant. The Head summoned Gosling, who was lurking in the doorway, to come forward, and then he took a forbidding-looking birch from the drawer of the desk.

"The boy to whom I have just referred," he said, "will now stand forward!"

Shamed in the eyes of all his schoolfellows, and with knees knocking together, Harold Skinner made his way down the gangway, and came to a halt in front of the raised dais. At Dr. Locke's command, Gosling stooped and took the cad of the Remove on his shoulders.

"I will now endeavour to teach you a much-needed lesson, Skinner!" said the Head. "You have been behaving badly for quite a long time, and a severe flogging will possibly make you think twice before breaking bounds in such circumstances again!"

Swish! Swish! Swish!

The great birch rose and fell, to the accompaniment of terrific screams from Skinner. The latter hoped, by yelling at the top of his lungs, to excite the Head's sympathy. On the contrary, the noise only quickened Dr. Locke's determination to give Skinner a very painful five minutes.

It was a very subdued Skinner who crawled back to his seat after the castigation. Dr. Locke had not spared the rod, and the cad of the Remove felt, as he limped along, that life was not worth living.

Meanwhile Gerald Linley, in his place among the Third-Formers, was suffering agonies of suspense. What was going to happen next?

The Head turned a grave face towards the assembled throng.

"The matter does not rest there," he said. "Yet another boy—a boy in whom I had always placed implicit trust—is concerned in this disgraceful affair, and his conduct shows up in a worse light than that of Skinner, for Mr. Quelch informs me he was actually inside the public-house. He escaped Mr. Quelch last night, but he shall not escape now! Mark Linley, stand forward!"

A gasp of astonishment ran round the crowded Hall. Mark Linley—pub-haunting! There must be some ghastly mistake somewhere.

Mark was dazed by the sudden turn of events. He couldn't understand it. The whole room seemed to revolve before his gaze as he walked, like a fellow in a dream, up to the dais.

"Linley," said the Head sternly, "what have you to say for yourself?"

"Why, sir," panted Mark, "it—it's floored me altogether! I certainly didn't break bounds last night—on my word of honour!"

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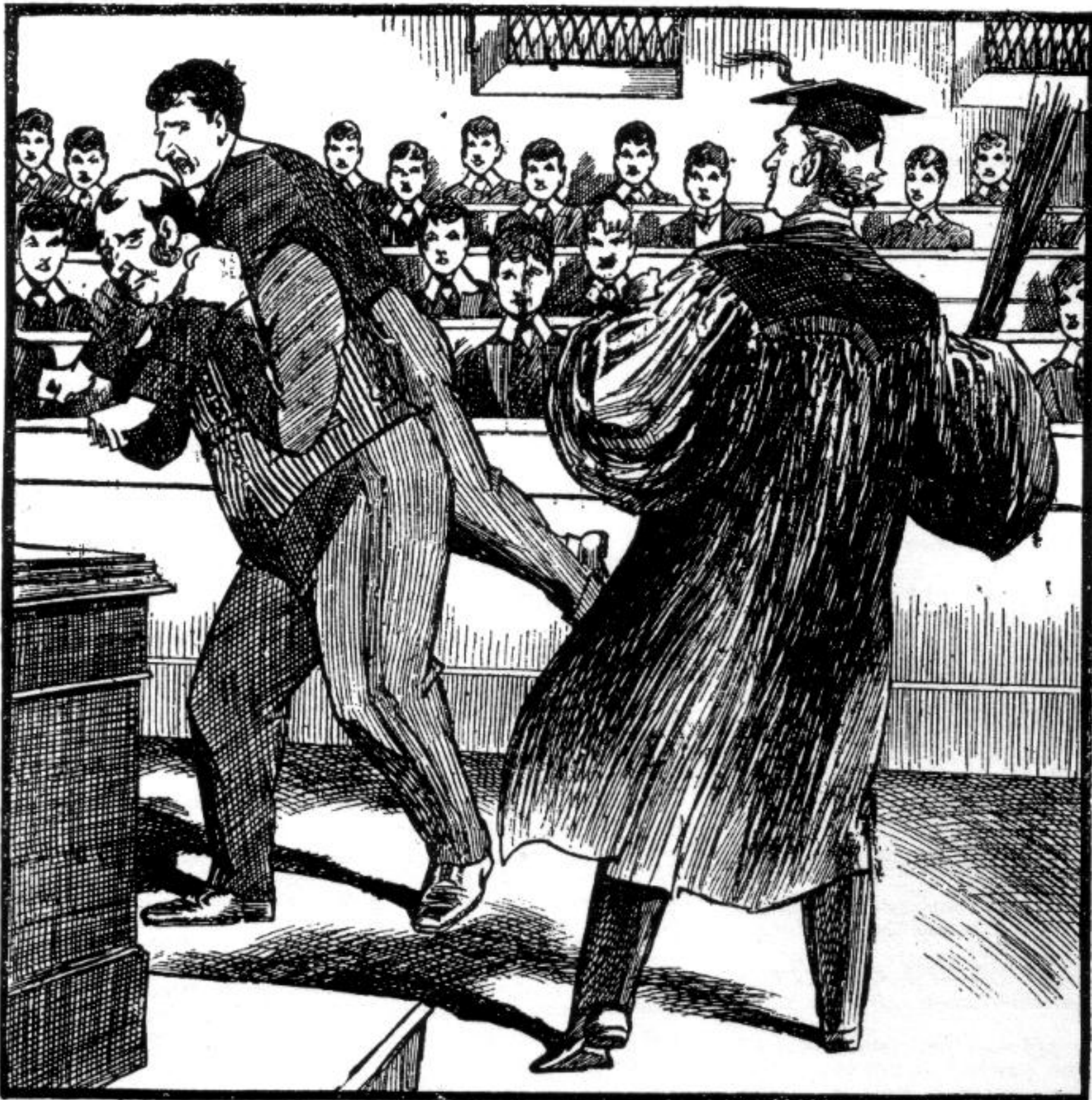
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THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 468.

NEXT MONDAY.

"BUNTER'S BIG BROTHER!"

A Grand Long Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.



Gosling took the cad of the Remove on his shoulders, and the birch rose and fell.
(See Chapter 7.)

"You will have to prove your assertion up to the hilt," replied the Head, "and that, I fear, you will find impossible to do. Stand up, Skinner, and answer my question! Was this boy at the Cross Keys public-house in your company last night?"

"Yes, sir!"

A sudden commotion followed Skinner's startling statement. Bob Cherry bounded forward like a tiger, and, indifferent to his surroundings, grasped the cad of the Remove by the collar.

"That's a lie," he exclaimed passionately—"a rotten, cowardly lie!"

"Cherry," thundered the Head, "how dare you, sir!"

"I can't help it, sir!" said Bob, shaking Skinner like a rat. "It's unfair—horribly unfair! I've been pals with Linley for a long time now, and I know he's a white man through and through! This is a lie—a rotten invention of Skinner's—to get him sacked!"

"Preposterous!" said the Head severely. "You seem to be smitten with a form of hysteria, Cherry. Release Skinner at once!"

Bob reluctantly obeyed.

"There can be no question of injustice," Dr. Locke went on. "You cannot convince me that Skinner mentioned Linley's name in order to do him an injury. That is a very grave accusation to make, Cherry. Is there any other boy present who can throw any light on this affair?"

Wingate of the Sixth came forward, with obvious reluctance.

"There is just one point, sir, which I feel it my duty to mention. I met Linley on the stairs shortly before eleven o'clock last night."

"Ah! What was he doing?"

"He told me he was going down to his study to swot, sir."

"Then it is as clear as noonday what occurred. The wretched boy put you off on that plea, Wingate, and instead

of proceeding to his study, joined Skinner in his rascally excursion to the village. There can be little doubt about it now. Mark Linley, I am sorry to see such a promising career as yours blighted as the result of an act of folly and indiscretion; but I could not allow you to remain here after what has transpired. You are expelled from Greyfriars!"

There was an ominous silence, broken by the shrill cry from the vicinity of the Third-Formers. Gerald Linley, his face pale, sprang to the fore.

"Oh, sir!" he stammered. "I—I—"

The Head waved the fag back, and his expression became softer.

"I can understand your feelings, Linley minor," he said. "I appreciate what a shock this must be to you. But you must accept the inevitable, and strive to win a good reputation at Greyfriars, so that your brother's guilt may be in some measure redeemed. As for you, Linley major, you will pack your belongings, and leave for home by the first available train. Your expulsion will serve as a warning to other reckless spirits. The school will now dismiss!"

Never before had the fellows filed out of Big Hall so quietly. Mark Linley had been a general favourite—a Trojan on the playing-fields and a scholar of great promise. And his expulsion, coming as it did so suddenly and unexpectedly, cast a deep shadow over all Greyfriars.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER. The Supreme Sacrifice!

IN the Remove dormitory, where he had always been such a conspicuous figure, Mark Linley packed his things. He packed them mechanically, like one whose spirit had been crushed, and who had nothing left to live for.

He had done nothing. He, an innocent lad, was to bear the burden of another's guilt—another who had not the manly decency to come forward the moment the terrible mistake was made.

Stunned by the blow, Mark could scarcely dare to look into the future. His own prospects were ruined. All his swotting, his long and lonely toil by the lamplight in his study, was brought to no account. The labour had been in vain.

But that, after all, was a minor consideration. It was his parents who would suffer most from their son's expulsion. The affair would cut them like a knife. Though poor, they were proud, and anything that was not clean and of good report found no place in their hearts. They belonged to that class of Britishers with whom honesty is ever the best policy, and had the keenest contempt for anything that wasn't "cricket."

And now their eldest son, in whom they had centred all their hopes, was cast out from Greyfriars in disgrace.

Mark Linley was not a milksop, but he came very near to breaking down at that moment. Try as he would, he could not wholly suppress the sob that rose in his throat. A mist swam before his eyes.

"It's rotten!" he muttered, over and over again. "I didn't think I should ever come to this pass! Oh, heavens! What ever shall I do?"

The dormitory door opened, and Bob Cherry came in. He stepped quietly across to his chum, and laid a hand on Mark's shoulder.

For some moments he said nothing. What was there to say? How could he condole with his friend in this overwhelming misfortune? It was all very well for people to sing about a silver lining through the dark clouds shining, and to talk of keeping a stiff upper lip when things looked black. It would have needed superhuman courage to do so in this case.

Mark Linley looked up with a wistful expression.

"Well, Bob, old fellow," he said quietly, "I've got to quit! Of course, it goes without saying that you think I'm innocent?"

"Of course it does, Marky! I've known you long enough, to know that you're as far removed from a pub-haunter as—as the sun is from the earth! The Head must be mad to expel you on such evidence!"

Then Bob Cherry burst into a sudden torrent of wrath.

"This is all the work of that cad Skinner!" he exclaimed. "Don't you remember, after you'd licked Bolsover in the gym, how he vowed he'd get even with you? And he's done it; though he's so confoundedly cunning that we can get nothing out of him! I've just pummelled him till he pretty nearly howled for mercy, but—"

"Oh, Bob!"

"Don't reproach me, Marky! I should be a poor sort of worm if I didn't make any effort to get to the bottom of this beastly affair. I tried to get the rotter to tell me who was with him last night, and he still stuck to his cock-and-bull story that it was you. I've blacked one of his eyes, and put his nose out of shape, but it's no use! He swears it was you!"

Mark Linley rose to his feet. His face was haggard.

"Never mind, Bob," he said. "I can see that everything possible has been done to clear me. It's only a waste of time and trouble to go on. The cad who was at the Cross Keys with Skinner will never own up!"

"Won't he, by Jove? I'm not going to let the matter rest—not a bit of it! After you've gone, Marky, I'm going to be a Sexton Blake and a Ferrers Locke rolled into one. And we'll have you back again at Greyfriars in your old place, and those cads—there are only a few of 'em, thank goodness!—who are going about saying you're guilty will have to go down on their hands and knees and ask your pardon!"

"Nothing quite so dramatic as that, I hope," said Mark, with a faint smile. "P'raps I'd better be getting along now. No sense in prolonging a scene like this. It's heartbreaking!"

"I shall miss you, Marky," said Bob vehemently. "We shall all miss you. You've been one of ourselves. In the half-back line Toddy and I will be lost without you. And the study—Ugh! The study will be like a blessed hermit's cell!"

"I know how you feel, old man," said Mark, "and it's only further proof of a friendship I shall always value above everything!"

"Can I do anything for you?" asked Bob. "It's a delicate question I'm going to ask, but this is not a time for mincing matters. Are you in need of money?"

Mark flushed.

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ONE
PENNY.

"No, Bob; that's all right. Things will be hard at first, I dare say, but I've been a breadwinner before, and it'll be nothing new to have to battle for existence. Good-bye, old fellow, and thanks—a thousand thanks—for all you've done for me!"

"Good-bye, Marky!" said Bob.

He took his chum's hand in a crushing grip, and then turned abruptly and quitted the dormitory. It was one of those rare moments in Bob's life when he wanted to be quite alone.

With a heavy heart Mark Linley shouldered his portmanteau, and prepared to take his departure.

A white-faced fag encountered him in the doorway.

"Gerald!"

"I—I came to tell you something," said the Third-Former. "It's no use keeping it back from you."

"Well?"

"I was the fellow who dodged Quelchy at the Cross Keys last night."

"What!"

"It's a fact. But—but I daren't stand the racket!" said Gerald wildly. "I can't bear to be expelled! It's rough on you, Mark, I know, but you can get over it. I shouldn't. It would bowl me out altogether!"

Mark Linley's face was a study. For some moments he was clearly at a loss for words.

"Do I understand," he gasped at length, "that you want me to face the music; so that you can go scot-free?"

"That's it," said Gerald eagerly. "It's the height of caddishness, I know, but I—I can't help it! I can't face what you've had to face this morning!"

"But this—this is beyond the limit!" panted Mark. "Can you reasonably expect me to be sacked in your place?"

"Yes; you're my brother!"



Wingate went sprawling, and Billy Bunter pitched like a ton of coals on top of him.
(See Chapter 2.)

"Granted. But there are bounds, even to sacrifices made for a brother's sake. You are taking a mean advantage of me, Gerald!"

The younger boy burst into tears.

"Oh, don't go back on me!" he sobbed. "Don't let me down, now things have gone so far! Think what it means to me!"

"Think what it means to me also!" said Mark sternly. "And our people, too! They're the ones who'll suffer over this business. You'd better go to the Head, and make a clean breast of things!"

"I couldn't!" said Gerald. His voice rose almost to a scream. "You're asking too much of me, Mark! Look here! I promise you, honour bright, if only you'll give me the chance of staying on here, that I'll cut out all that gambling bizney, and start afresh! I'm not really bad, you know! Do—do give me a chance! Oh, Marky, I know you will!"

Mark Linley struggled with himself for a long time. He had been asked favours many times in his life, but never such a gigantic favour as this. Could he possibly grant it?

He looked at Gerald's pale face and wistful eyes, and resolved to save the unhappy fag from shame. It was no light sacrifice to make, but Mark had more than common generosity.

"Very well," he said, after a long pause. "I'll do it! But you must keep your part of the compact, mind, and stop being such a beastly outsider! You must play up all you know!"

"I will," said Gerald earnestly. "Oh, Marky, what a stunning brick you are to do this for me! I shall never forget it—never!"

"I'm not in the mood for heroics," said Mark. "Good-bye, Gerald!"

"You—you won't breathe a word about this to anyone?" entreated Gerald.

Mark merely looked at him—a sad, scornful look, that made Gerald wilt. Then he proceeded downstairs with his port-manteau, and crossed the crowded Close.

Fellows stood about in twos and threes, and Mark was the cynosure of all eyes. Most of the glances in his direction were glances of sympathy, and there were a few of condemnation.

Mark Linley walked straight ahead with burning face, but with an unwavering resolve to see the thing through.

Harry Wharton & Co. joined him at the school gate, and bade him good-bye. They spoke but few words of cheer, for such words would have sounded almost ironical at a time like that.

Mark shook hands all round, thanked the Famous Five for their faith in him, and for the friendship they had freely given in the past; and then, suppressing a sigh, he tramped away through the gates and down the hard, frost-bound road, leaving behind him—perhaps for ever—the school he had come to love with all his young heart.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Gerald Plays the Game!

DURING the days that followed Mark Linley's expulsion, Skinner emulated the celebrated Brer Rabbit, and lay low. He had experienced a nasty shaking-up, and was not anxious for an encore.

Gerald Linley evaded the cad of the Remove as if Skinner were a leper. He meant to make good his promise to Mark—to atone in some measure for the bitter injustice he

had brought about by his own cowardice. At all costs, no determined, he must not run foul of Harold Skinner again.

But within a few hours of making this resolution Fate brought him face to face with his former associate.

It was dusk, and Gerald, in a sudden burst of generosity, had been to the village to obtain a money-order for two pounds, and send it home. He still had a little left from Mauly's generous gift, and considered it would ease the pressure, so far as his people were concerned.

Gerald was returning to Greyfriars at a swinging pace, when he became suddenly aware that another fellow was about fifty yards in front of him. Closer investigation proved it to be Harold Skinner.

"Hang him!" muttered Gerald. "I must keep out of the rotter's way somehow!"

He slackened his pace, and walked close in to the bank, hoping that the Removee would not turn and detect him.

A bicycle-bell clanged shrilly on the evening air, and Gerald saw the subdued glow of the front lamp advancing from the opposite direction.

Skinner seemed to take no heed. He was lounging along with his hands in his pockets, right in the centre of the narrow roadway.

"My hat!" murmured Gerald. "The silly ass will be run down! Why doesn't he shift to one side, I wonder?"

Again the bicycle bell sounded its warning note, and still Skinner refused to budge.

Then, as Gerald stood stark still, debating whether to shout to Skinner or not, there came the sound of a sudden collision, followed by a roar of rage from the cad of the Remove.

"Thought so," observed Gerald. "Serve him jolly well right!"

He rushed towards the spot, and saw what had transpired. The cyclist was a girl, and, peering through the gloom, Gerald distinguished the face and form of Phyllis Howell. She was looking angry and annoyed.

"How silly of Skinner!" she panted, addressing Gerald. "I rang my bell twice—and loudly, too—and he took no notice! Now I appear to have hurt him. It is entirely his own fault!"

Skinner, who was sprawling in the roadway, staggered to his feet. He was smothered in mud, though, apart from a few bruises, he had escaped injury. But his expression was positively murderous.

In his anger, he failed to notice Gerald, but strode towards Phyllis Howell.

"How dare you?" he roared. "It's like your confounded cheek to bowl me over like that!"

"You should have stepped aside," said Phyllis tartly. "You had plenty of time!"

Skinner gave a growl.

"It's always the way with you people who've got babies," he said. "You think you own all the giddy road. If you were a fellow I'd give you a jolly good licking!"

"You cad!" said Phyllis.

Gerald Linley said nothing, but he acted. Springing forward, he gripped Skinner by the arm.

"I agree with Miss Howell," he said. "Only a cad would speak to a young lady like that. I was walking behind you all the time, my cherub, and know exactly who's to blame in the matter!"

"You spying hound!" hissed Skinner.

Then he broke off, recognising the intruder's identity.

"So it's you, is it?" he gasped at length. "I thought you were my pal, and this is the sort of dirty trick you play me! Leggo my arm!"

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"I'll let go," retorted Gerald grimly, "the moment you apologise to Miss Howell—not before!"

"Apologise be blowed! I sha'n't do anything of the sort!" hooted Skinner.

"Then I shall thrash you!"

The words were spoken with deadly directness, and Skinner knew well that Gerald meant them.

But he would not eat humble-pie in the presence of a girl—especially a girl like Phyllis Howell. Apologise? Not he! He preferred to take his chance with Gerald, whom he felt pretty confident he could lick.

"Well?" said the Third-Former at length. "Made up your mind, you cad?"

"Yes."

"You're going to make that apology?"

"Not a bit of it!"

"Then put up your hands! I'm sorry to make a scene here, Miss Howell. You run away and pick flowers while I teach this beauty a lesson!"

"Don't!" said Phyllis. "It's quite all right, I assure you. I don't want you to get hurt on my account."

"Rats!" said Gerald cheerfully. "It's Skinner who'll get hurt, I'm thinking. Here goes!"

And he went for the cad of the Remove like a tiger.

Skinner reeled from a terrific punch in the chest, and his arms sawed the air in windmill fashion as he attempted to get to grips with his adversary. But Gerald was altogether too quick and nimble for him, and, following up his hurricane attack, he planted a smashing blow on Skinner's nose and another over his right eye.

That about finished Skinner. He had already been through the mill at the hands of Bob Cherry, and had no spirit left in him. With a gasp of pain, he rolled over once more in the roadway.

"Get up, you skunk, and have some more!" said Gerald. "You can stand a good deal more than that yet. Shamming won't save you!"

"I—I think he has been punished enough," said Phyllis Howell, laying a hand on Gerald's arm. "Please don't hit him any more!"

"All right. If you wish it, Miss Howell, I won't," said Gerald. "If he insults you again, though, and I'm anywhere near, he won't get off so lightly. Good-night!"

"Won't you shake hands?" said Phyllis.

Gerald did so, and the girl bent closer to him.

"I rather like you, you know," she said quietly. "Not every boy would have done as you did just now. Miss Primrose, at Cliff House, sometimes tells us that the age of chivalry is past, but you proved otherwise. Good-night!"

Phyllis remounted her machine, and was soon swallowed up in the darkness.

When she had gone Skinner rose to his feet and approached his conqueror with fury in his face.

"So this is the way you serve me!" he snarled. "I was your pal, and got you out of the dickens of a hole the other day, and now you turn your hand against me!"

"I can stand a good deal," answered Gerald hotly, "but I'm not going to fold my arms while you check girls of Miss Howell's sort. You're a thundering cad, Skinner!"

"Oh, that's the tune, is it? I'll jolly soon make you sing to another, you beastly upstart!"

And Skinner set off at a sharp pace for Greyfriars.

"What are you going to do?" asked Gerald, in alarm.

"Tell the Head who was with me at the pub the other night. It'll be an interesting titbit of news."

"You cad—you awful cad!"

"Fancy names don't hurt me," said Skinner. "You've driven me to it, and nothing would stop me giving you away now—not even if you went down to me on bended knees!"

"But—but what about yourself?" panted Gerald. "You'll get it in the neck for not telling Quelch the truth in the first place. When the Head knows that you lied about Mark and got him sacked, he'll kick you out!"

"I'm ready to chance that," said Skinner. "I shall have the satisfaction of knowing that I'm not the only one being sacked. You'll have to go through the mill, and it'll serve you jolly well right!"

Gerald paused, at a loss for words. The cad of the Remove had him in a cleft stick. The mad desire for revenge had outweighed all other considerations in Skinner's mind, and he was determined to leave no stone unturned to bring about Gerald's downfall.

The Third-Former realised his helplessness. Nothing could save him now. If he gave his former friend a further thrashing, it would only quicken Skinner's desire to play the part of informer.

Gerald swiftly decided how to act.

"You've got me beaten!" he muttered. "It's just the sort of shabby trick I might have expected from a waster like you!"

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NEXT
MONDAY.

"BUNTER'S BIG BROTHER!"

EVERY MONDAY, The "Magnet" LIBRARY. ONE PENNY.

Skinner chuckled. The sound was almost uncanny in the darkness.

"I guess you're sorry for the way you bashed me about just now," he said. "You've come off second best, after all, you see. I'm going now, to tell my interesting little narrative to the Head."

"You needn't trouble, you cad," said Gerald quietly.

"Why—what do you mean?"

"I'm going to tell him myself!"

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

The Shadow of Guilt!

SKINNER was staggered. He had thought that Gerald Linley would be prepared to go to any lengths to keep the little affair of the Cross Keys dark; yet the Third-Former was actually proposing to go to the Head and make a clean breast of the whole business!

"You're rotting!" said Skinner, after a long pause. "You wouldn't have the nerve to confess. It's a wheeze to make me keep my mouth shut. I tell you—"

Gerald, sick of the sound of Skinner's voice, didn't wait to hear more. He turned a resolute face towards Greyfriars, determined not to swerve from his programme.

The game was up now. He could not remain at the school. Even if Skinner had failed to fulfil his threat, he would have had no scruples in blackmailing Gerald from time to time, and making his life a misery.

And then there was Mark. Mark had been foully and cruelly wronged, and it was up to Gerald to state the true facts of the case to the Head and get his major restored to his old position in the school.

It needed a good deal of courage, but Gerald never faltered. He passed through the gates of Greyfriars, and went straight to the Head's study.

Dr. Locke looked up from his desk, struck by the excited gleam in the boy's eye.

"Well, Linley?"

Gerald seemed to gulp something down.

"I—I don't quite know how to begin, sir," he stammered. "You'll hardly credit what I'm going to tell you."

The Head laid down his pen with an air of surprise.

"Are you in trouble, my boy?" he asked. "You have been sent to me, perhaps, by one of the masters or a prefect?"

Gerald shook his head.

"Not that, sir," he said. "I've at least got the consolation of coming here voluntarily to confess."

"To confess? I—I fail to understand—"

Gerald Linley no longer beat about the bush.

"I was the fellow, sir," he said desperately, "who was with Skinner at the Cross Keys the other night."

"Linley!"

"It's a fact, sir. I knew it would come as a shock to you, I—"

The Head rose majestically to his feet.

"This is nonsense!" he said sternly. "I can only conclude that you must have taken leave of your senses!"

But the next moment, when Gerald almost broke down, and his face became pallid, Dr. Locke began to see things differently.

"Linley," he exclaimed, "do you realise the gravity of the statement you have just made?"

"Yes, sir. It was no use keeping it back any longer. I'd have been bowled out sooner or later, I expect."

"But your brother?" gasped the Head. "Skinner distinctly stated—"

"Skinner lied, sir."

"Bless my soul!"

"He owed Mark a grudge, sir. Anyway, what he told Mr. Quelch was false. Mark was in his study, swotting, as he said. He never left the school."

The Head looked flabbergasted.

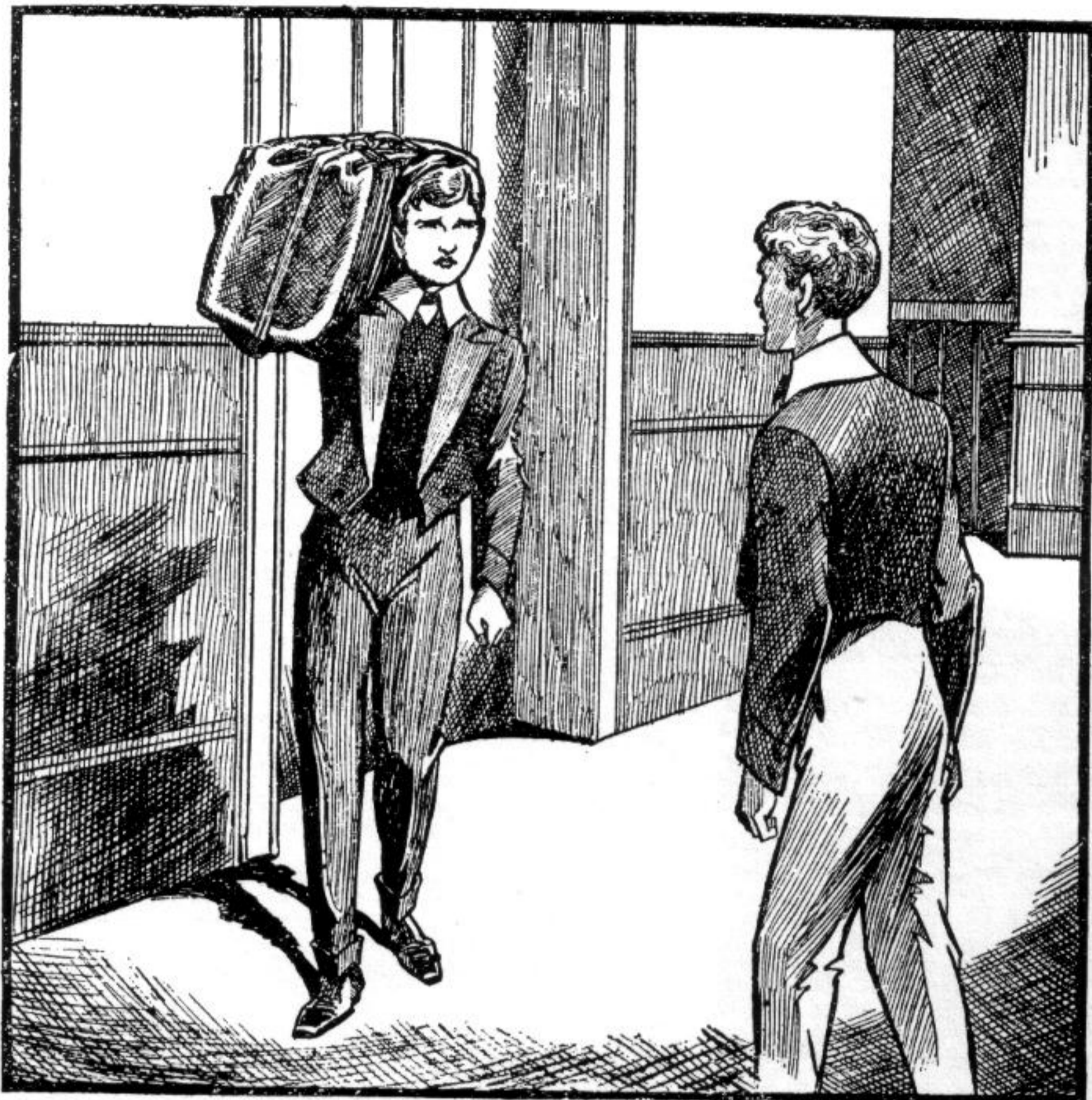
"Do you mean to tell me, Linley, that you allowed your brother to suffer in that way, when a word from you would have saved him the shame and indignity of expulsion?"

"That's so, sir. I was a beastly cad, I know!"

"This is most serious, Linley! Both you and Skinner have behaved most despicably! I shall have no alternative but to send you home in disgrace, and to recall your brother."

"I hardly expected anything else, sir."

"As for Skinner, I will consider how to best deal with him. I am strongly inclined to expel him, too; but the matter shall have further consideration. It is too late to send a telegram this evening, but I will wire for your brother's return first thing in the morning."



Mark Linley shouldered his portmanteau. Gerald encountered him in the doorway. (See Chapter 8.)

The Head pressed the bell, and Trotter appeared. "Send Wingate in to me at once!" "Yessir!"

A few minutes later the stalwart captain of Greyfriars entered.

"Take this boy to the punishment-room, Wingate," said the Head. "He has come to me with the startling confession that it was he, and not his brother, who visited the public-house in the village."

Wingate gasped.

"But Skinner vowed it was Mark Linley!"

"Skinner has told a most contemptible lie. He will be dealt with very severely in due course. Meanwhile, take this wretched boy away, and see that he is placed under lock and key. To-morrow morning it is my intention to expel him from Greyfriars."

Wingate marched Gerald off to the punishment-room. On the way, they encountered the Famous Five, flushed and ruddy from footer practice.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, stopping short in astonishment. "What's the little game? Been robbing a bank, young Linley?"

"Out of the way, you kids!" said Wingate.

Gerald Linley turned to the captain of Greyfriars.

"Let me tell them," he said. "They'll have to know in the morning, anyway, so it'll make no difference. Mark is innocent, you fellows. He didn't go near the Cross Keys."

"We're quite aware of that," said Harry Wharton. "But you don't mean to say—"

"That I was the culprit? Exactly! And I'm going to be sacked to-morrow. Put on your biggest size in boots, so that I get a thorough kick-out."

And, leaving the Famous Five staring at each other in a wild surmise, Gerald passed on in the custody of his warder.

The punishment-room was not the sort of apartment where a winter night could be passed in comfort. No fire burned

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And neither Greyfriars nor the people at home will ever see me again!"

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Last Adventure!

GERALD flung himself down on his hard, forbidding couch, waiting till the coast was clear, so that he could put his scheme into effect.

And while he waited, he thought—thought how different things might have been had he been less reckless and headstrong on his arrival at Greyfriars. He compared himself with such fellows as Tubb and Paget, much to his own disadvantage. Tubb and Paget were full of mischief and frivolity, but they were white men right through.

But it was too late now to make amends. He had had his chance, and the fact that he had failed to make good lay at his own door. The crash had come, and he must pay the penalty for his offences in full.

What should he do? Where should he go? It was all very well to talk of running away, and thus avoiding the shame of public expulsion. He had scarcely any money, and no friends in that part of the country.

If he tried to enlist, the odds would be heavily against him. Recruiting-officers were frequently indifferent to the age, physique, and appearance of the men whom they roped in; but they would draw the line at a fag in Etons.

There was only one thing for it. He must go to London—to the mighty city in whose depths fortunes were lost and won. There was great shortage of labour in certain commercial centres, owing to the war, and there was a sporting chance, also, of Gerald getting a job as a juvenile actor for the films. He was decidedly good-looking, and knew how to act.

"London!" said Gerald, with a deep breath.

in the disused grate, and the uncarpeted floor looked like a place where rats held high revel at dead of night. The bed—hard, cold, and cheerless—made Gerald shudder in spite of himself.

"In you go!" ordered Wingate. "I must say I've heard of some pretty rotten things in my time, but I've never known a fellow treat his brother as you've treated yours! You deserve all you get, and more!"

"Pile it on!" said Gerald bitterly. "Hit a fellow when he's down! That's just the way with you chaps! You may call it cricket, but I don't!"

Wingate paused, half remorseful.

"I suppose you're right," he said. "None of us are fit to throw a stone. Still, you must admit you've shown up pretty shabbily. I'm going to lock and bolt the door now, and to-morrow you'll be put out of your misery."

Gerald laughed grimly as he listened to Wingate's retreating footsteps.

"So he thinks I'm going to wait for the pleasant, cheery scene in Big Hall, does he?" he muttered. "By gosh! if I haven't put thirty miles between myself and Greyfriars by rising-bell, I shall want to know the reason why! Just wait till everything's quiet, and then I'll do it! I'll bunk—bunk clean away! and then I'll do it! I'll bunk—bunk clean away!

He let the word linger on his tongue, and conjured up visions of the great time he would have when he became famous. It did not occur to him that fame is not won in a day.

Gerald was deep in his meditations, when a knock sounded on the door without.

The condemned junior gave a start. It was past bedtime, and he wondered who could be abroad at that hour. A familiar voice soon gave him the answer.

"Linley, you young rotter! Let me in!"

The voice belonged to Harold Skinner.

Gerald applied his lips to the keyhole.

"Sorry, but I can't work miracles," he said. "The blessed door's locked and bolted. You don't think Wingate would be ass enough to leave the key on the inside, do you?"

"I want to speak to you."

"Then you'll have to do it through the keyhole. It's the only way. But before you begin, don't you think you're safer in bed? If you're caught loitering about out here, there'll be the dickens to pay!"

"Things can't be much worse than they are already," replied Skinner. "So you've split on me, have you? You've acted like a confounded sneak?"

"Put it that way, if it pleases you. I went to the Head and stated the plain, blunt facts, and if it lands you into hot water you've only yourself to blame. You forced me to do as I did. I didn't confess from choice altogether."

Skinner tramped about outside the punishment-room like a caged lion. He had made many enemies in his school career; but he hated no one so keenly as Gerald, who had taken this unexpected stand at the last minute and brought the pair of them headlong to disaster.

"You rotten cad! You low-down factory worm!" roared Skinner.

"Go it!" said Gerald encouragingly. "Keep on till you're out of breath. I like that sort of comic music!"

"Oh, you rotter! If only I could get at you now!"

"I reciprocate the feeling," Gerald remarked. "I'd give you a further dose of what you had this afternoon, by way of overweight."

"You think you're funny, don't you?" hissed Skinner. "Jolly funny, isn't it, to serve me a dirty trick like that, after I took the trouble to shield you?"

EVERY MONDAY,

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ONE PENNY.

"Rats! You didn't deny that I was with you in order to do me a good turn. It was to ruin Mark. I could see that with half an eye. You're a howling cad, Skinner, and if you get expelled in the morning Greyfriars will be a cleaner sort of place for the fellows to live in."

"There's this about it," retorted Skinner. "If I'm sacked in the morning—and I s'pose I shall be—I sha'n't go alone."

"You will!" flung back Gerald, with a harsh laugh.

"What d'you mean?"

"Do you think I'm fool enough to wait here till the general assembly? No giddy fear! When they come to this room in the morning they'll find that the bird has flown."

Gerald regretted the words almost as soon as they were spoken. By telling Skinner his plans he had played right into the enemy's hands.

Outside in the corridor, the cad of the Remove gave a chuckle.

"Thanks for the information!" he said. "I'll act upon it."

"Why, what are you going to do?"

"I shall go to Quelchy and tell him you mean to bolt during the night," was Skinner's rejoinder. "I expect he'll ask me why I'm absent from my dormitory, but I can fix that all serene. So-long, my beauty!"

"Come back, you cad!" called Gerald, in a frenzy.

But Skinner, bent on getting in his final sword-thrust, was already retreating.

"My hat!" muttered Gerald, pacing to and fro. "I've been and gone and done it now! He'll put Quelchy on the scent, and I shall be kept under watch and ward all night. Oh, heavens! What a mad fool I was to tell him!"

But there was still one alternative open to Gerald. He debated it swiftly in his mind.

"I've got it! By Jingo, I'll bunk now!"

It was a sporting chance, and Gerald Linley was not the sort of fellow to let a sporting chance go disregarded. Mr. Quelch would probably be asleep, and by the time Skinner had roused him he—Gerald—would have got clear away.

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But it must be done quickly. Even a few seconds might make all the difference between freedom and captivity.

In a twinkling Gerald had wrenched the sheets from the bed and knotted them together with deft fingers. It was his intention to lower himself from the window. Indeed, that was the only means of escape open to him.

The punishment-room was almost at the top of the building, and it would require considerable nerve to descend, hand over hand, to the ground beneath; but the boy who had crawled for yards over the treacherous ice and rescued Lord Mauleverer had nerve in plenty. Come what may, he would not remain and face the ordeal of the morning.

A faint shaft of moonlight played upon Gerald as he bent down and strung the sheets together. The knots were not so reliable as he could have wished; but time was precious, and he could not afford to give close attention to detail.

The sheets—there were only a couple of them—were not nearly long enough for the fag's purpose, and he was obliged to tear the blanket into strips. This was a difficult and a laborious task, and Gerald's heart sank. Surely Mr. Quelch would be along in a moment, and then—then all his fond dreams of liberty would be flown.

He strained his ears at every sound, and the ominous rustle of the elm-branches in the Close distracted and annoyed him. He was already beginning to despair.

But the improvised rope was finished, and there was still no sign of Mr. Quelch or his informant.

"P'raps I shall win through, after all," muttered Gerald. "I'll have a thundering good try, anyway. Here goes!"

And he made one end of the cumbersome rope fast to the bedrail.

Even as he did so, the sound of approaching footsteps, which he had dreaded for the past quarter of an hour, came to his ears. He was caught—caught like a rat in a trap!

But his wild desire for freedom made him desperate. Slingsing the rope through the open window, he sprang on to the sill, and began to let himself down at a terrific rate.

He was only just in the nick of time. As he started his descent he heard the door thrown open, and Mr. Quelch's rasping voice exclaiming:

"Linley, come back! Come back at once! I command you!"

"You can command till you're black in the face!" panted Gerald, under his breath. "Another few seconds and I shall be on the ground."

The words were tragically true. No sooner had they been uttered than the knotted sheets were suddenly rent completely in two.

The blankets had borne Gerald's weight well, and the knots had held good. But the sheets, hastily tied together as they were, failed to support the would-be runaway. Gerald gave a startled gasp, and went crashing down to the ground beneath.

Mr. Quelch, who had witnessed the occurrence from the window, turned pale. He had little doubt that Gerald Linley had gone to his death. The Remove master, peering intently, could distinguish the fag's motionless form on the flagstones.

Mr. Quelch was a man of action. He seldom lost his head in an emergency.

"Have you a bicycle, Skinner?"

"Ye-e-es, sir."

"Then mount it at once, and summon Dr. Short from the village!"

"Is—is Linley much hurt, sir?" stammered the terrified Skinner. "Do you think he—he's—"

"Delay is dangerous, perhaps fatal!" rapped out Mr. Quelch. "You will proceed on your errand at once, whilst I arrange for Linley to be conveyed to the sanatorium. Quick! Don't stand there gaping at me like an imbecile!"

And Harold Skinner, his thoughts full of the white, upturned face of the fellow he had tried to drag downhill, sped down the stairs and made rapid tracks for the bicycle shed.

It was a matter of life and death, and at present the odds stood heavily in favour of the latter.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Not Wholly Bad!

SKINNER rode as he had never ridden before. The night was dark and the way treacherous, but the cod of the Remove heeded nothing. It was a new Skinner that flashed through the winding lanes—his cowardice gone, his thoughts only for the welfare of the youngster whose life swayed in the balance.

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OUT ON
WEDNESDAY.

"LEVISON FOR ST. JIM'S!"

A Fine Yarn of Tom Merry & Co. in
The "GEM" Library.

Fortune favoured the night-rider. He accomplished the journey without mishap, and found Dr. Short in.

In a few breathless words, the junior described what had happened.

Dr. Short lost no time in getting into his car and whirling away towards Greyfriars.

Meanwhile, Mr. Quelch had hurried down to the Close, and conveyed the unconscious form of Gerald Linley to the sanatorium.

The boy still lived. Of that Mr. Quelch was certain, for he could detect the breathing; but Gerald's face was so white, and his frame so limp and helpless, that the Form-master knew it was a case of touch-and-go.

He laid his burden gently upon one of the beds, then stirred the fire, and paced agitatedly up and down the room. Until the doctor arrived he could do nothing.

Dr. Short's verdict was more favourable than Mr. Quelch had expected.

"The lad has sustained a rather serious concussion, and his left arm is broken," said the medical man. "But I have little doubt that he will pull through. There seems no internal injury, apart from the concussion."

Mr. Quelch drew a deep breath of relief.

"That is indeed good news," he said. "I had grave fears that we might have to prepare for the worst."

"He will have to be kept perfectly quiet for a few days," the doctor went on. "He will doubtless be delirious at first, but that will pass off in time. I will remain here until I have satisfied myself fully that all is well."

"There will be no need to summon a specialist?"

"No. I will do so at once if the lad has what I regard as a serious relapse; but I think that is extremely unlikely."

Gerald Linley did not recover consciousness until dawn, and then, as Dr. Short had predicted, he chattered away in a delirious manner.

News of the calamity spread through the school as a fire spreads through gorse. During the early hours of the day, fellows walked about in little groups, conversing in hushed whispers; and there was general relief when it became known that Gerald Linley was expected to pull through. And most relieved of all was Harold Skinner.

Early in the afternoon Mark Linley arrived from Lancashire. There was no flourish of trumpets in celebration of his return, as Bob Cherry had so fondly hoped; for the recent calamity weighed upon the minds of all, and Mark would have been the last person to wish a scene to be made in his honour.

As day succeeded day, Gerald rapidly mended. None of his schoolfellows had been permitted to see him, but on the third day both Skinner and Mark Linley were allowed the privilege.

The cad of the Remove came first. His face was white and drawn, for he had experienced three days of harrowing suspense. He had been waiting for the dread summons into Big Hall, and the expulsion; but things had been strangely quiet.

Gerald Linley explained the quietness.

"Hallo, Skinner!" he said, extending his sound hand for the Removee to take. "Don't look such a Dismal Jimmy. I've got good news for you. The Head's letting you off!"

"What! You don't mean it! You can't mean it!" muttered Skinner wildly.

"It's a fact, my dear chap. I put in a word for you, you see. Said you acted under great provocation, and all that sort of thing."

Then Skinner did an extraordinary thing, a most un-Skinnerlike thing. He broke down and sobbed.

"You—you did this for me, after—after the rotten trick I played you the other night, when I went and told Quelch you were bolting?"

"Oh, draw it mild!" said Gerald. "The chance came to do you a good turn, and I took it. The Head's not going to punish you; though I expect you'll have a pretty rotten time with the fellows until this affair blows over."

"I can stand that," said Skinner. "Anything's better than being expelled. What a stunning brick you are, Linley! I reckon—"

The door opened, and another visitor came in. It was Mark Linley. He advanced to the bedside, his face working as he strove to conceal his emotion.

Skinner glided softly from the room. He felt it was no place for him. Major and minor wanted to be alone, for they had many things to say to each other.

"Gerald, old boy," said Mark, his voice faltering, "it was splendid of you to make a clean breast of things!"

"Not at all," replied Gerald. "I was driven to it. And you, Marky? How have you been faring at home?"

"I had quite resigned myself to a life of slavery," said Mark, with a smile. "It fairly floored me when I got the Head's wire telling me to come back. And, I say! Have you heard? Dr. Locke's going to give you another chance. You're to stay on at Greyfriars."

"I'm not!" Gerald's tone was firm and final. "Since I was bowled over I've had time to put in some hard thinking, and I can see now where my duty lies. Oh, it's no use trying to turn me from my purpose, Marky. My mind's fairly made up. I mean to wipe all this beastly business off the slate by going back to Lancashire and working—working my fingers to the bone, if need be! I've been a selfish rotter, and it wasn't till I got crooked that I saw things in the right light. I shall tell the Head I appreciate his kindness ever so much; but Lancashire's the place for me. Gee! How I'll work! I pulled Mauly out of the lake, and I'll pull the people at home out of their nasty corner."

For some moments Mark Linley was silent. When he spoke, his voice rang with admiration.

"Gerald," he said, "I'm jolly proud to call you my brother, and, by Jove, you're one of the best!"

Gerald Linley kept his word. When he became fit and strong once more, he bade Greyfriars a lasting good-bye, and turned his face towards the sterner world of work.

He had learnt his lesson. Snob and outsider no longer, he carried away with him a firm resolve to play the game at all times; and it was with pride, and not contemptuous disdain, that the Greyfriars fellows afterwards spoke of Linley minor.

THE END.

(Don't miss "BUNTER'S BIG BROTHER!"—next Monday's grand story of Harry Wharton & Co., by FRANK RICHARDS.)

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Matches Wanted By :

ALFORD HOUSE F.C. (A team) (15½)—4-mile r.—James Godling, 6-8, Lambeth Walk, S.W.

NORTH LONDON UNITED F.C.—S. R. Lee, 6, Bathurst Gardens, Kensal Rise, N.W.

ALBANY UNITED F.C. (13-14)—also want good players.—L. Laitner, c/o 339, Attercliffe Common, Sheffield.

ALBION ATHLETIC F.C. (16-17)—13-mile r.—J. T. Fyson, 47, Albion Grove, Barnsbury, N.

18TH SOUTH ESSEX BOYS' BRIGADE F.C. (13-15)—2-mile r.—H. A. Southwell, 120, Maynard Rd., Walthamstow.

BULLIVANT'S JUNIORS F.C. A. Bezer, 6, Chargeable St., Canning Town, E.

FENTON ATHLETIC F.C. (13-14) 4-mile r.—J. Jackson, 1, Woodend St., Fenton, Stoke-on-Trent.

GOPSALL UNITED F.C. (16-17)—5-mile r.—F. Charlton, 12, St. Thomas' Gardens, Kentish Town, N.W.

ABBOTT STREET JUNIORS F.C. (12). E. Sander, 313, Rochdale Rd., Manchester.

ROXETH UNITED F.C. (16) 8-mile r.—R. Adams, 18, Grange Rd., South Harrow.

HULL AND DISTRICT F.C. (14-15).—W. F. Frederickson, 8, Wesley Terrace, Bean St., Hull.

Other Footer Notices :

ST. MARK'S CHURCH F.C. (16-17) want good left-back and two speedy forwards—Hackney.—Apply by post, A. Stephenson, 26, Navarino Mansions, Hackney, N.

F. Goldsmith, 79, Greenway Rd., Runcorn, wants to join club within 7 miles (outside-left or right-back, 15).

NORTH LONDON UNITED F.C. want referee (17-19).—S. R. Lee, 6, Bathurst Gardens, Kensal Rise, N.W.

A. Fishwick, 33, Elsmere St., Patricroft, Manchester, wants to join local team (outside-right, 15).

G. Watson, 59, Park Lane, Poynton, Stockport, wants to join club (outside either wing or goal, 14½).

ST. VINCENT'S A.F.C. want some good players.—C. Kirkwood, 60, Sharp St., Hull.

A. Hurley, jun., 130, High St., Tooting, S.W., wants to join club (17-18, forward or half) within 4 miles.

J. Balkwill, 88, Droop St., Queen's Park, N.W., wants to join club (16½, inside right or left).

S. A. Ovenden, 36, Alexandra Rd., Wimbledon (16, plays anywhere, but prefers back) wants to join club.

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NEXT MONDAY,

"BUNTER'S BIG BROTHER!"

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ONE PENNY.

J. Collins, 7, Sydney Place, Sydney St., Goswell Rd., E.C. (15½, any position, but prefers forward), wants to join club within 6 miles.

H. Goldhang, 49, Avondale Square, Old Kent Rd., S.E., wants to form club (about 15).

PECKHAM VILLA F.C. (16-17) want a few good players.—W. Ricketts, 24, Nelson Square, Peckham, S.E.

A. Crouch, 89, Park Rd., Leyton (16, back or goal), wants to join club.

L. Moran, 3, Windsor Terr., Kingstown, Dublin (18), wants to join club.

L. Landan, J. Kutz, and J. Davison want to join club in South London district. Any positions.—Write, J. Davison, 2A, Gubyn Avenue, Herne Hill, S.E.

J. A. Needs, 32, Sonning St., Roman Rd., Barnsbury, N. (16), wants to join club.

A. Hart, 277, Union St., Blackfriars, S.E., wants to join club as back or goalkeeper.

P. Lewis, 126, Old St., City Rd., E.C., wants to form club (14-15) in his neighbourhood.

Two boys want to join club near them (15½-16).—H. Pike, 47, Shakespeare Rd., Stoke Newington, N.

Two boys (15½, goalkeeper and centre-half) want to join club near Twickenham.—M. Creary, 27, Laurel Avenue Twickenham.

CORRESPONDENCE WANTED BY :

C. A. Roberts, 35, Kaiphang Rd., Kowloon, Hong Kong, China—with readers interested in stamp and postcard collecting.

Miss B. Lancaster, 74, Saltaire Rd., Saltaire, Shipley, Yorks—with a girl reader at home or abroad.

W. Winter, 14, Gadsden Mews, North Kensington, London, W.—offers to forward the "Magnet" regularly to some reader abroad who finds it difficult to get.

R. G. Evans, C.M.C., Gaiman, Chubut, Argentine Republic—with a reader.

Miss Dolly Treluce, 19, Codrington St., New Town, Exeter—with a girl reader of 15-18.

Kenneth R. Fischer, The Residency, Richmond, Cape Province, South Africa—with a boy reader in the United Kingdom.

Miss Ethel Edwards, 208, Kotze St., Pretoria, South Africa—with readers to exchange picture-postcards.

Roy Goodall, Water Road Lane, Mirfield, asks for address of R. Orme. He also wants more members for his league.

R. Squires, 50, Brunswick St., Luton—with readers interested in stamp collection.

Miss Edith Cook, Estate Houses, Burnmoor, Fence Houses, co. Durham—with girl readers.

W. J. Davidson, Ballyknockan, Ballygowan, co. Down—with a boy reader of about 15.

P. Johnson, East Hill House, Braunton, North Devon—with a cripple or invalid reader of 14-16. He himself has to use crutches.

G. Barltrop, 50, Borwick Avenue, Walthamstow—with a lonely soldier at the Front.

B. Carter, 12, Sharsted St., Kennington, London, S.E.—with a Canadian reader; object, exchange of picture-postcards.

Miss E. Brindley, 66, Frederick St., Wigston, near Leicester—with girl readers.

L. Dann, Lyndhurst, Mycenae Rd., Westcombe Park, Blackheath, S.E.—with boy readers.

Miss Amelia Simkins, Rietfontein Mines, via Pretoria, South Africa—with a girl reader of 17.

W. C. H. Zipp, Box 1173, Johannesburg, South Africa to exchange geological specimens, marine shells, and curios generally with readers in any part of the world.

C. R. Groome, 20, Upper Hulton St., Alexandra Park, Manchester—to correspond with boy readers over 17.

Miss N. Roberts, formerly of Halewood, now living at Ashbourne House, Ashbourne Road, Mount Pleasant, Liverpool, would like to hear again from B. A. Woodward, of H.M.S. Ganges.

Ernest Langbourne, 34, Fawdry St., Wolverhampton, will be pleased to hear from boy readers (16-17) in Leeds.

G. Smith, 94, Pitt St., Scott's Chambers, Sydney, Australia, formerly of Woollahra, would like to hear again from Ivor Hitchcock, whose address he has mislaid. He also wishes to thank Miss Esther Halliday for the parcel of back numbers sent.

F. W. Everet, 67, Bath St., Poplar, E., would like to correspond with other boy readers of 16-17.

Bert Richardson, 110, Forest Rd., Dalston, N.E., would like to correspond with a boy reader of 16-17.

(Readers will find a further List of Notices on cover, page ii.)

A Grand Long Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE GREYFRIARS GALLERY.

No. 5.—MARK LINLEY.



"Why don't we hear more of Mark Linley?"

"Why shouldn't the Famous Five be the Famous Six, and Mark Linley be included?"

"Why is Mark Linley so often left out of the japes and the picnics and the adventures?"

Such are some of the questions which we frequently have to answer.

It is easy to answer them. Mark has come to Greyfriars with a stern determination to make the best use of his scholarship, to work his hardest, to raise not only himself but his family. He has never flinched from that determination, never forgotten it for a day.

But such a resolve would be weakened if he gave up as much of his time to fun and frolic as his chums do. Many of the hours in which they are enjoying themselves are spent by Mark in hard work—which is not to say that the Lancashire lad does not get any enjoyment out of his work, by any means.

The thing puzzles Bob Cherry, Mark's closest chum. To Bob it seems very queer that a fellow should really like Greek and Latin and mathematics, and all that sort of thing. But he has long since come to see that it is no mere pose on Mark's part. The desire for knowledge is keen in him. There may be other fellows in the Form with brains equal, or even superior, to his; but he can keep ahead of them by a combination of ability at least above the average.

Mark Linley is a triumph of portraiture. There have been studious boys who were also good at games and ready for fun in other school stories; but it is difficult to recall another who was so fine a fellow in every way as Mark is, and the fact of his being a practically universal favourite with readers proves how well, how sympathetically, the author has drawn him.

No fellow at Greyfriars has had more to bear than this lad, who worked as little more than a child in a factory before his determination and talent carried him to the very different sphere of public school life. Let it be allowed that he had some advantages from the outset. If his home was poor, it was not lacking in other ways. His father is one of Nature's gentlemen, and Mark has no uncouthness of manners to live down. There is really nothing to distinguish him in that way from his chums, who come from homes that poverty has never entered. His very marked prowess in games counts, too, though at the beginning it was the cause of jealousy rather than admiration.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 468.

OUT ON
WEDNESDAY.

"LEVISON FOR ST. JIM'S!"

But the quality that has carried him through all his trials is—character! He is of the stuff that seldom fails to come to the front, strong of will and self-reliant. Again and again he has had to face situations which would have taken all the fight out of most fellows, and has won out because he simply will not be beaten!

Bulstrode was his chief persecutor at the start, but not his only one. At the outset the feeling against him was due entirely to snobbishness, and even fellows who should have known better were up against him. But not Wharton—not Bob Cherry!

He thrashed Bulstrode, and by showing what he could do at footer earned a certain measure of respect, but little liking. The ragging went on, and he was generally believed to have sneaked to Mr. Quelch about his chief persecutor. That was disproved; but a blacker shadow yet descended upon Mark. Bunter commits thefts while sleepwalking, and the Form, except for a very few, attribute those thefts, without any evidence, to the lad whose one crime is that he has had to earn his living by the work of his hands.

The truth comes out once more. But it is not long before there is more trouble, when he wins the £25 Seymour Prize for his Roman History paper, and will not stand a feed out of it. The money is sorely needed at home, because of the illness of his sister. He has refused to pool his chance, and now he refuses to share even to the small extent of a spread. It cannot be anything but sheer meanness, say the Remove generally, and even his friends think "Marky a bit close." But the discovery of the real reason of that "closeness" makes a difference to some of those who have hitherto been dead against him. And though he has lost some of his laurels by meeting Bulstrode again, and getting licked this time, his path becomes a somewhat less stony one—for a while.

The biggest temptation he has ever had to face comes to him when, by mistake, the name of Vernon-Smith is wired as that of the winner of the Founder's £50 prize. Mark had hoped to win that, and had needed it urgently, for matters are again in a critical state in that humble home in the far North. He has the custody of the cricket funds, and it would be so easy—so fatally easy—to use them. There would be excuse, too. But one does not feel afraid for him. Theft is impossible to a fellow of his sort. He resists the temptation, though the goading of the cads nearly drives him upon the rocks, and, after all, it turns out that the Founder's £50 has really fallen to him.

Bolsover's coming gives him a new enemy in place of Bulstrode, who has changed for the better. But Herbert Vernon-Smith is a far more dangerous foe than the blustering bully. Bolsover may knock Mark out, may foul him savagely at footer, may spread Bunter's lying tales against him; but the Bounder's enmity is a worse thing, for it is cunning with the cunning of the serpent. It is neither of these two, however, but Gilmore of the Fourth who comes near to getting him sacked for supposed pub-haunting. Gilmore had hoped to bag Mark's scholarship, but, instead, goes out in disgrace.

It is the Bounder who spoils his chance in an important exam, by a bogus summons home—a cruel trick!

But gradually most of the Form come round. Only the utter cads play any great part in the later persecutions. How can a decent fellow find it easy to believe evil of loyal Mark, who stood up for Bob Cherry, when everyone else but Harry Wharton deserted him—Mark, who always fights fair and plays fair—who can take a licking like a real sportsman, and administer a licking with the best—who rescues Sir Thomas Pensley's daughter when the horse she is driving runs away with her—who brings Billy Bunter out of the blazing sanny—who saves Percy Bolsover when Skinner's sacrifice looks like proving of no avail—who wins the Marathon for Greyfriars in the contest for Lord Eastwood's Cup—who scores a century when runs are badly needed—one of the very best on the footer-field—brainy without swank—plucky without brag—sound alike in body and mind and heart and temper?

Let not one thing be forgotten, though it is mentioned later than it should be. In Mark's darkest hour gentle Marjorie Hazeldene stood his friend, and that friendship has never wavered since. A mere slip of a girl, Marjorie, yet a judge of character much better than many older people. She never goes far wrong in that way. You may trust the fellow in whom Marjorie Hazeldene has faith!

(Look out for No. 6 of this series.)

A Fine Yarn of Tom Merry & Co. In
The "GEM" Library.

Conclusion of Our Great School Serial.

THE FOURTH FORM
AT FRANKLINGHAM.

By Richard Randolph.

Goggs Counsel for the Defence!

The scoundrel had taken alarm. At first he had meant to admit drinking with Granville, to assert that this was not their first meeting, to suggest the captain's having made a habit of visiting public-houses—in short, to play Cardenden's game.

But the mention of drugging and the doctor being sent for had caused him to change his mind. He could not afford to let suspicion of anything so black as that be cast upon him if, by dint of hard lying, he might avoid it.

The game was up! These meddling juniors had spoiled it. Cardenden had been cunning enough to keep well in the background, and would probably escape. It was for him, Mr. Brighton Fortescue, to look out for himself.

"I know very little," he said sulkily. "I chanced to run against this young man at the Crown and Sceptre, where I have been staying, and I saw that he was taking too much on board. It overcame him suddenly, as it sometimes will people who aren't used to it, and the landlord, who is a friend of mine, was in dread that he might have to make an appearance before the magistrates for allowing drunkenness on his premises. I volunteered to see the misguided lad safely here, and hired this man, who was in the tap-room at the time, to drive me."

There was nothing to be ashamed of in the story—if it had been true. But it was not true, and it did not sound convincing.

"Jarker, is this correct, to the extent of your knowledge of it?" asked Mr. Hayter.

"My knowledge ain't a lot, sir, but if you arks me wot I think, then I should say it ain't correct, an' that there was a lot more be'ind it all."

Goggs stepped forward.

"May I interrogate this man?" he asked of the two masters. "I trust you will not consider the request as impertinent. I do really think that if you will allow me to act as counsel for the defence"—he nodded towards Granville—"I can help materially to elucidate matters."

"I am inclined to give him his head," said Mr. Grayson to his colleague.

Mr. Hayter nodded.

"Go on, Goggs!" said the older master.

"You say that you met Granville at the Crown and Sceptre?" began the counsel for the defence.

"I do. Have you anything to say against that?" snarled Fortescue.

"Only that it is absolutely untrue! We all saw you and him go in together, coming from the direction of the railway bridge and entering by the side door," answered Goggs.

He turned to his fellow juniors.

"That's right," said Allardyce and Bags together; and the other three murmured assent.

"A point scored!" said Mr. Hayter to his friend.

"Did you meet him by appointment?" asked Goggs sharply.

"No! What are you driving at, you absurd young idiot?"

"That you will discover presently. You deny that you met him by appointment?"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 468.

NEXT
MONDAY.

"BUNTER'S BIG BROTHER!"

A Grand Long Complete Story of Harry
Whitson & Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.

"I do deny it! He was a complete stranger to me."

"That," said Goggs, "is decidedly in his favour, I think. Do you know anything about a letter—typewritten and unsigned—which reached Granville this morning, asking him to meet the writer on the railway bridge at half-past nine?"

"This youth," said Fortescue, waving his hand disdainfully, and contorting his features into a supercilious sneer, "is stark, staring, raving mad!"

"I do not think I am mad," answered Goggs mildly. "I have seen that letter, and I have a copy of it now in my pocket."

He did not produce the copy because he had no wish to drag the miserable Benton into the affair unless it became necessary in Granville's interests to do so.

"How did you come to see it?" asked Mr. Hayter.

"Granville showed it to me. He was good enough to ask my advice as to whether he should go. I advised him against going."

"But all this points to the existence of a cunning and elaborate plot against Granville," said Mr. Grayson, in surprise.

"Yes, sir. There is such a plot, and I intend to prove it!"

Mr. Fortescue's face had taken on a very unwholesome shade of green, against which his purple nose looked almost black.

"Mad—stark, staring, raving mad!" he muttered nervously.

"But what can Granville have done to arouse that fellow's enmity to such an extent?" asked Mr. Hayter.

"I do not think Granville had ever seen this person until to-night. This is merely the tool—not the real enemy."

"Who is the real enemy?"

But the arrival of the doctor saved Goggs from being obliged to answer that question at once, and he was glad of the respite.

Dr. Mordaunt spoke a few words to the two masters. Then he walked over to the armchair in which Granville lay back, and bent over him. He touched the captain's shirt and collar, lifted his eyelids, felt his pulse, and sniffed his breath.

"He is not under the effects of drink," he said sharply. "The boy has undoubtedly been drugged. I do not believe that he has even tasted alcohol; the strong smell of it comes from his clothing, on which whisky appears to have been poured. I shall administer to him at once something to counteract the effects of the drug, and within half an hour he should be able to give his own account of what has happened, although it is scarcely likely that his brain will be in quite normal working order."

"Hurrah!" cried Tilson. And Mr. Hayter turned suddenly round and shook hands with his head prefect.

They knew and valued Granville, those two. Because of the House rivalry—Hayter's against the Head's house of old, Hayter's against Grayson's more lately—Tilson and Granville had never been exactly close chums. But through all their rivalry had run the golden thread of mutual respect and liking.

"Shall we defer any further inquiry till Granville is able to speak?" asked Mr. Grayson.

Tilson and the doctor had carried Granville out now.

"Personally, I think it would be best to let Goggs go on," answered Mr. Hayter.

"Very well. Proceed, Goggs!"

"When you got out of the cab, someone spoke to you from within the gates," said Goggs to Fortescue. "You answered him. Who was it?"

"Mad—stark, staring, raving mad!" was all the answer he got.

"He said, 'Have you got him there?' And your answer was that you were delivering the goods as promised. Was it not?"

"Mad—stark, staring——"

"If he won't say who it was, I will!" cried Tricks. "It was Cardenden. We all knew his voice."

"Be careful what you say, Trickett! This is a very serious matter," said Mr. Grayson sharply.

"But it was Cardenden, sir," corroborated Bags. "Wasn't it, you fellows?"

"They were all sure that it was.

Then Goggs astonished them.

"It was not Cardenden!" he said gravely. "It was I who spoke. But I imitated Cardenden's voice, and this person answered in the belief that he was the speaker."

"You mean——"

"I mean, sir, that all the evidence points to a plot between Cardenden and this person to get Granville into disgrace," broke in Goggs.

"But why? What possible reason——"

"I do not know the whole story. I do not think Granville knows all, but he is well aware that Cardenden is his enemy."

Mr. Brighton Fortescue made one last attempt to bluff it out.

"Who is this Cardenden?" he asked, with a snort meant to express disdain. "I don't even know the fellow by name."

"Why, you were with him in the barn yesterday afternoon," cried Allardyce. "And you were there to cook up this dirty scheme, I'm certain! Oh, it's no good saying that you both took shelter from the rain! That won't wash, because you were there before the rain came on."

"I refuse to stay here!" said Fortescue. "There is a plot—oh, no doubt about that! These juvenile conspirators are all in it. I remember them now. I came into collision with them yesterday, owing to their extreme rudeness, and it is due to that fact, I suppose, that they have concocted——"

"Hold your tongue, you low swindler!" snapped Mr. Grayson.

Buswell stepped forward.

"You'd better 'old your tongue when you're told!" he said. "This 'ere's a serious matter, an' if these gentlemen look over the part wot you've played in it, I ain't sure as I shall."

"Come with me, Goggs!" said the older Housemaster. And the junior, still looking extremely meek and inoffensive, followed him out of the room.

Mr. Grayson turned on the gas in the dining-room.

"Now, Goggs," he said, "let me look at the copy of that letter!"

It was of no use to attempt shielding Benton any longer. The thing was handed over.

"I see why you wished to keep this back. The motive does you credit; but the wretched boy who was guilty of such a mean trick, even at the dictation of another, must be punished. Now tell me—what do you know of the enmity between Granville and Cardenden?"

"I know that they are cousins, sir, and that Granville did not like the other fellow's coming here. Apart from that, the active enmity has been all on Cardenden's side."

"Your theory is that Cardenden wanted to get back the letter, fearing that it might be used as evidence against him?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you consider this copy, having regard to all the circumstances, as even stronger evidence?"

"I think it is, sir."

"One more question, Goggs. You have behaved with so much discretion and resolution in this matter that, though I may not agree with everything you have done, I could scarcely overpraise you. But what explains your keenness? Hate of Cardenden—I know that you have reason for it—or love of Granville?"

"I would do anything for Granville, sir," Goggs answered earnestly. "I think he is the finest fellow I ever met, and he has been ever so good to me. I do hate the other fellow, but I don't think that has made any difference. I've tried not to be spiteful, anyway. There's one more thing I ought to tell you."

He related his uncle's warning, not forgetting the story that Mr. Ingleby had told of a previous meeting with Cardenden.

"The fellow will have to go!" said Mr. Grayson. "There can be no doubt of that. The Head will not tolerate his presence here an hour after he knows all this. Expulsion is not a sufficient punishment, but I think it will not be his only one. There is more behind this, and perhaps the only person who can explain the whole thing is Mr. Dyne, the uncle of both Cardenden and Granville. He must be wired for to-morrow morning. The Head will be back early. I think we must adjourn till then. Considering the service that you and the rest have rendered to the cause of justice, I believe I can safely promise that you will all be forgiven this night excursion. I suppose its main object was to aid Granville?"

"Yes, sir," answered Goggs.

It was a very little one, after all, if it could be called a lie at all. For quite certainly that had been Goggs' main object, and it was not for him to give away his chums.

The End.

Granville told his story straightforwardly. He had drunk no alcohol. Drink had been pressed upon him by Fortescue, and, after refusing several times, he had consented to take a cup of coffee. The drug must have been administered in that.

Of the fellow's promised disclosure he had heard little. It was constantly interrupted by invitations to drink, and was anything but easy to follow. Cardenden's name had not been mentioned in it; but Fortescue had given hints of the kind that can easily be denied afterwards, and had thus kept Granville, who had had previous experience of the lengths to which this cousin of his would go, from breaking off the conversation.

The two masters, taking the law into their own hands, informed Fortescue that they intended to detain him at the school that night. But for his desire to get on Mr. Grayson's right side, Buswell would have protested against this, holding that the lock-up cell attached to his residence would be a more proper place. He was told that he might stay in charge of the prisoner if he wished to do so, and he elected to stay.

Jarker went off in a very sour temper. He had not been paid by Fortescue, and he had been given to understand by the two masters that they did not consider his conduct in the affair above reproach.

"I don't envy Cardenden his feelings to-night," said Mr. Hayter to the other master.

"Do you think he should be told at once what he has to expect?"

"No. Let him lie and stew in the juice of his own foul plotting!"

"Is it quite certain that he will not suspect the defeat of his plot, and try to escape?" suggested Mr. Grayson.

"On the whole, I should not be sorry if he bolted. No; on second thoughts, that would not be well. I will ask Tilson to see that nothing of the sort happens, and you may rely upon Tilson."

(Continued on page iv of cover.)

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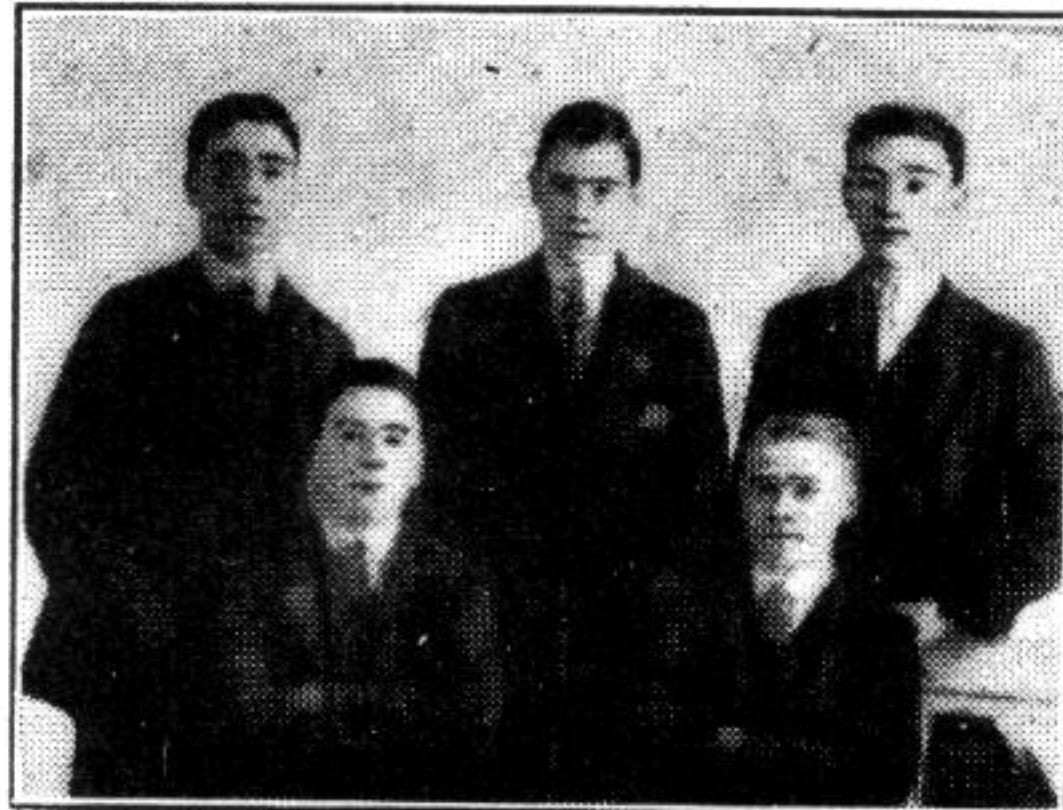
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THE FOURTH FORM AT FRANKLINGHAM.

(Continued from page 20.)

"I am sure of that, Hayter. By the way, I have promised Goggs that the juniors' escapade shall be overlooked."

"I quite agree, and I am sure the Head will. Whatever may be said of the rest, Goggs has played a man's part in this affair. What a cool head the boy has, and what ready wit! Good-night, old man!"

"Good-night, Hayter!"

Tilson had already escorted Allardyce and Bliss across to their own quarters, not omitting to give them a word in season on the way. Mr. Hayter followed now. His colleague saw Fortescue, with Buswell as warder, installed in a room from which escape was impossible.

In half an hour thereafter Franklingham lay dark under the clear sky, and most of those under its roofs slept.

But not all. Cardenden lay awake, trying to persuade himself that all was well, but full of dread lest his scheme should have miscarried. Not until the pale dawn broke in did he fall asleep—for the last time at Franklingham.

When he awoke it was to find Tilson by his bedside.

"Mr. Hayter wants to see you the moment you're dressed," said the head prefect abruptly.

Then Cardenden knew somehow that it was all up, and prepared himself for the worst. His dark face was livid when he went down to interview the Housemaster.

Somehow the news was beginning to leak out. It was impossible to keep such an affair as this a complete secret. There were whispers about Buswell and his prisoner, about something having happened to Granville, about Goggs and his chums being mixed up in it all.

And by-and-by the rumours took more definite shape. One thing was certain, whatever might be in doubt. Cardenden was to get the sack!

No one sorrowed. The fellow's fleeting popularity had gone the way of last year's snows.

The Head returned soon after classes had begun. Goggs and his companions were sent for at once, and a fresh inquiry began.

By the next train came Mr. Dyne.

The result of the inquiry was laid before him. It left him no possible doubt as to Cardenden's guilt. Fortescue had confessed, induced thereto by an undertaking that the law should not be put into action against him. He deserved punishment, but for the sake of the school the story could scarcely be made public, as it must be if he was to be punished.

Mr. Dyne saw Cardenden. The interview was a brief one.

Then he asked that Granville might be sent for.

"I have done you an injustice," he said—"a very great injustice, for I concealed from you, without realising what the result might be, what I told your cousin."

He referred to his design to choose between them.

"I never wanted it all, uncle," said Harry Granville. "I don't see, even now, why I should have it all, though anyway I hope it may be ever so many years before there's any question of that. Don't cut the fellow off entirely! Perhaps—you won't like it, I know, but I must say it—he'd have run straighter if it hadn't been for this."

"Would you have plotted against him had you known, Harry?"

Granville lifted his aching head proudly, and a flush swept over the face that was pale this morning for all its healthy tan.

"If you don't know me better than that, sir, I think it's a pity you should even dream of leaving me your money," he said.

"Perhaps you are right. But I do know you better. I cannot listen to any plea for your worthless cousin. I have cast him off once for all, but I have not sent him away penniless. To the end of my life I shall feel shame that he should have hoodwinked me so completely. Of course, you know that his coming here was not due to any suggestion of mine?"

"I felt sure of that, uncle. But let us put it all behind us."

"Yes, that will be best. Now I want to see this extraordinary boy Goggs."

Goggs was the hero of Franklingham that day, and for days afterwards. But he bore all his honours with a consistent modesty and meekness that made his chums inclined to kick him, and he insisted on continuing to fag for Granville.

Of the other things that befell him at Franklingham—of how Cardenden came into his life again, and of what happened in consequence: of the continued struggle between Buswell and Jarker for the hand of cook; of the rivalry between Hayter's and Grayson's for the proud title of "cock house" there is no space to tell here. But in another story it may be that they shall be told.

THE END.

OUR NOTICE COLUMN.

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