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The

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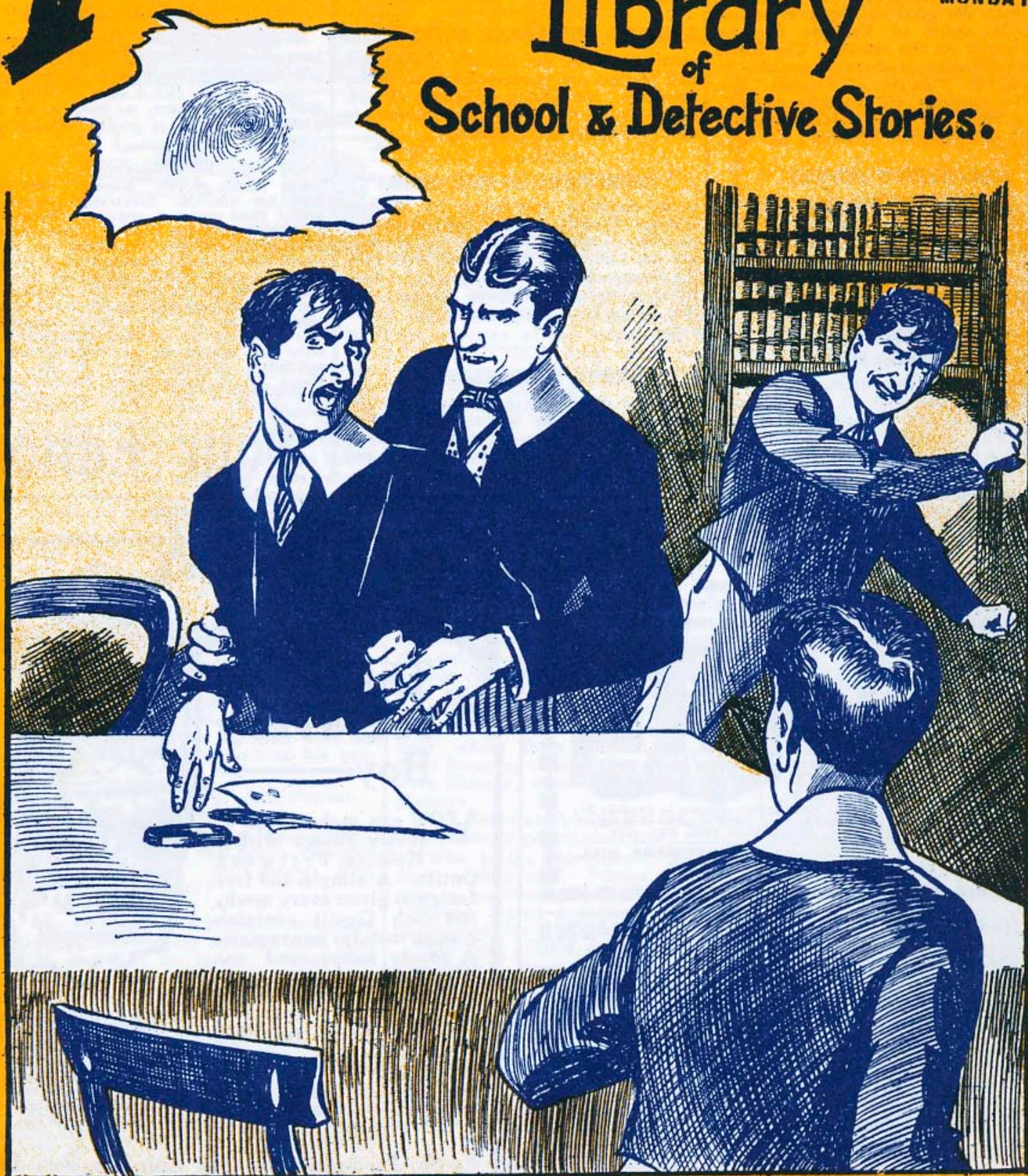
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comes next on the list of good things, and readers are booked for some merry moments, for Harry Wharton & Co. have spared no pains and trouble to make this number a success.

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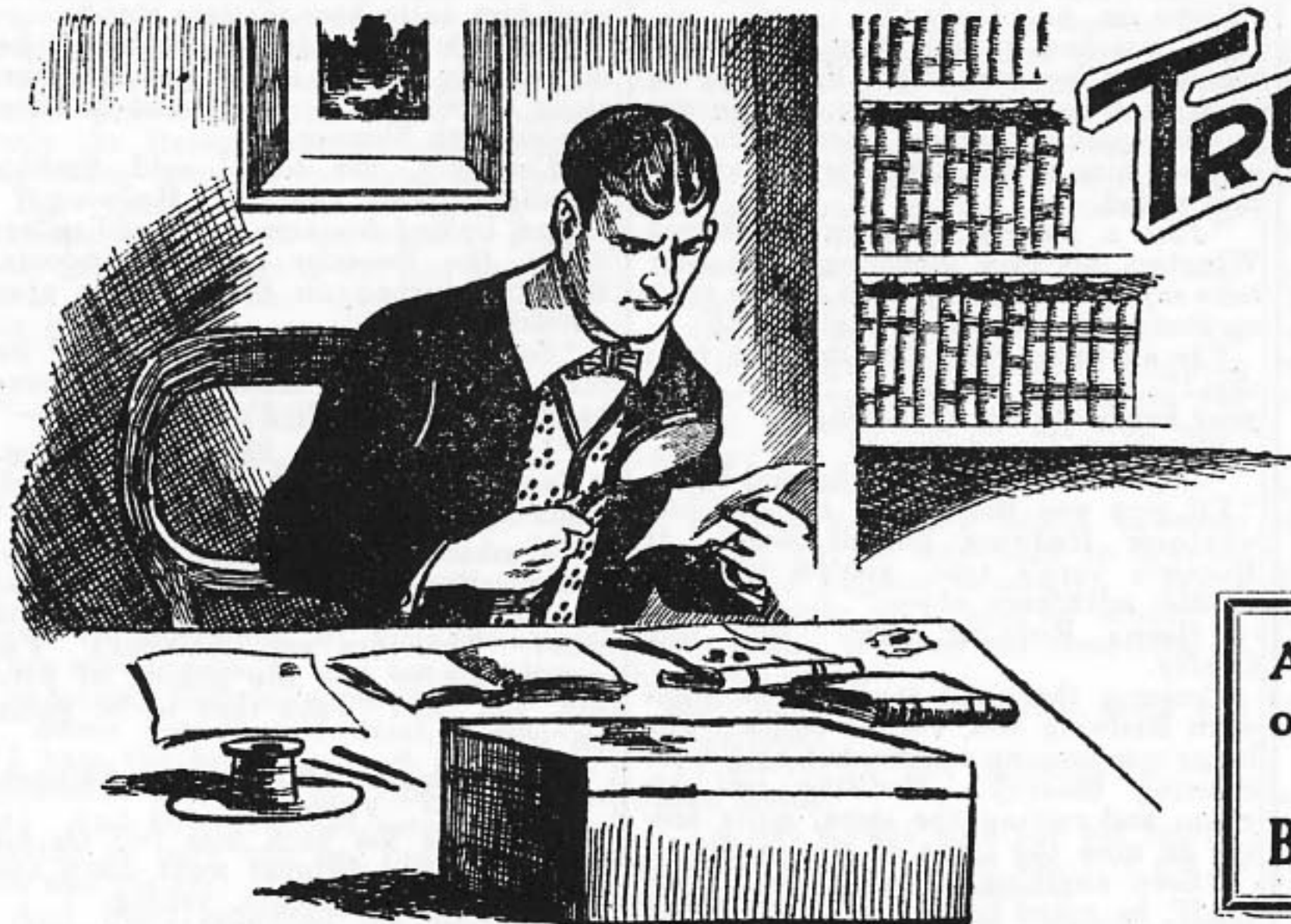
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A long complete story
of Harry Wharton & Co.,
of Greyfriars.
By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Tom Redwing's Father!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! Who's this merchant?"

Bob Cherry asked the question rather curiously as the Famous Five came through the big gates of Greyfriars on their way indoors from the footer-field. Since afternoon lessons they had been enjoying an hour's punt-about, and now they were returning, ruddy-faced and cheery, and with well-earned appetites for tea.

Outside the open door of the porter's lodge a man was wandering rather aimlessly, obviously looking for someone, and equally obviously feeling a little lost in his surroundings. The chums of the Remove stopped and looked at him with interest.

He was a middle-aged man, with keen, steady eyes, and rugged features bronzed dark by wind and sun. His blue serge clothes, though neat and tidy, were well-worn, and both his gait and his garb unmistakably proclaimed his profession.

"Looks like a sailor," said Nugent.

Harry Wharton nodded.

"I've seen him before somewhere," he said, wrinkling his brows thoughtfully. "My hat! Isn't it—Yes, it's Redwing's pater!"

"Oh, good!"

The chums of the Remove recognised the sailorman easily enough now, and they hesitated no longer. They had already met the father of Tom Redwing of the Remove, and a moment later they were renewing the acquaintance.

"You've come to see Redwing, I suppose?" asked Harry Wharton, after a moment.

"Ay, ay, sir," was the somewhat nervous answer. "I don't often visit the school, but young Tom was dead keen on my coming to-day, it being his birthday. He told me in his letter I was to ask for the gate-porter, and he'd put me right for Tom's study; but he don't seem to be about."

"Old Gosling's a slacker, Mr. Redwing!" grinned Bob Cherry. "He's usually asleep all day, excepting at

rising-bell and lock-up—he's wide awake enough then! I'll soon wake him up!"

And Bob Cherry put his head through the doorway of the lodge, and bawled "Gosling!" in a voice which certainly would have wakened Gosling up had he been within hearing.

But evidently Gosling wasn't.

"Must be somewhere round the servants' quarters, Mr. Redwing," said Harry Wharton, smiling. "Anyway, if you'll come along with us we'll pilot you to Reddy's quarters. Or perhaps you'd rather wait here? Vernon-Smith's had a nasty hack on the shin, and Reddy's stopped behind to doctor him. They should be along soon, though."

"I'll wait, thank you kindly, Master Wharton," said Mr. Redwing gratefully.

The juniors touched their caps, and hurried indoors to change, leaving the old sailorman to continue his wait in a more comfortable frame of mind now. The juniors' genial welcome had lessened his nervousness considerably.

He was still waiting two minutes later when three juniors in Etons came lounging through the gates. They were Skinner, Stott, and Snoop of the Remove.

They stared at sight of the old gentleman patiently pacing the quad.

"Who is the old josser?" remarked Stott, with a sniff. "Some old-clothes man in his Sunday best, I expect!"

Skinner stared a moment, and then he stopped, his eyes gleaming.

"My hat! Don't you see who it is, you chaps?" he hissed, with a curl of the lip. "It's that beastly low cad of a Redwing's father—the longshoreman from Hawkscliff!"

"Thought I'd seen him before!" said Snoop. "Fancy the low bounder coming here!"

"Like his cheek!" agreed Skinner, nodding. "I suppose he thinks because his son's wedged himself into the school with a beastly scholarship he can walk in here just as he likes!"

"Might have come in by the tradesmen's entrance!" remarked Stott.

"Exactly!" said Skinner thoughtfully. "He's made a mistake, and it's up to us to correct the bounder! Come on!"

And the snobbish Skinner started

towards Mr. Redwing, followed by his equally snobbish chums. Like Skinner, they wore unpleasant grins. They were well aware of Skinner's long-standing enmity towards the fisherman's son, and they expected to be amused.

They were. Mr. William Redwing eyed the juniors rather uncertainly as they came up to him.

"You are Redwing's father, sir?" asked Skinner, raising his cap, with a mocking smile.

"Yes, I am the father of Tom Redwing, sir," said the visitor quietly. "I was told to wait here for him. He—"

"That's right," smiled Skinner. "We've just left him. He's detained for some minutes, Mr. Redwing. He asked us to see you inside the school. Will you come this way, Mr. Redwing?"

Mr. Redwing was looking surprised—and a little puzzled. He had a vague feeling that he had met Skinner before, and that the circumstances of that meeting were not to the credit of Harold Skinner.

But Skinner gave him no time for reflection. He marched on ahead, and Mr. Redwing followed rather hesitatingly. Stott and Snoop also followed.

Round to the tradesmen's entrance marched Skinner, and then he stopped a few yards from the doorway.

At the bottom of the steps was the local carrier's van. Gosling, the porter, was unloading some big cases from the back of it, while the carrier himself was too busily engaged holding the head of his restive horse to help—hence Gosling's grumbles.

Skinner's eyes gleamed wickedly. "Here you are, Mr. Redwing," he said urbanely. "You can wait here. By the way, Tom suggested that you might make yourself useful while waiting. You wouldn't mind giving old Gosling a hand with these boxes, of course?"

Mr. Redwing stared a trifle—as well he might. But after a glance at Skinner's grave and composed features he nodded. That his leg was being pulled the simple-minded old sailorman never dreamed.

"Certainly, young sir," he said

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slowly. "I'm always ready to give a helpin' hand when needed. Young Tom, now—"

"Then I'll just tell old Gossy," said Skinner.

And he walked over to the grunting porter.

"Finding 'em heavy, Gossy?" he murmured.

"Which they are 'eavy, bein' books as the 'Ead's had bound agen!" grumbled Gosling. "What I says is this 'ere! The 'Ead ought to 'ave got a man to 'elp me with this job, Master Skinner!"

"He's done that, Gossy!" grinned Skinner. "No need to growl any longer, old top! This chap's been sent to give you a hand!"

"My heye!"

Gosling stared a little as, in response to Skinner's beckoning finger, Mr. Redwing came up. He came willingly enough. As a matter of fact, the good-hearted fisherman would have lent a hand eagerly enough had he not been asked.

He grasped the other end of the big case Gosling was dragging from the van, and Skinner hurried away and joined his grinning chums. Skinner was feeling he couldn't keep up his gravely composed attitude much longer.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Snoop. "What a scream! My only hat, Skinner, you've gone a bit too far this time! Old Redwing will flay you alive for this!"

"Redwing won't know!" grinned Skinner. "The old idiot doesn't know me, and I'll watch—"

"He, he, he!"

Skinner spun round, and his face darkened as he recognised the fat figure of William George Bunter. Bunter was wearing a wide grin, and it was fairly obvious that he had witnessed the scene and was enjoying it.

"He, he, he!" cackled the fat junior. "What a scream! I wondered what your little game was, Skinner, when I spotted you hauling old Redwing off! Fancy getting him to help old Gossy! I wouldn't be in your shoes, though, when Redwing knows! He, he, he!"

"You fat spy!" hissed Skinner.

"Oh, really, Skinner! I just happened to be crossing the quad, and I spotted—"

Skinner made a savage rush at the fat junior, and Bunter scuttled away, still cackling.

"You've done it now!" said Snoop, looking alarmed. "That fat frog will spread the yarn over the school!"

Skinner said nothing. He was already beginning to feel he had gone a little too far. He had played the trick solely to humble Redwing—to humiliate him before the school. He knew how touchy the sailorman's son was, and how deeply he would feel and resent any insult to his father.

But while he had wanted Redwing to know about the trick, he had not wanted Redwing to know who had played it. He had too much respect for Redwing's fists for that.

None of the three was grinning now. They were looking a little uneasy. And they looked more uneasy still when they entered the quad a moment later.

At the top of the School House steps were standing five juniors. They were Harry Wharton & Co., who had, after changing, decided to make sure that Mr. Redwing did not miss his son. And talking to them was Billy Bunter.

"If that fat cad has told Wharton,"

muttered Snoop, "then look out for fireworks, Skinner!"

"Blow Wharton!" snapped Skinner. "Come on, you funks!"

He marched up the steps, fully conscious that the eyes of the Famous Five were fixed upon him angrily. As he was pushing past the group Harry Wharton gripped him by the shoulder and swung him round.

"Just a minute, Skinner!" snapped Wharton, his eyes gleaming. "Bunter here says you've just played a dirty trick on Redwing's pater! Is that true?"

"Is anything true that that fat toad says?" sneered Skinner. "Here, take your hands off me, Wharton!"

Wharton's face darkened.

"If you have, Skinner," he said hotly, "I'll give you the licking of your life, whatever Redwing himself does! If Bunter's yarn's true, you've taken a caddish advantage of—"

"Here's Redwing now!" said Bob Cherry.

Crossing the quad towards the steps were Redwing and Vernon-Smith. The latter was limping a trifle, but both were chatting cheerily. Redwing left his chum and ran up the steps, quite failing to note the looks of the juniors.

"Seen anything of my pater, Wharton?" he asked breathlessly. "He was to have—"

"Ask Skinner!" grinned Bunter, preparing to enjoy himself. "Ask Skinner! He, he, he!"

Redwing looked from Bunter's face to Skinner's, and then at Wharton. His own face suddenly flushed.

"What is the fat ass gassing about, Wharton?" he asked quietly.

The captain of the Remove blushed uncomfortably. Skinner did the same—though for a different reason.

"Skinner seems to have played a dirty trick on your pater, Reddy," said Wharton, after a pause. "Bunter says he—he took your father round to the tradesmen's entrance. I don't know—"

"And put him up to helping old Gosling unload boxes!" grinned Bunter, enjoying the looks on the faces of Skinner & Co., and feeling safe in the presence of Wharton. "Ask him, Redwing!"

Redwing said nothing for a moment. His face had gone white, and then a deep crimson. He took a step towards Skinner, his fists clenched, his eyes blazing.

"You—you hound, Skinner!" he said thickly. "If you have—if you've insulted my father I'll—I'll—"

With what was obviously an effort of will, Redwing broke off abruptly, and, turning away, he ran down the steps again and across the quad. Skinner laughed uneasily.

"Soon gets his rag out about nothing!" he sneered.

"You did do it, then?" said Wharton quickly.

"What if I did?" said Skinner defiantly. "The tradesmen's entrance is the proper place for him! Like his cheek to come shoving himself in here! This entrance is for gentlemen, not beastly longshoremen!"

And Skinner was passing indoors, but this time Bob Cherry hauled him back.

"No, you don't, my pippin!" said Bob. "You've had your joke—now we're going to see you pay up! You'll wait here!"

And Skinner did wait. He had no choice in the matter. He was still waiting, his face pale, when Redwing came back across the quad with his father.

Redwing's face was white, but his father's face was hearty and cheery as ever. Plainly Redwing had not enlightened him as to how matters stood.

"I've found my father, Smithy," he said quietly. "You might just take him along to our study. I—I want to have a word with Skinner."

"Certainly, old top!" said Smithy blandly. "This way, Mr. Redwing!"

And, linking his arm in the old sailorman's, the Bounder led him indoors. Redwing turned on Skinner, his eyes glittering.

"So Bunter was right, Skinner!" he said through his teeth. "Put your hands up, you cad! I'm going to—"

"I won't!" said Skinner, backing. "You—you take a lot for granted, Redwing—"

"I asked my father who told him to help Gosling," said Redwing. "He said a fellow with a hatchet-like face told him! That fits you, Skinner! I'm going to give you the licking of your life, you cad! Take that to be going on with!"

"Here, hands off!" yelled Skinner. "If you— Yooup!"

Redwing's fist took him full on his long nose, and Skinner went down and rolled on the flagstones, yelling.

"Here, hold on, Reddy!" gasped Wharton. "You can't scrap here!"

"I'm going to! Stand back!" said Redwing savagely. "I don't care what the hound says or does to me! I can stand it! But I won't have him insulting and playing tricks on my father! Stand back!"

"Redwing!"

It was Mr. Quelch's voice, and the master of the Remove pushed through the group.

Redwing stopped, and his arm dropped to his side.

"What does this mean, Redwing?" asked Mr. Quelch in a curiously quiet voice. "Why did you strike Skinner?"

Redwing was silent.

"Get up, Skinner," went on Mr. Quelch grimly. "I hardly expected you to answer that question, Redwing. It scarcely matters, however. You may go indoors, Redwing."

Redwing turned slowly and obeyed, astonished. The others were astonished, too. There was a certain kindness in the master's tones they could not understand.

"Now, Skinner," said Mr. Quelch icily, "will you kindly explain why you escorted Redwing's father to the tradesmen's entrance, and why you took upon yourself the responsibility of engaging him to help Gosling, the porter?"

"I—I—I—"

"You apparently forgot," said Mr. Quelch, "that my window overlooks the quadrangle, Skinner. I witnessed the incident, and I also have learned the rest from Gosling. Have you anything to say, Skinner?"

Skinner hadn't. He was trembling.

"It was a joke, no doubt," went on the master grimly—"a cruel and contemptible joke. You were sent here, Skinner, to learn not only scholastic matters, but how to behave as an English gentleman should behave. You apparently have a lot to learn in the latter respect. If you will follow me to my study I will endeavour to teach you a lesson—a lasting lesson, Skinner. As you, Stott and Snoop, appeared to derive great enjoyment from Skinner's joke, I think you also need a lesson. Come with me, all three of you."

Mr. Quelch went indoors, and the

Something extra good next week, boys—"The Gipsy's Return!"—

three jokers followed, like limp rags. Harry Wharton & Co. followed a moment later, grinning. They could not help grinning, disgusted as they were. As they passed Mr. Quelch's study a moment afterwards they heard a steady swishing and queer groans and yelps proceeding therefrom. Apparently the Remove master was pressing his lesson home in no light manner.

But there was no sympathy for Skinner & Co. from the Famous Five—only grins. Skinner & Co. had had their little joke, and now they were paying for it.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Skinner's Enmity!

DON'T be a fool, Skinner!" muttered Snoop uneasily. "Let the beastly cad go hang! Anyway, I'm not taking a hand in any more of your wheezes! They always seem to miss fire somehow! I'm leaving Redwing alone!"

"Same here!" said Stott, scowling. "I hate the brute as much as you do, Skinner! But—but he's too much for us! And he's got that sarcastic brute Smithy to back him up, besides Wharton and his set! I've had enough!"

And Stott squeezed his hands and scowled again. It was fully an hour since their interview in Mr. Quelch's study, and all three were still feeling the effects of it, both in their minds and in their still tingling palms.

Skinner walked on for some moments without answering. Though the Remove master had apparently done his best to press home the lesson Skinner & Co. badly needed, it was obvious from the face of Skinner, at least, that he had benefited little.

His thin features were hard and bitter, and his eyes glittered vengefully. He was angry from the effects of Tom Redwing's blow, and still more angry at the swift punishment from Mr. Quelch. But what filled him with smouldering fury was the contempt shown him by Wharton, and others like him, at his trick upon Redwing's father.

Indeed, it was chiefly to get away from the disgusted looks of his fellow-Removites that Skinner had suggested a walk immediately tea was over.

And Stott and Snoop had agreed willingly enough. Walking was not much in their line, but they had an uneasy feeling that they had not finished with Redwing yet—or, rather, that Redwing had not finished with them yet.

Skinner broke the silence at last. "You pair of rotten funks!" he hissed through his teeth. "D'you think I'm going to be punched by that sneaking cad? D'you think I'm going to sit down under this? Not likely! He got the best of that, I'll admit, but—but I tell you I'll make him pay for it! I'll be even with the sneaking pauper yet, hang him!"

"You can't lick him! Too good for you!" said Stott.

"Am I likely to try?" said Skinner, his face twisting into an unpleasant grin. "There's more ways than one of cooking his goose! And I'm going to do it through that old brute of a longshoreman!"

"Better chuck it, Skinner," said Snoop seriously. "You know what always happens to your stunts."

"Count me out of it, anyway!" remarked Stott.

Skinner gave his "pals" a savage look. But he said nothing, tramping

on, with a sullen, lowering brow, and evidently trying to think out a new "stunt" for cooking the goose of Redwing and his longshoreman father.

He stopped by the stile leading from Friardale Lane on to the path across the heath towards the cliffs, and Stott and Snoop followed him as he clambered over. The short winter evening was already closing in, and a thin mist was coming in from the sea, shrouding the heath in feathery whiteness.

"Better not go too far," said Snoop. "Soon be dusk, and—"

"Oh, shut up!" snarled Skinner. "Go back if you want to! I expect Redwing will be waiting for you! I thought you wanted to keep out of his way until lock-up!"

"So we do! But—"

"Redwing's pater's bound to come this way on his way back to Hawks-cliff," said Skinner musingly. "It's a good ten-mile walk, and he should be along soon. We may see something of him, you chaps."

Stott and Snoop gave him quick and uneasy looks.

"You—you're not thinking of—"

"I'd like a chat with the old sport," grinned Skinner. "You see, I've got an idea that if we told him—"

Skinner paused, and stared ahead rather uneasily. Coming towards the juniors along the path was a man—a man whom he recognised as a disreputable character from Pegg, the little fishing

village along the coast. His unshaven face was flushed, his gait unsteady, and Skinner did not at all like the expression of his eyes as they rested on the juniors. "Look out, you chaps!" muttered Skinner. "I—I don't like the look of this chap."

Stott and Snoop didn't either—not in that lonely spot, at all events. And Skinner's warning was soon justified.

As the rough-looking man drew abreast he lurched suddenly against Skinner, sending that alarmed junior staggering. The ruffian himself also staggered, and went sprawling in the grass. He was up again the next second, however, with a speed which was in itself suspicious.

"Ere, you did that a-purpose, hang you!" he exclaimed, grabbing at Skinner and holding him fast. "Knockin' a bloke down like that, hey?"

Skinner wriggled, his face pale. The fellow was evidently seeking trouble, and Skinner didn't relish trouble with such an ugly-looking customer.

"I—I say, leggo!" he stammered. "I didn't knock against you. It was you who—"

"Course you did," said the man truculently. "Think 'cause you're gents you kon knock us 'ard-workin' blokes about as you likes—hey?"

"Nunno. Look here, you—"

"You knocked me down, and you got to pay for it," vowed the rascal, exhaling the strong scent of spirits over the scared Skinner. "I've 'urt my leg sommut cruel, falling like I did. I wants com—"



"No need to growl any longer, Gosling," said Skinner. "Here's a chap to help you—he's been sent to give you a hand." "My heye!" Gosling stared a little as Mr. Redwing came up and grasped the other end of the big packing-case. Skinner joined his chums. "Oh, crumbs!" gasped Snoop. "What a scream!" "You've gone a bit too far this time, Skinner," said Stott. "Redwing will flay you for this!" (See Chapter 1.)

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compensation—that's what I wants, my lads. Five bob won't 'urt you gents—"

"You'll get no five shillings out of me, you rascal!" snapped Skinner suddenly.

The sudden change in Skinner's tone startled the rascal, and he glanced round him quickly. Then he saw the reason for Skinner's new-found courage.

In the distance a group of figures were approaching from the direction of Greyfriars. Six of them were juniors, the seventh was a man. They were the Famous Five, Redwing, and Redwing's father—though the rascal did not know that.

"By hokey!" he gasped. "'Ere, what—"

Skinner's captor stared in alarm for a moment at the approaching figures, and then he dropped the junior's arm, evidently as a preliminary to bolting. But even as he did so Skinner clutched his dirty sleeve and held him back.

Skinner's eyes were glinting now.

"Hold on, old top," he said, grinning. "You wanted five bob from us, didn't you?"

"Yus, but— 'Ere, leggo—"

"Just a minute, my friend," said Skinner. "I wasn't going to give you

five bob for nothing, but I'll give it you if you'll earn it. You see that old chap coming along—"

"I didn't mean no 'arm, young sirs— Leggo, I'm off—"

"Wait a bit. Those chaps are leaving him now, see," said Skinner, his eyes on the group behind. "They've gone back to the school, and the old chap is coming on alone. If you'll give that old chap a good hiding—"

"Wot?"

"Stop him, and pick a quarrel with him," explained Skinner, grinning. "Then pitch into him for all you're worth—see? I'll give you five bob before you begin, and another five bob when you've done the job."

The man stared blankly at Skinner—as did Stott and Snoop. But Skinner's meaning was obvious. As he had said, the Famous Five and Redwing had turned back towards the school, leaving Mr. Redwing to continue his long tramp to Hawkscliff alone.

"He's an enemy of ours," went on Skinner, as the man still hesitated, bewildered. "The old brute is a long-shoreman from Hawkscliff—a mealy-

mouthered old bounder who got us into trouble this afternoon."

"I've seen 'im afore," muttered the man. "'Is name's Redwing. You wants me to bash 'im—"

"That's it, give him a hiding," grinned Skinner. "You're big enough to eat him. We'll hide behind the thicket there, and you'll get the other five bob when you—"

"'Ere, but wot about if 'e gives me a 'idin'?" muttered the rascal doubtfully. "'E looks—"

"He's not the quarrelling sort," said Skinner. "He's as meek and mild as a lamb—can't you see? We'll be at hand, too, hang it!"

"But, look 'ere—"

"Here's the five bob," said Skinner, shoving five shillings hastily into the ruffian's dirty hand. "Go in—quick! Let the brute have it hot and strong."

And leaving the bemused rascal standing in the path, Skinner dived for the cover of a near-by thicket, followed by his chums. Skinner was grinning gleefully, but Stott and Snoop were looking scared.

"I—I say," muttered Stott. "It—it's a bit thick, Skinney, old man. An old chap like that!"

"Rather too thick," murmured Snoop feebly. "You are a—"

"Rats!" said Skinner chortling. "I was trying to think of a wheeze, and here it is, chucked at us. The beastly old cad got us licked this afternoon, and now we're going to see him licked."

"But—but—"

"Dry up, you funks! Here he comes."

Mr. Redwing was quite close now. He came striding along the path, looking cheery and happy in the gathering dusk. Certainly, if his kindly face were an indication of his nature, then he was not the person for a rascal like the man standing in his path to be afraid of.

Evidently the rascal came to that conclusion, for he dropped the five shillings into his pocket and spat on his hands. Then, as Mr. Redwing was about to pass him, he lurched against him and sent him staggering.

Mr. Redwing looked up then, and the kindly expression left his face suddenly.

"'Ere, where in thunder d'you think you're comin' to, mate?" demanded the ruffian truculently. "Shovin' a feller like that. Arskin' for trouble, ain't yer?"

Mr. Redwing looked at him.

"Let me pass," he said quietly. "I don't want trouble with you."

"Bloomin' likely, ain't it? You shoved me— 'Ere, what—"

As Mr. Redwing attempted to pass, the ruffian aimed a wild blow at him. Then Mr. Redwing's face hardened.

Grasping the rascal's arm he swung him aside with surprising power, and sent him staggering back. Then he walked on.

The rascal recovered himself, and ran after Mr. Redwing, bellowing. He aimed another wild blow, and again Mr. Redwing was ready. He realised now that the man was bent upon trouble, and he saw that the sooner he put an end to it the better.

And he did.

Easily guarding the vicious blow, the longshoreman sent a brawny fist crashing under the rascal's chin. The astonished man collapsed to the ground, yelling, and stayed there this time. Redwing's father walked on again.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Skinner.

The three juniors fairly blinked after the Hawkscliff fisherman. They had not anticipated this. From what they had

STORIES FOR THE FIRESIDE!



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Mick Angel announces his intention of visiting Greyfriars—

seen of Redwing's father—his nervous manner and mild kindness—they had expected him to fall an easy victim to the truculent ruffian who had accosted him. It never occurred to them that a man who had spent his life on the sea, who had fought storm and tempest, was not likely to put up with any nonsense from a half-tipsy loafer.

"We've woke up the wrong passenger this time," grinned Stott. "I say, hadn't we better slope now—that brute will—"

"Wait a bit," snarled Skinner, furious that his plan had failed. "If old Redwing turns and spots us—Hollo!"

Skinner paused as the rascal picked himself up and came lurching back to them, nursing a bristly jaw. And the next moment Skinner wished heartily that he had not waited.

"You—you little rats!" yelled the ruffian, his eyes glittering with rage. "You've sold me a pup, hang you! You said as—"

"How—how did we know?" stammered Skinner, rising to his feet in alarm. "You—you—"

"I've a thunderin' good mind to smash you!" howled the rascal. "'Ere, hand over that other five bob, lively now. If you don't—"

"I—I won't!" said Skinner through his teeth. "You've mucked up—Look out! Run for it!"

The juniors scattered as the infuriated rascal made a savage rush at them. Stott and Snoop jumped clear; but Skinner was not so fortunate. Even as he ran for it his foot caught a trailing briar, and he went down headlong. In a flash the man's grasp fell upon him.

"Help!" yelled Skinner, heedless now of anyone hearing or seeing. "Help!"

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Accident!

HERE, what the thump—"
Tom Redwing stopped suddenly as the six juniors were tramping back schoolwards, after parting from Mr. Redwing. Quite by chance Redwing had happened to look behind him, and the sight he had seen was startling enough.

It was the brief glimpse of two shapes, apparently struggling together on the cliff path, their dim figures clearly outlined against the skyline in the distance.

"It's the pater," gasped Redwing, in alarm. "Some tramp or footpad's attacked him. Quick!"

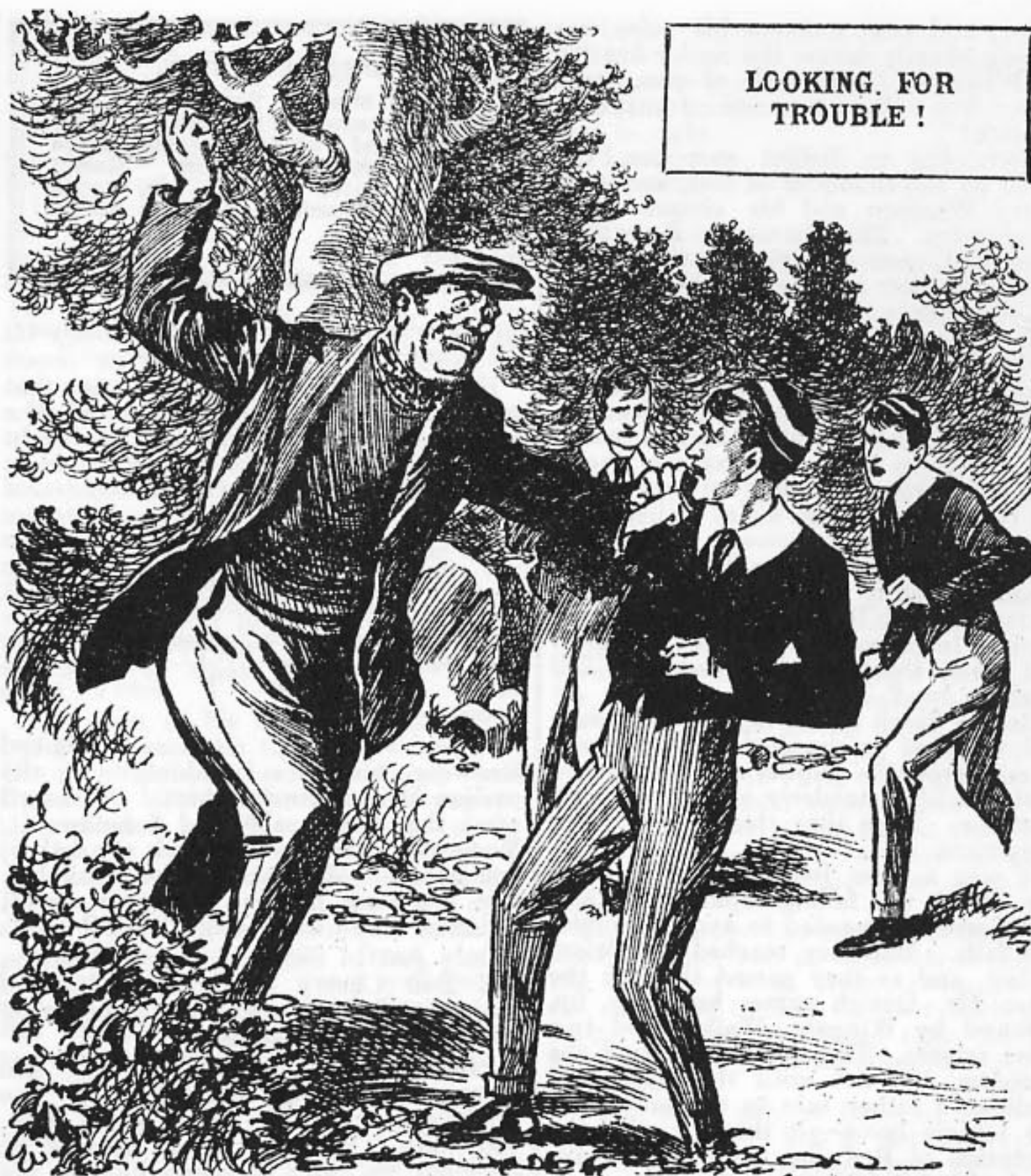
And, without stopping to see further, Tom Redwing raced off back the way they had come at top speed. And after him went Harry Wharton and Co., also at top speed. They also had turned in time to glimpse the struggling figures, and the sight filled them with alarm.

Heedless of the rough ground, abounding in pitfalls, they raced after Redwing, their eyes fixed anxiously ahead. They saw as they ran that one of the figures had been sent to the ground, and the sight lent them wings.

That was all they saw then, for a sudden dip in the ground hid the spot from their sight. And when next they reached higher ground what they saw brought astonishment—and relief.

Flying towards them were two well-known figures—two juniors, whom they recognised at once as Snoop and Stott. Behind them, struggling on the ground with a burly, unfamiliar figure, was another junior. They heard his voice as they ran.

"Help, help!"
"Skinner," snapped Harry Wharton.
"What—"



"'Ere, you did that on purpose!" exclaimed the ruffian, making a grab at Harold Skinner. "Knockin' a bloke down like that, hey?" "I—leggo!" stammered Skinner. "I didn't knock against you!" "'Course you did!" growled the ruffian threateningly. "And you've got to pay for it. I wants compensation. Five bob I wants!" Snoop and Stott backed away in alarm, and Skinner wriggled desperately. (See Chapter 2.)

"And there's the pater over there," panted Redwing. "Hollo! He's heard Skinner, and is coming back."

Stott and Snoop half stopped as the juniors raced past, but Wharton & Co. ignored them. They came up with the struggling figures with a rush, and there was a yell as the rascally loafer went to earth with the rescuers swarming over him.

"Got you, my bonny highwayman," panted Bob Cherry, thumping the yelling rascal's head on the ground. "Give in, old top."

"'Ere, leggo, hang you!" roared the man wildly. "That young 'ound—"

"What happened, Skinner?" demanded Wharton, staring curiously at that shivering junior. "This brute trying to rob you?"

"I—I—I—" stammered Skinner.

"No, I weren't," roared the man, wriggling helplessly. "That young rip was robbin' me. 'E owes me five bob, and what's more—"

"What?"

"It weren't my fault as that chap Redwing downed me," shouted the man furiously. "That young 'ound offered me five bob to go for 'im, and I did. 'Ere, you gents, let me alone, and I'll bloomin' soon make him pay up."

"Oh!"

The juniors fairly blinked from the red-faced ruffian to the white-faced Skinner.

"It—it's a lie!" hissed Skinner. "You—you can't believe a brute like—"

Skinner was interrupted. From some distance along the cliff path there came a sudden cry—a faint cry for help. As he heard it Redwing leaped to his feet as if he had been shot.

He had forgotten his father for the moment; but that cry brought sudden recollection. He glanced swiftly along the cliff path and then he jumped.

He had last seen his father speeding towards the spot; but now he saw no sign of him. The dusky heath was bare—deserted. Again came the cry—feeble it seemed—and Redwing was racing like the wind towards it next second.

He reached the spot quickly enough—a boulder-strewn hollow half-hidden by furze. A form lay there, curiously twisted in a heap. It was his father.

"Father!" panted Redwing.

He dropped down into the hollow, his face white as chalk, and stooped over the sailorman. Mr. Redwing looked up at him, his features twisted into a ghastly smile.

"It—it's all right, Tom—nothing to worry about, lad. I—I ought to have looked where I was runnin'!" he gasped, wincing with pain. "I heard that cry for help and I rushed back. Tom, I—I think my leg's broken."

"What?"
Tom Redwing gazed aghast at his

—and Bunter, with an eye on the Angel "millions," meets him at the station!

father, and next moment his voice was ringing shakily across the dusky heath.

"Wharton, Cherry—all of you, come here, quick!" he cried frantically. "Quick!"

There was an instant response, followed by the thudding of feet, and soon Harry Wharton and his chums came running up. The distress in Redwing's voice had been enough for them, and leaving Skinner and their captive to shift for themselves, they came up with a rush.

They soon learned what was wrong. Whilst Redwing and Wharton did what they could for the injured sailorman, Bob Cherry and the others hunted round, and presently they returned carrying a length of broken fencing between them. By this time Redwing's father had lapsed into unconsciousness.

"Perhaps just as well," muttered Wharton gently to the almost frantic Redwing. "It'll make things easier all round. Inky, you'd better run on ahead and warn them at the sanny. Tell Quelch, too."

Hurree Singh sped away like the wind, and vanished in the dusk. Coats were spread across the hurdle, and the injured man was lifted tenderly on to the rough stretcher. Then they started slowly for Greyfriars.

It was a slow journey—and a silent one. Dusk was falling rapidly now, and great care was needed to avoid stumbles and falls. But they reached Greyfriars at last, and as they passed through the gates Mr. Quelch came hurrying up, followed by Wingate, Walker and two other seniors. These took charge of the stretcher, but not until they had seen Redwing's father safe in the sanny did the juniors leave—all that is, with the exception of Redwing, who stayed behind with his father.

Moodily the Famous Five crossed the dusky quad, and as they went indoors they met Vernon-Smith, limping towards them.

"What's happened, you fellows?" asked Smithy quickly. "Is it true about Redwing's father?"

Harry Wharton nodded and explained. As he listened the Bounder's eyes gleamed.

"So that explains why Skinner came in looking like a ghost," he said, biting his lips savagely. "The—the cowardly cur! It looks as if—"

"We can't take that rascally brute's word, though," said Harry quietly. "After all, I can't see even Skinner playing a dirty rotten trick like that."

"Plain enough," grunted Johnny Bull. "Skinner did it. We know how he hates Redwing, and he's done it to get his own back."

"If—if it could be proved—"

"Here's Skinner now," said Bob Cherry.

Skinner came along the passage. His face was pale and troubled, and, after a moment's hesitation, he came up to the juniors.

"I—I've just heard about Redwing's father—about the accident, I mean," he stammered shakily. "Look here, Wharton—you—you don't believe what that beastly hooligan said about me. You—"

"If I thought it was true," said Wharton, eyeing Skinner steadily, "I'd give you the hiding of your life, Skinner."

"You—you've not told Quelch," almost whispered Skinner.

"No—neither has Redwing," said Wharton curtly. "We told him how Mr. Redwing met with the accident—that was all. It satisfied Mr. Quelch,

SPECIAL NOTICE.

Would Miss M. Ravelle, of Liverpool, who wrote to the Editor in May, 1922, and whose Correspondence Notice appeared in the "Gem" Library dated January 6th, 1923, kindly communicate with the Editor again?

but it won't satisfy Redwing, Skinner, I'll promise you. You'd better—"

Harry Wharton paused. At that moment Redwing himself entered the hall, his eyes glistening in the bright light. He saw Skinner, and a black, dangerous look came over his handsome face.

He strode up to the shivering cad.

"Skinner," he said huskily. "You—you frightful cad, Skinner!"

"Look—look here," stammered Skinner, backing away. "I—I swear that brute was lying. I didn't even know—"

"You are lying, Skinner," choked Redwing, his voice trembling with the passion that consumed him. "I heard what that brute said—and I believe it. You—you paid him to attack my father, you hound! My father's broken his leg, and it's your doing; it's your fault, Skinner. You dirty cad, I'll—I'll—"

Only just in time did Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry grasp the infuriated junior, and prevented him from flying at the trembling Skinner.

"Steady, Redwing, old man!" said Harry, tightening his grip on the junior's arm. "You can't scrap here, you know. We know what Skinner is; but—but we can't condemn him on the bare word of a ruffian like that. Take it easy, Redwing. If Skinner did do it, then depend upon it the truth will come out."

"That's so!" said Frank Nugent quietly. "Better make sure, Redwing."

Redwing struggled furiously for a moment, and then quite suddenly he went limp in the junior's grip. Skinner slunk away, as if he feared another outbreak.

"It—it's all right, you can let go," said Redwing through his teeth. "It can wait. I—I'll see Skinner again about this. He did it all right—I know it. If—if—"

"How is your pater now? Has the doctor seen him?" asked Harry Wharton hastily.

"Yes," was the husky answer. "It's not as bad as it might have been. But it's a broken leg, just below the knee. That's bad enough, goodness knows! If—if it gets worse, though—if anything happens to my father, I'll—I'll—"

With a sudden movement Redwing shook off the juniors' lingering grasp and strode away, his head bowed. But there was a look in his eyes that frightened the Famous Five. There was a glint in the Bounder's eyes as he followed his chum that boded ill for Skinner, too.

"I'm afraid there'll be trouble about this," said Harry Wharton, shaking his head gloomily. "What a howling cad Skinner is—if he did do it, that is! Anyway, let's get in to prep now."

And as Harry's chums followed him they also had a feeling that there was trouble in store for Harold Skinner—whether that rascally junior was proved guilty or not.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

More Trouble!

ALL Greyfriars had heard of the accident before bed-time, and the news was received with general regret. Harry Wharton and his chums told the bare facts—that Mr. Redwing had fallen accidentally, and that they had found him, and nobody thought of asking further particulars. They certainly did not dream that behind the bald statement there lay something else—something unpleasant that concerned Skinner & Co. of the Remove.

But by the morning the suspicious circumstances had somehow filtered through the Remove, and Skinner & Co. came in for a great deal of unwelcome interest and attention.

Certainly the claim made by the rascally hooligan from Pegg was queer, under the circumstances. But as Skinner & Co. stoutly and fiercely denied it, and as there was only the bare word of a drunken rascal to go upon, the majority followed Harry Wharton's lead, preferring to accept Skinner's word and to give him the benefit of the doubt. It was too thick even for Skinner.

Redwing refused to discuss the affair. He was moody and sullen—even with his chum the Bounder. And more than once in class that morning Harry Wharton was surprised to catch Redwing's eyes fixed on Skinner in a manner that made him inwardly uneasy. Such vindictiveness in a fellow like Redwing, whose nature was so generous and forgiving, was surprising—even supposing Skinner had been the indirect cause of Mr. Redwing's accident.

As Vernon-Smith came out into the quad after dinner he met Redwing coming across from the sanny. His brow was clouded, and he nodded sulkily to his chum.

"Oh, here you are!" said the Bounder cheerily. "Well, how's the pater? What does the doc. say?"

"I've just been seeing the pater off," said Redwing quietly. "They've taken him home in the ambulance. It's only a simple fracture, and the doctor says that a few weeks' rest and careful nursing will put him right."

"Oh, good!"

"Good!" exclaimed Redwing passionately. "There's nothing good about it, Smithy! Oh, I—I could smash that cad Skinner! It's all his doing. He played that dirty trick this afternoon—and now this!"

"But—but look here, old fellow—"

"Can't you see?" hissed Redwing, controlling himself with an effort. "If it had happened to you—to someone rolling in cash, it wouldn't be so bad. Your pater's a millionaire, Smithy; you can't understand what this means to people like us. My father won't be able to work—to earn a living for weeks and weeks. Who's going to keep him in the meantime? Who's going to pay for the careful nursing—for someone to look after him as he should be looked after?"

"Oh!" ejaculated the Bounder. "I—I never thought of that."

"You wouldn't!" said Redwing bitterly. "Rich people don't know how poor people live—or care!"

"But—but is there no way—"

"There's the Health Insurance, of course. But what good's that? And there's the bit of money the pater has saved. But how long will that last? I tell you it's hopeless, Smithy!"

The meeting is a thrilling and unorthodox one, and concerns a horse and trap—

Vernon-Smith was silent for a moment. Then he said quietly:

"Look here, Redwing, I—I know what your reply will be, but I'm going to say it all the same. You've got to let me help you. You've refused before when things have been bad. But this is different. What's a few pounds to my pater? He'd help like a shot. Remember what it means to your father—good food, good nursing. You can't refuse, hang it! Say the word, and I'll write now."

Redwing flushed and stood silent, his lips trembling. No worry for his father, good food and nursing. The offer tempted him sorely. Then, even as Smithy felt he was about to accept, his jaw set obstinately.

"I—I can't, Smithy! Neither my father nor myself would accept charity. That's what it amounts to. It—it's good of you, Smithy, and I'm grateful—you know that. But—but I can't do it!"

"You must! I won't let you refuse, Redwing," said the Bounder angrily. "There's nothing else you can do."

"There is," said Redwing quietly. "I've already made up my mind to that. There's that fifty pounds offered for the best prize map turned in by a junior. You know I've entered for it. I'm going to win it, Smithy."

"But—but if you don't—"
"I shall leave Greyfriars," said Redwing simply. "I shall turn out and earn my own living, Smithy—and help to keep things going. There's nothing else for it."

"Phew!"
The Bounder whistled blankly.
"You've a good chance of winning the fifty, though," he said eagerly. "There isn't a chap in the school can work like you, Redwing. You've really only got Wharton to fear, and even he isn't as painstaking as you. But—but I wish you'd let me help—"

"I won't!" said Redwing. Then, changing the subject abruptly, he said: "Will you lend me your bike this afternoon, Smithy? I want to run over to Hawkscliff to see the pater fixed up all right."

"Like a shot!" said the Bounder. "I only wish my gammy leg would let me come with you. But look here—about my offer—"

"That's off," said Redwing. "I'll see you when I come back to-night, Smithy—and thanks!"

He turned abruptly and ran across the quad towards the cycle-shed. Smithy watched him go, a troubled look on his somewhat hard features. He waited for some minutes, but as his chum did not reappear he went indoors, not a little angry at Redwing's obstinacy.

Redwing left the cycle-shed at last, wheeling Vernon-Smith's bike across the quad at a run. Valve trouble in the front tyre had kept him back several minutes, and even that slight delay had added to his bitterness. Several fellows nodded sympathetically as he ran through the gates; but he ignored them sulkily. He was in a black mood, and his moody, lowering face was a good indication of what was passing in his mind.

Not even of his father was he thinking just then. His thoughts were all of Harold Skinner, his old enemy—and they were bitter and vengeful thoughts.

He turned off Friardale Lane on to the rough and narrow lane leading to Hawkscliff, pedalling hard and savagely. But as his eyes scanned the long road ahead a hard glitter came into them.

Slouching along in front, with hunched-up shoulders, was a well-known and—to Redwing—a hated figure. It was Harold Skinner. There was no mistaking the slacker's slouching gait.

Redwing put on speed.
He came up with the slouching figure with a rush and a whirr. But not until Redwing had dismounted in front of him did Skinner look up. Then, as he met Redwing's smouldering eyes, Skinner gave a startled gasp.

"So I've got you, Skinner," said Redwing, in a low voice. "You've kept out of my way very cleverly since yesterday. You won't escape me now. I'm going to give you a thrashing, Skinner—or, at least, I'm going to try. Put your hands up—quick!"

Skinner licked his suddenly dry lips. He glanced about him wildly, frightened by the look in Redwing's eyes. But it was a lonely spot—not another soul was in sight.

"Look here, Redwing," he began desperately, "if—if you dare to touch me—"

"I'm going to give you a licking—a licking you've well earned, you cowardly cad!" hissed Redwing. "If you won't fight, then I'm going to take a stick from the hedge and thrash you! Got that? Then come on, you rotter!"

Skinner took a hurried step back on to the grassy roadside, as Redwing came towards him. His face was white; but he saw there was nothing else for it. It was better to fight than to be thrashed with a stick by the muscular young fisherman's son.

With a savage movement he wrenched off his coat and flung it down. Then, without another word, they started.

Skinner fought with a fury born of sheer desperation. He knew he was in for a hiding, and he meant to damage his enemy before giving in—if he could. Redwing, his temper at white heat, fought just as savagely and carelessly.

Backwards and forwards, now on the grassy bank, now tramping on the dusty road, in silence save for their gasping and panting, the struggle went on furiously.

But the pace was too hot to last; indeed, Skinner had no intention of allowing it to last long. Once, twice he bit the dust, and then as he went down and rolled over for the third time, he lay groaning, and made no effort to rise and continue.

"Get up!" panted Redwing, glaring down at him. "You're not done yet; you're hardly touched, you cowardly worm! Get up! If you don't—"

"I—I'm done!" panted Skinner, his breath coming in great gasps. "Can't you see I'm done, you brute! Let me alone! I've had enough, hang you!"

Skinner was done—in so far as wind and staying-power were concerned; there was little doubt about that. And, after eyeing him steadily, Redwing walked over to his coat and put it on. Then



Flying towards the Famous Five were two well-known figures—Snoop and Stott. Behind them, struggling on the ground with a burly ruffian, was Harold Skinner. "Help, help!" "Come on, chaps!" said Harry Wharton. "Skinner's in trouble!" (See Chapter 3.)

—a horse that runs wild and a trap that contains William George Bunter!

he picked up his machine, and returned to Skinner again.

"Skinner," he said quietly, looking down at his glowering enemy. "you've been up against me since the first day I came to Greyfriars. Why, I hardly know; unless it's because you are a rank cad and a snob! I've never harmed you that I know of. But let me warn you here and now. I don't care what you do to me—I can stand it. But interfere with my father again—any more dirty tricks played on him—and you'll have cause bitterly to regret it! That's all!"

He mounted his bike, and, without another glance at Skinner, he rode away rapidly. He was feeling better now—much of the bitter hate towards Skinner had evaporated. And when, some minutes later, he came upon a group of Greyfriars juniors, just dismounting from their bikes at the gates of Cliff House School, and one of them hailed him, he stopped willingly enough.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Whither bound, Redwing? Hawkscliff?"

It was Bob Cherry, and his companions were Harry Wharton, Nugent, Bull, and Hurree Singh—apparently about to call on their girl friends of Cliff House.

"Yes," replied Redwing, approaching the juniors. "I'm just running over to visit the pater; he was taken home this morning, you know. Not coming my way, I suppose?"

Wharton shook his head.

"No," he said, staring curiously at Redwing's heated face and dishevelled appearance. "We're just paying Marjorie and Clare a flying visit—taking 'em invites for the concert Saturday night, in fact. Then we're going back for a bit of footer practice. But—but I say, Redwing, you look as though you'd been through a mangle. Been scrapping?"

Redwing flushed guiltily, suddenly aware that his clothes were rumpled and dusty, and that his person showed more than one sign of combat.

"I met Skinner," he explained briefly, "and I thrashed him, as I said I would. Well, I'm in rather a hurry, you chaps. So-long!"

He mounted and rode away. Bob Cherry gazed after him and grinned.

"Poor old Skinny," he remarked. "I bet if his mother saw him at this moment she wouldn't know him. Well, he's asked for it, and now he's got it!"

"Serve him jolly well right!" grunted Johnny Bull. "I hope poor old Reddy gave it him hot and strong."

Harry Wharton frowned as he leaned his bike against the gateway.

"Skinner's hardly a match for Redwing, but—but he deserves a licking, I suppose," he said slowly. "I—I hope—Oh, hang Skinner, though! A licking will do him good, after all. Anyway, let's get our job done, and get back to the footer. Come on!"

And Harry Wharton led the way up the drive to Cliff House rather thoughtfully. But he was not thinking about the girls he was visiting, nor about the Remove concert. He was wondering what had happened at the meeting between Redwing and his enemy; he was wondering rather uneasily what Redwing had done to Skinner.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

In Deep Disgrace!

THE look on Skinner's face as Redwing rode away from him was not good to see.

More than once Harry Wharton had observed that lessons were wasted on Harold Skinner. And it was plain,

from the look of hate on the face of the cad of the Remove as he shook his fist after the departing cyclist, that this last lesson had done him little good.

For some moments he lay on the grass of the roadside, recovering himself, and then he staggered to his feet. He was hurt, but not as badly hurt as Redwing had supposed. One of his eyes was beginning to puff, and a stream of crimson ran from his thin nose. But it was far from being the licking Redwing had intended to administer to Skinner.

Skinner was well aware of this; but he was given little time to congratulate himself then. For even as he got on his feet, and started to mop his nose with a handkerchief, a newcomer appeared on the scene—one less welcome even than Redwing.

He was a burly man, red-faced and unshaven. He aped the clothes worn by the longshoremen of Pegg, and these were dirty and untidy. Skinner recognised him with a thrill of alarm as the rascal of the night before.

Skinner's luck was out that afternoon with a vengeance.

The loafer came creeping almost silently through a gap in the hedge, and faced the startled Skinner, an ominous grin on his decidedly unpleasant features.

Skinner shrank back; but the man was too quick for him. His dirty hand shot out, and his grasp closed on Skinner's shoulder.

"No, you don't, young feller!" he growled. "You bolted last night, but you won't get away from Joe Wilks a second time. What about that there five bob—hey?"

"Look—look here!" stammered Skinner, wriggling helplessly. "Let me go!"

"Likely—ain't it?" asked the man, grinning. "I bin wanting to meet you. I seed you fightin' jest now. You got a rare lickin', and no error. Want another like it—hey? If you don't you'll 'and over that five bob you owes me—sharp!"

Skinner shivered. He would gladly have handed over five shillings to get away from the rascal—had he got it. But he had not a shilling with him, much less five.

"I—I can't," he muttered earnestly. "I haven't a penny with me."

"You means you won't," said Wilks, changing his tone suddenly. "We'll see about that, my lad! 'And that cash over—the cash you owes me, or I'll—"

"I tell you I can't!" cried Skinner desperately. "I haven't got—"

"Then I'm goin' to take it out of your thundering hide!" said the man savagely, taking a firmer hold on the stick in his other hand. "Them pals of yours 'andled me 'ard enough last night, and now I'm goin' to take it out of you. You— Ah, would you?"

Skinner had given a frantic wrench; but again Wilks was too quick for him. Then Skinner, in his frantic terror, lost his head completely. He strove to free himself from the ruffian's cruel grip, fighting and kicking desperately.

It was unwise of Skinner, for the fellow was the worse for drink, and hardly responsible for his actions—as Skinner realised the next second.

As the junior's boots hacked at the rascal's shins, he gave a wild howl of pain and rage. Then he let himself go completely.

Again and again the heavy stick fell with brutal force, and the helpless junior staggered back under the rain of savage blows. On head, face, and body the stick fell, and the hapless youngster sank under it to the ground, yelling and shrieking and dazed.

Even then the brutal Wilks did not stop, blind as he was with rage and temper. And it was only when a shout came from the field beyond the hedge that he desisted at last.

Panting and gasping with his savage exertions, the man flung down the stick, frightened now at what he had done. He looked quickly over the hedge, and as he saw a man lumbering across the field he jumped for the farther hedge, and, diving through, bolted for his life.

The next instant a farm labourer squeezed through the hedge. He looked after the vanishing figure of Wilks, and then he looked at the half-conscious form of Skinner huddled on the grass.

"Well, I'm hanged!" he gasped, leaning over the hapless junior. "'Ere, what's happened, young 'un? That rascal been lammin' you?"

Skinner did not move or reply. He lay groaning now, his shoulders shaking under deep sobs. The startled man straightened himself and glanced angrily after the fast-vanishing form of Wilks.

"No good goin' after that brute now!" he muttered. "'Ere, hold up, youngster! I'll— Hallo! Here's some of your mates, I reckon!"

There was a whirring of cycle-wheels, and Harry Wharton & Co. came up on their cycles. They saw something was wrong, and dismounted at once.

"What's wrong?" exclaimed Harry Wharton, coming forward quickly. "Skinner, what is the—"

Harry Wharton broke off, aghast. At that moment Skinner raised himself and looked up. There was blood on his face, and his eyes were red with weeping, his face white with pain and shock. His collar was gone, his clothes torn and dishevelled. Altogether he looked a shocking sight.

"Skinner," gasped Wharton, "you—you've been through it, and no mistake! Who—who did this, Skinner?"

"That—that brute!" almost whispered Skinner, his lips quivering, his eyes roaming dazedly. "Has—has he gone? He—he did it—with a stick! I—I—I—"

He sank back and lay motionless. His head was thumping violently, and he felt as if every bone in his body was broken. The shocked juniors looked helplessly down at him. Then, as Skinner struggled to rise again, Wharton stooped and helped him to his feet.

"Who has done this, Skinner?" asked Wharton quietly. "Was—was it Redwing?"

Skinner did not reply for a moment. He stood swaying in Wharton's grasp, still dazed, but not sobbing now. Then Wharton's question seemed to sink into his mind, and he looked about him.

They were alone now. The farm labourer had squeezed back through the hedge, now that Skinner was in safe hands. A sudden, strange look came into Skinner's red-rimmed eyes.

Strangely enough, he felt no hatred—no desire for revenge—against the ruffianly Wilks, the man who had attacked him so brutally. But the mention of Redwing brought recollection,

ANSWERS
EVERY MONDAY—PRICE 2^d

Mick Angel invites the Co. to spend the Christmas vacation with him—



Again and again the heavy stick fell with brutal force on Skinner's head and shoulders. The junior staggered back under the rain of savage blows, yelling and shrieking. A farm labourer, hearing his cries, came dashing towards the hedge, and on sight of him Wilks dropped his stick and scuttled away. (See Chapter 5.)

and with it a flood of bitter hatred into his mind. In that moment all his hatred of the sailorman's son—all the enmity of his mean and unscrupulous nature—was roused by the name of his enemy.

"Redwing?" he repeated. "Redwing?"

"Yes," said Wharton, his face showing his distress. "Did—did Redwing do this, Skinner? He—he told us a few minutes ago that he had thrashed you. But—but—"

"It was Redwing!" muttered Skinner, striving to hide the exultation in his voice. "Redwing—he took me unawares—downed me with a stick, the brute! I—I couldn't even defend myself scarcely! He—he lost his head, I suppose!"

"My hat!"

"Phew!"

Though the juniors had expected Skinner to say Redwing, they could scarcely believe him now he had settled their fears. Redwing—a fellow whom they had known as frank and honourable—who, as far as they knew, was incapable of a cowardly and brutal action. It seemed impossible.

Yet it was true—it must be true. Only a few minutes ago Redwing himself had told them that he had thrashed Skinner. And now Skinner had told them—

"It's rotten!" said Harry Wharton glumly. "I—I can scarcely believe it even now! Anyway, you'd better come back with us, Skinner. You can have my bike, and I'll ride behind Cherry."

They gave Skinner a few more minutes to recover, and then the party started back for Greyfriars. It was a silent journey, and when they dismounted at the gates at last Wharton turned to Skinner.

"Remember this is a Remove matter, Skinner," he said quietly. "We'll deal with Redwing ourselves. You don't intend to report to Quelch?"

"No," said Skinner, "I don't."

Skinner spoke through dry lips, but he meant what he said. He had no intention of reporting to a master. He

knew he could never carry the lie through safely with Mr. Quelch. And such a course might lead to awkward questions being asked.

But there was something else in Skinner's voice as he said it—a haunting fear. He already regretted his line of action. He had told a lie—a dastardly lie—and he knew it. But the lie did not trouble the rascally junior. What troubled him was the fear that he could not keep it up when face to face with Redwing. He had told a lie—yes. But could he see it through safely?

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Remove's Decision!

REDWING rode back from Hawkscliff that evening in a much brighter mood than when he had started out in the afternoon.

He had found his father not only safely installed in his cosy little cottage, but fairly comfortable and hopeful. The injured old sailorman's steadfast courage had made Redwing not a little ashamed of his own despair. If his father could be cheery and hopeful under pain and trouble, then Redwing felt he himself had little need to despair.

And during that lonely ride back to Greyfriars Redwing had thought a great deal about his treatment of the Bounder. He had been sulky and insulting to him for no reason at all. Smithy was a chum to be proud of—true as steel. He mentally resolved to make amends when he got in.

The winter's dusk was settling thick over the old quadrangle of Greyfriars as Redwing passed under the gateway. He quickly housed Vernon-Smith's machine, and ran indoors. As he passed through the Hall he noticed that several fellows eyed him strangely, and he wondered. But he hurried on, hoping to find Smithy in the study.

But Vernon-Smith was not in the study, and Redwing went straight to the Common-room. He went inside, and

then he stopped. At his entry the hum of conversation in the room ceased abruptly. Redwing flushed as he felt, rather than saw, hostile eyes fixed upon him from every corner of the room.

What did it mean?

He walked across to Vernon-Smith, who eyed him queerly.

"You've got back then, Redwing?" he said rather curtly.

"Yes, I've got back," muttered Redwing, looking round him blankly. "But what's the matter, Smithy? You look as if—"

He paused as Harry Wharton came over to him slowly.

"We've been waiting for you, Redwing," he said, flushing uncomfortably. "There—there's something the Form wants to see you about. You can guess what."

"I don't understand—"

"It's about Skinner, of course," said Harry, his voice hardening. "You—you told us this afternoon, Redwing, that you had thrashed Skinner. But you did not say how or to what extent. The Form wants to know, Redwing."

"But—but, look here—"

"Some minutes after you left us this afternoon, Redwing," said Harry Wharton, "we found Skinner lying almost unconscious in the roadway. He had been brutally ill-treated—and not in fair fight, either. He claims that you took him unawares, Redwing—that you attacked him with a stick, not giving him chance to defend himself. It was the act of a coward—a brutal ruffian! A fellow who did a thing like that is not fit to associate with decent chaps! Look at Skinner, now! Those marks weren't made by anyone's fists, Redwing!"

Redwing looked round him, bewildered. His eyes fell suddenly upon Skinner, standing with Stott and Snoop, and he jumped. Skinner's face was pasty white, and the ugly marks showed vividly upon it—marks that could never have been made by fists.

He stared steadily into Skinner's eyes, and Skinner moved uncomfortably and his eyes fell. Redwing's eyes suddenly

—at his historical home in the Highlands—an invitation at once accepted!

gleamed, and he strode over to the cad of the Remove, his fists clenched convulsively.

"Skinner," he said, striving to control his voice, "you lie if you say I did that—and you know it! Who did it, I don't know, but—but I didn't. You're putting this on me to pay me back for what I did do this afternoon. You—you hound, Skinner! Not content with what you've already done, you want to disgrace me before the fellows. We're face to face now—deny it if you can!"

Skinner shrank back before the scorn and fury in Redwing's eyes. But he knew that all eyes were upon him, and he dare not draw back now.

"I—I do deny it!" he stammered defiantly. "You—you did it. I've told the truth!"

"What?"

Redwing took a step towards Skinner, but Wharton and Bolsover sprang before him.

"No you don't, Redwing!" snapped Harry Wharton. "You've done Skinner harm enough, if it's true; and I fancy it is. You've got your chance to prove it isn't, though, now. You'd no right to thrash Skinner because you thought he had caused that accident last night, in any case—not without proof. But that's not the point. The point which concerns the Remove is whether you treated Skinner as he claims you did this afternoon. Do you deny it?"

"Of course I do!" shouted Redwing passionately. "I do deny it! No, I'm hanged if I will trouble to deny it, though," he went on, his face suddenly flushing crimson. "You fellows ought to know me by now; you ought to know I wouldn't do anything that wasn't playing the game! If you'll take Skinner's word before mine, then be hanged to the lot of you!"

And Redwing was starting angrily for the door, when Wharton caught him by the arm and held him fast.

"That won't do for us, Redwing," he said curtly. "This is a matter for the Form, and if you won't defend yourself then we'll know what to think. You won't defend yourself because you can't. Isn't that so?"

"Hang the Form—hang the lot of you!" hissed Redwing, his eyes blazing. "Let me pass, Wharton!"

There was silence. Redwing's unfortunate outburst of temper—his refusal to defend himself, and his bitter, angry manner, went, against him. And the evidence certainly was clear enough—so thought the fellows. There wasn't a chap—excepting Skinner himself—who doubted now that Redwing was guilty.

"Very well, Redwing!" exclaimed Wharton quietly. "We've already talked it over. We can only believe you guilty. You've disgraced the Form; you've proved yourself unfit for any decent chap to speak to. From now on you're in Coventry. No Remove fellow is to speak to you. You understand?"

Redwing did, and his face whitened. Then his face crimsoned again, and his jaw set obstinately.

"I don't care, you can go hang, the lot of you!" he shouted passionately.

He wrenched his arm free, and started again for the door. This time it was the Bounder who stopped him.

"Just a minute, Wharton," he said blandly, still clutching his chum's arm. "If that sentence is supposed to include me, then you can call it off. Redwing's my chum, and whatever he's done—or supposed to have done—I'm standing by him. Got that? You'd better send us both to Coventry—what?"

There was a murmur. It was Redwing who spoke, however. He wrenched his arm free, and turned fiercely upon his chum.

"That doesn't suit me, though, Smithy," he said savagely. "I want to know how we stand first. Do you believe I did that to Skinner or not?"

The Bounder looked uncomfortable; then he grinned—a trifle uneasily, however.

"What does it matter, anyway?" he asked cynically. "Skinner deserves what he got, and more!"

"What does it matter?" hissed Redwing, his lips trembling. "Of course it matters. Do you think I can be friends with a fellow who believes that of me? I want to know, Smithy! Do you believe it or not?"

"Now, look here, old man——"

"Yes, or no, Smithy?"

"Well—er—it looks funny, Reddy; you can't deny that, old chap. But if you say——"

"That's enough!" snapped Redwing, his eyes blazing. "Take your hand off my arm, Smithy!"

"But listen, old chap——" pleaded the Bounder.

Redwing wrenched his arm free savagely. And then it happened, though in his blind rage and despair, Redwing himself hardly knew he had done it.

But as the Bounder clutched at his arm again, Redwing swung round, and his flat hand struck Vernon-Smith's cheek. The sharp slap rang through the silent room like a pistol-shot.

The Bounder staggered back with a cry, and his hand went to his face. Redwing's hand dropped limply to his side.

His face went suddenly white. He waited a moment, shaking with emotion, and then, as Smithy made no effort to return the blow, he turned slowly and left the room.

He walked blindly to his own study, and, sinking on to a chair at the table, dropped his head on his arms. The room was in darkness, but he never even noticed that. His brain was in a whirl, and he hardly realised what had happened yet. But as his mind cleared he began to realise his position.

He was ostracised—an outcast. And he had spurned the loyal friendship of his own chum—the only fellow who had stood by him. Certainly, the Bounder ought to have believed in him—ought to have known him better, to have believed him incapable of any rascally action. And yet, he knew he ought to have listened to him. He certainly ought not to have lost his temper.

What a fool he had been! Why had he let his emotions and temper master him like that? And now he had lost the friendship of Smithy. He was certain that the proud and haughty Bounder would never forgive that hasty blow. It was all over between them now.

And he had returned from Hawkscliff full of renewed hope, thankful for having a chum like Smithy, determined to make amends for his churlish conduct. And it had ended in this. Redwing's head fell lower, and his shoulders shook.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Prize Map!

NOT a single fellow in the Remove spoke to Tom Redwing for the rest of that evening. Indeed, he hardly saw a soul until bedtime. The Bounder did not come near Study No. 4, and Redwing was left severely alone. In the dormitory he undressed quietly, conscious that he was

the object of hostile attention from every part of the room.

But he undressed and got into bed, determined to show no further signs of weakness, though he felt sick at heart, and his mind was numbed with despair. And yet he felt even then that he could hardly blame the fellows, if they did genuinely believe him guilty; and the evidence—such as it was—certainly pointed to that conclusion. A fellow who could thrash Skinner as that junior had apparently been thrashed, was a howling cad—a brutal, heartless ruffian unfit to associate with decent fellows. If he had done such a thing, Redwing realised that he deserved such a punishment; he also realised that only his popularity had saved him from a far worse punishment.

But he hadn't done it. And Smithy—his own chum—ought to have taken his word, whatever the evidence, whatever the other fellows thought. A sudden revulsion of feeling swept over Redwing at the thought, and when at last he fell asleep this thought was uppermost in his mind.

When he awoke the next morning all remorse for that hasty blow had vanished. His heart was full of bitterness against his old chum.

Redwing was unusually late in dressing that morning. He finished his toilet at last, to find only one fellow left in the dormitory with him. It was the Bounder.

Then Redwing got a surprise. The Bounder came up to him, smiling as if nothing had happened between them.

"Coming down, Redwing?" he asked cheerily. "Better buck up, or you'll be late for chapel, old scout."

Redwing regarded him steadily.

"I'll go down alone, thanks, Vernon-Smith," he said quietly. "Look—look here, Smithy. I—I'm sorry for that blow last night—I didn't know what I was doing. I—I——"

"My dear man, I know you didn't," smiled the Bounder. "That's done with. Come on down."

He linked his arm in Redwing's, but that junior repulsed him almost savagely.

"Wait a bit, Smithy," he said, his face hard. "You may have forgiven me for that blow; it's generous of you. But—but I can't forgive you, Smithy. I didn't do that to Skinner, and you ought to know it. I can't be friends with a fellow who thinks that of me. The fellows won't speak to me; I don't wish them to. I don't want you to, either. That's all!"

And Redwing walked quickly from the room.

"Oh my hat!" said the Bounder.

He stood motionless, nonplussed. Like Redwing, he also had done a great deal of thinking during the night. Of course, Redwing had made that mess of Skinner. He had no doubt about that. He knew better than anyone how vindictive Redwing had felt against the plotting schemer. It was a bit thick, right enough. But Skinner had deserved it. Like Redwing himself, and unlike the rest of the Remove, Smithy believed the rascally Wilks' story of the bribe to "down" Mr. Redwing. There was some excuse for Redwing; he had done it in the heat of passion, too. He knew only too well how over-sensitive, how "touchy," Redwing was.

But Redwing was his chum, and he wasn't going to let that come between them. He knew his chum hadn't meant that hasty blow. He had been beside

(Continued on page 17.)

Lurking behind the possibilities of a real good Christmas is Aubrey Angel, the slacker!—



Supplement No. 153.

HARRY WHARTON
EDITOR

Week ending December 15th, 1923.

THE VANNISHED TREZZURE!

By Billy Bunter.

I WAS browsing over some old volumes the other day, in the school library, when I made a most startling and sensational discovery.

A sheet of musty old parchment happened to drop out of one of the volumes, and I promptly pounced on it, and eggsamined it. To my grate joy I found that it was a dockument which referred to berried trezzure!

Now, I had often heard that the smugglers who flurrished about a hundred years ago had hidden a good deal of their ill-gotten plunder in one of the caves on the coast. The loot was supposed to be in an old oak chest, and it konsisted of gold, silver, joolery, valewable trinkets, diamonds, roobies, and so on and so fourth.

Here was proof that such a trezzure really eggsisted! I could not doubt the evidence of my eyes. For the following message, written in poertory, appeared on the parchment:

"In the cave of Smuggler Joe
There's an old oak chest, you know,
Crammed with jewels, precious stones,
Silver coins, and dead men's bones.
You will find this treasure grand
Buried deep beneath the sand.
Venture forth, at dead of night,
When the moon is shining bright,
To the cave where Smuggler Joe
Hid the treasure long ago.
If you delve with pick and spade
(An hour's hard labour, I'm afraid),
You will find embedded there
A costly fortune, I declare!
Seek, and you shall find, I beg,
In the Smugglers' Cave at Pegg!"

I was so eggsited when I read this doggerel that my hare stood up on end, like it does in the middle of the night sometimes, when I see the Greyfriars Ghost.

Of corse, in that rapturous moment it didn't occur to me that the parchment was written in very modern English, and that it might be a practical joak on somebody's part.

That night, when Greyfriars slept, I slipped out of bed, put on my clothes, and silently stole away.

I went first of all to the woodshed, and armed myself with pick and spade, and with a lantern. Then I sallied fourth on my grate avenger.

I wish I could tell you, dear readers, that my mlsion was crowned with sucksess—that I dug up the trezzure, left Greyfriars at my own rekwest, and lived in the lap of luxury for the rest of my days. That's how it would work out in a romanse. But this wasn't a romanse. It was very real, I can assure you!

But I will stick to the trooth, as George Washington said when his father accused him of burning the cakes.

What really happened was this. I tramped down to Pegg in the moonlite, and after a good deal of eggsploring, I found the cave of Smuggler Joe. Then I lighted my coat-sleeves, rolled up my lantern, and got busy with the pick and spade.

I digged and digged, I dug and dug, but all to no purrpuss. At any moment I eggpected my spade to land with a metallick clink upon the steel bands of the old oak chest. But, alas! My luck was absent—and so was the trezzure!

In a state of mental and fizzical yeariness I trudged back to Greyfriars. I could have wept with disappointment as I crawled between the sheets.

Next morning that beest Peter Todd had the ordassity to admit that he had played a jape on me. He had written the doggerel on a sheet of paper, and skorched it in front of the fire, to make it look old and musty. Then he had slipped it into the old volume, knowing that I should find it in the corse of my researches.

Toddy's a hartless beest! But never mind. He's got a brand-new plum-cake in the study cubberd, and I'll have my revenge by wolfig it here and now. Then there will be no tea for Toddy!



EDITORIAL!

By HARRY WHARTON.

HERE at last is our Special Smuggling Number, hot from the press, so to speak.

Those who remember our Highwayman Number, and our Pirate Number, will know what to expect this week—a feast of fun and laughter, with a spice of old-time romance.

The smugglers who flourished in this country a hundred years ago were formidable fellows. We do not applaud their dishonest deeds, but we love them for their daring. It was no picnic, being a smuggler. There were all sorts of difficulties to contend with, and the Customs officers were ever on the alert to capture those who smuggled secret stores into these islands.

The coast of Cornwall was a favourite rendezvous of the smugglers. For it is a wild and rugged coast, with many convenient caves, which served as dumping-grounds for the spoils.

But here in Kent the smugglers were not idle. They used to come sailing into Pegg Bay at dead of night, with cargoes of rum, tobacco, and other commodities, and the caves in which they stored their plunder may still be seen.

Sometimes the smugglers would come into possession of valuable treasure. Caskets of gold and silver, and ropes of pearls, and so forth would be brought ashore at secret landing-places, and then buried beneath the sandy floor of one of the caves. In fact, some of this buried treasure still lies undiscovered beneath the caves of Pegg, and the Greyfriars fellows never weary of exploring these old smugglers' haunts. One of these days we may turn up a nice little hoard of plunder. Who knows?

We could fill several issues in dealing with the absorbing topic of smuggling. But we must content ourselves with compressing all our contributions into one issue, and we have no doubt you will all enjoy it up to the hilt—especially the contribution which came from the leaky pen of Dicky Nugent. If it's anything to do with the dashing days of old, Dicky's sure to be well in the limelight.

HARRY WHARTON.

SOME VIEWS ON SMUGGLING.

We sent the following question to a number of Greyfriars celebrities: "If you had lived in the olden days, would you have been a smuggler?" The answers appear below.

TOM BROWN:

Yes, rather! Of course I should have been a smuggler—Cap'n Tom Brown, leader of a daring gang of desperadoes! I should have smuggled everything I could lay my hands on, and I should have enjoyed the fierce duels with the Customs officers. I often wonder why I was born a hundred years too late!

HURREE SINGH:

If I had lived in the dashing days of oldfulness, I should certainly have been an esteemed and ludicrous smuggler; and the sportfulness would have been terrific! The scrapfulness with the Excise men would also have been terrific. My trusty bladefulness would have done great execution, and I should have enjoyed myself up to the hiltfulness; but my victims wouldn't have done!

THE HEAD:

Would I have been a smuggler, had I lived in the olden days? Most certainly not! I am a lover of law and order, and I cannot tolerate lawlessness in any shape or form. Neither can I picture myself in the quaint costume that the smugglers wore. It would be most undignified and unbecoming. I much prefer a gown and mortar-board.

BILLY BUNTER:

My grate-grate-grandfather was the King of the Smugglers. He was a pirate as well as a plunderer, and they called him "Cross-bones" Bunter. Rather a grewsome nickname, wasn't it? I don't doubt that if I had lived a hundred years ago I should have been an even more famous smuggler than my esteemed ansestor. But instead of smuggling ashore such things as tobacco and rum, I should have smuggled tuck!

DICK PENFOLD:

If I had lived in days of old I should have been a smuggler bold. I should have done a roaring trade in meat and wines and marmalade. By smuggling all these things ashore, and selling them for quids galore! I'm brave and fearless, bold and free. A smuggler's life's the life for me!

STOP PRESS!

Rake of the Remove has been found guilty of SMUGGLING!

He smuggled a copy of the "Magnet Library" into the Remove Form-room! This led to a skirmish with the Customs officer—Mr. Horace Quelch!

—His ways hardly coincide with those of Harry Wharton & Co. ! What happens ?



By **DICKY
NUGENT.**

A Thrilling Tail of
Advencher in the Dashing
Days of Old.

MARRY! 'Tis a dark night, forsooth! I can scarce see my fist in front of my phiz!"

It was Captin Cutlass, the chief of the smugglers, who spoke.

The captin and his gallent band were coming ashore with vast booty, which they had plundered from a noble ship on the high seize. The booty was in an old oak chest, and it konsisted of jools, preshus stoans, Spannish dubloons, peaces of 8, and all sorts of valewable trinkets.

"'Tis well that the night be dark, cap'n," said Dick Lawless, who was the youngest member of the smugglers' crew. "Methinks, if it were a moonlight night we should be in the soop. Our boat would be seen by the Custems officers who are prowling on the shore."

"Eye, eye, lad," said Captin Cutlass. "You speak trooth. But, dark though it be, those uniformed dogs may catch sight of us; in which event, they shall taste our glittering steal!"

And Captin Cutlass fingered his cutlass as he spoke.

The smugglers' boat was still a good way from the shore, and the members of the crew burst into song, without any fear of being heard by the Custems officers.

"Sixteen smugglers bold are we,
Fearing nought on land or sea.
Feercely we fight, and never flee—
Yo-ho! and a cask of rum!"

The voices of the smugglers floated tunefully over the plassid waters.

It was a big boat, manned by eight oars. The old oak chest lay in the stern, covered with tarporing. It was the object of the smugglers to get it safely ashore. Then they would share out the munny, and berry the jools and trinkets underneeth one of the caves at Pegg.

Captin Cutlass, who was a pawnbroker in private life, valeded the trezzure at twenty-five bob—which was a lot of munny in those days.

It was the biggest horde the smugglers had ever possest, and they meant to guard it jellusly. If the Custems officers attempted to interfere with them there would be a frightful shindy.

Gradually the boat drew nearer to the shore. It was a calm night, and there was not a breth stirring. But on the shore lerked the Custems men, waiting to pounce upon their pray!

"Yo-heeve-ho, me harties!" said Captin Cutlass. "'Tis but a stoan's throw to the shore, and I can't see anybody about."

Dick Lawless peered through the gloom.

"I fancied I saw a number of shaddowy figgers," he said.

"Tut, tut, lad! 'Tis your imagination. The King's men sleep sound in their beds. We have nothing to fear. Heeve-ho! We shall run aground in a jiffy."

Even as the captin spoke, the keel of the boat grated on the gravelley shore.

The captin then wrapped out a number of swift destructions.

"Hop out, everybody! Unload the merry trezzure! Two men will carry it to yonder cave; the others will draw their cutlasses and act as a boddygard."

The old oak chest was lifted out of the boat, and two berly smugglers ran with it over the shingle.

The others followed with baited breath, and with cutlasses drawn. It was a thrilling moment!

The plunder was rushed into the cave, and the two berly men started to dig.

Suddenly Captin Cutlass gave the alarm.

"The enemy is upon us!"

A duzen Custems officers suddenly seemed to spring up from nowhere, and they rushed towards the mouth of the cave, which was guarded by the smugglers.

"Hold, in the King's name!" shouted the leader.

"Rats!" growled Captin Cutlass. "Likewise, tosh! Have at thee, thou scurvey nave!"

So saying, the captin made a savvidge lunge, and ran the officer through the hart with his glittering blade.

"Ow!" gasped the officer, as he fell to the ground mortelly wounded.

A feerce fight followed.

Captin Cutlass did grate eggsecution, and so did Dick Lawless. They were giants in the fray, and the King's men went down like grass before the lawnmower.

After desprit fighting, which lasted about ten minnits, there wasn't a single officer left to tell the tail. And on the smugglers' side there was only one casualty. Peter Craven, who had never been in a battle before, had died of frite.

"Bravo, my trusty men!" said Captin Cutlass, wiping his blade in the sand. "You have deserved well of your country. We will now share out the spondulix."

This they did, amid much rejoicing. And the rest of the trezzure—the jools, preshus stoans, and seterer—was berried in the sand. And it remanes there to this day—a Hidden Horde, which some Greyfriars fellow may have the plezzure of finding!

THE END.

A TELEGRAM TRAGEDY!

By Donald Ogilvy.

THERE'S a telegram for Master Newland, up at Greyfriars."

The ancient dame who kept the post-office in Friardale handed a buff-coloured envelope to the waiting telegraph-boy and instructed him to take it up to the school at once and deliver it to Monty Newland.

The day was Wednesday; the time, two o'clock in the afternoon. And Newland of the Remove should have received the wire by half-past two at the latest. But he didn't.

Matter of fact the telegraph-boy seemed in no hurry to get to Greyfriars. He had punctured his bike, to begin with, so he had to walk. And he crawled along at the rate of a mile an hour,

reading a paper called "The Jolly Joker" as he dawdled along the road.

Presently he was overtaken by a plump porpoise on a bicycle. It was Billy Bunter.

"I say, kid, is that telegram for me?" asked the fat junior.

"No, Master Bunter. Which it's for Master Newland."

"Well, I'll save you the trouble of fagging all the way up to the school," said Bunter. "Hand over the telegram."

The telegraph-boy willingly complied, and Bunter rode on.

In the privacy of his own study at Greyfriars the fat junior carefully steamed open the buff envelope. It was a pleasant little habit of Bunter's to poke his nose into other people's affairs. He rather hoped that the telegram would contain news of a remittance, in which event he would "tap" Monty Newland for a loan.

But when Bunter took out the flimsy sheet of paper and perused it he gave a snort of disgust. The message didn't interest him in the least. He sealed the

envelope again and tossed the telegram into the passage, where it lay for some considerable time. It was found eventually by Lord Mauleverer, and Mauly quite made up his mind to find Monty Newland and hand him the wire. But his lordship was feeling drowsy, and he decided to take forty winks on his study sofa before hunting for Newland.

Mauly's "forty winks" occupied a couple of hours, and it was quite late in the afternoon when he woke up and realised that he still had Newland's telegram in his possession.

The wire was delivered to Newland at half-past five. It was from Harry Wharton, who was skippering the Remove eleven over at Wapshot. The message ran:

"Man short. Come at once.

"WHARTON."

Of course, the match was over long ago. Even at that moment Newland could see the Remove footballers returning. I won't tell you what he said about that belated telegram. It will hardly bear repeating!

A special "Christmas" Supplement next Monday, boys!



The Greyfriars Smugglers!

BY
TOM BROWN.

IT was all Bunter's fault. When anything goes wrong at Greyfriars, you can generally trace the mischief to Billy Bunter.

The fat and fatuous Owl of the Remove had received a sum of money quite unexpectedly. As a matter of fact, he found a wallet full of Treasury notes in Friardale Lane.

Had no one seen him find it Bunter would have stuck to the spoils. Findings were keepings, so far as William George Bunter was concerned.

However, Vernon-Smith happened to be passing on his bike when Billy Bunter pounced upon the wallet, and Smithy promptly made Bunter take it to the police-station. It was claimed, in due course by a local gentleman, who rewarded Bunter to the extent of thirty shillings for his honesty. He wasn't aware of the fact that Bunter had not been honest from choice.

Had the matter ended there all might have been well. But the matter didn't end there.

Possessed of thirty shillings, and a ravenous appetite into the bargain, Billy Bunter betook himself to the village bunshop. Here, he expended the whole of his reward upon one gigantic feed. He stuffed and stuffed, until he could stuff no more.

And what was the result? That evening Bunter was assisted to the school sanny in great anguish. It was the thirty shillings' worth of tuck in his interior that was causing the anguish.

The matter was more serious than a mere bilious attack. Bunter had made himself really ill, and the doctor had to be summoned.

When the affair came to the ears of the Head, that gentleman was extremely annoyed. In his wrath, he issued the stern decree that the school tuckshop was to be closed for a week, and that no provisions of any sort were to be smuggled in from the village.

Ever since the world began the innocent have had to suffer for the guilty; and the innocent suffered now. It meant that all supplies of tuck were cut off from Greyfriars, and that we should have to have all our meals in hall for a week.

And it was all Bunter's fault!

The Head declared that there had been too much gluttony in the school of late. "Some of you have made quite a habit of eating between meals," he said, "and a week's abstinence from luxuries and 'extras' will do you good."

Of course, the Head's decree came as a bombshell. Most of us had been in the habit of having a snack at the tuckshop between meals, and it was maddening to think that Dame Minible's establishment was to be closed for a week. It was just as maddening to reflect that no provisions were to be smuggled in from the village.

But laws are made to be broken, and it wasn't very long before a gang of

smugglers was organised in the Remove. Harry Wharton was appointed chief of the smugglers; and the other members of the Famous Five, together with Smithy and myself, formed the rank and file of the gang.

"We'll go down to the village this afternoon, you fellows," said Wharton, "and buy some provender, and smuggle it into the school. Dash it all, we can't go without the little luxuries that make life worth living!"

"We ought to wangle it all right," said Bob Cherry. "I suppose you know there's a Customs officer at the school gates, to prevent smuggling?"

"Eh? Who d'you mean?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Old Gosling. He's been instructed by the Head to keep his optics open, and to stop foodstuffs from being smuggled into the school."

"My hat!"

"It won't be difficult to bounce old Gossy," I said. "We'll have the grub put into a big cardboard box, with the label of a firm of tailors on the lid. Then Gossy will think we've been over to Courtfield to replenish our ward-ropes."

Bob Cherry thumped me heartily on the back.

"A ripping wheeze, Browney!" he said. "It will work like a charm!"

And so it did—so far as Gosling was concerned. When we trooped in at the school gates an hour later, with the big cardboard box, Gosling was standing sentinel on the doorstep of his lodge.

"Alt!" he exclaimed dramatically. We obeyed.

OUR ADVERTISEMENT CORNER!

STUDY TO LET.—Owner, being in a perpetual state of stoniness, is thinking of transferring his quarters to the Woodshed. I will let my magnificently furnished study—No. 7 in the Remove Passidge—for three guineas per week. (No attendance.) My study-mates, the two Todds and Tom Dutton, object to this arrangement. But, dash it all, the study belongs to me, so I am at liberty to do what I like with it. Prospective tenants are invited to roll up for an interview without delay.—**BILLY BUNTER, Study No. 7.**

STUDY WANTED where I can live in peace and tranquillity. I have shared a study with Claude Hoskins for several terms, but his piano-thumping, violin-playing, and singing are beginning to get on my nerves. I feel I can't stick it any longer. I want to get away from this mad musician to an abode of peace and quietness. Any Greyfriars fellow who can "find room for a little one" in his study should apply to **JAMES HOBSON, of the Shell.**

"I'm 'ere to do my dooty," said Gosling sternly. "Wot ave you young rips got in that there box?"

"You can look and see, Gossy, if you like," said Vernon-Smith daringly.

Gosling shuffled towards us, and we half-feared that he would insist upon the box being opened. But when he saw that it bore the label of a firm of tailors, he concluded that it contained clothes and hosiery.

"All right; you can pass on," said Gosling. "I jest wanted to make sure that you wasn't smugglin' no foodstuffs into the school. Horders is horders, an' my hexpress horders is to see that no food passes these 'ere gates."

"You are doing your duty nobly, Gossy," said Frank Nugent. "Would-be smugglers would have to get up very early in the morning to deceive such a smart Customs officer as you!"

Gosling smirked at the compliment, and we passed on with our secret supplies.

But alas! We had the misfortune to bump into a far shrewder person than William Gosling.

Mr. Quelch happened to be coming across the Close, and he promptly bore down upon us.

"Wharton!" he rapped out. "I must ask you to tell me what is in that box."

Harry Wharton exhibited the cardboard box to the Form master's gaze without a word. Mr. Quelch glanced at the label, but he was not to be taken in by it.

"Does this box contain articles of clothing, Wharton?"

Not being a fabricator, Wharton was obliged to answer in the negative.

"Oh!" said Mr. Quelch grimly. "Then what, pray, does it contain?"

"Ahem! Provisions, sir!"

"Ah, I suspected as much! You and your friends have defied the headmaster's express commands, and I must confiscate this box."

We nearly wept. After all the trouble we had taken, after all the cash we had expended, the spoils were taken from us. Still, as Bob Cherry said, we were lucky to escape a licking.

For a couple of days we had a positively awful time of it at Greyfriars. The school authorities kept an eye on our little band of smugglers, and we were unable to obtain supplies.

However, we were determined not to endure a whole week of comparative privation, and we plotted a deep, dark plot to break bounds at night, and to smuggle an ample supply of tuck into the school at an hour when William Gosling, the Customs officer, would be snoring placidly on this pillow.

Our plot succeeded up to the hilt; and we not only enjoyed a topping midnight feast, but we had sufficient supplies to last until the Head's order was rescinded. So the Smugglers of Greyfriars justified their existence after all!

THE END.

The "Herald" contributors have given of their best! Result: A 1!



By GEORGE WINGATE (Captain of Greyfriars).

A SMUGGLER'S life a century ago was not a bed of roses. He had a price on his head, and he carried his life in his hands, as well as his ill-gotten plunder!

In those days there was a very active gang of smugglers carrying out their nefarious operations on this part of the coast. The vast network of caves near Pegg proved an admirable hiding-place, not only for plunder, but for the smugglers themselves, who used to "dig themselves in" and defy the officers of the Crown.

Personally, I do not envy the wild and lawless lives which the smugglers led. They were often in peril on sea as well as on land. Terrible storms, as we all know, frequently rage off the Kentish coast, and some of the smugglers' boats were none too seaworthy. Indeed, the gang was practically wiped out of existence in the year 1825, owing to their

vessels being sunk during a heavy and unexpected gale.

Captain Roger Compton was the chief of the Pegg smugglers. How he came to be called "captain" I do not know. Probably he had at one time been the skipper of a trading vessel, and at the end of his career in that capacity he turned his attention to smuggling, and organised a gang of desperadoes to assist him in bringing secret cargoes ashore, and defying the law.

There was a good deal of profit to be made out of smuggling. Many of the lawbreakers, in fact, were not only smugglers, but pirates, who plundered stranded vessels. But I strongly suspect that a good many smugglers were in the game, not so much because of the lure of making a fortune, but because they loved a life of adventure.

There were many skirmishes with the Customs officers, of course. The smuggler

was not free to come and go as he chose. The Government officials were very vigilant and resourceful, and they invented all sorts of ingenious schemes to cope with smuggling. Fierce and furious were the encounters by moonlight, on the lonely shore, between the smugglers and their sworn enemies.

Sometimes there were traitors among the Customs officials. They were hand in glove with the smugglers, and rendered them valuable assistance by putting their own comrades off the scent. They would also light beacon fires on the hills near the coast, so that on a dark night the smugglers would be guided safely to their landing-place.

Those were thrilling times! Duels to the death were frequent occurrences; and the smugglers, however much we may despise them for following a dishonest calling, were nearly always game to the last, and when overpowered by their enemies they went down fighting.

It is rumoured that the smugglers of Pegg concealed a good deal of plunder hereabouts, and search-parties have frequently set out from Greyfriars with a view to locating the spoils. Some day we may hear of a remarkable discovery of treasure; but perhaps, after all, the affair is nothing more substantial than a mere rumour, in which case the explorers are chasing a will-o'-the-wisp.

Smuggling has died out long since, both in this district and elsewhere. Some people would like it to be revived, because they say it would break the monotony of existence. But I cannot agree that modern life is at all monotonous. We get quite enough excitement and thrills to go on with; and, for my own part, I am not sorry that the days of the smugglers, the highwaymen, and the pirates, who ran rampant a century ago, are past and dead, and not likely to be resurrected!

MODERN SMUGGLING!

By BOB CHERRY.



Smuggling is not a lost art. It flourishes nowadays, to an even greater extent than in the thrilling days of yore. And it actually goes on at Greyfriars!

Sorry to give you away, Gerald Loder, but do you not smuggle "smokes" into the school? Of course you do! And you have them put into a tin marked "Toffee," so that should a master happen to see the tin, his suspicions will not be aroused. You, my unworthy Loder, are the chief of the Greyfriars Smugglers, and one of these days the Customs officer—in the person of the Head—will tumble to your little games. So beware!

I myself am a smuggler, and I cheerfully admit it! Only the other day I smuggled a tame hedgehog into Quelch's desk, and he got a violent attack of "pins and needles"! Of course, I had to confess to the crime, and I got it where the chicken got the chopper. Verily, the lot of a modern smuggler is not a happy one!

Skinner is also a smuggler. At the Governors' Exam he smuggled a "crib" into the Form-room. Unfortunately for Skinner, Quelch tumbled to his little game, and we had the pleasure of seeing him skin a Skinner!

Four of the biggest smugglers in the Remove had a busy time last night. They smuggled a tuck hamper into the dorm in the "wee sma' hours." The hamper had to be fetched from the bunshop in the village, which was surely quite as risky a game as the smuggling in the olden days!

Perhaps the most notorious smuggler at Greyfriars is Billy Bunter. Not only does he raid studies and smuggle food into his capacious pockets, but he actually tried to smuggle an article into this issue of the "Herald" without the editor's knowledge. Fortunately, however, the printer knew Bunter, and refused to be a party to the smuggling operation.

TREASURE HUNTING!

By DICK PENFOLD.

In days of old the smugglers hold
Left quite a lot of plunder
In secret caves, beside the waves;
Will it be found, I wonder?
Or will it lay, for many a day,
In fact, for generations,
Beneath the ground, and ne'er be found?
Such are my speculations.

With pick and spade, I've often strayed
Along the sand and shingle,
In hot pursuit of gold and loot—
I'd love to hear it jingle!
For half the night, by lantern-light
I've dug and bored and burrowed;
But no success has come, I guess—
Therefore my brow is furrowed!

Ye caves of Pegg, give up, I beg,
The secret you're possessing;
For all the gold which new you hold
Would be a boon and blessing!
'Twould give me joy without alloy
To find a topping treasure;
I'd spend my days in various ways
Of luxury and pleasure!

When all is dark, I shall embark
Once more upon my mission;
I feel assured a rich reward
Will crown my expedition.
For he who seeks, for many weeks,
A store of priceless plunder,
Will surely gain success, 'tis plain—
I'll set to work, by thunder!

SMALL ADS.!

FURNITURE FOR SCHOOLBOYS' STUDIES.—We have a vast variety in stock. Come and inspect our show-rooms. Tables, chairs, bookcases, carpets, etc., etc., all of first-class quality. Easy terms arranged. Come over to Courtheld and consult us.—**THE FLEECHEM FURNISHING COMPANY**, High Street, Courtheld.

IS YOUR STUDY COMFORTABLE? Is it in good repair? Is the ceiling peeling? Is it shedding plaster all over the shop? Are the floorboards sound, solid, and substantial? Has the mantelpiece collapsed? **FISHER T. FISHER**, who has just set up in business as a study repairer, will willingly attend to all these things. If your study isn't a place fit for heroes to live in, come and consult the famous Transatlantic junior.

STUDY FOR SALE.—No. 2 in the Remove Passage. Commands a glorious view of the Close, the Crypt, the Cloisters, the Head's garden, the village of Frigdale, the Nelson Monument, St. Paul's Cathedral, and the English Channel. Beautifully furnished room. Persian carpet, and a luxuriant couch. Bookcase containing dozens of bound volumes of the "Boys' Friend," "Holiday Annual," etc., etc. Quite a home away from home. The price I am asking is One Thousand Pounds (spot cash). I haven't consulted my study-mates, Bulstrode and Hazeldene, in this matter, but they don't count. Prospective purchasers should apply at once to **TOM BROWN**, Study No. 2, Remove Passage.

"WHY SHOULDN'T FAGS HAVE STUDIES?"—A thrilling address on this subject will be given in the Second Form Common-room on Saturday evening, at eight o'clock, by Dicky Nugent. Members of the fag fraternity are invited to roll up in their thousands.

"My Tragic Fate!"—by a Christmas Turkey—next Monday!

TRUE AS STEEL!*(Continued from 12.)*

himself. Coming on top of the accident to his father, that scene in the Common-room had been too much for him. And during the night the Bounder had resolved to forgive.

He stood thinking for a while, and then his face set with determination.

"The—the silly ass!" he breathed. "But—but I don't care. I'll bring him round. Hang the fellows—hang what they say! I'm going to stand by him, whether he wants me to or not!"

And, having made his decision, the Bounder went downstairs.

But such a decision was easier to make than to carry out—as the Bounder soon discovered. In his own way, Redwing was as obstinate—or strong-willed—as the Bounder. He refused to let Smithy stand by him. The Bounder spoke to him—treated him as if nothing had happened. Redwing never answered his cheery words—ignored him completely.

The Bounder soon found himself in a peculiar position. The fiat had gone forth that anyone caught speaking to Redwing would also be sent to Coventry. And the Remove kept their resolve and sent Smithy to Coventry. But the Bounder stuck to his guns. He spoke to Redwing when opportunity offered. Redwing never answered.

The strange position made many of the Remove angry; it amused others. The Bounder cared little for anger or amusement. He went on his way regardless.

The days which followed were wretched ones for Redwing. He still repulsed the Bounder's repeated offers of friendship—yet the loss of that friendship hurt him more than he could have imagined. More lonely and hopeless than ever now, Redwing's sensitive and none too strong nature began to show a marked change in the face of adversity. He became bitter and cynical.

The news from home was not comforting, either. His father's leg was mending, certainly. But the money in hand was running short—alarmingly short. His only hope and comfort now was to work hard for the fifty pounds offered for the prize map. If he won that the money might see them through. If it didn't—or if he didn't win it—then—well, he would leave Greyfriars. He felt he didn't mind even that now.

He plunged into the work with all his courage and energy. The subject was Great Britain—a difficult enough subject for a junior. Always a careful and painstaking worker, Redwing took his time over it, only finishing it on the last day on which the maps had to be in.

They had to be handed in to Mr. Quelch by six o'clock that evening, and immediately after afternoon class Redwing put the last touches to his map and walked along to Mr. Quelch's study.

He was excited and hopeful—more than hopeful. His map was good—he knew it was good—well drawn, accurate, and neatly tinted. He was well satisfied with it. In all modesty, he felt confident nobody in the Remove, at least, could beat it.

Skinner was just coming out of the master's study as Redwing came up. Redwing passed him without a look and

entered the study. Mr. Quelch was out—the room was empty. But on the table lay several maps. The topmost one was an untidy, blotched affair, and Redwing smiled mirthlessly as he read the name in the corner—"Harold Skinner."

Then a map, half hidden by Skinner's effort, caught his eye suddenly. The name in the corner was "Harry Wharton." He hesitated a moment, and then he picked it up and looked at it, his fingers trembling.

As he scanned it his heart sank, and a feeling of hopelessness took possession of him. He had feared Wharton—and now he knew he had need to fear him.

Like his own, the map was perfectly drawn, neatly tinted—an admirable piece of work. But the printing was neater than his—the map itself was better than his. Redwing did not attempt to blind his eyes to that fact.

He stared at it dully, sick at heart. Were all his weeks of patient effort to go for nothing? Were his hopes to be dashed to the ground, after all? He had taken a sporting chance of failure, of course. But—but it seemed to him a cruel shame.

What did victory mean to Wharton? His people were fairly well off. He had no vital need of the money. To him—Redwing—the money meant everything. It meant a chance for him to stay at Greyfriars; it meant good food, careful nursing, no financial worry—perhaps life itself to his father.

He flushed crimson as an idea entered his mind—a sudden thought that at any other time Redwing would never have allowed to enter his mind. But in his bitter disappointment and despair he allowed it to enter now—more, he dallied with the thought.

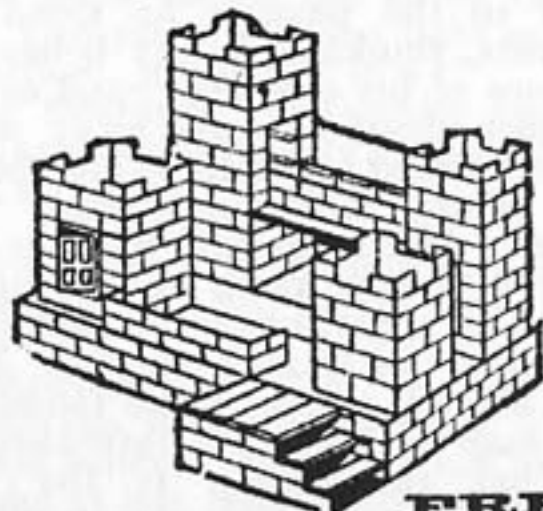
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Wharton. A few careful strokes of the pen, and his rival's map would be ruined; his chance of victory hopeless.

As he stood motionless the subtle temptation grew and grew until it flooded his mind, blinding his senses to all else. Never a strong nature, his mind already unbalanced by recent events, he made little effort to fight the tempter—and the tempter won.

Trembling violently now, Redwing glanced about him quickly, and then scanned the table for a pen. An ink-bottle lay there, but no pen. Fear of being interrupted gripped him as he glanced feverishly about. After all, it would be safer to do what he had determined to do in the secrecy of his own study. Vernon-Smith was out of doors, he knew that. And—

"I'll do it!" he whispered aloud without knowing it. "Nobody will know. Why should Wharton win, while I who need the money so badly will—"

With a sudden movement Redwing grasped Wharton's map and stumbled to the door, his face white now.

Skinner was only just walking away from the door as he reached it, but Redwing was too agitated to note that. He stumbled along the passage to his own study and flung open the door. Dropping the map on the table, he switched on the light.

Then he jumped.

Smithy was there. He had been sitting at the table in the dusk, as he often did. He looked up now, blinking in the sudden light. His eyes fell on the map, and he grinned.

"Just waiting for you, old man!" he said cheerily. "That your map? Here, let me have a squint at it!"

He reached out for the map, but Redwing was too quick for him. He snatched the thing up, with a hoarse cry. He stood with the map in his shaking hands, his face flushed crimson with mingled shame and fury.

But there was a queer, startled look in the Bounder's keen eyes now. As he had reached for the map he had seen the name in the corner; only a glimpse, but it was enough for the keen-witted Bounder. The agitation on Redwing's face told him the rest.

He knew; and as he met his old chum's eyes Redwing realised, with a thrill of fear, that he knew.

There was a tense silence. But the Bounder had no intention of letting Redwing know that he had guessed the truth—little dreaming that Redwing already knew that.

Vernon-Smith gave a sudden laugh.

"Hang it all, Redwing!" he said, with pretended wrath. "You might let a pal see it. I know I'm not a pal of yours now; but you're a pal of mine yet. I'm not chucking you over to please a hound like Skinner—no fear! Look here, I've come back to tell you something."

Redwing said nothing.

"I've just been speaking to Wharton, Redwing. I've heard the details of that affair of the other day. I've learned, with surprise, that several minutes elapsed between the time Wharton and his chums met you and the time they found Skinner. Quite a lot could happen in that time. I'm going to find that farm labourer chap who found Skinner first. I fancy he'll be able to tell me something."

Still Redwing said nothing, and the Bounder went on:

"But I'd already decided I was wrong before I learned that," he said. "I

ought to have believed you, old man. I do now. I know you couldn't have done it. I've been pals with you a long time, Redwing, but I've never known you to do a cowardly action. You couldn't do it—and didn't do it!"

Redwing's eyes were glistening now. There was no doubting Smithy's sincerity. Then the Bounder went on speaking, and there was a deeper meaning in his words now.

"I've never known you do a mean or dishonourable action, either, Redwing," he said, gazing straight into Redwing's eyes. "You've always played the game, and you're going to do so now. You've always kept a clean slate; take the advice of a pal and keep it clean."

It was utterly unlike the cynical Bounder to talk like that. But Redwing knew why. His lips were quivering now. He knew that the Bounder had guessed what he intended doing with the map. He knew perfectly well that the Bounder was "preaching" to him, was pleading with him to think before it was too late—before he did something he would regret all his life.

He turned slowly and left the study. He went straight back to Mr. Quelch's room and laid the map on the table—unspoiled. He saw Skinner still in the passage as he emerged, but he barely glanced at him. He went back to his study almost at a run.

Outside the door he paused, trembling.

What had the Bounder saved him from? Dishonour? From doing a mean, dastardly action he would have remembered all his life with shame? He knew he had.

He entered the study. Smithy was still sitting there, and Redwing stumbled over to him.

"You knew, Smithy?" he said in a whisper.

"Yes, I knew," said the Bounder quietly. "But I also knew you would never do it—if you were brought to your senses. I think you'd better take me back as a pal, after all."

Redwing held out a shaking hand.

"You forgive me, then, Smithy. I've been a fool," he stammered.

The Bounder took his hand and laughed.

"Of course, I will, you ass!" he said.

"Haven't I been trying to bring you

round for days. And I've done it. Hang the rest of the Remove, Redwing! We'll see this through together. Now what about tea?"

When they sat down to tea at last Redwing's face was brighter than it had been for days. He felt as if a great load had been lifted from his back. He had retained his honour. Whatever came now, he would play the game through. He had regained his chum, and with the Bounder to stand by him, he felt ready to face anything.

He little dreamed that, even then, Fate was preparing yet another staggering blow.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

The Blow Falls!

THOUGH Redwing had taken little notice of Skinner when he met him going out of Mr. Quelch's study, Skinner had taken a great deal of interest in him.

He had already seen Harry Wharton's map when he took his own in, and now he felt curious to see what sort of a job Redwing had made of his.

So he hung about outside, waiting, intending to slip in when Redwing had gone, to have a look at it.

But as Redwing did not come out for some moments Skinner's curiosity was aroused. What on earth was Redwing up to?

He sneaked to the door, and peered cautiously inside the room. He saw Redwing standing by the table, a map in his hand. But he was not looking at the map. His eyes were staring at nothing apparently, and his face was white, full of baffling emotions.

Then he saw Redwing stoop over the table, as if searching for something. He saw him straighten himself, and heard Redwing's muttered words clearly enough.

"I'll do it. Nobody will know. Why should Wharton win—while I, who need the money so badly—"

The words broke off, and only just in time did Skinner jump back and walk away as Redwing came out, a map in his hand. He walked away towards his study. Skinner had taken the opposite direction, and as Redwing vanished along the passage, Skinner hastened back and dived into Mr. Quelch's study.

His eyes were gleaming with excitement. He went through the little pile of prize maps with trembling fingers. As he half suspected, Wharton's map was not there. Redwing had taken it—why? In his own mind Skinner had little doubt, and his eyes were glittering now as he left the study.

Out in the passage he stood a few moments, thinking, hardly believing the evidence of his own eyes—and ears. He was just about to walk away when he was astonished to see Redwing returning.

As before, Redwing scarcely glanced at him. And as before, Skinner walked away—to return again as Redwing went back to his study, empty-handed now.

Skinner was frankly amazed. He was more amazed still when he found Wharton's map on the table untouched.

"What the thump is the fellow's game?" thought Skinner, turning the map over and over in his hand. "It's not harmed; and yet—"

Skinner was disappointed. Somehow he felt he had been done. With a disgusted sniff, he threw the map on the table. And then it happened—how, Skinner scarcely knew.

But he remembered making a snatch at

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the map as it slid off the pile; the next moment he was staring, white-faced, at a pool of red ink—a pool slowly spreading over Wharton's admirable prize-map.

"Oh, my hat!" breathed Skinner. He stared for another moment, and the next he had snatched up a piece of blotting-paper and was mopping the pool of ink feverishly. He stopped suddenly as an alarming thought struck him—the thought of his danger.

If anyone came along now and found him there—saw what he had done? It was an accident, he could explain that. But would they believe him? Mr. Quelch might, and he might not. The fellows in the Remove certainly wouldn't. They would not believe him. His deep dislike of Wharton was well known. And he was a competitor for the prize, too.

All this passed through Skinner's mind in a flash. He knew that the Remove master was out of doors. But he might return at any moment.

Leaving the map where it lay, the up-turned ink-bottle near it, he passed swiftly from the room. Nobody was about, it being tea-time now. He went quickly to the bath-room and washed the tell-tale ink-stains from his hands, scrubbing and rubbing until all traces had vanished. Then he went to his own study.

He had scarcely been there five minutes when Harry Wharton looked in. Wharton's face was white and angry-looking.

"Skinner," he exclaimed through his teeth, "you're wanted in Mr. Quelch's study!"

Skinner rose to his feet, trembling, and followed the skipper of the Remove to the master's study. He knew what the summons meant. Mr. Quelch had found the ruined map, and had also discovered in some manner that he, Skinner, had been to the study.

He was right. Mr. Quelch was standing by the table, gazing down grimly at the ink-smothered map. As the master looked up Skinner made a mighty effort to control himself.

"Skinner," said Mr. Quelch, pointing to the map, "do you know anything about this?"

Skinner looked at the map, then he gave a cleverly assumed start.

"Certainly not, sir," he answered in alarm. "That—that isn't my map, sir, is it?"

Mr. Quelch gave Skinner a sharp look.

"No, it is not, Skinner. This map is Wharton's. It was handed in to me personally by Wharton half an hour ago. It was unharmed then," said Mr. Quelch. "Since I left this room two other maps have been laid on my desk—yours and Redwing's, Skinner. Nobody else is known to have visited the study in my absence. Can you throw any light on this—this outrage, if outrage it is?"

Skinner hesitated. Outwardly he was cool, but apparently deeply concerned on Wharton's behalf. Inwardly he was shaking. He knew he was in an awkward position. If it came to a question of taking his word before Redwing's he knew Mr. Quelch's choice. And though Redwing was now in deep disgrace with the Remove, he knew whom they would believe. Certainly not him!

He spoke at last reluctantly, as though he had just remembered something.

"I—I'd rather not say, sir," he said slowly. "It certainly wasn't me, though. You—you can't think that, surely, sir."

"What do you mean, Skinner?" demanded Mr. Quelch, his brow darkening. "If you know anything about this matter it is your duty to speak. Do you know who did this?"



Skinner sneaked to the door of Mr. Quelch's study and looked in. He saw Redwing standing before the master's desk, a map in his hand. But he was not looking at the map. His eyes were staring at nothing, apparently, and his face was white. "I'll do it! Nobody will know!" mumbled Redwing, unconsciously talking aloud. And the watcher at the door heard every word. (See Chapter 8.)

"Not—not exactly, sir," stammered Skinner. "But—but—"

"Well?" "It's only something I overheard Redwing muttering to himself," said Skinner slowly. "I—I had just left my own map on the desk there when I met Redwing as I was going out. I stopped outside the door. I had seen Wharton's map—it was all right then—and I wanted to see Redwing's. I—I saw him looking at Wharton's, and muttering to himself. I'm afraid it—it must have been Redwing, sir."

"What did Redwing say, Skinner?" Skinner hesitated; and then he told what he had overheard—word for word. He also told how Redwing had looked when he said it.

"I went then," he explained. "I was afraid Redwing would look round and see me. I didn't want him to think I was spying. But I didn't attach any importance to it—until now."

Skinner finished. Both Mr. Quelch and Harry Wharton were looking grave now.

"Very well, Skinner," said Mr. Quelch quietly. "Wharton, you had better bring Redwing here at once."

Wharton went from the room. Mr. Quelch and Skinner waited in silence. Skinner's face was white. What he had told was partly the truth, and partly lies. But in that moment Skinner realised the depths to which he had sunk. He had thrown the blame for his action on another's shoulders. He knew it, and he had never felt so ashamed of himself in his life before.

But he had to go through with it now.

Redwing came with Wharton at last. Mr. Quelch explained as he had done to Skinner. Redwing listened in amazement, and his eyes opened wide as he saw the ruined map.

"Redwing," finished Mr. Quelch, "Skinner claims that he saw you in this study with the map in your hands. He also claims he overheard you mutter words, that, if true, are quite enough to prove you guilty. Skinner, you will repeat what you have already told Wharton and myself."

Skinner did so, in a low voice, and carefully avoiding Redwing's eye. As he heard it, Redwing's face went ghastly.

"Is that true, Redwing?" demanded the master, fixing a steely look on the junior's face. "Did you say those words?"

Redwing was silent for a moment; then he spoke, almost in a whisper.

"Yes, sir," he stammered. "It's true enough. But—but I didn't do it for all that."

Mr. Quelch's face hardened. "Very well, Redwing. That is quite enough. This is a matter for Dr. Locke. You will follow me to the Head's study, Redwing. Wharton and Skinner must come also."

They filed out after the master. Redwing was looking stunned. Wharton's face showed blank amazement. Redwing's answer had been so unexpected, so startling.

The interview with the Head was short

"Christmas Chatter!"—by Bob Cherry! Don't miss it!

—terribly short. He listened gravely as Mr. Quelch explained, and his frown deepened as he examined the ruined map, and handed it back to Mr. Quelch. Then after questioning Skinner he turned to Redwing.

"You do not deny having spoken those words, then, Redwing?" he said.

"No, sir; I—I said them," said Redwing, his voice trembling. "But—but I did not do it, sir—I swear I didn't."

"Have you anything further to say—any proof to offer that you are innocent of this—this outrage, Redwing?"

"No, sir. I—I didn't do it, though. The map was all right when I saw it last." He paused a moment, and then he went on with a sudden, unexpected outburst of passion. "I didn't do it, sir—Skinner knows I didn't," he cried, his eyes fixed glitteringly on Skinner's thin face. "He's done it—he's at the bottom of this. He's trying to ruin me, the cad! He always hated me, and now—"

"Be silent boy!" thundered Dr. Locke.

He exchanged a meaning glance with Mr. Quelch. That master nodded slowly. They had already reached the conclusion that Redwing was guilty—indeed, Redwing's admittance that he had spoken the words claimed to have been overheard by Skinner, was proof enough in the eyes of the masters—and Wharton. And now this wild, passionate outburst made a bad impression on the minds of the masters.

"That is quite enough, Redwing," exclaimed the Head, his voice trembling with indignation. "It is futile to attempt to save yourself by throwing the blame for your rascally offence upon others. You are guilty of a wicked, dishonourable crime. I will not allow a boy who would descend to such cruel, unworthy tricks in order to gain a prize to remain at Greyfriars. You will proceed to the punishment room and remain there until to-morrow, when you will leave this school in disgrace."

The Head signed to Mr. Quelch. He motioned to Wharton and Skinner, and those juniors left the room quietly. Then he took Redwing, not unkindly, by the arm and led him out.

Redwing's face was like stone. Expelled—he could scarcely believe it even now. His brain whirled, and he felt as if the whole world was falling about his ears. He walked with Mr. Quelch like one in a dream.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

A Shock for the Bounder!

DUSK was deep in the quadrangle as the Bounder ran his bike across to the cycle-shed. Despite his damaged leg, Vernon-Smith had done what he had told Redwing just before tea he was going to do. He had been to hunt for the farm-labourer who had found Skinner lying in the roadway that afternoon. Redwing had told him where the spot lay. And after careful inquiries round about the vicinity, the keen-witted Bounder had found his man at last.

He had started out immediately tea was over, full of determination to get to the bottom of the wretched business—and vowing to clear his chum's name.

And now he was back again. His injured leg was throbbing horribly; but the Bounder scarcely noticed it. He was happier than he had been for a long time.

For, not only had he found his man,

but he had learned from the man what he believed to be the truth. It was not Redwing who had so brutally attacked Skinner—it was a rascally wastrel from Pegg named Joe Wilks—the man whom he recognised from the description given him by the farm-labourer, as the ruffian whom Wharton and Co. had dragged from Skinner that night on the cliffs.

It was all as clear as daylight to the Bounder now. The brute had revenged himself upon Skinner—and Skinner had lied to revenge himself upon Redwing.

The Bounder housed his machine, and almost ran indoors, heedless of his gammy leg. He went straight to his study. It was empty. He thought for a moment and then he went along to No. 1 Study.

Harry Wharton was there, and so were Cherry, Nugent, Bull and Singh. They stared as the Bounder burst in upon them, his eyes gleaming with excitement. Harry Wharton pointed to the door, without speaking.

"You can drop that Coventry rot, Wharton," said Smithy coolly. "It's a washout. I've just found out the truth of that Skinner affair. Redwing didn't do it."

Wharton spoke then—quietly and coldly.

"Didn't he?" he exclaimed. "Well, what does that matter now? That won't help Redwing, Smithy. He goes to-morrow—"

"What?"

The Bounder gasped the word—conscious now from the looks on the juniors' faces that something was wrong—something he knew nothing about.

"What do you mean, Wharton?" he asked blankly.

"I suppose you've been out of doors, Smithy," said Wharton, glancing at the trouser-clips the Bounder wore. "Redwing is sacked."

At the look of amazement on Vernon-Smith's face Wharton went on to explain what had happened while he had been out. The Bounder listened without a word. When Wharton had finished he nodded slowly, and left the room.

He walked along the passage blindly. He was staggered. Had Redwing actually damaged that map after all? He could easily have done so when he took the map back—he realised that. But even as the thought came to him he dismissed it from his mind savagely.

"Redwing didn't do it—he couldn't," he vowed, clenching his fists. "And I'll prove it—I'll prove it if I have to choke the truth from Skinner's lying throat."

He stopped suddenly, whilst passing Mr. Quelch's study door. Some wild idea was in his mind of rushing in and denouncing Skinner, of flinging his suspicions in the face of Mr. Quelch. Then he became aware that the room was empty.

He went inside—hardly conscious that he did so. On the table, where the master had laid it after leaving the Head's study, was the ruined map. The Bounder picked it up and looked at it.

Then he started. His keen eyes saw something at once—faint finger marks on the tinted surface. He turned the map over. The fingerprints were clearer there—finger-prints in red ink.

The Bounder gazed at them, his eyes gleaming. Then he deliberately tore the piece bearing the finger-marks off the map and put it carefully in his pocket.

He then walked swiftly out of the room and went to his study. He lighted up, and examined the tell-tale scrap of paper thoughtfully. A plan was forming

in his mind, and suddenly he jumped up and proceeded to carry it out.

From a drawer in the table he rummaged out an ink-pad and a sheet of paper. He shoved these in his pocket and left the study. His first intention had been to obtain the fingerprints of every fellow in the Remove somehow. He abandoned that idea on second thoughts. In his own mind the hard-headed Bounder had decided that such a course was hardly necessary. He wanted only one fellow's fingerprints, and he knew where to find him.

He went straight to Skinner's study and flung open the door. Skinner was there with Stott and Snoop. They looked up in alarm as the Bounder came in, and watched him blankly as he closed and locked the door.

"What—what do you want, Smithy, hang you?" breathed Skinner.

"I won't tell you! I'll show you!" snapped the Bounder.

He took from his pocket the ink-pad and paper. He placed the ink-pad, opened, on the table; the sheet of white paper he placed alongside it. Then before Skinner had realised his intention the Bounder leaped at him and grasped his wrists in a grip of iron.

Skinner realised his intention then—too late. He yelled furiously and struggled madly. But he was helpless in Smithy's hands. There was a few moments' frantic struggling by the table, and then the Bounder suddenly sent Skinner spinning from him.

On the white paper were smudges of ink—but fingerprints were there, too. The Bounder picked up the pad and the paper, and, after a glance at the latter, he walked to the door. He unlocked it, and, without another glance at the frightened Skinner, he went out, closing the door after him.

The Bounder went to his own study then, and locked himself in. From his desk he took a magnifying-glass, and then he picked up a book of Redwing's. He searched it carefully, and at last he found what he wanted—a fingerprint of Redwing's. It was faint, but under the glass it was clear enough.

Then the Bounder settled down to his task eagerly, feverishly. He compared the fingerprints on the scrap of paper torn from the map with Redwing's and Skinner's again and again. And at last he rose to his feet, satisfied and exultant.

He locked the tell-tale scraps of paper in his desk carefully. Then he left the room and went along to Study No. 1 once again.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Skinner Climbs Down!

AS the Bounder closed the door of Study No. 11 behind him, Skinner staggered to his feet. He trembled violently, and his face was white as chalk.

He knew only too well what the Bounder's game was. He remembered, with a thrill of fright, that he had taken the map in his fingers, and that his fingers had been wet with ink. What a fool—what a careless fool he had been! He went back to his chair, feeling suddenly sick and giddy.

Stott and Snoop were eyeing him blankly. They could not make anything of the queer incident.

"What—what does it mean, Skinney?" gasped Snoop. "What game is that cad playing? Is—is it something to do with that map business?"

(Continued on page 26.)

Something to look forward to—next Monday's Grand Christmas Number!

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A Surprise Visit!

RONALD SWIVELLER perused his morning paper with a gloomy frown upon his sharp features. He had just reached that point in the news where Jim Blakeney's opportune arrival outside the premises of the rascally book-maker, Michael Menzine, had turned the riotous mob of angry creditors into a body of cheering hero-worshippers, when his landlady discreetly tapped at the sitting-room door.

"A gentleman to see you, sir!" she announced.

"Bother!" snapped Swiveller curtly. "What name did he give?"

"None, sir," replied the landlady. "He merely expressed the wish to see you. Shall I show him in?"

Ronald Swiveller nodded ungraciously, and the good lady withdrew. She reappeared a moment later in company with a tall, thick-shouldered individual who carried a shining silk hat, and whose rather ugly features were creased into a beaming smile.

Swiveller, as he noted the silk hat and the perfectly tailored morning-suit of his visitor, rose to his feet in some surprise.

The stranger waited for the landlady to retire, and then he advanced with outstretched hand.

"Good-morning, Mr. Swiveller!"

Mechanically Swiveller took the proffered hand, and was subjected to a hearty handshake—so hearty, in fact, that he winced as his own limp fingers were compressed as in a vice.

"Will you take a seat?"

The visitor nodded his thanks, and drew forward a chair. Swiveller seated himself directly opposite, and waited for the stranger to begin.

"I expect you are wondering who I am, and what is the object of my visit?" said the visitor.

Swiveller nodded.

"Well, my name—for the moment, at least—can be left out of it," said the stranger, with a peculiar smile that was not lost upon Swiveller. "My business can be explained in a very few moments."

"Indeed," said Swiveller vaguely, "I'm ready to hear it."

"Very well. You see, I happen to know something about a packet of chewing-gum—"

"What!"

Swiveller leaped to his feet. Then, as if remembering that he was acting strangely, and perhaps taking too much for granted that the stranger did indeed know something, he sat down again and waited for the other to continue.

"Ah, I see my statement interested you, if not surprised you, eh?" The visitor's manner was quite polished and friendly. "I happen to know also, Mr. Swiveller, that you placed the drugged packet of gum in the pocket of Blakeney's coat, and that, unknown to yourself, it was exchanged again later for your own."

"Ah!" Swiveller uttered the exclamation

through clenched teeth. This, then, was the man who had learned his secret.

"Don't be alarmed, Mr. Swiveller," continued the stranger. "Your desire to do Jim Blakeney a harm does not surprise me. Knowing what I do of that young cub, I can almost appreciate it."

"Ah!" Swiveller breathed a sigh of relief.

"In fact, Mr. Swiveller, you and I should be of use to each other," continued the visitor. "You are striving after one object—I

HOW THE STORY OPENS.

JIM BLAKENEY, the eighteen-years-old centre-forward of the Middleham Rangers, who is a nephew of

TIGER SLEEK, a notorious criminal, who has escaped the clutches of the police, and who now has designs upon a secret wireless ray invented by

MORNINGTON HARDACRE, the managing-director of the Middleham Rangers.

RONALD SWIVELLER, the inside-left in the Rangers eleven, and nephew of Mornington Hardacre. Jealous of Blakeney's rapid strides into favour, Swiveller has sworn to get the centre-forward turned out of Middleham.

FERRERS LOCKE, the world-famous detective, and his clever young assistant,

JACK DRAKE, are by a strange series of circumstances thrown into contact with Jim Blakeney, who confides in the famous sleuth. It transpires that Tiger Sleek seeks to compel Jim Blakeney to steal the specifications of Mornington Hardacre's invention, and when he finds the lad obstinate, resorts to brutal methods of persuasion. Ferrers Locke offers to take a hand in the case, and resides in Middleham in the guise of Colonel Challis.

An attempt is made to drug Jim Blakeney during the match between the Rangers and Portdale to support the theory that he is out to play a "crooked" game. Ferrers Locke intervenes at the critical moment, and the plot recoils upon Swiveller. Unknowingly, Hardacre's nephew partakes of the drugged chewing-gum, which he had placed in Jim's pocket himself. As a consequence his play in the second half of the match is deplorable, and the crowd is angry. With the fouling of the plot to injure Blakeney, Michael Menzine, bookmaker—the rascal egging Swiveller on—flies the country, leaving behind him a crowd of riotous creditors, who proceed to smash his offices. Jim's timely arrival on the scene of the riot turns the crowd into a good mood, and he is carried shoulder-high round the town, a bigger favourite than ever. Meanwhile, Ronald Swiveller is skulking in his rooms, conscious that someone has traced the plot to him, and waiting for the denouncement. But although Locke has saved the situation, he holds no direct evidence against Swiveller, and so for the time being he is given his head.

(Now read on.)

another. Strangely enough, our paths lie parallel, one might say."

"I don't get you!" muttered Swiveller, who was completely at sea.

"Patience, my dear friend, and you'll know all."

Ronald Swiveller tried hard to pierce the friendly smile upon the ugly face of his visitor in an endeavour to read what was passing through his mind; but he failed dismally.

"You," continued the object of his pertinent scrutiny, "are expecting to inherit the enormous wealth of Mornington Hardacre, when he—"

"Stop!" exclaimed Swiveller, with a dramatic gesture of the hand. "You have no right—"

"Gently, gently!" smiled the other. "Let's have no petty heroics, Mr. Swiveller. I'm speaking facts, and you know it well enough. However, to return to my subject, you are expecting to be a wealthy man one of these days, but"—here the speaker dropped his semi-bantering tone, and an ugly gleam shot into his eyes—"you will never realise your ambitions, should I inform our mutual friend, Mr. Mornington Hardacre, of your share in the plot to injure Jim Blakeney. He would cut you off with a shilling!"

Swiveller was unable to reply. For the moment he was the victim of a passing fit of terror. This man, this suave-tongued, smiling visitor, held the trump cards. He spoke truly enough, however. Swiveller realised that should his uncle get wind of the attempted drugging affair his chances of inheriting Hardacre's money and estates were gone for good.

"Don't get alarmed," continued the smiling stranger, in lowered tones. "If you and I pull together, Mr. Swiveller, both our objects can be achieved. What's more, Mister Jim Blakeney will go to the wall."

Swiveller found interest again in the conversation at the mention of his hated enemy.

"Now you are talking, Mr.—"

"Mr. Martimas," smiled the other quickly.

"Good! Glad to see you and I are going to talk business."

"I'm open to talk," said Swiveller slowly, "because I realise that I must. You know enough to ruin me. But how or where you obtained your information I'm at a complete loss to fathom."

Mr. Martimas banteringly waved a bejewelled hand.

"Don't let that worry you, my friend. After all, it's immaterial really. What I am about to say is more to the point. Mornington Hardacre stands between you and half a million quid. He blocks the way, so to speak, between me and a cool million of the same stuff."

"But—" began Swiveller in amazement. "Don't get excited," continued Mr. Martimas. "It's too early yet to do that. But to business. We can't talk here with safety. What do you say to running along to my place, close by the river, where we

What happens to Mornington Hardacre next week?

can discuss the plan I have formed. There's no fear of being overheard there?"

Swiveller, overpowered by the dominating personality of the man, found himself agreeing to the proposal. Thus it was two minutes later a powerful two-seater car was being driven rapidly through the back streets of Middleham en route for Mr. Martimas' dwelling.

But as the car left the curb outside Swiveller's apartments, a tall, military-looking gentleman, whose face was tanned a deep bronze, detached himself from a neighbouring shop window into which he had been gazing with the air of a would-be purchaser, and darted a keen glance at the occupants of the car.

As his eyes took in the figure of Mr. Martimas at the wheel of the two-seater, the military-looking gentleman, who was no other than Ferrers Locke, the world-famous detective, allowed an exclamation to escape his compressed lips:

"The 'Tiger'!"

Even as Locke uttered the words he started forward, his steely eyes following the rapidly receding car, until they narrowed like pin-points.

"The Tiger and Mr. Ronald Swiveller!" he muttered, half aloud. "What fresh roguery is afoot, I wonder!"

To think was to act with the great detective. Glancing about him he caught sight of a passing taxicab. With a stentorian yell he hailed the driver.

"Quick, man!" he jerked out. "See that two-seater? Look! Just turning the bend! A fiver if you keep it in sight!"

two-seater in sight. To his annoyance it disappeared round another bend in the road, which ran close to the river. When this point was reached by the taxi the detective saw to his dismay that it was a cross-road forked by four narrow lanes. Wondering which lane to take, Ferrers Locke was surprised to find that the driver of the taxi—without apparently looking either to right or left—swung his car into the second lane on the left.

"Hi, man!" yelled Locke angrily. "Where are you going?"

The driver turned his head for one fleeting moment, and the great detective was quick to note the triumphant expression on the grimed features. Immediately that peculiar faculty for scenting danger that had saved the life of England's premier detective on scores of occasions asserted itself.

"That's deuced funny!" muttered Locke.



The driver jammed on the brakes, and the disguised detective leaped to the ground. In the distance Ferrers Locke could see the Tiger racing towards the spot. Recovering himself, the detective darted for the hedge. (See this page.)

"How did this fellow know that the Tiger had taken this route?"

He might well ask himself the question, for only a hundred yards ahead was the two-seater. Even as Locke peered out of the window and observed the car containing his quarry it drew to a standstill.

"Stop, man!"

The driver of the taxi-cab took not the slightest heed of the sleuth's commands. As a matter of fact, he accelerated his engine to its utmost capacity. The suspicion that had begun to form in Locke's active brain became actual fact now. The driver was a confederate of Tiger Sleek's!

"Time I got out of this!" muttered the detective.

Despite the fact that the taxi was now travelling at close on forty miles an hour, Ferrers Locke swung open the door of the cab and balanced himself on the footboard. Perhaps his sudden weight being brought to bear upon the one side of the cab gave the driver some inclination of what his passenger was doing. He turned his head sharply, and the triumphant expression instantly changed to one of dismay as he guessed the sleuth's object.

Unconsciously the driver jammed on his brakes, and gave Locke the opportunity he was waiting for. The detective sprang to the ground, recovered his balance, and jumped the small hedge that bordered the lane. As he ran his right hand slipped into his hip-pocket, to emerge a moment later with a Colt automatic in its grasp.

"Nothing like being prepared for trouble," he grunted, as he raced across the field before him. "That confounded driver is in

league with the Tiger, or I'm a fool. A nice trap I should have walked into—or, rather, been driven into!"

"Stop!"

A powerful voice yelled out the command, causing Locke to glance over his shoulder. Pounding in his wake, not more than thirty yards behind him, was the burly figure of the Tiger, accompanied by the driver of the taxi. A second glance revealed the fact that the twain were armed.

"Stop!"

Ferrers Locke halted dead in his tracks and faced about. His pursuers separated as they observed the Colt automatic in his hand, and slackened pace. But even as the detective turned on his heel two figures emerged from the cover of a clump of bushes, and advanced stealthily upon him from behind.

"It's all right!" began the Tiger, in an apologetic air. "I'm sorry; we mistook you for someone else."

Ferrers Locke smiled grimly. He had his own ideas about the veracity of that statement. He covered the burly figure of Sleek with his automatic, and advanced a few paces.

"What's the game?" he demanded, in a well-assumed military voice. And that was all he had time for. A certain rustle behind him caused him to turn sharply. Two figures immediately leaped upon him, and, overcome by the unexpectedness of the attack, Ferrers Locke crashed to the ground, his assailants uppermost.

"Got him!" roared the Tiger, rushing forward. "Hold him, boys!"

The great detective was hitting out lustily, but the odds were against him. One of his assailants had a strangle-hold upon him, and Locke felt his senses swimming. With the coming of the Tiger and the driver of the taxi the issue was never in doubt. Four to one—and that one taken completely at a disadvantage—were odds too heavy for even Ferrers Locke.

Tiger Sleek settled the matter with a cruel blow that took the detective full in his unguarded face. With a low moan he relaxed limply in the arms of his assailants.

"Meddling hound!" grated the Tiger. "Bring him along, boys. Lucky I thought to send you to attack him in the rear! He knows something—that's evident, otherwise he wouldn't have been so keen to follow me."

Two of the roughs picked up the limp form of the detective and carried it across the fields to the first house in the row of river tenement dwellings that faced the water's edge. Ronald Swiveller, who was at a loss to understand the exciting train of events of the last ten minutes, jumped out of the two-seater. He gasped in horror as his eyes alighted upon the unconscious figure of the man whom he knew as Colonel Challis.

"What have you done?" he panted. "That—that's Colonel Challis!"

"I don't care who he is!" grunted the Tiger. "All I know is that he was following us. Turnley"—this to the driver of the taxi—"get back to your car and beat it. Savvy?"

"Right-ho, chief!" grinned the treacherous driver. "I know nothing!"

The significance of the last remark was not lost upon Swiveller. He turned to the pseudo Mr. Martimas.

"What's the game, Mr. Martimas?" he demanded.

"You'll see, young fellow!" replied the Tiger. "And not so much of the Martimas business—not now, at any rate. My name's Sleek—some call me the 'Tiger.'"

"What!" exclaimed Swiveller, completely mystified.

"Cut it!" grunted the Tiger. "Take him downstairs, lads!"

His rascally companions carried the detective down a narrow flight of stairs, whilst Ronald Swiveller felt his arm gripped as in a vice by the bogus Mr. Martimas, and found himself—very unwillingly, be it said—bringing up the rear of the party.

The staircase led to what had once been a cellar. A stout, iron-studded oak door, that looked strangely out of place in such surroundings, barred further progress. The Tiger rapped upon this door three times, and in response a small panel was slid away by someone in the room beyond. Swiveller found himself gazing through this narrow aperture in wonderment and fear. He had already repented of his rashness in accompanying the oily gentleman who had called

Face to Face!

THE driver of the taxi did not allow the grass to grow under his feet. A fiver for a Middleham "fare" was not to be sneezed at. Ejaculating his willingness to keep the two-seater in sight, and hardly allowing Ferrers Locke time enough to clamber into his cab, the driver slipped in the gears, and accelerated his engine.

The bend round which the Tiger and his companion had disappeared was reached in less than three minutes. About a quarter of a mile ahead Locke, peering out of the window of the cab, could see a moving object in front of a small cloud of dust which he took to be the two-seater. He urged the driver to accelerate still more.

Bumping over the uneven road the taxi appreciably narrowed the distance between Locke and his quarry. The driver of the cab wore a peculiar expression upon his grimed face as he peered ahead—an expression that would have caused Locke some uneasiness could he have seen it.

But the detective, who was peering out of the window, had no time to look at the driver. His chief concern was to keep the

A Quarter Past Seven! Look out for these words next Monday!

himself Mr. Matthews. There was a complete air of sinister mystery about the whole place that got on his nerves.

But there was no escape. The Tiger's grip on his arm was proof enough of that.

The door opened slowly, and the party entered the room.

"Any luck, chief?"

The three other occupants of that underground room voiced the question in unison.

The chief jerked his head in the direction of Ronald Swiveller.

"Let me introduce you. Mr. Ronald Swiveller, of the Rangers—the boys!"

Swiveller found himself murmuring the usual formalities of an introduction—why, he couldn't say. The three disreputable-looking gentlemen introduced as the "boys" grinned sheepishly, and then turned their attention to the inanimate figure of Colonel Challis.

"Bring him round!" grunted the Tiger. "I've got his gun—he's quite safe!"

One of the gang fetched a pail of water, and with scant ceremony flung the contents of the bucket in the face of the unconscious man. It had an instantaneous effect.

The eyes of Ferrers Locke opened, and he blinked about him in the half-light of the underground room.

"Put the bracelets on him!" commanded the Tiger.

The order was obeyed with alacrity by Bill Stubbins. A pair of handcuffs snapped home, and Ferrers Locke found himself gazing up into the cruel face of the man he had sworn to arrest.

"Who are you?" demanded the Tiger gruffly. "What's your game in following my car?"

"And who are you?" bellowed the prisoner savagely. "How dare you treat me like this—me, an officer of his Majesty's Army! Release me this instant, or, by jingo, I'll make things hot for you—huh!"

"That kind of bluff won't work with me!" grunted the Tiger. "I've asked you a question, and I want an answer! Savvy?"

"My dear sir, this treatment is scandalous, unwarrantable! There is no law, I presume, against my following your car? My business was with Mr. Ronald Swiveller. I saw him enter your car, and, as my business could not wait, I decided to follow him. Mr. Swiveller and I have met before—"

"That's so, Colonel Challis," replied the Rangers' inside-left, striding forward. "Please don't think that I have any business with these—these fellows. I was inveigled here under false pretences."

"Enough!" snapped the Tiger, giving Swiveller a shove that sent him staggering. "I'm afraid your tale won't wash, colonel. I've—"

He broke off sharply, and an exclamation that conveyed nothing intelligible escaped his thin lips. His hand shot out, and the fingers closed upon a rebellious lock of hair that fell down over his prisoner's forehead. The Tiger wrenched at it savagely.

A gasp of amazement followed his action, for the hair appeared to part company with the colonel's head. Then another cry of astonishment escaped the other occupants of the room:

"A wig!"

The Tiger seemed too dumbfounded to move. The wig had fluttered to the ground from his nerveless fingers. His eyes nearly started through their sockets as, through the obscuring grease-paint, he traced the outline of the face of the man he feared most in all the world—the man whom he had fondly imagined to be on the Continent!

"Ferrers Locke!" he managed to gasp at length. "By Heaven! Ferrers Locke!"

The rest of the gang crowded back like a pack of beaten curs, their expressions of fear providing a striking contrast to the look of wonderment upon the face of Ronald Swiveller.

With an oath, the Tiger dragged away the false white moustache of the pseudo-colonel, making the resemblance to the great detective even more striking.

"Ferrers Locke!" he hissed again.

"At your service, Tiger Sleek!" smiled Locke. "You've made no mistake. You'll find my card in—"

The rest of his bantering remark was drowned in the flood of imprecations the Tiger gave voice to. Like a wild animal in a cage the leader of the gang tramped up and down the room, his gleaming eyes ever coming to rest upon the smiling countenance of Ferrers Locke.

The detective himself was far from feeling the humour of the situation that his smile suggested. He realised well enough that he was in a tight corner—his life was at stake. Tiger Sleek was as cruel and remorseless a foe as the great sleuth had ever pitted his wits against.

The Tiger ceased his agitated perambulation of the room at last and towered over the prostrate figure of his prisoner. He seemed to have recovered his composure. An evil light played in his eyes, and his cruel lips were set in a straight, thin line.

"Very well, Mr. Clever Locke! You've done me so far, but I know a trick worth two of that! Dead men tell no tales!"

"Just as well for you, Tiger!" replied the sleuth stoutly. "I know enough to put you away for a few years!"

"You know too much!" hissed the leader of the gang. "It's you, then, who upset Swiveller's game with the chewing-gum—ch?"

"Exactly!"

"Good heavens!" muttered Swiveller. "You—you hound!" He turned savagely upon the Tiger. "Then your yarn this morning about knowing everything was sheer bluff?"

"Not all of it," smiled the Tiger. "My own men had seen you visit Menzine, the bookmaker. I put two and two together, and—"

"You cur!"

Swiveller was beside himself with rage. Without thinking of the brute strength of the man who had imposed upon him, he lashed out with his fist. The blow caught Sleek full on the jaw. He staggered back, with a roar of rage. Then, recovering, he rushed forward. His muscular arm shot out, and Ronald Swiveller crashed to the floor like a felled ox.

"The cub!"

(Continued on page 24.)

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Tiger Sleek tenderly caressed his jaw where Swiveller's fist had landed, kicked the prostrate figure as though it had been a sack of flour, and then turned his attention again to Ferrers Locke.

"As I was saying before that young dog chipped in, Mister Ferrers Locke, you know too much. I'm taking no more chances, you understand? You'll leave this world via the window on the next landing. It faces the river. Your active imagination can picture the rest!"

"Your threats don't worry me, Mr. Sleek. I've faced death a score of times. There's only one thing I'm sorry about. I wish from the bottom of my heart that I had warned Mornington Hardacre of your plot. That done, I would die cheerfully. Other hands could finish the work that I have commenced. Your time will come, Sleek. You've escaped the hangman twice. You know what they say about tempting the Fates too far!"

"Dog!"

The Tiger smashed his gnarled fist in the face of his helpless prisoner and laughed mirthlessly.

"You speak very courageously for one about to die. I wonder if you'll chirp the same tune when the time comes?"

Ferrers Locke winced as the heavy fist caught his unprotected face, and he bit his lip to stifle the cry of pain that threatened to escape him. As the pain subsided he smiled grimly, and when he spoke his voice was even and steady:

"Do your worst, Sleek! I'm in your power. I'll show you my quality—it might be helpful to you when you walk the scaffold at some later date!"

Certain Death!

BILL STUBBINS ambled forward in response to a gesture from his chief. "Rope, Stubbins, and some stones. Savvy?"

The burly fellow nodded and smiled evilly.

He looked forward to the execution of the plan the Tiger had hinted at in connection with Ferrers Locke.

"What time, sir?" he asked.

"To-night—nine-thirty, or thereabouts," replied the Tiger thoughtfully. "It will be dark then. Understand?"

"Rely on me, chief!"

"Guard him well, Stubbins, or you'll have to reckon with me! I'm off for a little talk with Swiveller. Ah, he's coming round! I shall be in the room upstairs, should you want me."

So saying, the Tiger stooped, picked up the dazed form of Ronald Swiveller, and with apparent ease carried him from the room.

He negotiated the winding flight of narrow stairs and entered a room on the first floor. There he dumped the Rangers' inside-left in a chair, and poured out a stimulant from the decanter on the sideboard.

"Drink this, Swiveller," he commanded. "It will do you good. You and I can't afford to go knocking each other about."

Swiveller swallowed the liquor at a gulp, and then faced the masterful man before him.

"Now, listen to me," commanded the Tiger. "Forget that rash action of yours—and mine—of a few moments ago, and let's talk business."

Swiveller nodded rather uneasily. This dominating personality seemed to fill him with dread. He glanced furtively around him, as if looking for a way of escape.

Sleek seemed to read his thoughts.

"You're in good hands, Swiveller, I assure you, if you'll only see reason. You will leave here to-day—providing, of course, that you fall in with my wishes—and will return to your own apartments just as if nothing had happened."

"What do you want me to do?"

"Deliver into my hands the plans of the wireless ray your uncle has invented."

"What!" Swiveller stared aghast. "Rob my uncle?"

"Shssh! Not so loud. After all, what

does it matter? Mornington Hardacre, without his wireless ray, is a wealthy man—which means that some day you will be a wealthy man, too—so where's the rub? You can't kid me, Mr. Swiveller, that you jib at the task. You'd rob the next man with pleasure—"

"Maybe," muttered Swiveller, visualising the pile of debts he had incurred and the wrathful creditors already clamouring for their money. "But—but my uncle! I couldn't do it—I won't do it!"

"Think again!" hissed the Tiger sibilantly. "What about the chewing-gum affair? Where do you stand with your uncle when he knows the real facts?"

"I won't do it!" repeated Swiveller, horrified at the thought. "You can do your worst!"

"Ah, another obstinate subject, eh?" grated the Tiger. "Well, Mr. Swiveller, you don't know the man you're talking to. Listen. Unless you agree to do what I ask, you will never leave this place alive. You will join our meddling friend Ferrers Locke—on the bed of the river! Savvy? Picture yourself, arms and feet tied, pockets weighted with heavy stones, plunging headlong from the window-sill on the floor above into the River Twee! How does it strike you? And who will know where Mr. Swiveller has disappeared to? Who would guess that he reposes in the mud at the bed of the river—just because he was a trifle obstinate, eh?"

Swiveller shuddered as the grating words, with their dread significance, penetrated his brain. He could already see himself hurtling from the window, powerless to help himself, into the murky waters of the river—the river which had already been decided upon as the final resting-place of England's premier detective!

"You've got the whip-hand, you cur!" he ground out, furious at his own impotence. "You would drive me to rob my uncle—"

"And incidentally rid yourself of Jim Blakeney," interrupted the sibilant voice of the Tiger—"Jim Blakeney, the lad who has already usurped your place with Mornington Hardacre!"

The well-thought-out remarks of the Tiger touching upon the popular centre-forward of the Rangers had the effect the scoundrel had anticipated. Deep down in the heart of Ronald Swiveller burned a great hate of Blakeney—a hate that would go to almost any lengths to reap satisfaction and revenge.

"Curse him!" he grated, clenching his fists. "I'd do anything to get even with that cub—anything!"

"Well, where's the rub?" inquired the Tiger insinuatingly. "The scheme I have in mind will bring me the plans that I have set my heart upon getting, and will, moreover, encompass the downfall of your hated enemy! Bend your head lower, Swiveller, and listen carefully to what I have to say!"

The two conversed in low tones for the space of half an hour. Swiveller's eyes glowed with a strange, fierce light as the Tiger unfolded the scheme his crafty brain had evolved. A hectic flush surmounted Swiveller's cheeks, and an uncanny laugh left his lips when the Tiger, having concluded, rose to his feet.

"You see how easy it is?"

"Of course! By Heaven, I'll do it! That cub Blakeney will rue the day he ever crossed my path! I'll do it if it's only to get him turned out of Middleham!"

"Or shoved into prison, eh?"

"Gad, yes! A term would do him good, Mr.—er—"

"Martimas," smiled the Tiger complacently. "Good name, isn't it?"

Swiveller made a move towards the door, and the Tiger crossed to his side.

"You'll find your way all right," he said, by way of a parting shot. "But remember, Swiveller, I have a method all my own for dealing with traitors! You know my lair, you know my plans; but be careful of that confidence, unless you would wish a sudden and mysterious exit from this world! I am a man of my word; nothing is too great, nothing is too cruel for me to accomplish. Understand?"

Swiveller nodded. For one brief moment he half-repent of his resolve to assist the Tiger in his vile scheme, but it passed in a flash as a picture of the bed of the river floated before his eyes—the river, with a bound and weighted figure stretched lifeless in its muddy wash!



Tiger Sleek's hand shot out and fastened on a stray lock of hair that drooped over his captive's forehead. He wrenched at it. A gasp of amazement followed the action, for the hair appeared to part company with the head. "A wig! Great heavens!" gasped the Tiger. "Ferrers Locke!" (See page 23.)

Why is Jim Blakeney arrested? See next Monday's fine instalment!

As a distant clock chimed the half-hour a window on the second floor of a tenement house facing the river opened noiselessly.

A glimmer of light from a guttering candle revealed a peculiar scene. Tiger Sleek, arms akimbo, glared down at the bound-and-gagged figure before him, whilst a fiendish chuckle echoed softly over the placid waters of the Twee.

"Is all ready?"

The Tiger softly uttered the question and faced his right-hand man, the burly Bill Stubbins.

"Ay, everything is ready for the wedding!" grinned that worthy callously. "I've weighted his pockets with some fine tombstones, I can give yer my word, chief!"

"Good!"

Ferrers Locke glared up at his captors with a look of utter contempt that penetrated even the thick skins and hardened hearts of the Tiger and his crew. But only for a moment. The Tiger was a man of his word—Ferrers Locke knew too much for his safety, for the safety of the gang who called him chief. Therefore—

"Up with him, boys!"

It was useless for the detective to struggle. He was securely bound; he was gagged. He accepted his fate as only a strong man can. He would sooner have ended his career with a merciful bullet, but it was ordained otherwise.

Ferrers Locke's coolness in face of such a terrible situation moved the Tiger to a momentary pitch of fury.

"You dog!" he rapped. "You think that I will repine? You think that I'm weak enough to go back on my word! You're wrong! Ferrers Locke, take your last look of this world; take your last look of the man who sends you, with his compliments, to the river! In with him, boys!"

The scoundrelly confederates of the Tiger needed no second bidding. They were eager to put an end to the suspense. Ferrers Locke was poised upon the window-sill. Even at that moment he calmly reviewed the position. Before him was a twenty-foot drop into the river, the wall of the dwelling-house running flush with the bank. There was no escape. True, his hands were bound in front of him; but the stones in his pockets would prevent him being able even to float. The seconds that ticked by seemed like as many hours to him. His heart beat a trifle faster, his lips compressed firmly, he braced himself.

Two of the scoundrels, at the command of their chief, pushed the bound form of the world-famous sleuth clear of the window-sill.

Splash!

Ferrers Locke had been hurtled to his death. The faces of the gang, prominent amongst them the ugly countenance of the Tiger, appeared at the open window, the pale light of a crescent moon revealing the cruel lines of their distorted features.

Ferrers Locke was a person of the past!

But a stronger hand than that of the Tiger's had destined otherwise. The sleuth felt himself plunging down—down—down, until he thought his lungs would burst under the terrific strain. He tried to rise to the surface, but the heavy stones in his pockets made that impossible of accomplishment. Then, when the detective had practically given up all hope, he found himself being sucked into a tunnel of sorts. His head bumped against brickwork—of that he felt certain—and then he was swept onwards he knew not where. How long he was hurtled along in this fashion, the world-famous sleuth never knew. Mercifully his senses left him. When he eventually came to it was to find himself brought up sharp by a brick wall, against which the waters of the Twee thrashed themselves into a white foam.

No longer was he compelled to hold his breath, for the water lapped no higher than his knees.

Instinctively the sleuth's hands sought the gag in his mouth, which well-nigh choked him. To his relief, the gag gave to his sudden wrench, and he dragged it clear of his mouth.

He tried to review the position. His senses were returning now, his lungs were drinking in air. At his back was a brick wall; before him, as far as the eye could see, was a cylindrical tunnel; above him—wonder of wonders!—was daylight, or, rather, twilight.

"Thank Heaven!" breathed the detective fervently. "There's a chance!"

He began to explore the immediate vicinity of the brick wall, puzzled to account for a tunnel of the description before him; and then came enlightenment.

"A disused sewer!"

The detective uttered the words in all confidence. And he was right. The admittance of the twilight above could now be accounted for. The light penetrated the bars of the trap grating.

"There should be some steps beneath that grating," muttered Locke, unconsciously talking aloud.

He started to explore.

Wading through the water, he groped for the opposite side of the tunnel. Then systematically he began to feel the surface of the tunnel. A whoop of triumph escaped him when his manacled hands rested upon a rusted metal bar of about twelve inches in length stapled into the wall. His hands, moving higher, encountered another bar.

Exerting all his strength, Ferrers Locke grasped this latter piece of metal, and drew himself up. By the strength of his arms he managed to hang in this position until his feet rested on a bar lower down. The remainder was easy. The bottom rail of the ladder in the trap had evidently rusted through and fallen from its sockets, but those above were still firmly fixed.

Testing the strength of each bar as he mounted the ladder, Locke found himself within three minutes on the topmost rung. His head almost rapped against the metal grating above, but he caught sight of it in time and ducked.

"This is going to be a hefty job," muttered the sleuth, glancing at the heavy grating. "I wonder if I can shift that trapdoor with my shoulders?"

But after five minutes of pushing and straining, Ferrers Locke

(Continued on page 26.)

HORNBY CLOCKWORK TRAINS

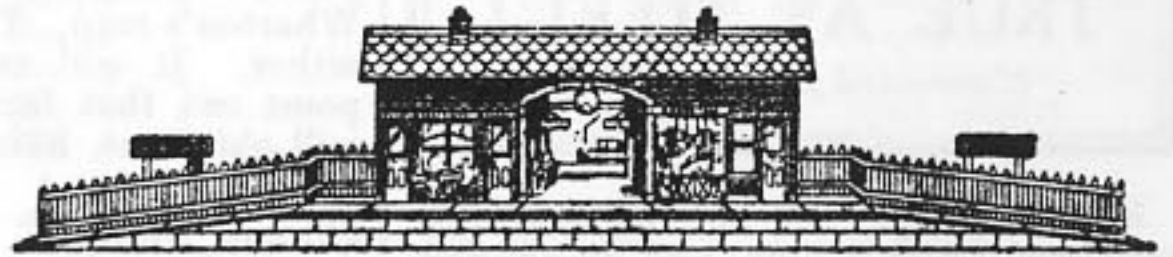
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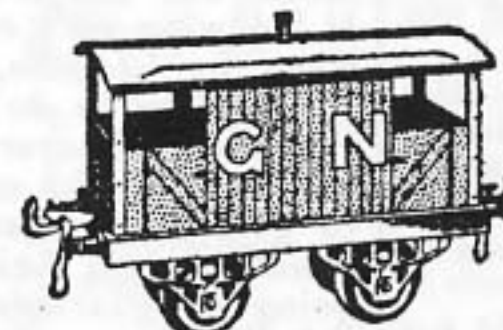
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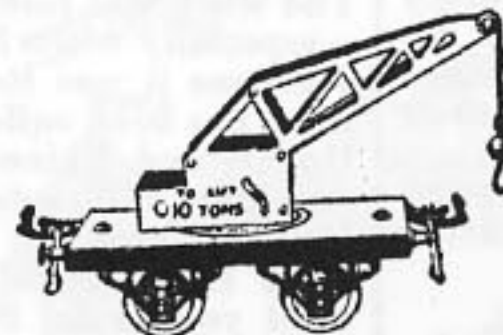
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Ferrers Locke had almost given up hope, when he found himself being sucked in a tunnel of sorts. His head bumped against brickwork, of that he was certain, and then he was swept onwards, he knew not where. (See page 25.)

was convinced that, alone and handicapped as he was, it was well-nigh impossible to shift the grating, which was no doubt firmly wedged through the rust and dirt of years.

"I shall have to wait for it, and make myself as comfortable as possible under the circumstances," the sleuth reflected. "Someone might hear my cries for help."

Accordingly he grasped the topmost rung of the ladder, and firmly wedged his feet on a rung lower down. In that uncomfortable, not to say dangerous, position—for the bars might be rotten, and unable to support his weight for any length of time—Ferrers Locke settled down to await the coming of some-

body. What part of the district the trap-door opened into, he had not the faintest idea, but the fact that it was an old sewer-trap afforded him some consolation, for it was likely to be situated in a main road, or near one.

"Help!"
Two hours dragged by, and no sound reached the detective from above. His strength was beginning to give out, he was chattering with the cold, and his frantic cries for help were now beginning to grow weaker and weaker. Then suddenly a shadow fell across the grating, and it put new life into the sleuth.

"Help!"

The cry rang out, with all the strength of his lungs behind it. From above came a horrified gasp of amazement, and a youthful voice shrilled out:

"The gov'nor!"

After that Ferrers Locke knew no more until two strong hands seized his numbed wrists and dragged him clear of the shaft.

"Thank Heaven I arrived in time!" said Jack Drake, almost tearfully.

(How has Jack Drake arrived at such an opportune moment? See next week's instalment.)

TRUE AS STEEL!

(Continued from page 20.)

Skinner caught the note of quick suspicion in Snoop's tone, and he snarled:

"Hang you, of course it isn't! Dry up! Can't you see it's only one of that brute's silly, tomfool games? Shut up!"

Snoop and Stott could not see. But they returned to their prep without questioning Skinner further. They did not dare.

But Skinner had forgotten prep. His mind was in a turmoil of dark suspicions and fears. Had the ruthless and keen-witted Bounder guessed the truth? And could he prove it? Skinner was soon to know that.

He was still sitting buried in his bitter reflections when the door suddenly opened and the Bounder walked in. Behind the Bounder were the Famous Five. Skinner shivered as he felt their accusing eyes fixed upon him.

"What do you want?" hissed Skinner.

"Go it, Smithy!" said Harry Wharton grimly.

Smithy "went it."

"We want you to do something for us, Skinner," he said calmly—"only a little thing. Just go to the Head and tell him it was you and not Redwing who mucked up Wharton's prize map. It will save a lot of trouble if you will—especially for yourself."

Skinner shrank back, his face livid.

"Better do it, Skinner!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, giving the cad of the Remove a scornful glance. "If you don't, we will!"

"It—it's a lie!" hissed Skinner. "You—you can't prove it!"

"Fingerprints never lie, old top!" said the Bounder. "There's no getting over them. We've got yours, we've got

Redwing's, and we've got the fingerprints—beauties—that were left on Wharton's map. They're not Redwing's, either. It will save us taking 'em to point out that fact to the Head if you will oblige us, Skinner!"

"I—I won't! I won't!" panted Skinner hoarsely. "You—you're trying to spoof me, you cads!"

"Not at all!" said the Bounder. "Oh, and there's another little matter, Skinner! About that queer affair that happened to you in Hawkscliff Lane. We've found out the truth about that, also! If Redwing isn't out of the punishment-room by bedtime, do you know what I am going to do? I'm going to fetch that farm labourer who found you, Skinner, over to the school. I'm also going to give a merchant named Joe Wilks, from Pegg, a quid to come, too. I'm going to guarantee him a safe return if he'll own up as to why he bashed you. The story will interest the Head, I know—especially when he knows that you told everyone it was Redwing, and that Redwing has been suffering for it ever since! Understand, Skinner?"

Skinner did understand—only too well. He shuddered.

"I think you'd better do what we want you to do, Skinney," went on the Bounder gently. "You see, it will be much better for you to tell him than for him to find out through us. Besides, if you do, nobody save us in the Remove need know anything about this Joe Wilks affair—or the affair on the cliffs. Well?"

Skinner looked about him like a hunted hare. He was hopelessly trapped, and he knew it. He did not hesitate long.

"I—I'll do it!" he whispered at last. "You—you've got me! I'll do it, hang you!"

"Good!" breathed Harry Wharton. "Then come on! We'll see you to the Head's door, Skinner!"

And they did. They waited outside the Head's study for nearly an hour. During that time Redwing was sent for, as was Mr. Quelch. And at last Redwing came out alone. He was looking dazed, but there was a bright light in his eyes as he approached the Bounder.

"It—it's all serene, Smithy!" he said. "I'm free! The Head's a brick! He's not sacking Skinner, either! He's to be flogged in the morning!" He held out his hand impulsively.

"You—you saved me, Smithy, as you said you would!" he muttered huskily. "Smithy, you're a pal to be proud of!"

He shook the eager hands of the Famous Five next. Then, with his arm linked in his chum's, Redwing was escorted in triumph to the Common-room.

Skinner was duly flogged the following morning. But that was not his only punishment. The Form showed their disgust at his rascality by sending him to Coventry for a month—a little enough punishment, as Skinner himself realised.

And Redwing won the fifty-pounds prize, after all, and on his merits. For on examining the ruined map the Head discovered a blunder—slight, but quite sufficient to throw it out of court, in any case. And Redwing's hope that the money would see his father through was realised. In fact, Mr. Redwing—a strong and clean-living man—recovered much quicker than even Tom Redwing had dared to hope for. The fifty pounds more than saw him through.

But even Redwing's pride in his success was less than his pride in the chum who had proved true as steel, and who had, by his loyalty and self-sacrifice, broken down the barrier he—Redwing—had raised between them.

THE END.

(Now look out for next Monday's Bumper Christmas Number, boys!)

DIFFERENT TYPES OF TELEGRAMS.

A Special Bright and Breezy Article by
TOM BROWN.

MY schoolfellows have got it badly. Not the 'flu, not German measles, not housemaid's knee, or St. Vitus' dance. They are all suffering from a new complaint known as "telegramitis."

There seems to be a positive mania nowadays for sending telegrams. The humble letter is despised. The picture postcard and its anæmic brother, the plain postcard, are out of date. The letter-card is a back number. As for the telephone—well, everybody knows that it takes much longer to send a telephone message than to send a letter. I've proved this myself. Our telephone system is like the late lamented racehorse called "Tishy"—it wants speeding up!

Whenever a Greyfriars' fellow wishes to send a message to one of his friends or relations, he does so by telegram. Every day you can see a steady stream of Removites pouring into the Friardale post-office.

Some of the fellows spend a small fortune on telegrams. They are not content with a humble "bob's worth." They fill up reams and reams of telegraph-forms, quite regardless of expense.

A telegram should always be brief, pithy, and to the point. But Alonzo Todd doesn't seem to think so.

Lonzy had been in the sanny, suffering from a chill, and his Uncle Benjamin wrote an anxious letter asking if he was better. Now, instead of wiring a reply, "Much better, thanks.—ALONZO," the Duffer of the Remove, in his long-winded way, sent the following telegram:

"I have great pleasure in informing you, my dear Uncle Benjamin, that the chill has now been eradicated from my system, and I have made a swift and satisfactory recovery from my regrettable indisposition. I am now wearing flannel chest-protectors, as advised.
ALONZO."

I will leave it to my readers to calculate the cost of such a telegram!

Another person who is guilty of the same sort of extravagance is Billy Bunter. But Bunter's telegrams seldom go off, for the simple reason that he lacks the "wherewithal" to pay for them!

Coker's telegrams are like Chinese puzzles to the harassed postal officials. His spider-like scrawl, his blots, and his queer spelling are the despair of the postmistress at Friardale. She can never make head or tail of Coker's telegrams, and she either has to call in an interpreter, or a detective who is skilled in the art of unravelling ciphers!

Lord Mauleverer's telegrams are models of brevity. His lordship frequently gets flooded out with invitations to various functions. In every case he wires the laconic reply, "Too much fag."

One of the few fellows in the Remove who doesn't suffer telegramitis is Bolsover major. Bolsover hates telegrams. They are the bane of his life. He became so fed-up with them that whenever he received a reply-paid telegram he always wired back "Rats!" without even troubling to read the message. He took it for granted that it was an invitation to some tiresome function or other.

This led to a very amusing incident. One day Bolsover arranged for a special table to be reserved for him at the Elysian Cafe, in Courtfield, so that he could take a few pals over to dinner. The proprietor of the cafe sent a reply-paid telegram to Bolsover, saying:

"What would you like for dinner?"

Bolsover promptly wired back, "Rats!" And he can think himself jolly lucky that the proprietor didn't take him at his word and serve up rat-tail soup!

One of the meanest fellows in the Remove is Harold Skinner. Whenever he has occasion to send a telegram he runs several words into each other, in the hope that they will pass as one word. Here is a typical Skinner telegram:

"To: Mr. John Skinner, 99, Lombardstreetlondon.—Am desperately hardup so please sendme remittance asoonas possible.
HAROLD."

A cute dodge, but Skinner found that it wouldn't work. The postmistress at Friardale wasn't born yesterday!

I must now buck up and finish my article. The telegraph-boy is coming across the Close, and he's bound to have about a dozen wires for your humble servant.

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