

THE BOUNDER'S WAY!

Powerful Long Complete School Story—inside.

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Week Ending October 10th, 1925.

The Magnet 2nd Library

EVERY MONDAY.

Complete School Stories.



BUNTER ASKS FOR IT—AND GETS IT!

(A diverting incident from the topping, long complete story of Harry Wharton & Co., of Greyfriars—inside.)



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

BUNTER AND A BATH!

A REALLY fine and interesting letter reaches me from a reader in Manchester who can't say enough in praise of the Companion papers. My cham sends along the request that the Famous Five, with Bunter in tow, should visit Droitwich, and what is more, to the point, the Droitwich Brine Baths. Poor old Bunter! Why, the very thought of a bath sends cold shudders down his spine. Heaven alone knows what would happen if the fat Owl visited the baths at Droitwich. One thing is certain—there would be a great splash!

A CURE FOR BLACKHEADS!

S. K., of Birmingham, asks me to let him have a cure for this troublesome affliction. I have often replied to the same question. Will readers cut out this paragraph if they are worried in

this way? The best way is to steam the face with the vapour of extremely hot water. Then the blackheads can be removed without much pain. Brisk friction with a rough towel is required after removal. I think, however, that S.K. should consult a doctor before taking any steps, as he tells me his general health is shaky. A doctor would set him on his feet again, and the facial disfigurement would vanish of itself.

TWO SUGGESTIONS!

A "Regular Reader" wants a story of romance, with Miss Clara and Miss Marjorie taking conspicuous parts. He says this would be a welcome change. What do others think? "Maidstone" says that Loder, Walker, and Wingate ought to have more of a show. He is not satisfied with the noble prefects playing a sort of ashplant chorus at the back. I am pleased to be able to inform my

latter correspondent that Mr. Richards has written a fine series of yarns in which the Sixth-Formers mentioned above figure prominently. And number one of the series starts next week

Next Monday's Programme.

"BROTHER AND PREFECT!"

By Frank Richards.

The opening story of a grand new series featuring George Wingate, the captain of Greyfriars, and his young brother Jack, of the Third Form, at Greyfriars. A winner all the way!

HIGHCLIFFE!

A special "Herald" Supplement dealing with Highcliffe School—an old neighbour of Greyfriars—compiled by Harry Wharton & Co. Well worth reading, boys.

"THE PHANTOM BAT!"

Another gripping instalment of this splendid mystery story, featuring the prince of detectives, Ferrers Locke, and his boy assistant, Jack Drake. Look out for it.

PORTRAIT GALLERY!

Another topping portrait of a Greyfriars celebrity, making No. 7 of this popular series.

(Continued on page 28.)

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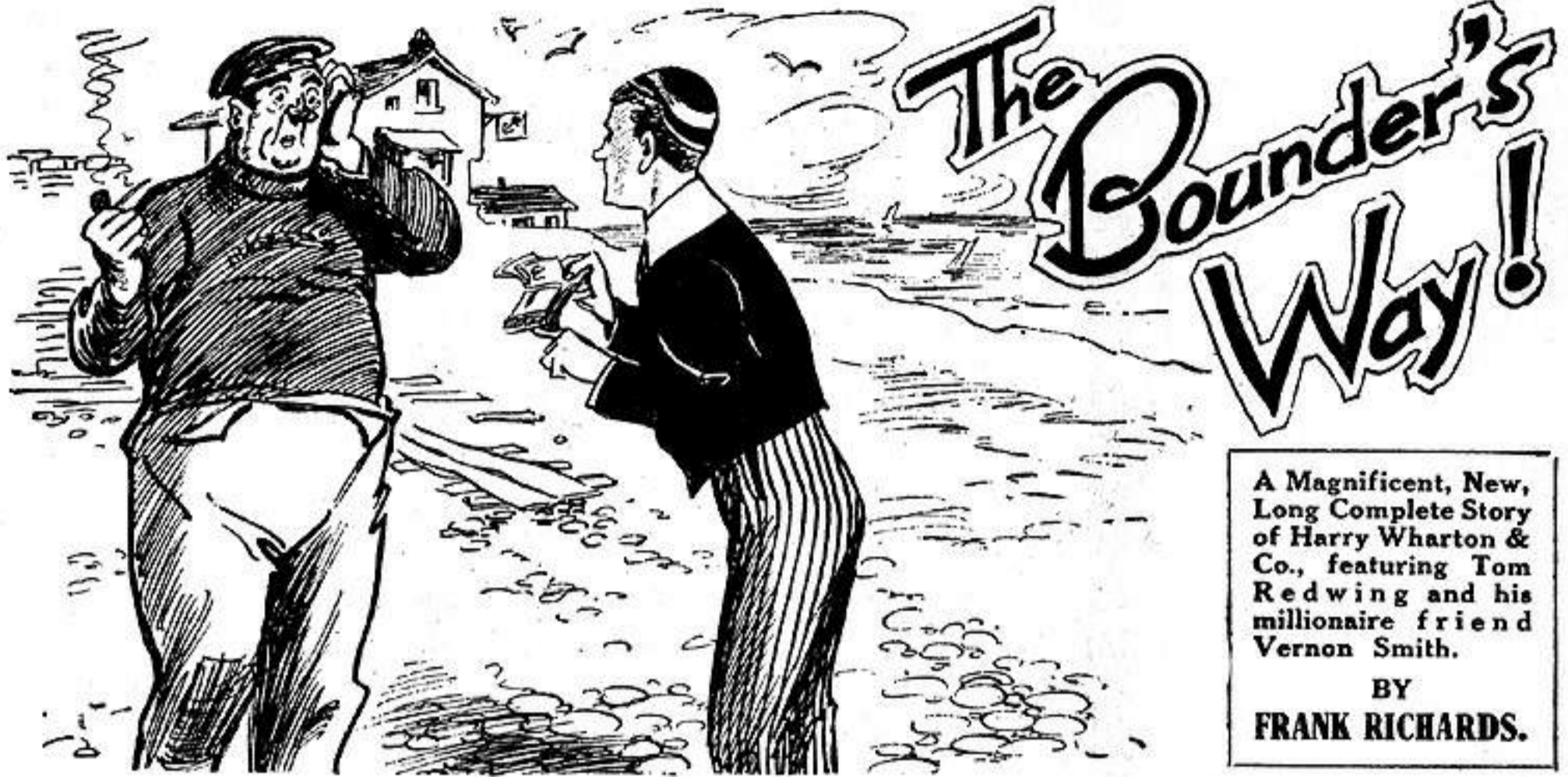
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BY
FRANK RICHARDS.

**THE FIRST CHAPTER.
Skinner's Scheme!**

I SAY, Redwing, old chap!"

"Well, Bunter?"

"I've been looking everywhere for you, Redwing!"

Tom Redwing stopped and smiled.

"Well, here I am, Bunter," he said cheerfully. "What's the trouble?"

Billy Bunter blinked rather sorrowfully at Tom Redwing, of the Greyfriars Remove.

"I'm surprised, and rather hurt, Redwing," he said, shaking his head. "After all I've done for you, too!"

"Eh? What have you done for me, Bunter?" asked Redwing, looking puzzled. "You've pinched grub from me, and you've borrowed cash from me, and you've done me down more than once. But I'm blessed if I know what you've done for me!"

"Oh, really, Redwing—"

"If you've stopped me to ask for a loan—"

"Nothing of the sort," said Bunter, with some dignity.

"Then if it's grub you're after—"

"It isn't grub," said Bunter warmly. "Look here, Redwing, old fellow. You know jolly well what a pal I've been to you, old chap. I've backed you up through thick and thin; I've stood by you when other fellows have given you the marble eye, you know."

"You fat ass!"

"Other fellows," went on Bunter, blinking seriously at Redwing, "might look down on you because you happen to be the son of a dashed low fisherman; but not me. I'm not like that. I'm awfully dem-democratic, you know."

"Are you?"

"Yes. I don't mind if you are the son of a low-bred longshoreman. I don't care a thump how you happen to have been dragged up, Redwing. You know what that chap Shakespeare says—it's not the jacket that makes the man. Well, that's how I look at things," explained Bunter, still blinking seriously at Redwing. "You see, it all depends on the man, Reddy."

"Does it?" gasped Redwing.

"Exactly! It's the man that counts," said Bunter, waving a fat hand. "Now, I like you, Reddy, no end. You're a jolly good sort, old chap—decent, and all that. I usually bar scholarship cads! But I can stand you, Redwing!"

"You—you can?"

"Well, yes; I try to anyway. In fact, I've always tried to be a pal to you, Tom. That's why it hurts so when you treat a fellow like this. It isn't like you, old chap!"

And, dropping his patronising manner, Billy Bunter blinked at Redwing once again sorrowfully.

Tom Redwing looked at him, scarcely knowing whether to laugh or be angry. Such remarks, coming from anyone but Bunter, would certainly have given him cause to be angry. But it was always rather difficult to be angry, really, with the fatuous Owl of the Remove.

The good-natured Tom Redwing found it difficult now.

"You—you fat ass!" he exclaimed at last, grinning. "What's the game, Bunter? What's all this gas mean? You know I'm no pal of yours—and never likely to be."

"Oh, really, Redwing! You know jolly well what I mean. What about this afternoon?" asked Bunter warmly. "What about the picnic? I understand you're taking some fellows for an outing this afternoon?"

"That's so. But—"

"You're taking Smithy, and Wharton's crowd," said Bunter accusingly—"or, at least, your pater is. He's taking you all on a trip in his fishing-boat."

"That's so, Bunter."

"Smithy's supplying a luncheon-basket," said Bunter. "I know all about it, Redwing. I—I happened to hear Wharton talking about it before dinner. You're going to have tea on an island—the Shark's Tooth, it's called. Isn't that true?"

"Quite true, old lard-tub," agreed Redwing, smiling. "Well, what about it?"

"What about it?" echoed Bunter indignantly. "What about me? Where do I come in, Redwing? After all I've done for you—the pal I've been to you! Where do I come in?"

Redwing laughed. He understood now. Bunter had evidently heard about the outing, and this was his little way of fishing for an invite.

"You fat chump!" said Redwing. "You don't come in at all. We don't want a Jonah aboard, Bunter. Besides, even if you didn't sink the boat you'd scoff all the grub. There's nothing doing, Fatty!"

Redwing was walking away, but Bunter grabbed his arm.

"He, he, he!" he cackled. "I know you're only joking, of course, Tom, old chap. I know you won't forget an old pal. You'll put me down, of course?"

"You really want to be put down, Bunter?"

"Naturally—as an old pal."

"Then here you are, Bunter."

Redwing suddenly grasped Bunter by his fat shoulders and sat him down in the quad with a bump.

"Yaroooooh!" roared Bunter. "Ow! Oh dear! Beast! Wharrer you do that for?"

"You asked to be put down, and I've put you down," said Redwing. "Good-bye!"

He strolled away, laughing, and mounted the School House steps. Bunter blinked after him—a ferocious blink that bid fair to crack his gleaming spectacles. He had not wanted to be "put down" in that manner at all. He had wanted to be "put down" on the list for the picnic-party—not with a painful bump on the hard, unsympathetic quad. It was painfully obvious to Bunter now that there was "nothing doing."

"Yar! Beast!" he howled after Redwing. "Low beast! Rotten longshoreman! Beastly scholarship cad! Yah! Who wants to go in the rotten, stinking fishing-boat! Yah!"

Redwing vanished into the School House, still smiling. Three juniors who had witnessed the incident from the top of the steps came down them and strolled up to Bunter as that fat youth scrambled to his feet.

The three were Skinner, Stott, and Snoop, of the Remove, and all three were grinning—until they reached Bunter.

Then Skinner assumed a look of sympathetic inquiry as he helped Bunter to brush himself down.

"Hurt, old chap?" he inquired anxiously. "That cad Redwing been bullying you, I suppose, Bunter?"

"Ow!" gasped Bunter. "The awful beast! Yes, that's it, Skinner; the beast was bullying me—like his cheek! Fancy a low cad like that laying his paws on a gentleman!"

"Awful!" agreed Skinner solemnly. "But what was it all about, Bunter, old man? I—I fancied I heard you say something about a picnic, and about a fishing-boat, Bunter?"

"Blow the rotten picnic, and blow the stinking fishing-boat, and blow that beast Redwing!" snapped Bunter crossly. "Look here, Skinner. That beast Redwing punched you on the nose yesterday, didn't he?"

Skinner stroked his nose, and his eyes glittered. Skinner's nasal organ was rather a noticeable feature of Skinner's face in the ordinary way. But just now it was doubly so—being red and decidedly swollen.

"Yes, he did!" assented Skinner quietly.

"Well, I'll tell you what," said Bunter viciously. "Let's go after the beast now and lick him, while Smithy isn't with him, you know. There's four of us. I—I'll hold your jackets while you pitch into him."

Skinner shook his head gravely. "Wouldn't do, Billy," he said thoughtfully. "But—but look here, old man, it would be rather a lark to do them out of their picnic this afternoon, wouldn't it?"

Grunt.
"And, better still," continued Skinner, watching Bunter's face closely, "to collar the picnic for ourselves, Bunter."

"Eh? What d'you mean, Skinner?" said Bunter, with sudden interest.

"It could be worked easily enough, I should think," said Skinner carelessly. "All we've got to do is to get there before they do and collar the boat, Bunter."

Bunter blinked at Skinner, and then he grinned. Besides being Redwing's bitterest enemy at Greyfriars, Skinner was a notorious schemer and trickster—a fact Bunter well knew.

"I—I say, Skinner," he breathed, "do—d'you think it could be managed?"

"Easily enough!" said Skinner. "I heard Wharton talking about it, too, Bunter. They're starting out on their bikes for Hawkscliff at two o'clock, aren't they?"

"Yes, yes!"

"And the boat will be waiting for them—with the picnic-basket? Smithy's sent that on ahead, I believe?"

"That's right!" grinned Bunter. "But—"

"Well, all we've got to do is to get there first on our jiggers," said Skinner reflectively. "The trouble is that they'll be starting on their bikes soon. If only we could stop 'em—just for an hour, say?"

"That's the trouble," agreed Stott seriously.

"Bunter might be able to think of a way, though," said Snoop, looking at Skinner and winking. "He's such a jolly brainy chap."

"That's just what I was thinking," said Skinner. "I'm fairly beat—can't think of anything. But it struck me that Bunter might—with his brains, you know. He's such a clever chap, you know—hard-headed and all that."

Bunter grinned and smirked with self-satisfaction. He liked flattery in chunks.

"I say, you fellows," he grinned. "Leave it to me. I'll manage this little affair all right! Trust me! What about smashing their rotten jiggers up now?"

"Wouldn't do at all," said Skinner doubtfully. "Of course, if they all happened to get a puncture, now—"

Skinner paused; but he had said quite enough for Bunter. He swallowed the suggestion just as Skinner had expected.

"I say, you fellows," he grinned eagerly. "I was just going to suggest that, you know. Leave it to me. I'm the chap for this job! He, he, he! It's easy enough. You chaps just back me up, that's all!"

"Well, perhaps we had better leave that part to you, Bunter," agreed Skinner. "It needs a chap with brains and plenty of nerve, of course. We should only bungle it, perhaps. Don't you fellows think so?"

"Oh, quite!" said Stott. "Leave it to Bunter," said Snoop. "Mustn't lose any time, though," warned Skinner. "It's getting on for two now. Come on."

"Yes, rather!"

"Better not all go together, though," said Skinner. "You run on, Billy, and we'll follow."

"Getting funky—what?" grinned Bunter. "He, he, he! Look at me, you chaps—cool as an iceberg, you know. That's me! Just as you like, though. Leave it to me, and I'll see you through, you chaps."

With that Bunter rolled away, a fat grin on his grubby features. It did not occur to the fat junior that Skinner & Co. might have an object in not wishing to be seen approaching the cycle-shed with him. Indeed, in his fat complacency, Bunter never gave a thought in that direction. He imagined Skinner & Co. were beginning to "funk," and he was exceedingly flattered at the thought that such usually sharp and "nervy" youths as Skinner & Co. would be willing and eager to "leave it" to him.

He reached the cycle-shed, and chuckled at finding it deserted. In less than a minute, Skinner, Stott, and Snoop joined him there.

"All serene," smiled Skinner. "Not a soul about, old chap. Go ahead, and we'll keep cave. Let's get our jiggers out first, though."

Skinner & Co. wheeled their bikes out of the shed. Bunter wheeled out the machine that belonged to Vernon-Smith of the Remove.

"Hallo, that's Smithy's bike!" said Skinner, staring.

"Well, you don't suppose I'm going to grind ten rotten miles on my old crock, do you?" said Bunter, grinning. "Besides, it's busted. I'm taking Smithy's—save doing in the tyre, you know. He, he, he!"

"Ha, ha! Yes, old chap!" agreed Skinner, laughing. "Buck up and get busy, Bunter. Got a pin?"

Bunter had got a pin, and a moment later he was making good—or, rather, bad—use of it. He knew the bikes belonging to the Famous Five and Redwing, and a moment later the hiss of escaping air was heard in the cycle-shed as Bunter gently pressed the pin home into the front tyre of Wharton's machine.

"Go it, Bunter," said Skinner encouragingly. "That's one!"

Bunter giggled and rolled over to Bob Cherry's machine. Skinner & Co. remained in the doorway and watched with grins on their faces. Five more times came the hiss of escaping air, and then Skinner chuckled at the sixth.

"Finished, Bunter?" he inquired. "That's the sixth," grinned Bunter, straightening himself and turning a fat face towards the grinning Skinner & Co. "I say, shall I give 'em another dose—"

"Yes, do!" grinned Skinner. "Sure you've done in the front tyres, Billy?"

"Yes, old chap—"

"Then we'll leave you to it, Bunter," said Skinner. "Good-bye, old chap!"

With that Skinner stepped back, pulling the door of the cycle-shed to as he did so. The next moment the key clicked in the lock. It was followed by a startled exclamation from Bunter inside, and then a howl.

"Here, wharrer you at, Skinner?" howled Bunter, rushing blindly to the door and thumping it furiously. "Look here, you beast—"

But Skinner did not stop to "look" or "hear." He grabbed his machine, and chuckled as he led his chums away towards the gates.

"Even Bunter's useful at times," he remarked, with a soft chuckle. "I fancy that puts me square for that punch on the nose yesterday, anyway. Wonder what those cads will say to Bunter when they find him in there, and their jiggers busted?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Skinner & Co. laughed, and wondered as they made for the gates.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Pride of Kent!

"MY hat! Why not?"

Harold Skinner hesitated, with one leg over the saddle of his bike, and made that sudden exclamation.

The three black sheep of the Remove had just passed through the school gateway, and Stott and Snoop, who were also just about to mount their machines, stopped and looked at Skinner.

"Eh? Why not what, Skinner?" asked Snoop.

Skinner grinned and glanced about him. His eyes were gleaming.

"Why not do just as we suggested to that fat ass, Bunter?" he grinned. "Why not?"

His chums looked at him.

"You—you mean go to Hawkscliff and collar their boat, and all that?" said Stott.

"Just that!"

"But—but I thought you were only pulling that fat rotter's leg," said Stott.

"So I was!" grinned Skinner. "It was just an idea that occurred to me—an idea to make Bunter do those cads one in the eye. I saw Bunter was waxy at Redwing turning him down, and I knew the fat ass only wanted a lead to make him do any silly thing to get his own back."

"Yes, but—"

"Well, Bunter swallowed the bait as I expected. He's punctured their dashed bikes, and I expect he'll get it in the neck for it. That was all I wanted then. But—it's just struck me, you chaps. Why not go the whole hog? It'll be easy enough as we told Bunter."

Stott and Snoop looked at Skinner in rather a scared manner. They were used to Skinner's "practical jokes," and his mean and spiteful trick in getting Bunter to puncture the bikes of the fellows he hated had amused them vastly. But to carry the "joke" on to the length Skinner now suggested, frightened them.

"Too risky, you ass!" said Snoop. "If you ask me, you've risked enough already, Skinner. Bunter's bound to

tell those cads who put him up to puncturing their bikes as it is. You've forgotten that."

"Not at all!" said Skinner. "Nobody believes Bunter; they'll just think he did it to spite them for not taking him. Bunter always tries to put it on to someone else. Wharton knows that. He's too just and high-minded to risk doing little us an injustice. He'll tackle us, and we'll simply deny it. That's all."

And Skinner laughed sneeringly.

"Well, that's so," grinned Stott. "Wharton won't believe Bunter against us. But how is it going to be managed? Redwing's dashed pater's bound to be in charge of the giddy boat—"

"I don't see it," said Skinner. "The dashed boat's more likely to be drawn up on the beach, or tied to the jetty. I expect Redwing will just call at the cottage for him. Anyway, we can easily find a way of doing down that simple old fisherman johnny."

"But we were going to meet Pon and his pals, weren't we?"

"Yes, and we are!" grinned Skinner. "I bet old Pon will jump at the chance—especially to do down Redwing and Smithy. He hates 'em just as he hates Wharton's crowd. My hat! It'll be ripping, chaps! A trip out to that merry old island, tea, and then banker and smokes afterwards. We can leave the dashed old boat on the beach somewhere afterwards, can't we? It's easy as eating ices!"

"Phew! But—"

"Oh, stop butting, for goodness' sake," sneered Skinner. "Come on, you silly funks!"

Skinner jumped into the saddle. Stott and Snoop only hesitated for a moment, and then they did likewise. They usually did object to Skinner's schemes at first; but they never had the courage to decline to take part in them for all that. Moreover the prospect Skinner held before them was distinctly alluring to the shady hangers-on.

They raised no further objections, and the three rode hard along Friardale Lane, and turned on to the Cliff road. At the cross-roads, where the Highcliffe road joined the Cliff road, three juniors, wearing Highcliffe School caps, were waiting, and Skinner & Co. dismounted and joined them.

The three were Ponsonby, Gadsby, and Vavasour, three elegant "nuts" of the Highcliffe Fourth Form. Cecil Ponsonby greeted the Greyfriars trio with a scowl.

"Late as usual, Skinny," he sneered. "Dash it all, I wanted to be in Courtfield by this time. Come on!"

Skinner grinned.

"Hold on, Pon," he said. "I've got something better on than a Courtfield pub for this afternoon."

Ponsonby jammed his eyeglass into place and regarded Skinner curiously.

"Well, what's the game, Skinny?" he demanded.

Skinner chuckled, and told him. As he listened Ponsonby's eyes glinted, and he nodded at last.

"I'm on, Skinny," he said, grinning. "I'm on, if it's only to score over those cads. Smithy's hammered me more than once—so has Redwing, for that matter. I'm on!"

Skinner grinned. He had been well aware of the bitter enmity between Ponsonby and Redwing and his chum. He had known what Ponsonby's answer would be.

"Right!" he said briskly. "Let's get going then. It's a bit of a fag to Hawkscliff, but it's worth it."

"What-ho!"



"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Skinner. "Buck up and get busy, Bunter! Got a pin?" Bunter had got a pin, and a moment later he was making good—or rather, bad—use of it. He knew the bikes belonging to the Famous Five and Redwing, and soon the hiss of escaping air was heard in the cycle-shed as Bunter gently pressed the pin home into the front tyre of Wharton's machine. "Go it, Bunter!" said Skinner encouragingly. "Now the others!" (See Chapter 1.)

The six juniors mounted their machines and started out, taking the Cliff road at a good speed. As Skinner pointed out, it would not take Redwing and his chums long to repair punctures, and speed was necessary. They reached the little fishing hamlet breathless and panting and perspiring. It was quite a warm afternoon, and none of the six was an athlete.

The little hamlet—merely a few scattered cottages—was almost deserted, and only a couple of figures were to be seen. Outside a cabin a fisherman was mending a net, and down alongside the little jetty was a fishing boat with an elderly man busying himself about the little hatchway.

Though the jetty was some little distance away, Skinner recognised the man at once.

"Bad luck to it!" he muttered. "That's old Redwing, you chaps. He's getting the dashed old tub ready. What's to be done?"

"Leave it to me," said Ponsonby coolly. "Let's go on through this hole for a bit. Plenty of places to hide the bikes beyond those rocks there."

"Right-ho!"

The six mounted again, and rode on through the little hamlet. Just outside there were plenty of hiding places among the rocks, and leaving their machines there, they started back along the beach at a stroll.

They reached the little jetty, and Ponsonby gave the signal to stop. With his hands in the pockets of his elegant blazer, Ponsonby led the way on to the jetty at a careless stroll.

At the sound of footsteps on the jetty Mr. Redwing looked round quickly. He looked a little disappointed as he saw the faces of the juniors. He had obviously taken them for his son and his friends at first.

"Good-afternoon!" said Ponsonby genially. "Nice day for the time of the year."

Mr. Redwing smiled. He was a burly man, with sailorman written all over him, and his bearded face beamed with honest good nature. Just for a moment, Skinner & Co., who had met Redwing's father before, and had good reason to fear recognition, hung back, but, as the sailorman smiled they realised they had nothing to fear.

Quite obviously he had not recognised them again.

"Good-afternoon!" he answered cheerily. "Yes, it is a fine afternoon, lads."

"Tidying the old boat up, what?" said Ponsonby, looking the boat over, and reading the name on the prow. "Pride of Kent, eh? Good name for the boat, that."

There was a snigger from Gadsby—a snigger that made the old sailorman

look up sharply. But Ponsonby nudged his chum warningly, and went on again quickly:

"I suppose you wouldn't care to hire us the old tub for the afternoon, my man?" he inquired blandly.

Mr. Redwing shook his head.

"I've already got a job on this afternoon, young gentlemen," he said, looking at Skinner & Co. and smiling. "My son, Tom Redwing, is a scholar at Greyfriars, like these young gentlemen. I'm taking him and some of his friends out to Shark's Tooth on a picnic."

"I know him," said Ponsonby, nodding. "Well, our luck's out, you chaps. Come on. Good-after—"

Ponsonby was turning away, when he stopped.

"By the way," he said, smiling genially, "if you happen to be waiting for Tom Redwing now—"

"I am, sir. I expected him and his friends before this," said Redwing senior. "But I suppose—"

"I asked," said Ponsonby, "because we passed him and some more chaps from Greyfriars outside a cottage up in the village there. Looked to me as if he was waiting for someone."

"Oh, absolutely!" said Vavasour, nodding.

"Oh!" said Mr. Redwing. "That's it, then!" He jumped on to the jetty. "He'll be waiting for me, of course, young gentlemen. I expected he'd come right along here. I'd better go up to the cottage."

"I should," said Ponsonby. "Good-afternoon!"

Ponsonby turned away, and his chums followed him, trying to hide their grins. The simple fisherman, never dreaming that Ponsonby had lied, returned a hearty "Good-afternoon, lads!" and hurried away.

"Good man, Pon!" chuckled Gadsby.

"I thought that would do it," grinned Ponsonby. "Simple, innocent old codger, isn't he? We'll stroll on for a bit until he's out of sight."

"Where is the dashed cottage?" grinned Stott.

"You can't see it from here—luckily," said Ponsonby. "It's just beyond that row of rotten hovels there. Hallo! Now we're right!"

As Ponsonby spoke the upright figure of Mr. Redwing vanished behind the row of "rotten hovels," as the elegant Ponsonby called them.

In a flash Ponsonby was hurrying back to the jetty with his grinning chums at his heels. Ponsonby, as usual, had quite taken charge of the affair, and Skinner, secretly, was only too glad to let him take charge. It occurred to Skinner now that if Mr. Redwing remembered any faces he would remember Ponsonby's first.

A quick glance round showed not a soul in sight along the sea-wall or beyond, and the juniors swarmed aboard the *Pride of Kent*. Despite Ponsonby & Co.'s sneers, the fishing boat was far from being an "old tub," and it was certainly tidy and as clean as a new pin.

"Buck up!" urged Skinner, rather nervously. "Let's get far out before that old bounder finds he's been diddled, and comes back."

"Hallo, getting the breeze up, Skinny?" grinned Ponsonby. "What if he does spot us? He can prove nothing, neither can Wharton's lot; they can only suspect. Matter of fact, I jolly well hope the cads do suspect us," added the Highcliffe junior viciously. "That's what I want—to do the cads down, and for 'em to guess we've done 'em down!"

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"But if they prove it—"

"Oh, dry up, you funk! Heave-ho, my hearties! Up with the rotten old sail, chaps!"

"Oh, absolutely!"

Skinner, anxious to get clear of danger, grabbed a boat-hook, and pushed off desperately, aided by Snoop armed with an oar. The *Pride of Kent* rolled and pitched away from the jetty, and Ponsonby took charge of the tiller, whilst Gadsby, Vavasour, and Stott struggled with the big mainsail.

All three had many a time and oft been sailing in Pegg Bay, but they were by no means skilful sailors. They got the sail up at last, however, after much struggling and panting, and the *Pride of Kent* all but capsized as she heeled over and forged away seawards.

"My hat!" gasped Skinner, who was looking rather white. "If you idiots can't handle a dashed sail better than that you'd better leave the dashed thing alone."

"Skinny's got the breeze up badly," grinned the Highcliffe leader. "It's all serene now, the giddy wind's with us, luckily, and we'll soon be well away."

Skinner scowled. As a matter of fact, the cad of the *Remove* was already regretting the expedition, not only because he felt that the fishing-boat was a little more than they could safely handle, but for other reasons. Mr. Redwing might have recognised them, after all. And it was pretty certain that Harry Wharton & Co. would guess they were the fellows who had played the trick, especially after the suspicious puncturing of their tyres at Greyfriars. Ponsonby & Co. were, perhaps, safe enough, but Skinner & Co. belonged to Greyfriars, and Skinner did not feel at all safe now.

"Oh, dry up, Pon!" snarled Skinner. "Why should I funk it, when I suggested the trip? Look here, blessed if I can see any picnic-basket."

"My hat!"

None of the juniors had thought of that until now. They glanced about the boat, but saw no signs of a basket. Skinner rummaged in the tiny cabin, but found not a scrap of food on board.

"That's mucked up the whole wheeze," said Stott glumly.

"Blow the grub!" said Ponsonby. "We'll have an hour or two at the cards, and then we'll run back and shove this old tub ashore somewhere round by the Shoulder there. Jove, we're moving now!"

"Yes, rather!"

The *Pride of Kent* was moving—there was no doubt about that. She snorted over the crisp waves, burying her nose again and again, and sending showers of stinging spray over the juniors crouching in the well. They were well beyond the looming mass of the rocky Shoulder now, and Shark's Tooth was in sight—a rocky islet, bare and desolate, and almost surrounded by jagged, half-submerged rocks.

Skinner and several of the juniors eyed it somewhat dubiously as the fishing-boat drove on through the dancing, sparkling waves towards it.

"I say," said Skinner at last. "It's a jolly dangerous place to approach, I believe, Pon. Treacherous rocks all round it, and our chaps always give it a wide berth. Better go carefully!"

"Rot!" said Ponsonby easily. "I can handle a blessed old tub like this, don't you worry! We'll work round to the seaward side, though—no place to land this side."

But none of the others, to judge by their faces, shared Ponsonby's confidence. They watched rather

anxiously as the rocky islet loomed larger. Rounding the island, the craft once again narrowly escaped capsizing, but they got it round at last, and Skinner breathed deeply in relief as he pointed to a tiny stretch of golden sands.

"There you are, Pon!" he muttered. "Better have the dashed sail down now, what?"

"Plenty of time, you ass!" grinned Ponsonby. "I'll tell you when!"

The *Pride of Kent* heeled over and slid towards the stretch of beach at a good speed, and suddenly Ponsonby gave a yell.

"Down with it, chaps!"

Skinner & Co. were only too glad to obey the command. They jumped to obey, and then the trouble started. Try as they would, they could not get the sail down.

"The dashed block's jammed or something!" yelled Skinner, tugging desperately at the ropes. "Oh, my hat! Turn her out again, Pon, you fool! Oh, look out!"

Even as Skinner shouted to Ponsonby his eyes glimpsed something in the blue water ahead—a sunken, ugly snag clearly seen in the water, and his voice ended in a shriek that was drowned in a harsh, grinding crash.

Crash!

The boat struck, rose, and fell again with a sickening lurch, amid a grinding of timbers and yells of fear from its occupants, and then she heeled over drunkenly, flinging the juniors over in a struggling heap.

THE THIRD CHAPTER

A Startling Discovery!

"OH crumbs!" groaned Billy Bunter, in dismay.

He stared at the closed door of the cycle-shed with feelings almost too deep for words as he realised how Skinner & Co. had tricked him.

For some moments he hammered away at the doors until he heard the footsteps of the treacherous trio die away, and then he gave it up, fuming with wrath and indignation.

He saw it all now—or thought he did. Skinner had tricked him into doing their dirty work for them—leaving him to face the music while they went off to collar the boat and the picnic-basket for themselves.

"Oh, the awful beasts!" repeated Bunter. "Those other beasts will come along soon, and they'll find me here and know I've punctured their bikes. Oh dear!"

Bunter rolled over to the window of the shed, and blinked out dismally. The window was small and did not open, and his only hope now was that someone would come along before Redwing and his chums—someone who would let him out of his incriminating position.

Bunter's luck was out, however.

As he blinked out of the window he spotted seven juniors crossing towards the cycle-shed. He groaned as he recognised them as Wharton, Cherry, Bull, Nugent, Hurree Singh, Vernon-Smith, and Redwing.

"Just my luck!" groaned the fat junior. "Oh crikey! What am I to tell 'em?"

He blinked about him desperately, and suddenly seeing a huge packing-case at the far end of the shed, he rolled quickly over to it.

As he hoped, the case was empty, and Bunter swiftly turned it on one side. Then, crouching down, he pulled the case over him.

It was not an easy task, and the result was a very tight fit, and most

uncomfortable to Bunter. But it hid him, and that was what the fat junior worried about at the moment.

Gasping and quaking, the fat youth crouched in the darkness of this case, and the next instant a voice came faintly to his ears from outside—Smithy's voice.

"Hallo! Who the thump's got my dashed jigger out—"

There followed a murmur of voices, and then the key rattled in the door of the shed, and the voices became suddenly louder.

"The same chap locked the silly door who shoved your bike out, I expect, Smithy," Harry Wharton was saying. "Sure you didn't get it out yourself?"

"Of course I didn't!" said Vernon-Smith. "Some silly ass playing a silly game, I suppose."

"It's queer, certainly!" said Wharton. "Anyhow, let's have the bikes out, chaps!"

The Famous Five and Redwing and the Bounder swarmed into the shed, and there was a rattling of machines—followed by a chorus of angry remarks that made Bunter quake.

"Hallo! Oh, blow it! My front tyre's down!"

"So's mine!"

"And mine!"

"That's queer, you chaps," chimed in Harry Wharton. "My front tyre's flat, too! Who the thump—"

"Some silly ass playing tricks," grunted Bob Cherry. "Yours down, too, Reddy?"

Redwing nodded.

"Mine also!" added Hurreo Jamset Singh. "The flatfulness is terrific, my esteemed chums. Someone has been playing the absurd trick jokefully."

"Half a minute," said Harry Wharton suspiciously. "This looks queer, chaps!"

He leaned his machine against the wall of the shed, and started to pump up his front tyre. He very soon discovered what he had half feared—that the tyre was punctured.

"Try your tyres, chaps," said Harry grimly.

"Yes, rather!"

There was a general reaching for pumps, and soon all the juniors except Wharton and Smithy were hard at work pumping. Like the captain of the Remove, they soon found the uselessness of pumping.

"Well, my hat!"

"This is the giddy limit!"

"Who's done it?"

"That's the question," said Harry Wharton quietly. "It's not just coincidence when six bikes are discovered to be punctured."

He tried the tyres of several other machines in the shed, but none appeared to have suffered except their own.

"Only yours has escaped, Smithy," said Bob Cherry, "and that was outside the giddy shed. Here's a mystery, if you like!"

"Phew!"

"Who is the cad?" breathed Frank Nugent. "Someone who wanted to muck up our afternoon's trip—that's clear. Can it be Bunter? He was waxy because he couldn't join us, you know."

"Well, he might have done it out of spite," said Harry, doubtfully. "But he'd scarcely dare, on his own, anyway. Oh, blow it! No good standing grousing, though. Let's make a start at mending the dashed things."

"Blow it!"

"Yes, rather!" said Bob Cherry with a snort. "If I ever get my fists on the cad who did it—"



"Oh—look out!" Skinner's cry of warning came too late. Crash! The boat struck the snag, rose and fell again with a sickening lurch, amid a grinding of timbers and yells of fears from its occupants. Then she heeled over drunkenly, flinging the juniors over in a struggling heap! (See Chapter 2.)

Bob gave a blood-curdling growl, and turned his machine upside down to start operations. His chums did likewise with many growls and threats against the unknown miscreant who had caused the trouble. Eager to help the unfortunates, the Bounder hurried away for a bucket of water.

"Might as well sit down on the job," said Bob Cherry, who was a fellow who always tried to make life easy when he could. "Here we are."

Bob grabbed hold of the packing-case. Though very wide, it was rather flat, and Bob thought it would make a good seat. He sat down on it. The next moment, however, he had jumped up as if the box were red-hot, as a startled yelp rang out.

"Mum-my hat!" gasped Bob.

"What the thump—"

His chums had also heard that yelp of pain, and they stared at the box aghast.

"Something alive inside it!" gasped Frank Nugent. "It almost sounded like a pig. Hark!"

From the box came the sound of heavy breathing and a series of muffled grunts. Billy Bunter, though knowing he was on the verge of being discovered, could not help breathing heavily and grunting. It was stifling inside the box, and in

addition to being cramped, the fat junior was almost suffocated.

Quite suddenly Bob Cherry gave a chuckle, and grasped the box again. This time he gave a hefty heave, and up-ended it.

Bump, bump!

"Yaroooooh!"

"My hat!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Bunter!" bawled Bob Cherry. "I thought so."

"Great pip!"

"I say, you fellows—"

It was Bunter, as the juniors saw now. After rolling over, howling, Billy Bunter sat up, and blinked up in alarm at the chums of the Remove.

"Ow! Ow-wow!" he gasped. "Ow! You careless beast, Bob Cherry! You pulled me over like that on purpose. You've nearly busted my back, and jolly nearly broken my spectacles."

"You—you fat ass—"

"I say, you fellows—" gasped Bunter, blinking up at the startled juniors in a scared way. "It—it's all right, you know. If you think I punctured your bikes, you're jolly well mistaken, you know."

"Oh!"

"In fact, I know nothing at all about THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 922.

it," explained Bunter cautiously. "In fact, I don't even know your bikes are punctured. So—so you needn't ask me about it!"

"Oh, needn't we?" said Harry Wharton grimly.

"Certainly not! I know nothing at all about it. I'm innocent. Never even knew your front tyres were punctured! I—I say, you fellows, I can't stop now; got to meet—to—to meet my minor."

Billy Bunter scrambled to his feet and started for the doorway. He gave a yelp as Bob Cherry's powerful grasp closed on his fat arm. All the juniors were looking grim now. As usual, Billy Bunter had given himself away by being so eager to deny knowledge of the crime.

"Hold on, you fat clam!" snorted Bob wrathfully. "So it was you, after all, you—you fat rascal!"

"I—I say, you fellows—"

Without warning, Bunter broke off, and, wrenching his arm free, he made a leap for the doorway. At the same moment Vernon-Smith appeared there with a bucket of water in his hand.

Bump! Splash, splash!

"Yooop!" roared Bunter.

The two collided with terrific force, and Bunter yelped once, and then again, as half the contents of the bucket splashed out over his waistcoat and his legs.

"You careless idiot!" roared Vernon-Smith.

He grabbed Bunter with his free hand, and raised his boot.

"Hold the fat rotter!" yelled Bob Cherry. "He's the cad who punctured our bikes, Smithy!"

"Oh, is he?" ejaculated the Bounder. "Then I'll let him have the rest of the water!"

Swoosh!

The Bounder calmly emptied the bucket over Bunter.

Bunter sat down with a bump and a spluttering roar.

"Ow! Groooh! Ow! Beasts! Oh! Grooooooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Angry as they were, the juniors could not help laughing at the dismal sight Billy Bunter presented. He sat on the ground and gasped and spluttered as if for a wager.

"Ow!" he managed to articulate at last. "Ow! Ow-wow! Oh, you awful beast, Smithy! Oh, I'm wet—drenched through! Groooh! Oh, you rotters!"

"It serves you jolly well right, Bunter," said Harry Wharton, ceasing to laugh. "We might have guessed that you were the cad who punctured our bikes. I suppose you did it out of spite, because Redwing turned you down this afternoon?"

"Beasts!" howled Bunter, blinking up wrathfully. "Don't I keep telling you I didn't do it. It wasn't me, I tell you. I know nothing about it, you awful beasts! Besides, Skinner made me do it!"

"Oh!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "Skinner made you do it, did he?"

"Not at all!" gasped Bunter in sudden alarm. "D-dud-did I say that? Quite a mistake. I mean I know nothing at all about it, honour bright. Oh dear!"

"What's the good of telling fibs?" snorted Johnny Bull. "Of course, you did it, you fat worm! It's no good trying to put it on someone else, either."

"Hold on!" said Harry. "There's one thing wants explaining, chaps. If Bunter did it, how came he locked up in the blessed shed? He couldn't have locked himself in."

"My hat!"

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The juniors stared at Bunter. That fat junior scrambled up, his eyes fairly glittering behind his big glasses. It certainly did need some explaining.

"I say, you fellows—" gasped Bunter, groaning. "It—it was Skinner, you know. He made me do it, and then he locked me in, the awful rotter! Ow-yow! It wasn't my fault in any way. Besides, I didn't do it at all. Now lemme go, you beasts! I'm wet!"

"You fat worm—"

"Oh, really Bull— I say, you fellows, you'd better be quick, and go after old Skinner before he collars that boat, and does you out of the picnic!"

"Eh, what's that?"

"That's Skinner's game," groaned Bunter. "He made me puncture your bikes so that he could collar the boat at Hawkscliff, and pinch the picnic, you know. He'll do it if you're not jolly slippery. Ow! Ow-yow! I'm wet!"

"Oh, let the fat ass go!" snapped Harry Wharton impatiently. "Let's get these punctures mended and get off. We can talk to the fat rotter later about this."

"My hat!" said Nugent in alarm. "You think the fat rotter's telling the truth, Harry?"

"I'm blessed if I know what to think," said Harry crossly. "I certainly believe that Skinner's at the bottom of this rotten trick. But—but it's all rot about Skinner collaring the boat, of course. He's just stuffed Bunter up to get him to puncture our bikes out of sheer spite. I expect he promised Bunter a look-in at the picnic."

"And then double-crossed him," grinned Bob Cherry. "Well, my hat! Just like Skinner!"

"Just!" said Harry. "We'll talk to Skinner about this to-night, chaps. Now let's get these thumping punctures mended, blow 'em! Kick that fat ass out, someone."

"Yaroooh!"

Bob Cherry made a move towards Bunter, but the Owl did not wait. He fairly flew, howling before he was touched, and vanished behind the chapel at a rare pace.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Wrecked!

NEVER in their lives had Ponsonby & Co. and Skinner & Co. been so terrified as when the *Pride of Kent* struck the snag off Shark's Tooth Island.

For some moments there was a scene of wild panic as the juniors struggled in the bottom of the straining, lurching boat, which was heeling over now at a dangerous angle, her sail almost in the water.

Then, to make matters worse—or rather, to add to their panic—Ponsonby's wild grasp closed suddenly on a rope, and, as his weight swung upon it, what the juniors had been trying to bring about when the boat struck, happened.

The large mainsail came down with a rush, half of it into the foamy water, and half of it enveloping the struggling juniors.

Ponsonby and his companions almost howled with fear.

Already they felt their feet and ankles covered in water, and they expected the boat to sink under their feet at every passing second.

But it did not sink. After that first grinding crash, the boat had slid off the rock on to a shelving bank of sand, and now it was hard and fast there.

The frightened juniors discovered this when the boat became motionless, and they ceased to yell, and drew in deep breaths of relief.

"It—it's all right, you fellows," panted Ponsonby, whose face was almost green. "We've run off the rock on to a sandbank or something. Look!"

He pointed to the clear water, through which yellow sand could be discerned, scarcely three feet below the surface. It was an exceedingly fortunate thing for the shady adventurers that that sandbank had been there, for several of them could not swim a stroke.

"Oh, thank goodness!" mumbled Skinner, who was scarcely able to speak. "I—I thought we were done that time."

"We're all right so far," said Ponsonby, who was recovering his nerve rapidly. "The tide's at its highest now. My hat!" he went on eagerly, glancing about him. "I believe we can get ashore from here along that reef!"

"Oh, absolutely!" breathed Vavasour. It certainly looked possible. Some yards away was a long reef of rock, jagged and broken, but stretching to the rocky marge of Shark's Tooth Island. And in between them and the reef was only a dozen yards of water whose sandy bottom was clearly visible.

"We can wade it easily," said Skinner, licking his lips. "Hadn't we better do it now?"

"Yes, rather!"

The water was quite calm here, sheltered as it was by the reef, and the juniors lost no time in leaving the wrecked fishing-boat. The idea of getting wet was not pleasant, but it was far to be preferred to being stranded on the sandbank. All the juniors were anxious to feel their feet on dry land after their terrifying experience.

Ponsonby led the way over the side of the wrecked boat, and dropped with a shudder into the water up to his knees. The elegant Highcliffe junior did not like the idea of wetting his natty trousers, but he realised it could not be helped. His companions followed him gingerly, their faces still white. Though the sandy bottom looked so shallow, they were up to their thighs before they had crossed that dozen yards,

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But they reached the reef at last, and all of them clambered on to the rocks, with gasps of relief.

"All serene now," muttered Ponsonby. "Come on. Sooner we reach the dashed rotten island, the better."

"There'll be trouble about this," said Stott, with a scared voice. "That beastly boat—"

"Let the rotten old tub go to pot!" snarled Ponsonby. "Think I care about the boat? What about us, you fool? How are we to get out of this? We're dashed well stranded fairly."

"They'll come and search for the boat," groaned Skinner. "And they'll find us here. No good saying you don't care about the boat, Pon. Someone will have to pay for this. Looks as if it'll be us!"

"Oh, don't croak, you silly funk!" snapped Ponsonby, though he was looking none too cheerful at the prospect. "Let's get ashore, anyway. Who's got a fag? Mine are dashed well wet through."

Skinner passed over a cigarette silently, but he did not light up himself. Nobody felt like smoking, except Ponsonby—who did, apparently. He lit up with assumed carelessness, and then he led the way along the reef. Even Ponsonby could see that they were in a very tight corner. There was nothing much to worry about as regards being stranded on the island, or so they imagined. It would be easy to signal ashore for aid. But aid would mean trouble—serious trouble. They had taken a fishing-boat without permission, and they had wrecked it. Someone would have to pay the piper—even Ponsonby saw that.

It was easy enough to reach the island—the distance was not long nor difficult to cover. They stood in a silent group at last, safe on the island. All of them looking what they were—wet and decidedly miserable.

"Well, what's to be done now, Pon?" sneered Skinner. "You were cocky enough a minute or two ago. Let's see what you're going to do to get us out of this mess?"

"Oh, shut up!" snarled Ponsonby, biting his lip. "What's the dashed good of squabbling at a time like this. We've got to put our heads together and think of some dashed way out."

"There's only one way out," groaned Snoop. "And that is to signal to the shore, or to a passing boat. That means we're done; we'll have to explain the facts. In any case, that wreck there is evidence enough against us."

"Shut up, hang you!" Ponsonby snarled at Snoop now. "I know we'll have to signal, you fool! We can put our heads together and spin a yarn to account for the boat. We've got to get ourselves out of this hole somehow."

"There's a fisherman's hut on this island somewhere—deserted now," said Gadsby. "So we're all right for shelter if we're stranded here all night!"

"Who's going to stay here all night?" said Ponsonby, through his teeth. "I tell you we've simply got to get out of this somehow. We'll not signal to the shore, though, until we see it's hopeless. I vote—Hullo, there's a boat!"

He pointed out seawards to a small boat scudding along under a light sail. In the boat was a solitary figure—apparently a fisherman.

"That's the sort of chap we want to get hold of," said Ponsonby, his eyes gleaming. "Some of these rotten boatmen will do anything for money. We'll get hold of him somehow. Come on. We'll bribe the brute to take us ashore and keep his mouth shut."

The Highcliffe dandy started off at a



Quite suddenly Bob Cherry gave a chuckle, and grasped the box. He gave a hefty heave, and up-ended it. Bump, bump! "Yaroooooh!" "My hat!" "Hallo, hallo, hallo! Bunter!" bawled Bob Cherry. "I thought so!" "Great pip!" "I say, you fellows—" It was Bunter, as the juniors saw now. After rolling over howling, the Owl of the Remove sat up, and blinked up in alarm at the chums of the Remove. "Ow! Ow-wow!" he gasped. "You careless beast, Cherry!" (See Chapter 3.)

trot, and the others followed, their wet clothes flapping dismally. Ponsonby ran to the far end of the island towards which the distant boat was approaching rapidly, evidently intending to round the island. His chums followed him.

Snatching off his jacket, Ponsonby waved it frantically. The coast on the seaward side of the island was low, and Pon knew it was impossible for him to be seen from the mainland. He gave a muttered gasp of relief as he saw the distant boat's course suddenly altered, and the light craft now came skimming over the sparkling waves towards the island.

The juniors watched its approach in silence. They could see now that the man in the boat was a rough-looking sailorman—or longshoreman, rather. Skinner fancied he had seen the man before, hanging about outside the Fisherman's Nest, at Pegg Village. He was not at all a pleasant-looking customer.

Ponsonby of Highcliffe noted that fact, and grinned.

"Oh, good egg!" he exclaimed. "This is the sort of brute we want. He's a boozy-looking blighter, and I bet a doughnut he'll play up!"

"If we pay him well!" sneered Skinner.

"Better than having to pay for that wrecked fishing-boat!" replied Ponsonby viciously.

"Oh, absolutely!" agreed Vavasour. "This is a bit of top-hole luck, dear boys!"

"Here he comes!" grinned Gadsby. "All serene now! I say, he can't see that dashed wreck yet. No good telling him, what? Why not just let him think our own boat's sunk—a school boat, y'know?"

"Dashed good idea!" breathed Ponsonby. "Good man, Gaddy! Just the very wheeze!"

The boat was quite near now, and suddenly the sail came down with a run, and the longshoreman stood up and hailed the stranded juniors.

"Ahoy! What's the trouble, mates?"

"We're stranded," yelled Ponsonby. "Can you take us off? Our boat's sunk, you know."

The man grinned. He took out a pair of oars, and a moment later was pulling nearer. Some yards out, he stopped, however, and stood up again.

"Take ye off, hey?" he grinned. "Well, I reckon I can, young gentlemen. I'm a poor man, though—a man as 'as to earn 'is living. I reckon as ye don't expect a bloke to work for nothin', young gents?"

"I'll give you five bob to land us at Pegg," called Ponsonby, grinning. He felt more certain than ever now that this was just the type of man they wanted.

The man chuckled. "I reckon you young gents is stranded," he said.

"Of course we are," said Skinner impatiently.

"I reckon ye can afford to make it five quid, then?"

Ponsonby bit his lip.

"Look here," he shouted. "Do you think we come boating with fivers in our pockets, you fool! We'll make it ten bob—that's all the money we can rake together between us."

"Make it a quid and I'm your man," yelled the longshoreman, who had never hoped to get a "fiver," but who was obviously out for all he could get. "Better than spending a night on that there island, gents."

Ponsonby scowled.

"Tell him yes," said Skinner, in an agony of fear lest the man should depart. "Losing a quid's better than losing this chance, you fool, Pon! Let's have a whip round. I've got three bob!"

"Come on, then!" snarled Ponsonby.

The juniors went through their pockets. None of them was the fellow to part with cash if he could help it, but all of them realised that it was their only hope now—if they wished to escape from the island without their connection with the wrecked fishing-boat becoming known.

They easily made up the pound between them—indeed, the wealthy Ponsonby had more than one treasury note for a pound in his pocket-wallet. But he did not choose to make that fact known.

He called his agreement to the compact to the grinning boatman, and then the man pulled ashore quickly enough. As the boat grounded he held out a greedy hand, and Ponsonby handed over the pound he had collected. Then the man allowed the juniors to board the boat. It was quite a roomy craft, and as the juniors seated themselves, the boatman pushed off again.

"All right now, young gents," said the man affably. "I'll soon land you at Pegg. Jim Sparks—that's me—ain't a 'ard man, only he 'as to get 'is living, as you young gents will own, I reckon."

"That's all right," said Ponsonby calmly. "Look here, my man. How would you like to earn another ten bob?"

"Arsk me another," grinned Jim Sparks.

"Listen!" said Ponsonby, eyeing the fellow narrowly. "We took our school boat out without permission—we'd no right to be out at all. It's sunk now—sunk without any hope of getting it up again. We shall get into a frightful row if it comes out that we had it. See?"

The fellow grinned and nodded. His face, in addition to being far from clean, was red and flushed and unshaven. And it was a crafty face. Skinner noted rather uneasily that the man's eyes gleamed now.

"I understand, young gents," he grinned. "You want me jest to land you and keep my mouth shut, hey?"

"We want you to do more than that," said Ponsonby coolly. "We want you to do that certainly. But if anyone comes and asks you about us, we want you to tell them that we hired you and your boat for the afternoon. I suppose you do hire your boat out, my man?"

"That I does," grinned the man, nodding.

"Right! We want you to tell them that we hired your boat at two-thirty or thereabouts at Pegg beach, and that we've been out

with you all the afternoon. And remember that we've not been near the Shark's Tooth. Understand?"

"I reckon I does," was the grinning answer. "And you wants me to do all this for another ten bob, hey?"

"That's it!"

"It ain't good enough," said the man, shaking his head. "Me tellin' lies jest for ten bob, and p'r'aps gettin' inter trouble. It's worth more than that to you young gents, I reckon."

Ponsonby bit his lip. The other juniors looked at each other glumly. But they were in the greedy rascal's hands, and Ponsonby knew it. They would have to pay up.

"Look here," scowled Ponsonby, after a pause. "We'll pay you another quid; that's all we can possibly pay."

"Oh, all right—and it over, then," said the man, looking closely at each of the dismal-looking juniors. "I reckon I've seen all you young gents afore—three of ye comes from 'Ighcliffe School, and the other three from Greyfriars, yonder?"

"That's so," said Ponsonby, nodding, and looking rather uneasy. "But that needn't interest you, my man."

"Not at all," grinned Jim Sparks, winking at a passing seagull. "Only if I wants to see any of you, to report, like, I shall know where to find you, hey?"

Ponsonby did not at all like the rascal's leering grin, but he said nothing more. He handed over a pound-note, and after pocketing it, the man chuckled and picked up the oars. The next moment he was pulling hard back the way he had come. Presently he ceased to row, and got the sail up. The light craft skimmed away towards the red roofs of Pegg, nestling in Pegg Bay on the mainland.

Up till then no other craft had been sighted, but as the boat neared Pegg,

Skinner happened to glance behind him, and he started as he saw a distant sail between Shark's Island and the mainland. It was only a white speck in the distance, and was evidently just leaving Hawkscliff and making for the Shark's Tooth.

"Just in time, Pon!" breathed Skinner. "I bet that's Redwing's father out after his boat. Phew!"

"Shut up!" muttered Ponsonby, with a warning glance towards Jim Sparks.

Skinner shut up, and nothing more was said until the boat touched the beach at Pegg. The juniors jumped out thankfully, and none of them troubled to return Joe Sparks' grinning "Good-afternoon, young gents!" They hurried up the beach, and started back towards Hawkscliff at a run, after wringing the water from their trousers as best they could. It was not a long way, and they reached Hawkscliffe at last, and, skirting the village, they made for the rocks behind which they had hidden their bikes. As they were about to mount on reaching the road again, Skinner pointed suddenly out to sea.

"I told you so," he said. "There's a boat just leaving the Shark's Tooth, and that's Wharton's crowd in it, I bet."

The juniors saw it clearly—a fishing-boat just leaving the island, and making for Hawkscliff. In it were several figures, and their size in comparison with the man's figure seated in the stern was enough for them.

"Come on!" snapped Ponsonby. "Let's get back."

A moment later the six black sheep were pedalling hard back again along the Cliff Road. It had been a dismal afternoon altogether, and none of the juniors felt up to slanging Skinner for ever suggesting it. They were only too thankful to have got out of their predicament—if they were out.

"Put it on," gasped Ponsonby. "We're safe enough now, I fancy. Better not let anyone see our clobber wet, though, if it can be helped."

"Oh, absolutely!" said Vava-sour, rather feebly.

Skinner & Co. said nothing. They were not feeling quite so certain of their safety as the Highcliffe juniors. From the bottom of his heart Skinner wished now that he had not played that trick on Bunter. Bunter would tell, and Wharton would guess the rest. Moreover, Redwing's father would remember them—perhaps had recognised them. Then there was that brute of a boatman. Skinner was feeling rather uneasy about him. He did not like the way the fellow had grinned at parting.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Ruined!

"HERE we are!"
"Good egg!"
Perspiring and rather breathless, the Famous Five, with Redwing and Vernon-Smith, dismounted outside the little white stone cottage that was Redwing's home at Hawkscliff. The punctures had soon been repaired, and the juniors had made light of the ten mile ride.

"We'll shove the bikes in the yard at the back," said Tom Redwing cheerily. "We can carry the grub down to the boat. I expect the pater's down at the jetty. Hallo! He's here!"

For Next Week!

BROTHER AND PREFECT!

By Frank Richards.

SPECIAL SERIES,
starring
GEORGE WINGATE
(the Captain of Greyfriars.)

An early order for the "MAGNET" saves disappointment.—Editor.

Tom Redwing ended on a note of surprise as his father emerged from the cottage. He was looking just a trifle puzzled, but he greeted the juniors heartily.

"Good-afternoon, my lads!" he cried. "I was just beginning to wonder what had happened to you."

He shook hands with each of the juniors. All of them had met the sailor-man before.

"We were delayed with punctures, dad," smiled Redwing. "I expected you'd be down at the jetty. Boat all ready?"

"Ready long ago, Tom," was the surprised answer. "But—but, you talk as if you'd only just arrived. I understood that you'd been here before—were waiting here for me, lads. That's why I left the boat and came up. I've been waiting here some time, wondering where you'd got to, and wondering where your bikes were. Your school-fellows told me you were here."

Tom Redwing gave a start—as did all the juniors.

"Our schoolfellows?" echoed Tom Redwing quickly. "What do you mean, dad? We've only just this minute arrived."

"Oh!" exclaimed Mr. Redwing. "Then—then those boys—"

"Which boys, dad?" said Tom, exchanging a startled glance with his chums.

"Six of them—they came along the beach to the jetty. Three of them wore Greyfriars caps," said Mr. Redwing. "They told me that you and your friends were waiting at the cottage here for me. That's nearly half an hour ago, though."

"Great Scott!" All the juniors remembered Bunter's claims at once, and they all thought of Skinner & Co.

"My hat!" breathed Tom Redwing, exchanging another meaning glance with his chums. "What were they like, dad?"

"I hardly noticed them particularly," said Mr. Redwing, looking curiously at the juniors. "Schoolboys mostly look alike to me," he added, smiling. "One of them—not from your school, wore an eyeglass, though. He was the lad who spoke to me, Tom."

"Ponsonby!" ejaculated Vernon-Smith. "Oh, my hat! It was Skinner, and Ponsonby was with him. This looks like dirty work, you fellows."

"Phew!" "Did you leave them with the boat?" demanded Tom Redwing, his eyes gleaming a little. "They told you a lie, dad; they could not have seen us waiting at the cottage."

"Oh!" said the old sailorman, considerably taken aback. "They—they were civil enough, and I believed the boy. But—but I hope nothing is wrong."

"We'd better go down to the jetty—smartly," said Tom Redwing, looking at his equally startled chums. "Come on, dad. We'll soon know if those chaps have been up to any tricks."

Alarmed considerably now, the juniors hurriedly slipped their bikes into the yard at the back of the cabin without stopping to unstrap the parcels of food-stuffs from the carriers. A moment later they were hurrying towards the beach. As the party rounded the row of cottages facing the jetty, Mr. Redwing gave a cry of alarm.

"Gone!" he stammered, staring at the jetty where he had left his boat. "My boat's gone, Tom. It was tied up at the jetty there!"

"Well, the cads!" snapped Tom Redwing.

His face flushed, and his eyes gleamed



Ponsonby ran to the far end of the island towards which the distant boat was approaching rapidly. Then, snatching off his jacket, he waved it frantically. The Greyfriars juniors gave muttered gasps of relief as they saw the distant boat's course suddenly change, and the little white craft, with its solitary, rough-looking passenger, come skimming over the sparkling waves towards the island. (See Chapter 4.)

angrily as he understood. There was little doubt in the minds of the juniors as to what had happened now. Skinner & Co., with their shady friends from Highcliffe, were at their usual dirty tricks again.

"But—but I saw them walk away, Tom, lad!" gasped the honest old fisherman, as Tom Redwing explained their suspicions. "They asked me if they could hire a boat, and I told them it was impossible. They walked away. I—I'm sure they wouldn't have—"

"You don't understand, and you don't know the rotters," said Tom Redwing through his teeth.

He shaded his eyes and scanned the shimmering sea along both coasts. But not a sail was to be seen—not a boat on the water. In the hazy distance the Shark's Tooth could be seen, but it was too distant to make anything out. And the jutting shoulder on the mainland shut off a great part of the sea beyond.

"Dad," said Tom Redwing through his teeth, "those cads are up against us. They've tricked you. They've taken the boat, and we must go after them before they do any damage. They're not safe with a boat at all. Look here, can't we borrow a boat from someone?"

He nodded towards a couple of boats drawn up on the beach. His father had grasped the position now, and his face was considerably disturbed.

"One of them belongs to Joe Bates,"

he muttered. "He's at his cottage yonder. I'll see him, lads."

He hurried away, and after a few moments absence he came hurrying back with an elderly fisherman. It was the man Ponsonby & Co. had seen mending nets in his garden.

"I seed the boat was out, though I didn't see it go," the man was saying. "I took it as you was with her. Borrow my boat? Yes, and right welcome. We'll soon 'ave her afloat."

"Lend a hand, you chaps," said Tom Redwing quietly. "If anything happens to dad's boat, I'll—I'll make Skinner smart for this, you fellows."

The juniors lent a hand willingly enough as the two sailormen ran the boat down to the water. They were soon afloat. It was a roomy boat, and Mr. Redwing stepped the mast, and in a very short time they were racing over the sunlit water towards the distant shoulder. Tom Redwing guessed they would make either for Shark's Tooth Island or Black Rock Island, and once round the Shoulder the boat's nose was pointed for the former.

It was Vernon-Smith's keen eyes that saw the wrecked *Pride of Kent* first, and as he saw it he gave a startled shout.

"Look!" he said. "Good heavens!" panted Tom Redwing.

His alarmed exclamation was echoed THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 922.

by his father the next instant, and his rugged, bronzed features went white as he recognised his craft—a dismaying sight, to say the least of it.

"It is, Tom—it's the old boat right enough," he muttered thickly. "But those lads—what has happened to them?"

Deep concern and alarm were in the old sailorman's voice. At that moment Mr. Redwing scarcely thought of his boat. He was thinking of the boys who had, so it seemed, wrecked it. There was not a soul to be seen on the island, and their absence from the scene was ominous.

"They'll be on the island, I expect," said the Bounder, unable to restrain a bitter note in his voice. "Trust them to save themselves. They'll be hiding. They must have seen us coming."

"Oh!" said Mr. Redwing. "Yes, I hardly think they would come to harm. There's a sandbank just there—the old boat's fast on it, I reckon. The lads would be able to get ashore along the reef there. Take her in, Tom."

Tom Redwing, who was at the tiller, nodded. His face was white and hard. He did not think for one moment that Skinner & Co. had come to any harm. He knew the spot was not dangerous where the wreck lay. The sail dropped, and Tom Redwing skilfully steered the boat between the treacherous rocks as Mr. Redwing took the oars.

They edged nearer and nearer to the wreck, and then as the prow of the boat grounded on the hard sand, Tom Redwing sprang on to the wrecked craft. His father followed him, his kindly face grim now as he looked at the damage.

"It—it might have been worse, Tom, lad," he said thickly. "But—but she wasn't insured. We've just had a bad season, Tom, and I had to let the insurance lapse. Her bottom timbers are ripped away, and it'll take more money than I've got to get her afloat again and repaired. And there's the time I'll lose—my living till the old boat's mended and seaworthy again. It—it means ruin, Tom, lad!"

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Skinner's Denial!

"RUIN!"

Tom Redwing gazed dumbly at his father. Yet he knew it could only be the truth. All his father's savings were sunk in the *Pride of Kent*. And now the old boat—his father's pride—was wrecked, and there was no money with which to pay for its repair—no money with which to make the boat seaworthy again.

"Is—is it as bad as that, father?" he faltered.

"Ay, ay, lad! And even if I could raise the money, my living's gone for weeks an' more. And times are too slack here for me to hope to get a job, or at Pegg, either. It's hard, lad, to see the old boat like that. But—but—"

He paused suddenly, seeing the distress on Tom Redwing's white face.

"But it might be worse, after all, Tom," he went on, more cheerily. "It's lucky that she struck just here. She's safe enough where she is as long as we don't get a severe storm, and that ain't likely, is it? She's hard and fast, and the tide'll leave her high and dry soon. But never mind the boat now," he added, gazing anxiously about him. "I'll be easier in mind when I know what's happened to those lads, Tom."

"They'll be hiding, sure enough," said Harry Wharton, though his voice

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sounded doubtful and uneasy. "Had we better search?"

"More likely they've been taken off by another boat," said the Bounder bitterly. "Trust those cads to save their skins somehow."

"Easy on, Smithy," murmured Harry Wharton quietly. "We don't know yet what's happened to them. I hope—I hope they are safe, anyway."

"Better search, lads," said Mr. Redwing grimly.

He splashed into the water, and the juniors helped him to drag the boat on to the sands. Then, leaving it there, they waded towards the reef. They soon found clear evidence that the late occupants of the *Pride of Kent*, whoever they were, had escaped along the reef. Scratches on the rocks, wet footprints, and on the island they found plenty of signs, including a couple of dead matches and a cigarette end.

"Ponsonby's crowd for a pension," said Harry Wharton, his fears vanishing at sight of the cigarette end. "They're safe enough, Mr. Redwing. None of them would be likely to be smoking if anything had happened to any one of them."

"Rather not!"

Mr. Redwing nodded, his kindly, bearded face showing his deep relief. But now the juniors' relief was changed into feelings of deep anger against the cads who had caused the damage by their reckless acts.

"Oh, the cads!" breathed Tom Redwing. "They—they've gone too far this time, you fellows. They've hated me—they've done all they could to injure me ever since I came to Greyfriars. And now they've done this—struck at me through my father."

"Redwing," said Harry Wharton, noting the glitter in Redwing's eyes. "they're cads right enough—cads to play such a trick with your father's boat. They must have known they could never handle it safely. But—but they haven't done this purposely, of course. It—it was an accident, old chap."

"And an accident they'll pay for, Wharton!" snapped Vernon-Smith. "I'll thundering well see to that."

"Easy, easy, lads," said Mr. Redwing, eyeing his son's dark, savage face uneasily. "It was an accident—that's plain as plain. The young rascals ought not to have touched the boat, of course. It was just a schoolboy's prank, I reckon. It's bad—bad, but it can't be helped now. We must make sure those lads are safe, though."

The search of the island was begun glumly. Mr. Redwing's face, though saddened, was quiet and composed. Tom Redwing's face was also composed, only the dark glitter in his eyes showing the tumult that was raging in his breast. Tom was a good-tempered fellow at most times, and it was very rare indeed for him to be roused to such a state of bitter anger. But even he did not look so savage as did Vernon-Smith. The Bounder always looked upon a blow at his chum as a blow against himself—or, rather, he always tried to take his chum's troubles upon his own shoulders. Harry Wharton, angry as he himself felt against the rascally Ponsonby & Co., felt uneasy as he glanced occasionally at the two chums.

It was not a long search, for the

island was small, and soon covered, and the search ended on the beach, where Ponsonby & Co. had boarded Jim Sparks' boat earlier on. The footprints and the deep indentation of a boat's keel in the wet sand told its own story.

"They've been taken off, as I said," said the Bounder. "But they won't escape us, never fear, Redwing. We know they did it. Come on. Let's get off the island—no good stopping."

"You'll come to my cottage for tea, of course, lads?" said Mr. Redwing.

"Certainly—thanks, Mr. Redwing," said Harry Wharton. "The grub's still on the bikes."

The party returned to the waiting boat, and after another brief examination of the wrecked boat, they started back. It was a very gloomy run back to Hawkscliff, though Mr. Redwing tried to assume a cheery attitude—an attitude all knew he was far from feeling. The boat was returned to the fisherman friend of Mr. Redwing, and the party made for the cottage. Then the food-stuffs intended for the picnic were taken from the bike, and after tea in the cottage parlour the juniors bade the kindly Mr. Redwing good-bye and started back.

It was Redwing who led the way, and he rode hard—the juniors did not need to be told why. For once the usually forgiving sailorman's son was bitter and revengeful. Had he himself been the only sufferer, Tom Redwing would have taken it quietly, scorning to show his anger and hurts. But he made no attempt to hide his feelings now. It was his father who was chiefly to suffer through the conduct of Skinner and his shady pals, and Redwing meant to have a reckoning with Skinner & Co. Like the rest of the juniors, Tom Redwing realised from Billy Bunter's story that Skinner must have been the instigator of the whole thing in the first place.

And Skinner had to pay.

That was Redwing's resolve, and in that way Vernon-Smith was no less determined upon that. Indeed, the Bounder's hard features showed far more bitter fury than did those of his chum. Smithy was a staunch friend, but a bitter, implacable enemy. More than once Harry Wharton glanced uneasily at his black brows during that ride back to Greyfriars.

"We must go carefully, you fellows," he said quietly, as they dismounted at the school gates at last. "Remember we can prove nothing whatever. Bunter's word is worth absolutely nothing, and nobody seems to have seen them take the boat. They will deny it, of course, and we can prove nothing."

"That's enough, Wharton," said the Bounder savagely. "We know they did it, and that's enough for us. We're going to see that cad Skinner at once!"

"I'll see him," said Redwing. "Leave this to me, Smithy."

"We'll see," said the Bounder, setting his lips. "I know you, Reddy; you'll listen to the denials and whines of those cads, and you'll let it go at that, or forgive the dashed cads. It won't do, Redwing! They've got to pay the piper for this, and they've got to pay for the damage they've done!"

"It looks as if they did it, anyway," said Bob Cherry soberly. "If they did, they ought to pay up for it."

"Yes, rather!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific, my chums."

All the juniors were agreed upon that. But they also agreed rather gloomily that it would be no easy matter to prove the guilt of Skinner & Co.

Smithy, at all events, had no intention of troubling to prove it. And the moment the bikes were housed he led

ANSWERS
Every Saturday — PRICE 2:

the way indoors and straight to Skinner's study. He kicked the door open, and strode in with Redwing and the Famous Five at his heels.

Skinner, Stott, and Snoop were in the study, and they exchanged quick glances as they saw the invaders. Stott and Snoop looked a trifle pale, but Skinner was cool and composed. He had expected just such a visit, and he was ready.

"Hallo!" he exclaimed, eyeing the visitors coolly. "Is this the way you usually enter other chaps' studies? What's this mean, Wharton? I don't remember askin' you here."

It was not Wharton who answered, but Vernon-Smith, and he did not answer in words. He grabbed Skinner's chair and pitched the lounging slacker out in a heap on the floor.

"Get up!" he hissed. "Get up, you rotter, and face the music!"

Skinner scrambled to his feet, his eyes glittering. Redwing jumped forward and pushed his chum back.

"This is my affair, Smithy," he said through clenched teeth. "Leave this to me. Now, Skinner, I want to know what share you had in the affair that happened this afternoon on Shark's Tooth Island?"

Skinner drew a deep breath. Even to the last he had cherished a lingering hope that they would escape suspicion—that Bunter had not told, and that Redwing senior had not recognised them. He strove to recover his calmness.

"What do you mean, Redwing?" he said. "I don't know what you are dashed well talking about."

"So you intend to deny it all, Skinner?"

Skinner assumed a look of blank astonishment.

"Look here," he said, staring at the faces of the juniors. "I want to know what you chaps are getting at. I know nothing of what you mention—of anything that happened on Shark's Tooth Island. Are you potty, or is this a leg-pulling stunt?"

Harry Wharton drew a deep breath. Skinner's indignant surprise and apparent ignorance was so well assumed that he was almost taken in—though he did know the crafty junior of old.

But neither Redwing nor Vernon-Smith were affected by Skinner's attitude.

"I'll soon explain, then," said Redwing, in a harsh tone. "And if you still deny it, then, Skinner, I'm going to hammer you until you own up, you cad!"

He paused, and Skinner licked his lips. The thought came to him that quite possibly they had been seen in the boat—that Redwing and his chums had proof to show. But he dismissed the thought at once. It was almost certain they had not been seen—it was certain that no proof could be brought forward against them. They had only to deny it—to keep a bold front, and to deny it absolutely. Their combined word was more likely to be taken by the authorities, at all events, than Bunter's. Before parting from Ponsonby & Co. Skinner & Co. had agreed upon their story, and Skinner meant to stick to it like grim death. His look was almost careless and unconcerned as he answered Redwing.

"Go ahead, then, Redwing," he sneered coolly. "I shall be no end interested to hear what this stunt means. Get ready for some whopping fibs and shocking charges, chaps. It'll be murder we've done at least, I expect."

Stott and Snoop grinned faintly—they realised the necessity of backing their leader up in his careless attitude.



Smack! Skinner's words ended in a smothered howl as Redwing's clenched fist hit him in the mouth. He went backwards, and measured his length on the study carpet. Redwing stood over him, his chest heaving, his eyes blazing with the passion that consumed him. "Redwing," muttered Wharton. "Hold on!" "Let him alone, Wharton!" snapped Vernon-Smith. "If Reddy hadn't knocked the sneering cad down I should have done!" "What does this mean?" A familiar voice came from the study doorway. (See Chapter 6.)

"Yes, go ahead, Redwing," grinned Stott. "But cut it short—we're rather busy, old bean."

Redwing clenched his fists.

"This afternoon, Skinner," he said thickly, "we found our bikes punctured in the bike shed. We also found Bunter locked in there. He states that you put him up to puncturing the tyres, leaving him to face the music. Do you deny that?"

Skinner whistled with well assumed surprise.

"Well, the fat rotter!" he exclaimed. "What rot! Of course I deny it, you ass! You're not going to suggest that you believe that fat fibber?"

"Yes, I do—I believe every word of it, Skinner. Bunter is telling the truth for once. But that isn't all. This afternoon some fellows went to Hawkscliff—three Greyfriars fellows, and three Highelife fellows. They took my father's fishing-boat from the jetty there, and they smashed it up on the rocks off the Shark's Tooth, Skinner. Those fellows were you three and your precious pals Ponsonby and his friends from Highelife."

"Well, I'm hanged!" gasped Skinner. "Anything else, Redwing? Sure we didn't drown your dashed father, and burn your dashed hovel down, too? Why, you cheeky rotter—"

"Be careful, Skinner!" said Redwing, his eyes glinting dangerously. "I've

stood as much as I can stand this afternoon. I'm asking you to deny it if you can. I'm going to make you prove you didn't do it, you cad—or own up that you did!"

"Oh, are you, you cheeky rotter?" said Skinner, unable to restrain the sneer. "And how are you going to do it? What the thump should we want with your father's rotten boat? We're not in the habit of taking joy-rides in stinking fishing-boats, Redwing—or hobnobbing with fishermen. Get outside, you—"

Smack!

Skinner's words ended in a smothered howl, as Redwing's clenched fist hit him in the mouth. He went backwards, and measured his length on the study carpet. Redwing stood over him, his chest heaving, his eyes blazing with the passion that consumed him.

"Redwing!" muttered Wharton. "Hold on!"

"Let him alone, Wharton!" snapped Vernon-Smith. "If Reddy hadn't knocked the sneering cad down I should have done. What's the good of expecting the rottors to own up—we knew they'd deny it. If he doesn't own up I'm going to Quelchy—"

"Quelchy is already here, Vernon-Smith," said a deep, quiet voice in the doorway. "What does this disturbance mean?"

(Continued on page 16.)

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THE GREYFRIARS HERALD

No. 243.

HARRY WHARTON, EDITOR

Week Ending Oct. 10th.



"PLAY RUGGER," LOOK YOU!

By
OUR SPECIAL REPORTER,
*A Cheery Interview with
DAVID MORGAN the Welsh Jock
at Greyfriars.*

I RAN Morgan to earth in the tuck-shop. He was asking Dame Mimble why on earth she didn't sell leeks. He was sure there would be a big demand for them.

The good dame sniffed.

"Leeks are all right in stews and soups, Master Morgan," she said, "but I shouldn't dream of selling them over the counter, like tarts and sweets. Besides, leeks are vegetables; and I'm a confectioner—not a greengrocer!"

"Leeks are top-hole, look you!" said Morgan. "We eat them with every meal in Wales, where the people are more civilised than the bun-eating Englishmen."

"Excuse me butting in," I said, perching myself on a stool and pulling out my notebook. "I've come to have a chat with you, Morgan, about Rugger."

Morgan's eyes glistened. His face glowed like a rising sun. I could see that I had touched on a topic that was dear to his heart.

"Rugger," he said at once: "is the rippingest game ever invented, look you! It beats Soccer into fits, and it licks hockey and golf into a cocked hat! It's a great game, a grand game. It hardens, invigorates, and makes a man of you. I used to play lots of Rugger in Wales, before I came here, and I was never fitter in my life. I was awfully disappointed, on coming to Greyfriars, to find that footer was played under the Soccer code. I'm trying to persuade old Wingate, who is Head of Games, to get up Rugger matches, and I shall keep on worrying him until he jolly well consents, look you!"

"I wish you luck!" I said. "Personally, I don't know much about Rugger. I saw a game once, but I couldn't make head or tail of it. It was one mad scramble—like the scramble at Westminster School on Pancake Day."

"Ass!" snorted Morgan. "Rugger's not a mad scramble; it's a scientific game!"

"Why do they call a chap a three-quarter?" I asked. "Is it because his other quarter—an arm or a leg—has been torn from him in the fray?"

Morgan glared.

"If you're going to be funny," he said, "I shall refuse to answer any more questions. Be serious—if you can! What do you want to know?"

"I want some advice on how to play
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Rugger, so that I can pass it on to the readers of the 'Herald.'

"Well," said Morgan, thoughtfully nibbling at a cream-bun, "the great thing in Rugger is to watch the ball wherever it goes. If you can't exactly spot it, you must know its whereabouts, whether in the pack or in the open. Keep the ball in sight as much as you possibly can—that's the golden rule."

"But surely you don't spend all your time watching the ball?" I asked.

"Of course not! You get into the pack, and push! And be sure to give the first shove, because a lot depends on that. Don't hack, and always be ready to break up the scrimmage, and get among the opposing backs. I'm presuming, of course, that you're a forward. Through following up in this way tries are often scored."

"It all seems double-dutch to me," I said. "But go ahead! How do you make a tackle?"

"Round the hips. If you tackle a fellow's feet, you put your napper in peril. If you go for the neck, you mostly lose your man. A genuine grip round the hips is best. And go for your man bald-headed. Don't be half-hearted about it."

"I see. Now, I suppose you have to be as fit as a fiddle to last out in a strenuous game of Rugger?"

"Absolutely! A fellow who ruins his wind by smoking cigs on the q.t. will never be any good at Rugger. He'll collapse like a pricked balloon before the game's half-way through. You've got to keep yourself in tip-top trim. Dumbbell exercises, club-swinging, skipping—that's the stuff to tune you up ready for a fast game of Rugger."

"Any more points?" I inquired.

"One more. Keep your temper. A fellow who loses his wool on the Rugger field is no good to himself or his team. Of course, you sometimes find yourself up against opponents who are none too gentle in their methods. They come barging and charging into you like mad bulls. But it's silly to play them at their own game. Act like a gentleman yourself, and they will come to respect you."

So saying, Morgan gave a sharp nod of his head, and took an enormous bite at his cream-bun, to signify that the interview was at an end. I thanked him profusely for his views and advice, and stood him a glass of foaming ginger-pop. We parted the best of friends.

"RUGGER" JOTTINGS!

BY TOM BROWN.

I AM a red-hot Rugger enthusiast, and I mean to get up a Rugger fifteen to challenge the world—the world in this case being St. Jim's, Highcliffe, and Rookwood. Fellows who wish to play in my fifteen should send in their names at once. No duffers or muffers need apply!

BILLY BUNTER tells me he is awfully keen to play in my fifteen as "stand-off half." He has got his heart's desire, for I've stood him off already!

COKER of the Fifth wishes to know how long it would take a fellow to learn Rugger if the learner happened to be Horace Coker I should say about a lifetime!

GERALD LODER, the black sheep of the Sixth, states that he intends to play for a well-known Rugger team. The Cross Keys, we presume!

MR. PROUT is a man of many parts. He seems to have been everything by turns, but nothing long. He reminds one of the gentleman in Dryden's poem,

"Who, in the course of one revolving moon,
Was fiddler, chemist, statesman, and
buffoon!"

Naturally, Mr. Prout includes Rugby football in the list of his past accomplishments. He declares that he once took part in a most exciting game, but had the misfortune to be caught out at scrum-half. His side eventually won by two wickets. A marvellous Rugby match, indeed!

FISHER T. FISH says that when he played in a Rugger match in New York before he came to Greyfriars he converted no less than twenty "tries." I wish somebody would convert Fish from his habit of telling tall stories!

BOLSOVER MAJOR has a very unusual grievance against Rugger. He says it's too tame. Rugger tame? Great Scott! What Bolsover major seems to want is a gory battlefield!

WHEN playing Rugger on Big Side last Wednesday Gwynne of the Sixth "dropped a goal." Anyone finding same, and returning it to Gwynne's study, will be suitably rewarded!

I ASKED Gosling, the porter, if he knew what Rugger was, and he replied: "Certtingly, Master Brown! A Rugger is a person wot manufactures rugs." So now we know!



"MIGHT a bloke join in the scrum?"

Burleigh of the Sixth, skipper of the St. Sam's Rugger 11111111111111 (I think that's the correct way to write "Rugger Fifteen") spun round with a start as that quiet, dignified voice fell on his ears.

It was the Head who had spoken. The staid and skollerly gentleman was attired in plus fours and a sports coat, and he had calmly strolled on to the Rugger ground in the middle of the match with St. Bill's.

Dr. Birchmell beamed at Burleigh.

"I haven't played a game of Rugger for at least ninety years, Burleigh," he said. "I should like to renew my acquaintance with the noble sport. Can I give you a hand, and help you to wipe up the ground with St. Bill's?"

"Impossible, sir!" gasped Burleigh.

"Eh?"

"If you were to join in, sir, we should have sixteen on our side, and that isn't aloud."

"Ratts! You can give St. Bill's another player, to make it equal," said the Head. "Tackler of the Fifth would be glad of a game—wouldn't you, Tackler?"

"Not half, sir!" said Tackler.

"That's settled, then," said the Head.

"But—but—" stammered Burleigh.

"What are you butting like a blessed billygoat for, Burleigh?" demanded the Head testily.

"You're not dressed for the part, sir," said the skipper of St. Sam's, glancing at the Head's garments. "You can't play Rugger in plus fours!"

"Can't I, by Jove! I shall play a jolly sight too well for the liking of these St. Bill's fellows. But enough of this jaw. Let's get on with the job!"

So saying, the Head shut his eyes and made a blind rush, and hurled himself bodily into the scrum.

There was a roar from the crowd round the ropes.

"Go it, sir!"

"On the ball!"

For a moment the Head was completely lost to view. He was hidden by a struggling, squirming mass of yewmanity, from which numerous arms and legs were protruding.

When the air had cleared a bit, and the struggling mass had sorted itself out, the Head became visible. He was lying spread-eagled on the ground, puffing and blowing like a grampus, and letting out gasps like a very old pair of bellows.

"Oh dear! Oh crumbs!" he panted. "Is this a Rugby match, or has an earthquake been let loose? I am severely shaken! Yow-ow-ow!"

There was a wild scramble, in the course of which the unfortunite Head was kicked, punched, biffed, bashed, broozed, and trodden on. The onlookers roared with merriment, and the Head roared, too—with anguish! He felt as if he was being put through a mangle.

"Hellup!" roared the Head. "Where am I? What's happening? I had no idea Rugby was such a brootal and barberous game. I am severely injured in every part of my annatermy!"

"Shall I send for the ambulance, sir?" grinned Burleigh.

"No, Burleigh, you will do nothing of the sort!" roared the Head, scrambling to his feet. "Sorely wounded though I am, I will not leave the battlefield! I will score the winning try, or perish in the attempt. Charge, Chester—charge! On, Stanley—on!"

And the Head dashed feerecly into the fray. He collared a St. Bill's player by the heels and upended him. He punched another in the chest, and bowled him over like a skittel. He butted into a third with lowered head, and sent him spinning into a puddle. Then he made a lightning dive for the ball, and gathered it up, and went racing towards the line, with a hoard of players in hot pursuit.

The crowd cheered him to the ctko.

"Go on, sir!"

"Rush it over the line!"

"He'll do it—he's done it! Hooray!"

The Head dived over the line with the ball. He was seized by the ankles and dragged back, but it was too late. The try had been scored—the winning try, as it happened.

"Bravvo, sir!" said Burleigh, helping the Head to his feet. "You've deserved well of your country."

"What do I do now?" panted the Head. "It's such a long time since I played Rugger that I've forgotten."

"You take a shot at goal, sir, to see if you can convert the try."

"Oh, good!"

The ball was placed in position, and the Head took a flying kick at it. It went sailing over the crossbar as clean as a wissle.

The Head fairly danced with delite. He rushed up to Mr. Lickham, the master of the Fourth, who had just arrived on the ground.

"My dear Lickham," he cried joyfully, "I have dropped a goal!"

"Indeed, sir!" murmured Mr. Lickham. "Have you any idea where you dropped it? If so, I will help you look for it!"

"Idiot!" snorted the Head. "Do you compray, as the French say? I have dropped a goal, and I had a try into the bargin!"

"Had a try at what, sir? Making a fool of yourself? Bekawse, if so, you seem to have succeeded pretty thurroughly! Fancy rushing about on a Rugby field at your time of life. And in plus fours, too!"

The Head frowned.

"You can thank your lucky stars, Lickham, that I happen to be in a good yewmer at the moment, or I would ask you to tender your resignation! Ah, there goes the wissle! The battle is over and won, and the hero of the match will now be carried sholder-high from the seon of his triumph! Come along, boys!"

Willing hands hoisted the Head, and he was born proudly away on the sholders of several sturdy Sixth-Formers; while a procession of juniors and fags brought up the rear, playing "The Konkering Hero" on their mouth-organs.

THE END.

EDITORIAL!

"RUGGER"—alias Rugby football—is a great game. I feel bound to kick-off my Editorial by that remark, in case you should think, by reading Alonzo Todd's poem, that Rugger is a grim and gruesome game—a "battle, murder, and sudden death" sort of business!

Rugger is not played to any great extent at Greyfriars. We are a Soccer school, and most of us prefer the round ball to the oval one. But there are several fellows in the Remove who are crazy keen on the Rugger code.

Browney talks of getting up a Rugger fifteen this winter. He has been canvassing for players, but I don't think he has made much headway. Billy Bunter was one of the acceptances, but I can't see Bunter turning out for Browney's fifteen when the day of the match comes along. Most of our contributors treat the game of Rugger in a humorous spirit, but it must not be inferred from this that they wish to belittle the game. It's just their funny way.

HARRY WHARTON..

RUGGER!



By ALONZO TODD.

Oh, Rugger is a spleudid game
For those who love to maul and maim,
And make opponents limp and lame
By tackling them with vigour;
I played it once—but never more!
And when the fierce affray was o'er
I crawled away, both stiff and sore,
And cut a sorry figure!

I lost my front teeth in the scrum,
And someone said: "Hard luck, old chum!
Such slight mishaps are bound to come—
You've simply got to stick it.
I quite agree that Rugger's rough,
But better far than Blind Man's Buff
And all that kindergarten stuff—
In fact, it rivals cricket!"

I tried in vain to score a "try";
A fist came crashing in my eye.
A frenzied mob went surging by—
I floundered in the mud.
And there I lay, as in a trance,
And waited for the ambulance
To carry me away, perchance,
From the battlefield of blood.

I also tried to drop a goal,
And heard the shouts like thunder roll:
"There goes old Lonzy, bless his soul!"
I went a dozen paces.
Then someone grabbed me by the heel;
I spun round like a catherine-wheel,
And, falling flat, began to feel
Punctured in fifty places!

Oh, Rugger is a noble sport
For fellows of the burly sort,
Who never seem afraid to court
Disaster every minute.
They come up, smiling and serene,
But I'm no longer feeling keen.
Tom Brown is forming a fifteen,
But I shall not be in it!

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(Continued from page 13.)

"My hat!"

All eyes turned to the half-open door. It was Mr. Quelch who had appeared there. He had evidently been passing when Skinner's howl of pain rang out. He came in, closing the door after him.

"What does this mean, boys?" he said grimly. "Skinner, get up at once."

Skinner—his face livid now—scrambled to his feet, nursing his jaw as he did so. He sent a look of hatred across at Redwing. That junior's face went pale.

"Redwing," went on the Remove master, as nobody answered him, "why did you strike Skinner?"

There was a silence. It was broken by the Bounder. Vernon-Smith's face was set and determined. Whatever the outcome of the interview with Skinner & Co., the resolute Bounder had already determined to acquaint the authorities with the facts. He was resolutely determined that the Redwings should not suffer their loss without a fight for justice.

He stepped forward now.

"I can tell you what is wrong, sir," he said steadily.

"Very well, Vernon-Smith. I will hear you, my boy."

Vernon-Smith did not hesitate. Whether it could be called sneaking he did not stop to consider—he did not care. He told of the afternoon's adventures—of the punctured machines, and of the discovery of the wreck, and also what that discovery meant to the Redwings.

"It means ruin for them, sir—for a time, at all events," he said grimly. "I am telling you this, sir, because I know you will see that justice is done."

Mr. Quelch's face was grim.

"I will certainly do my best to see that justice is done, Vernon-Smith," he said quietly. "Redwing, you should not have taken the law into your own hands—you should have come to me. This is not a matter I can deal with, however. You had better come with me to the headmaster, my boy. Skinner, Stott, and Snoop will also accompany me. Wharton, will you please find Bunter, and send him to the Head's study without delay."

"May I come, too, sir?" asked Vernon-Smith calmly.

"Very well," said the master of the Remove, with a sharp look at the Bounder. "Come!"

He left the study, and Skinner, Stott, and Snoop followed promptly enough. Redwing gave Smithy a curious look, and the two went out together.

"Well, my hat!" said Harry Wharton. "Now for trouble, chaps."

"Thundering good job this happened," said Johnny Bull bluntly. "Redwing will get fair play now—the Head will see to that. Skinner's bowled out, and the cads will have to pay up."

"I wish I could be certain of that!" said Harry Wharton quietly. "Skinner did not look very scared to me. He's a crafty cad, and he'll have got some yarn ready. Anyway, let's find Bunter!"

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And, followed by his chums, Harry Wharton hurried out in search of Billy Bunter.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Skinner Crows Too Much!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. very soon found Bunter, and sent that shivering junior along to the Head's study. Whatever the outcome of the affair, Bunter was "for it" as the fat junior dimly realised. His only hope of being let off lightly for the rascally trick he had played was in his story being believed, and in the Head thinking that he had been but the tool of Skinner & Co.

After seeing the fat junior safely into the Head's study, the Famous Five waited in the corridor, anxious to hear the result of the interview. Not for one moment did they doubt that Skinner & Co. were guilty. At the same time they felt far from certain that the cads of the Remove would be found guilty by the Head. There was no proof whatever—nothing save Bunter's word in regard to the punctured bikes, and Mr. Redwing's statement regarding the juniors who had spoken to him at the jetty. And this, they realised, was not proof enough—if it was proof at all.

They did not have to wait long. The door opened suddenly, and Skinner & Co. came out, followed by Redwing and Smithy and Bunter. A glance at their respective faces showed how things had gone. Skinner & Co. were looking almost triumphant. Bunter was white and almost blubbing. Smithy and Redwing were looking bitter and angry.

With a grin on his pasty face, Harold Skinner led his chums away. Redwing, Vernon-Smith, and Bunter stopped.

"Oh, the awful rotters!" groaned Billy Bunter dimly. "Fancy the Head believing them before me, you fellows. Skinner's a lying beast! I say, you—"

"Oh, shut up and clear out, you fat fool!" hissed Vernon-Smith.

He raised his boot, and Bunter jumped away and fled.

"Well?" said Harry Wharton, eyeing the two chums curiously. "How did things go?"

Redwing bit his lip hard.

"They've beaten us," he said, "for the present, anyway. They had a yarn ready, as we guessed they would. They deny absolutely knowing anything whatever about the punctured bikes; they deny even knowing we were going to Hawkscliff this afternoon. And the Head won't accept Bunter's word at all. The fat idiot contradicted himself again and again. You can't blame the Head for not believing him."

"But—but—"

"They've done us!" gritted the Bounder through his teeth. "The cads admit having spoken to Redwing's father, and asked to hire a boat. He knows he daren't deny that if it comes to him facing Mr. Redwing about it. He says they went straight back to Pegg and hired a boat there, and that they spent all the afternoon on Black Rock Island. They've given the Head the name of the boatman, and Quelch's going over in the Head's car now to see the man—to see if their story's true!"

"But it won't be true—Quelch will soon find that out," said Harry Wharton blankly.

"Can't you see the game?" said Smithy bitterly. "It must have been the man who took them off the Shark's Tooth. They knew there'd be a row, and they've bribed the fellow or something. I'm certain of that. Skinner

was too jolly keen for the fellow to be fetched and questioned for my liking. They could easily bribe the fellow to keep his mouth shut—or to tell their yarn for them."

"Phew!"

"That's the game!"

"Of course it is!" snapped the Bounder savagely. "The man will back them up, and we're done. The Head says there is not an atom of real proof against the cads. He says if their story proves to be true—if the boatman says they were with him all the afternoon, then the charge falls to the ground. You saw Skinner grinning? He knows we're done, the cad!"

"And Quelch's going now—"

"Yes. We shall be called again when he comes back, I suppose. But if he does get out of it—if that brute Skinner does get clear," vowed the Bounder savagely, "we'll deal with him ourselves."

Vernon-Smith walked on with his chum, both of them obviously bitterly disappointed and furious. They went along to their study—but not to do prep. There was no prep done by Redwing and his chum that evening. They sat for some minutes with their books before them, and then the Bounder spoke.

"Look here, Reddy," he said quietly. "What are you going to do if we can't make those cads pay up for the damage? I heard what your pater said—it means ruin for him. What will you do about it?"

Redwing eyed his chum steadily; he seemed to guess what was coming.

"I don't know," he said quietly. "I suppose we shall manage to pull along somehow, Smithy. It may mean my leaving Greyfriars, though—it all depends. If things are bad I shall just leave Greyfriars."

"Give up your scholarship?" ejaculated Vernon-Smith blankly.

"Yes; if things are as bad as I fear," said Redwing simply. "I shall go out to earn my living. The scholarship scarcely covers my expenses here, you know, Smithy. I won't be a burden on the pater. I want to be a help at a time like this. We shall see, though. I—I hope it won't come to that."

The Bounder said nothing for some moments. He was eyeing his chum strangely.

"Look here," he said, at last. "I've got something to say, Reddy—something I know you won't approve of; I'm going to say it all the same. It's this. If those cads don't pay up—and it looks as if they won't—then I'm going to lend a hand. My pater—"

Redwing held up his hand, but the Bounder ignored it, and doggedly went on.

"My pater's got more dibs than he knows what to do with, Reddy. You know that. I've wanted to help before, and you never would hear of it. But I'm jolly well going to make you this time. It's dashed idiotic of you to refuse, old man. Hang it all, man, do you suppose I'm going to let you leave Greyfriars when the pater could—and jolly well would like a shot—lend a hand? If you're so dashed proud that you won't take it as a gift, then you've got to take it as a loan. Dash it all, man—"

"That's enough, Smithy," said Redwing quietly. "It is utterly impossible—out of the question. You know I can't take charity, and you know neither the pater nor I would borrow money. I know you mean jolly well, and I'm grateful. But—but it's impossible! Don't ask me, Smithy, old chap."

"But look here——"
"Drop it, Smithy," pleaded Redwing.
"You know I can't accept. It's useless trying to make me. My father would never hear of such a thing, either."

"Redwing——"
"Drop it, old chap!"
Redwing turned to his books, lowering his head to hide the growing moisture in his eyes. He was grateful to his chum—he understood the genuine desire to help on the Bounder's part. But it was impossible. He could never take charity, for it would amount to that. The Bounder looked at him, more than a trifle impatiently, it seemed. He never could quite understand why his chum should refuse help. But he said nothing more then regarding the matter. And at last a knock came at the door, and Wingate looked in.

"Wanted in the Head's study, Redwing," he said. "Cut off there, sharp!"
"Has Quelch come back, Wingate?" asked the Bounder.

The captain of Greyfriars nodded, and withdrew.

"Come on!" breathed Smithy. "Now for it, Reddy. I'm coming, too."

The juniors hurried along to Dr. Locke's study. They found Mr. Quelch with the Head, and Skinner, Stott, and Snoop were also in the study.

"Redwing," said the Head, when the door was closed, "Mr. Quelch has been to Pegg. He has succeeded in finding this man, Sparks, whom Skinner claimed to have been their boatman this afternoon."

"Yes, sir," said Redwing quietly.
"Skinner's story was apparently quite correct," said the Head. "The man substantiated Skinner's claims in every detail. He states that Skinner and his friends hired his boat on the beach at Pegg, and were taken direct across the bay to Black Rock Island. They remained there for tea, and returned this evening before lock-up. I have also telephoned to Dr. Voysey, the headmaster of Highcliffe, who has kindly

interrogated this boy Ponsonby. The boy's story also agrees in every detail with Skinner's story. You will therefore see that the grave charge against them is ill-founded, and falls to the ground, Redwing."

Redwing said nothing, but Vernon-Smith did.

"Skinner is lying, sir!" he said calmly. "And both the boatman and Ponsonby are lying also. They have arranged this story between them. The boatman has been bribed——"

"Stop!" said Dr. Locke angrily. "Vernon-Smith, how dare you make such a ridiculous charge? You are allowing your enmity against Skinner to carry you away. There is not, in view of the evidence, now any ground whatever for the charge. Unless you can prove your statements, Vernon-Smith——"

"I can prove nothing, sir," said the Bounder defiantly. "But I know they did it."

"Nonsense!" rapped the Head angrily. "There is not an atom of real proof against Skinner or his friends. It is obvious to me that Bunter made the claim against Skinner to save his own skin. Bunter shall be punished severely for his conduct in the matter. You may go, Vernon-Smith."

"Very good, sir."
The Bounder walked out, and the next moment the Head had also dismissed Skinner, Stott, and Snoop. Then he turned to Redwing.

"Redwing," he said in a kindly tone. "I am very sorry indeed for the serious loss your father has sustained. I sincerely hope that it will prove to be less than you have supposed, and I hope the miscreants who are responsible will be discovered and obliged to make recompense. But you must see that it is impossible for me to accept your statements against those three boys, or against the Highcliffe boys. In my eyes they have cleared themselves completely. I have no doubt that the real culprits

are youths from Friardale or from Pegg."

"Yes, sir," said Redwing in a low voice.

"I intend, however," went on the Head grimly, "to make strict inquiries in regard to the matter. All boys known to have been boating on the sea this afternoon will be closely questioned. I will speak to you again concerning the matter, Redwing. You may go."

"Thank you, sir," said Redwing.
He left the study. His face was quite composed, but his eyes were glittering. He found Vernon-Smith waiting for him in the passage, and he told him dully of the Head's last remarks.

"The cads!" hissed the Bounder, his hard features flushing with rage. "But they haven't finished with us yet, Redwing. If the Head's finished with the cads, we have not, not by a long chalk. You—you're still determined not to allow me to help, Reddy?"

"Absolutely, Smithy!" said Redwing emphatically. "I'm sorry to have to refuse you like this, Smithy. But it's no good!"

"Right!" said Vernon-Smith. "If my cash can't help you in one way, then it shall help you in another, Redwing."

"What do you mean, Smithy?"
"Money talks," said Vernon-Smith grimly, his eyes glinting. "And money makes people talk—some people, at all events."

"Smithy——"
"Let's get down to the Common-room," said the Bounder abruptly. "Wharton and his lot will be there, wondering how things have gone."

Redwing nodded, but he glanced curiously at his chum more than once as they went down to the Common-room. He wondered what the keen-witted Bounder meant, and what he was thinking of. But he knew it was useless to ask again. They reached the Common-room, and curious glances met Redwing's eyes wherever he looked. The

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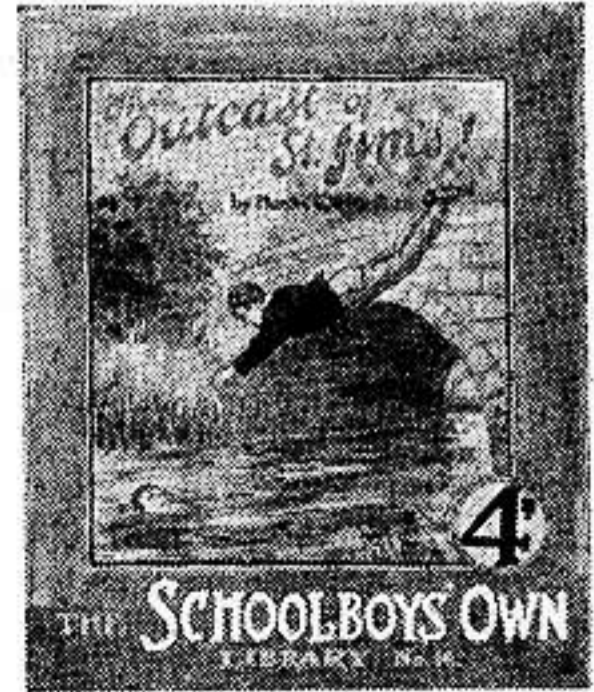
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news was known now, and nearly all the fellows' sympathy was with Redwing.

Skinner, Stott, and Snoop were standing together near the fireplace, and Skinner met Vernon-Smith's glowering glance and grinned openly. He did not grin again. The Bounder took one quick step towards him, and his flat hand sent Skinner spinning across the room.

"That's for grinning," said the Bounder coolly. "Grin again, and you'll get my fist next time."

Skinner did not grin again. He slunk from the room, his eyes glinting savagely. He did not want the Bounder's fist, not having liked his flat hand at all. He would not have liked Smithy's thoughts, either, had he only known what they were just then.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

The Secret Out!

"**W**HITHER bound, Smithy?" Harry Wharton asked the question as Vernon-Smith overtook the Famous Five when they were passing through the gates after tea the next day. The Bounder was alone, and he appeared to be in rather a hurry.

"A walk," said the Bounder carelessly. "Care for a brisk stroll, you fellows?"

"Well, we were just going for a stroll," smiled Wharton. "We were thinking of going for a breather along the cliffs, Smithy. I suppose you're bound for the village?"

"Not at all!" smiled Smithy. "I'm bound for Pegg."

"Oh!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "You'll only just do it there and back before lock-up. Where's Redwing?"

"Gone home. He's biking it to Hawkscliffe—got a pass from Quelchy. The poor chap's anxious to know how his pater's boat affair stands. I suppose you don't feel up to going with me as far as Pegg?"

"I'm game!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"We'll come all serene, if you like?" said Harry, staring rather curiously at the Bounder. "But what's this game, Smithy? What the thump are you trotting all the way to Pegg for this evening?"

"Business," said Vernon-Smith coolly. "I'm hoping to do a bit of business—financial business—with that boatman friend of Skinner's."

"Oh!"

"Great pip!"

"What the thump do you mean Smithy?" asked Harry Wharton blankly.

"What I say, old chap. It struck me last night, Wharton, that if this merchant Sparks will tell lies for money, then it's more than likely he'll tell the truth for more money. See? Money talks, and makes people talk."

"Oh!"

"I thought it would be useful if you chaps were with me," explained the Bounder blandly. "I know you may not quite approve of my giddy methods of seeing justice done. But—"

"Does Redwing know what you propose to do?" said Harry Wharton quietly.

"Not at all. I'd rather he didn't know—yet, Wharton. Well, do you approve, or otherwise?"

"I don't know," muttered Harry Wharton. "But—but it may come off. We'll come, anyway."

"Yes, rather!"

There was a chorus from Harry's chums.

"That's good, then," laughed the

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Bounder. "If the merchant does happen to cut up rusty, you'll be handy. But I fancy he won't cut up rusty."

"What made you think of this game, Smithy?"

"It just occurred to me last night. Redwing refuses point blank to let me help him. It's all rot, of course. If I was down, and a fellow wanted to help me—a chum—I should accept; at least, I think so. Anyway, it occurred to me that my cash might come in useful in another way. Skinner's bribed this boatman merchant to tell fibs. I'm going to bribe him to tell the truth. Quite a moral object, what?"

Though the Bounder's words were spoken lightly, there was a hard note underlying them.

"It should be easy to find him," went on Vernon-Smith, as the juniors did not answer. "Quelchy seemed to find him quickly, anyway. I expect he's a boozy bounder, and we'll find him at a pub. Come on. Let's hurry!"

The juniors were already walking fast, but they quickened their footsteps, and very soon they were on the crisp turf of the cliffs. They did not know what to make of Smithy's extraordinary plan. But they were only too glad to try anything to help Redwing to get justice. Since the previous evening nothing further had happened in the matter. The Head had made inquiries, as he had promised, but the inquiries had come to nothing.

For some ten minutes they walked on, and then Bob Cherry grunted as a group of figures came into view ahead of them.

"Skinner and Ponsonby, and their crowd," he grunted.

"Never mind them," said the Bounder calmly. "Just pass them, and say nothing."

The figures ahead—there were six of them—vanished suddenly from sight beyond a rocky ridge across the cliff path. The juniors walked on, and they had almost forgotten the existence of Ponsonby & Co. again, when Vernon-Smith gave a warning hiss, and clutched Harry Wharton's arm.

From ahead of them sounded voices quite close. They had just reached the ridge, and the voices came from the hollow beyond—angry voices, though nobody was visible to the Famous Five and Smithy.

"Quiet!" breathed the Bounder.

The Famous Five stopped, struck by the tense note in the Bounder's voice. The thought of eavesdropping was repugnant to them. But Smithy's tone bade them halt, and the next moment they felt rather glad they had halted.

Beyond the ridge the unseen Ponsonby was speaking savagely, and his voice reached them clearly.

"But it's blackmail, you scoundrel!" Ponsonby was saying. "We paid you yesterday for—for what you did. You'll not get another penny from me!"

"Nor me!" came a savage chorus.

"Oh, all right!" came the husky answer. "Arter all, I s'pose it's my duty to tell what I knows, young gents. I ought not to 'ave taken your money yesterday—making me tell lies like you did. It's my dooty to see as that feller Redwing from Hawkscliff gets compensation for the loss of 'is boat."

"What—what do you mean?" came Ponsonby's snarling voice. "We know nothing about any lost boat, excepting our own."

"What a question," came the answer with a chuckle. "I reckon I believed you young gents at first. Then when I 'eard last night as a feller from Hawkscliff 'ad 'ad 'is boat smashed on the Shark's Tooth, I tumbled to it straight

away. I feel sorry for that there chap Redwing. I don't 'old with shielding you young gents. I feel it's my dooty to go up and see that master of yours agen. I'd better tell 'im as you young gents tempted me with money, and that. Bein' 'ard up, I foll for it. But I think better on it now, and wants to tell the truth. So-long, young gents!"

There was a movement, and then Ponsonby's savage voice.

"Stop!"

"Well?" was the husky retort. "Think better on it, hey?"

"How much do you want, you rotter?"

"I ain't arskin' for nothing, mind you," was the cool reply. "But if you likes to make a bloke a present of a quid, say, I don't know as I shall refuse it."

"Don't pay the brute another penny, Pon!" came Skinner's furious voice. "Can't you see the brute's game? He'll be always at us for money now. He can prove nothing!"

"Ho, can't I?" was the husky retort. "You telled your master as you spent most of the arternoon on Black Rock Island. I can prove as you didn't, for one thing. I was talkin' on the beach at Pegg to the durned Coastguard and two other fellers just afore I took you off the Shark's Tooth. And them fellers saw me land you less than twenty minutes arterwards at Pegg, my lads. Oh, I got proof enough to settle you, young gents."

"Oh, you rotter!"

"Shut up, Skinner!" snarled Ponsonby. "Can't you see the brute's got us? We'll have to shell out, hang him!"

There followed a murmur of voices, and Vernon-Smith gave a grim chuckle.

"Now, you fellows," he said coolly, "let's get on."

He walked calmly forward, topped the rocky ridge, and stepped down into the hollow. Harry Wharton gave his chums a nod, and they followed him.

They saw six juniors in the hollow, and a rough-looking man in fisherman's garb. The six juniors were Ponsonby, Gadshy, and Vavasour of Highcliffe School, and Skinner, Stott, and Snoop of Greyfriars. They did not need to be told who the man was.

Skinner gave a yell of alarm as he sighted the newcomers, a yell that was followed by gasps of alarm from his shady companions.

"Hallo!" remarked Vernon-Smith coolly. "That's right, Pon. Best to pay up and look pleasant, what? Don't faint, Skinner, old chap. It's only little us!"

Skinner was livid. He knew from the Bounder's words that they had been overheard—that the game was known.

"Oh, you—you sneaking cads!" he hissed. "You've been eavesdropping, you rotters!"

"Exactly! We have," agreed the Bounder, smiling. "We're just in time to stop that merchant from robbing you. Aren't you glad, Skinner? I'm sure Pon is."

If Skinner was livid, then Ponsonby was more so. He fairly shook with passion as he realised that the game was up. He glared at the Bounder, and then he gave a yell.

"Go for the cads!" he howled. "Smash the sneaking rotters!"

He flung himself in a fury of rage at Vernon-Smith, and the two crashed down together, fighting like wild cats. But neither Gadshy nor Vavasour moved—nor did Skinner, Stott, and Snoop. The latter three knew better than to side with a fellow from Highcliffe against their own fellows.



There came a sudden angry shout, and the next instant two well-known figures appeared on the scene with a rush. They were Wingate and his chum Gwynne of the Sixth, and they did not stop to ask questions. "Out of the way, you kids!" snapped Wingate. "We'll deal with this merchant!" Smack! Wingate's fist took Jim Sparks at the side of his bristly chin, and the boatman howled and went crashing down. (See Chapter 9.)

But someone else did, and that someone was the burly boatman. The rascal apparently realised on which side his "bread was buttered." Moreover, he had heard Vernon-Smith's words concerning himself. He did not intend newcomers to stop Ponsonby & Co. from being "robbed" if he could help it.

He gave a roar, and rushed to aid Ponsonby, sending the Bounder spinning dizzily with a blow from his huge fist.

That was more than enough for Harry Wharton & Co.

"Back up, chaps!" hissed Harry. "Go for the brute!"

At the same moment Gadsby and Vavasour decided to aid their leader. The sight of the burly, rascally boatman aiding their leader gave them courage, and they piled in at the same moment that the Famous Five went to the Bounder's rescue.

The next moment a furious struggle was in progress on the grassy cliff-top.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Smithy Plays a Lone Hand!

TRAMP, tramp, tramp!

Backwards and forwards over the short, crisp turf went the struggle. The Bounder had Ponsonby to himself now—as the latter junior soon knew, to his sorrow. Gadsby and Vavasour were fighting with Frank Nugent and Hurree Singh respectively, while Harry Wharton, Bob Cherry, and Johnny Bull, were at grips with the rascally Jim Sparks.

Nor were they enjoying the encounter—far from it. The rascal was a rough handful even for the three of them. Skinner, Stott, and Snoop looked on in an agony of apprehensive indecision. They longed to aid Ponsonby & Co., yet they dared not stir a finger to do so. They knew what they would have to expect at the hands of the Remove if they did.

How the struggle would have ended was doubtful indeed, had not help been at hand for the Greyfriars juniors. But help was at hand.

There came a sudden angry shout, and the next instant two well-known, and—to the Famous Five and Smithy—welcome figures appeared on the scene with a rush.

They were Wingate and his chum, Gwynne of the Sixth, and they did not stop to ask questions.

"Out of the way, you kids," snapped Wingate. "We'll deal with this merchant!"

Smack!

Wingate's fist took Jim Sparks at the side of his bristly chin, and the boatman howled and went crashing down. He was up again, roaring with fury the next instant—only, however, to meet another straight left that floored him again neatly.

Once again he jumped up, but this time it was not to show fight. He had glimpsed the sturdy, athletic forms of the seniors now, and the sight was enough for him.

He dodged Gwynne's ready fist, and lurched away, taking to his heels without a glance backwards. And Ponsonby, Gadsby, and Vavasour were scarcely a second behind him.

"Let them go!" snapped Wingate, turning and regarding the Removees curiously. "Well, Wharton," he went on. "What's this rumpus mean?"

Wharton was panting and breathless. He wiped a trickle of blood from his mouth, and looked at the Bounder without answering. Vernon-Smith calmly mopped a streaming nose with his handkerchief, and looked at Skinner with a smile. That junior, like Stott and Snoop, was white and shaking.

"I'll leave Skinner to tell you that, Wingate," he said coolly. "Go on, Skinner, old chap—tell Wingate what awful eavesdropping cads we are."

Skinner did not answer.

"Come, Wharton," snapped Wingate. "I am waiting. What does this business mean?"

"I'll tell you that, Wingate," said the Bounder. "That merchant was the boatman whom Quelch went to see last night—the man who rescued Skinner and his pals from the Shark's Tooth

after they had smashed up Redwing's pater's boat!"

"What?"

"Skinner and his pals were just settling up with him when we came along," explained the Bounder. "You've heard, of course, about yesterday afternoon's affair, Wingate—how Skinner and his precious pals smashed that boat up?"

"I heard that Skinner had proved that he didn't smash it up," replied Wingate dryly.

"Skinner didn't prove it," smiled the Bounder. "He only got that boatman to spin a yarn—the yarn Ponsonby and he had paid him to spin. But they didn't pay him enough apparently. When we came along just now he was blackmailing them for more cash. We caught them handing the cash over, and we overheard what was said. That's what made dear old Pon waxy, and he went for us. That boatman merchant piled in to help him. Isn't that right, Skinner?"

Skinner licked his lips. He gave the Bounder a look of bitter hatred.

"Skinner," said Wingate quietly, "is this true?"

"It's all lies, Wingate!" panted Skinner. "Ask the rotter to prove it!"

Wingate turned to Wharton.

"What do you know about this, Wharton?" he demanded grinily.

"Smithy is telling the truth, Wingate," said Harry. "We came along and overheard that rascal blackmailing Ponsonby. I suppose it's no good attempting to hide it now if we wanted to. It was Ponsonby and Skinner, and the rest of them who caused Mr. Redwing's boat to be wrecked."

And the captain of the Remove told all he knew of the matter. He saw it was useless to attempt to shield Skinner now—though he had little inclination to do that. Wingate listened with compressed lips.

"Right, Wharton, that's enough," he said at length. "Skinner, Stott, and Snoop, cut off back to school at once."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 922.

You other kids had better get back also, you may be wanted."

He turned away with Gwynne, and the two seniors started back the way they had come. Evidently the captain had decided not to continue his walk. The Bounder stared after him, his eyes gleaming now.

"You chaps can go back, but I'm not," he said coolly. "I—I think I'll go to meet Redwing."

"Don't talk rot, Smithy!" said Wharton, eyeing him sharply. "What's your game now, Smithy? If that brute is still hanging round, and you happen to bump into him—"

"I can look after myself, Wharton," smiled the Bounder. "You've no need to worry about me, old chap."

"But Redwing is hiking it—he will come by road," said Wharton suspiciously. "Look here, Smithy—"

"I'll risk missing him. I'm off anyway!"

The Bounder turned abruptly, and started off towards Pegg. Wharton stared after him undecidedly.

"Oh, let him go!" said Bob Cherry. "You'll never stop him, anyway!"

"Smithy can look after himself all right," said Johnny Bull.

Harry Wharton shrugged his shoulders.

"All right! Let's get back, then!" he said. "This looks like being the kybosh for Skinner, chaps."

"Serve him jolly well right!" said Frank Nugent.

The Famous Five were agreed upon that as they tramped back schoolwards. Meantime, Vernon-Smith was hastening in the opposite direction. The moment he was out of sight of his friend, he started to run, a resolute look on his firm features.

For it was not to meet Redwing that the Bounder had decided to go on alone. Despite what had happened, Vernon-Smith was far from being satisfied. He had started out that evening with the intention of proving that "money makes people talk," and he was determined to carry out that intention.

He ran hard, his eyes fixed ahead on the look-out for the slouching figure of Jim Sparks. That he was running a big risk of getting a severe handling from the rascal, the Bounder was well aware; but it made no difference to the iron-willed junior.

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THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 922.

It was already beginning to grow dusk, and a thick mist hung over the sea. But Vernon-Smith went on, and very soon he saw the man he was after. He came within hearing distance, and then he shouted his name.

The boatman stopped and looked back. He seemed quite taken aback when he saw the solitary junior racing towards him. Then his eyes glittered as he recognised the Bounder, and he waited, an ugly look on his face.

"Hold on!" said the Bounder, as he ran up. "I want a word with you!"

"Oh, do yer?"

The man stared at Vernon-Smith. But something in the junior's tone made him lower his fists again.

"Well?" he growled menacingly. "What's this game?"

"I'll soon tell you that," said Vernon-Smith coolly. "Look here!"

He opened his pocket-wallet, exposing a small wad of Treasury notes—keeping a wary eye on the man as he did so.

Jim Sparks' eyes glistened greedily.

"What—"

"Yesterday," said Vernon-Smith coolly, "you were paid by some fellows to keep your mouth closed about that wreck affair. Now I'm offering to pay you for opening it. See?"

"Eh? What d'you mean?"

"I mean just this," said Vernon-Smith. "I'll give you five pounds if you will come up to the School—Greyfriars—and tell our Headmaster the truth as to who ran that boat on the rocks. You've no need to fear anything, I promise you. Blackmail or no blackmail, the Head would never prosecute—would never make a police-court case if he could help it. It doesn't do to get a school into the papers with cases of this sort."

The man eyed him blankly.

"You—you mean that?" he said thickly.

"Yes. It'll pay you to take it on. You've finished with those other cads. You'll never get another penny from them. It's all out now, and I shouldn't wonder if they're sacked. You need expect nothing more from them."

"By hokey!"

"There's another thing," said Smithy grimly. "We heard what you said just now. The coastguard and others will furnish proof, if necessary. It's five quid for you or nothing, my man. And I might tell you that it will perhaps save you trouble if you come up now and own up. You can tell our Head you've thought better of it—that you were tempted, and all that—just what you like, in fact. But the truth has got to be told."

Smithy stopped, and the man eyed him fixedly, evidently dubious and suspicious. But he nodded at last. Smithy's arguments had not been unavailing.

"I'll come," he said. "And over the dibs, young gent."

"I'll give you two quid now, and the rest when you've finished with the Head."

"Done!" said the man.

"Right!" snapped Smithy, his eyes gleaming. "Here's your money. Now, come on!"

Vernon-Smith handed over two Treasury notes for one pound each, and the next moment Sparks and the Bounder were tramping back towards Greyfriars together.

The Bounder's methods might not appeal to fellows like Harry Wharton, but that did not trouble him. He was fighting for his chum, and that was all that Smithy cared about just then.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

The Bounder's Win!

WINGATE went straight to the Head's study on arrival at Greyfriars. The captain had a duty to perform, and he lost no time in performing it. The Head was not in the room, but a message by the maid quickly brought him in. Wingate related what he had learned and what had taken place on the cliffs.

Dr. Locke listened with growing amazement. But his tone was grim when he spoke at last.

"Very well, Wingate. I am very glad you lost no time in coming to me with this information. I will deal with the matter without delay. Will you be good enough to send Skinner, Stott, and Snoop to me—also Wharton, Redwing, and Vernon-Smith?"

"Yes, sir."

Wingate vanished, but he soon reappeared again. With him were all but the two last-named juniors.

"Vernon-Smith did not return with the others, sir," he explained. "He went to meet Redwing, who has gone home to Hawkscliff, with Mr. Quelch's permission."

Wingate hurried out for Mr. Quelch, and when the Remove master arrived the Head explained the position to him, and then he turned to Wharton.

"Wharton," he said quietly, "you have heard what I have just related to Mr. Quelch. Is that what happened to your knowledge?"

"Yes, sir. It is quite right, sir."

"Kindly relate all that took place, Wharton."

Harry Wharton did so, and the Head nodded, and turned a steely glance upon Skinner & Co.

"Now, Skinner," he said sternly. "I will address you as you appear to have been the leader in this matter. You have heard what Wharton has stated to me. What have you to say?"

Skinner could scarcely articulate; he was shivering with fear. He had felt himself and his chums so safe—safe from discovery. And now this had happened. It was all up he felt certain, and he felt sick with dread and fear.

But he was determined to bluff it out desperately, for, all that.

"It is all lies, sir," he said thickly.

"This is all a plot—all arranged. We were talking with that boatman certainly. We met him accidentally on the cliffs. We owed him something for the hire of the boat yesterday. We were paying him when Wharton and the others came up. The rest is all a pack of lies, sir."

"You deny it all, Skinner?" said the Head, eyeing the hapless junior steadily.

"Ye-es, sir!" gasped Skinner. "The—the man will tell you—will prove what I say to be true."

"Then you would not mind if I sent for him, Skinner—to cross-examine him here?"

"Oh, no, sir!"

"Or if I asked the Pegg coastguard to come here and prove Wharton's words were false, Skinner?"

Skinner caught his breath. He was bowled out, and he knew it. He could not speak.

"Skinner," said the Head grimly. "I warn you to be careful. I have every confidence in Wharton's word; I certainly have not in yours. Wharton's companions will doubtless substantiate his statements, also. I intend to thrash this matter out. I am not at all satisfied now that you are speaking the truth; indeed, I strongly suspect that you are

not. You apparently fear to face the witnesses Wharton refers to."

Still Skinner was silent. And as he stood, white-faced and wretched, a knock came at the door, and Wingate entered.

"Excuse me, sir," he said, "but Vernon-Smith has returned. He has brought the boatman, Sparks, back with him. The man wishes to make a statement, sir."

"Show Vernon-Smith and the man in, please, Wingate."

A moment later the Bouncer entered the study. Behind him was the boatman, twirling his peaked cap nervously in his hands. He slunk into the room stealthily, glancing under his eyebrows at the Head. Jim Sparks was not at all sure of the kind of welcome he would get.

"Well, Vernon-Smith?" said Dr. Locke.

"I've brought this man, sir," said Smithy steadily and quite coolly. "He has something to tell you, sir, regarding the smashing of that boat yesterday. He did not tell the truth yesterday to Mr. Quelch. He is willing to tell it now, sir."

"Oh, indeed!" said Dr. Locke, with a look of disfavour at the cringing boatman. "And why should I believe the man to be speaking the truth now when yesterday he lied, Vernon-Smith?"

"Because he can prove what he has to say now, sir."

The Head turned to Jim Sparks.

"I will hear what you have to say, my man," he said grimly.

"It weren't my fault, sir," mumbled the rascal. "I was tempted by them young rascals, sir. Bein' a poor, 'ard-workin' man, as 'as to earn 'is livin'. I was only too glad to earn a bit of extra cash, and believin' I was helpin' them young rascals, too."

"Never mind that now," interrupted the Head curtly. "What is the truth of this matter? I shall be obliged if you will tell me without delay."

"Yes, sir."

And Jim Sparks told his story—truthfully this time. With two pounds in his pocket, and three more pounds to come for telling the truth, the rascal was only too willing to oblige.

"That will do, my man," said the Head grimly, at last. "Wingate, will you kindly show this—this person out? Now, Skinner—"

Dr. Locke turned to Skinner as Wingate led the growling boatman out. Skinner's face was a picture by this time. His last hope was gone. And Stott and Snoop were almost in a state of collapse.

"Now, Skinner," exclaimed the Head in steely tones, "you have heard what that man had to say. Do you still deny that you are one of the boys who took Mr. Redwing's boat and caused it to be wrecked yesterday?"

Skinner hung his head.

"No, sir," he gasped. "I—I own up! It was all Ponsonby's doing, though. We—"

The voice of the Cad of the Remove trailed off into silence.

Sidney James Snoop and Stott were almost as speechless.

"And you, Snoop," rumbled the Head. "Do you still maintain that you were not concerned in this regrettable affair?"

"Nunno, sir," faltered Snoop. "You see, sir, we—we—we—I mean I—I—"

"What do you mean, Snoop?"

"N-nothing, sir!" gulped Snoop.

Dr. Locke fixed his piercing eye on Stott. That unhappy junior nearly collapsed.

"MAGNET" PORTRAIT GALLERY.

No. 6.—Horace James Coker (of the Fifth).



Possessing the muscles of a fellow of twenty and the brains of a Third-Former, Horace Coker is the acknowledged Duffer of the Fifth. Imagines himself good at everything and prides himself upon his tact and judgment. Ought to be captain of Greyfriars—in his own opinion. The great Horace is seldom taken seriously, the fellows usually allowing him to "have his head" so long as he doesn't do any harm. With Coker and his Aunt Judy, Greyfriars has passed through some stirring times. Rather heavy-handed with the fags, in which category rank the heroes of the Remove. But for all his misguided ideas, Coker is not a bully. Generous to a fault, brave as a lion, and straight as a die; there are heaps worse at Greyfriars. Shares Study No. 4 in the Fifth with George Potter and William Greene.

"What have you to say, Stott?"

"Nothing, sir," stuttered Stott. "It wasn't my fault. Ponsonby is to blame. I—"

"That is enough," said the Head. "I will deal with the three of you later, when I have consulted with Dr. Voysey of Highcliffe."

It was enough. Dr. Locke acquainted the headmaster of Highcliffe with the facts as he knew them; and, faced with the unpleasant knowledge that Skinner & Co. had owned up, Cecil Ponsonby, Gadsby, and Vavasour also owned up—they could do nothing else. On the telephone, Dr. Locke and Dr. Voysey also agreed upon the punishment of the delinquents.

The juniors concerned had lied again and again to their respective headmasters, and there was small expectation that they would escape expulsion. But they did.

In Big Hall at Greyfriars Skinner, Stott, and Snoop received a well-deserved flogging. At Highcliffe, also, Ponsonby & Co. were served the same. That was not all, by any means, however. The parents of all six received letters from Dr. Locke and Dr. Voysey respectively a few days later, acquaint-

ing them of their sons' misdeeds, and stating that they would be expected to pay their sons' share of the damage done to Mr. Redwing's boat.

And—luckily for them—the damage was also not as bad as was generally expected. When Redwing returned that evening he brought good news, in addition to finding good news awaiting him. An expert examination proved the damage much slighter than was generally supposed, and an estimate for repairs came to less than fifty pounds.

But even this, divided amongst the six culprits, was more than enough for the parents of Skinner & Co. and Ponsonby & Co., for they promptly withheld all pocket-money until the debt was wiped out.

And it was noticed for weeks afterwards that Ponsonby & Co. and Skinner & Co. were in a chronic state of impecuniosity—which was unpleasant, but only half of what they deserved.

THE END.

(Look out for the opening story of a grand new series, featuring the popular captain of Greyfriars—George Wingate, and his young minor, Jack, entitled: "Brother and Prefect!" by Frank Richards. Appears in next Monday's MAGNET.)

ALL IN THE DAY'S WORK! To be knocked on the head and imprisoned in a dingy cellar, knowing not what fate awaits him, is, to Jack Drake, a trifle light as air compared with the sense of disgust he feels at having failed in his task!



A full-of-thrills detective story featuring Ferrers Locke, the private investigator, and his clever boy assistant, Jack Drake.

The Visitor!

JACK glanced at his chief when the inspector had departed.

"Got any idea at the back of your head, guv'nor, as to what the game is?" he remarked.

"Not the slightest, except that it doesn't augur well for my good health!" was the sleuth's reply.

"Then what are you thinking of doing?"

"Rigging up a decoy duck, and then wait and see what turns up."

"A decoy duck?"

"Yes. Cut along downstairs. You'll find a lot of straw and paper in the cellar, as well as some old sacks. Fill one of them, and bring it up."

With a nod the lad darted away, inwardly wondering what the detective had in mind, whilst Locke—passing into his bed-room—selected a light tweed suit from his wardrobe, and by the time his assistant had returned, was awaiting him.

"Ever helped to build a guy on fire-work nights?" he asked, with a smile, as Jack dropped the sack full of rubbish on the floor.

"Course I have, but—"

"Then you can give me a hand to make one now, my lad!"

And, picking up the trousers belonging to the suit, the detective commenced to cram them with the contents of the sack.

This done, the jacket—which had been fixed to the nether garments—was treated in a similar manner. Then, drawing a chair up to the table, Locke fixed the dummy in it, causing it to bend slightly over the table.

Next, with the aid of a wig from his make-up set, and a bundle of rags, a head was manufactured and made secure. Then, placing an open book before the figure, the famous detective regarded it with evident satisfaction.

"Yes, when viewed from the street, I think that will pass muster for 'yours truly.' And now, Jack, as soon as I'm out of the room, pull up the blind and leave the light on."

With a broad grin that he could not

suppress, the lad carried out these instructions, and then followed his chief into the hall.

"Reckon I've got you, guv'nor," he chirped. "This decoy duck stunt of yours beats cock-fighting. Anyone outside would swear you were hard at work in there!"

"Which is just the impression I wish to create," came the reply. "See, it's this way, kid. We don't know what we're up against; but we do know this, that whoever we've got to tackle, he is not taking more risks than he can help, so it's a case of diamond cut diamond."

"Then—"

CHARACTERS IN THE STORY.

FERRERS LOCKE, the famous private detective of Baker Street.

JACK DRAKE, his clever boy assistant.

INSPECTOR PYECROFT, a leading light of the C.I.D. at Scotland Yard.

"THE CHIEF," a mysterious personage, who directs the coups of the Phantom Bat, the name given to the weird, inhuman-looking object, capable of flying like an aeroplane, about which, so far, very little is known by Scotland Yard.

HUSKY and the **SNARK**, two prominent members of the Chief's gang.

Soon after the Phantom Bat is seen flying over London comes the news of a daring robbery at the house of Juan Fernandez—an agent of a Spanish Grandee—in whose care some priceless emeralds have been entrusted. The emeralds are stolen, and the few clues left behind point to the work being that of the Bat.

Ferrers Locke is invited to investigate the case, and forthwith the sleuth and his assistant make their way to the scene of the robbery.

On his return to Baker Street Locke finds a letter left for him by a messenger-boy. The letter, incidentally, is a fiendish attempt to put the great detective out of the way, for it contains a deadly powder which, when inhaled, brings about instantaneous death.

But the trick doesn't work!

Some time later Locke, through a fault at the telephone exchange, overhears part of a conversation between two people which, strangely enough, refers to himself. That some devilment is afoot the detective feels convinced, although he is only able to glean the information that a certain scheme is to be put into operation that same night at his house in Baker Street.

(Now read on.)

"Before any attempt would be made, it's a million to one that whoever's on the job will have a good look round. Our dummy friend in the next room will give them the impression that I'm hard at work!"

"Whilst we're stowed away in the background ready to give them one in the neck!" exclaimed Jack Drake excitedly. "Gee! But if they only knew that the Ferrers Locke they'll see is stuffed with straw—"

And, despite the gravity of the situation, the youngster burst into a laugh.

"Well, we'll leave them to find that out if they can, and now we'll take up our positions. If you put yourself at the landing window you'll be able to keep an eye on the rear of the premises. I'll go in here, for the window is well in the shade, and from there I can see up and down the street, and that's all we can do for the present."

With a "Right-ho, guv'nor!" Jack mounted the stairs to his appointed place, and then, each making himself as comfortable as circumstances would permit, settled down to await the advent of—they knew not what.

Hour after hour dragged wearily on, till the hum of traffic had practically ceased, the footsteps of a solitary pedestrian, or the rumble of a belated car alone breaking the silence.

Suddenly a faint "Hist!" caught Jack's ear, and, instantly realising what it meant, he tiptoed down the stairs, and, without speaking, touched his chief on the arm.

"See that car up there?" Locke asked, in guarded tones, pointing to a limousine drawn up at the kerb some thirty yards higher up the road.

"Plain as a pikestaff, guv'nor. What about it?"

"It drew up there a few minutes ago. Three men got out, one of whom strolled back on the pavement opposite, and then, apparently catching sight of our decoy duck, hurried back to his comrades. Ah, there they are! See?"

By straining his eyes, the lad was able to distinguish three dim forms, though, as they were far removed from a street-lamp, and the head-lights of the car had

been switched off, he could obtain but a very imperfect impression of the strangers.

"Coming over this side, gov'nor!" he remarked, as the men could be seen moving off. "If I open the front door half an inch, I can spot what the blighters are up to."

"Go ahead," Locke agreed. A permission of which the lad instantly availed himself, to rejoin his chief some three minutes later, when he blurted out:

"This fairly gets me down. Dashed if they haven't entered Dolby House. You know, the one that's let out in flats. Perhaps, after all, they're chaps who are staying there, or—"

"Hardly! If either residents or visitors, they'd not draw up their car on the farther side of the road and switch off the lights."

"Then what's their wheeze?"

"Difficult to say. But, if I remember rightly, the stairway at Dolby House, the same as many other flats, terminates below a door leading on to the roof, and there's only a few houses separating this from the one they've entered."

"By Jove, yes! Then while you keep a look-out down here to see if they come out again, shall I hop upstairs? If, by any chance, they should start monkeying about aloft, I could give you the tip."

"Not a bad idea!"

Without waiting to learn more, Jack Drake sped silently up the stairs, and, having arrived at the top landing, seated himself on an empty trunk, well knowing that, from the position he occupied, he could not fail to hear any movements overhead.

He had, however, scarcely settled himself down, when a faint sound attracted his attention. A sound so faint at first that he could hardly distinguish it from the heavy breathing of their Chinese servant, Sing-Sing, proceeding from a room close at hand. For, having returned some time previously, the Celestial was sleeping peacefully, if not noiselessly.

In an instant, with every nerve in his body quivering with excitement, Jack rose to his feet. No, he had not been mistaken. Once again the peculiar sound was repeated. Yet what could it be? Certainly not the footfall of human beings, but a sort of scraping noise, as though some object was being lowered down the slanting roof over his head.

Should he communicate with his chief? was the first thought that flashed through his brain. No, he would ascertain first whether there was any necessity, and, acting on this resolve, Jack cautiously opened the door of a room close beside him, and, gliding in, drew himself as flat against the wall as possible.

Nor had he long to wait, for, as with straining eyes he gazed at the uncurtained window, he could detect some object that, deeper than the gloom that surrounded it, swayed backwards and forwards.

He was on the point of creeping nearer the window to make a closer examination, when once again, though this time louder than before, a movement on the roof above him caused him to pause.

The indistinct object swaying before the window began to oscillate wildly, and then the faint light that still filtered through the panes became practically obscured by what Jack instantly realised as a human form.

Here, indeed, was a solution of the mysterious sounds he had heard. The indistinct, swaying object he had first detected had undoubtedly been a rope-ladder that, having been secured to a chimney-stack overhead, had been lowered over the edge of the roof. A

ladder which then supported someone who was bent upon secretly forcing an entrance.

Drake's first impulse was to raise the alarm; then, even as his lips parted to utter the warning shout, they were closed tightly. To raise an alarm at that moment could have but one result. The would-be intruder would instantly take to flight, and in all probability get clear away, which was the last thing his employer would desire. No; he would permit the stranger to enter unmolested, and then, when cutting off all chance of escape, utter the well-known call that would instantly bring Ferrers Locke to his aid. So, with pulses beating at fever heat with excitement, the lad crouched even lower back, waiting developments.

That the unknown outside was an expert at the work he was attempting was evident, for almost immediately one of the panes of glass in the window became opaque; a change in its appearance that Jack well knew was due to its surface being covered by an adhesive plaster, preparatory to its being cut round the edge with a diamond.

The sharp, scratching noise of the stone against the glass almost instantly followed. Then a faint snap as the glass was removed, permitting the cool night air to play through the aperture.

With every muscle taut, and scarcely daring to breathe, Jack crouched even lower still, as with eyes now thoroughly accustomed to the gloom he watched every movement of the man outside. First a hand, then an arm came through the open space, a hand that instantly made for the thumb-screws that had effectually prevented the sash from being raised from the outside.

Another second, and the hand and arm would be withdrawn. The thought surged through the lad's brain. Now was his opportunity, for the unknown was practically at his mercy.

With a loud shout of "Hi, gov'nor!" that echoed weirdly out through the

silent building, Drake sprang forward, and, gripping the wrist of the unknown, flung his full weight upon it.

A savage oath burst from the lips of the captive, as at the expense of many lacerations he endeavoured to wrench his arm free.

But Jack was not to be so easily shaken off, as his enemy found to his cost, for struggle as he would, Locke's assistant held on with the tenacity of a bulldog.

"Got him, gov'nor! Got him!" he shouted, as Locke, bursting into the room, switched on the light.

This statement on the part of the plucky lad, however, proved premature, for, maddened at the prospect of capture, his antagonist, practically risking everything, removed one foot from the swaying ladder that supported him, and with every ounce of strength in his body, lashed out.

A smash of glass, and the heavy boot, crashing through a lower pane, caught Jack on the side of his head with a force that not only compelled him to loosen his hold, but to stagger back with a gasping cry into the arms of his chief.

Clutching at his assistant with one arm, Locke levelled his automatic, and fired at the figure of the intruder—a masked figure, revealed by the electric light—intending to wing him.

But a convulsive movement on the part of the lad he was supporting caused the bullet to go wide of its mark, and, uttering a snarl of impotent rage, the unknown literally flung himself upwards to safety.

Pausing for a moment to lay his assistant gently down, the criminologist darted to the door that gave access to his own roof, and here a few moments more were lost in unlocking and unbolting it, so that by the time he had flung it open and swept the rays of his electric torch around, it was to discover that the intruders had got clean away.

There was the rope around a chimney



A smash of glass, and the heavy boot crashing, through a lower pane, caught Drake on the side of his head with a force that not only compelled him to loosen his hold, but to stagger back with a gasping cry into the arms of his chief. Clutching his assistant with one arm, Locke levelled his automatic and fired at the intruder.

(See this page.)

stack, supporting the ladder, by means of which an attempt had been made to force an entrance, and as the detective stooped to examine it more closely, his light rested on a small object that caused him to utter an ejaculation of surprise. It was an indiarubber ball, of medium size, to which was affixed some three inches of fine brass tubing.

For a long time Ferrers Locke regarded it in silence, then, with a grim smile, he pocketed his find, and made his way downstairs.

Drake had come to by this time, and was apparently none the worse for the blow he had received.

"What next, gov'nor?" he queried. "Shall we—"

"Go to bed," finished Locke with a smile. "Sure thing! There's nothing further to fear to-night. Our friends have had more than they bargained for."

Drake's face fell.

"Off with you!" said the detective. "A sleep will do you good. And we've got a stiff day's work in front of us to-morrow, take it from me."

The Star of Golcoondabad!

THE hum of machinery filled a spacious underground chamber, one that, judging by the quaintly carved groined roof, was of great antiquity, the time-worn walls of which seemed strangely out of place in the glare of the powerful electric light by which they were illuminated.

"No, she's not running smoothly," a tall, dark-haired man, in conventional evening-dress, snapped out, as he bent over the swiftly-revolving wheels and piston-rods of the complicated machine before him. "What's the hitch?" he asked, turning to the only other occupant of the chamber, a frowsy-headed individual, garbed in greasy overalls.

"More than I can say, boss, till she's stopped, and I can overhaul her."

"What about the pressure—is that being kept up?"

"Only by fits and starts."

"And the accumulators?"

"'Bout half-charged."

"Half! Then you'll have to let her up at all costs. Those accumulators must be fully charged."

"But you're risking a breakdown, chief. Shouldn't be surprised, working as she is, to find something snap at any moment."

"Breakdown, or no breakdown, those accumulators are to be fully charged, or if not—well, you know what to expect. Call yourself an engineer, and you let a machine get into this state! Understand this—Hullo! What in the name of fury do you want?"

The words were jerked out, and the speaker swung round to face a third man who had unexpectedly entered.

"They're back," the newcomer remarked laconically, jerking his head in the direction of a flight of wooden stairs by which he had descended.

"Husky and the others? Good!"

"Don't know what you call good. Reckon you'd better see Husky."

"What?" shouted the chief, and his face went livid with passion. "D'you mean to tell me—"

"Guess I'm leaving 'im to tell you what there is to tell," his companion interrupted dryly.

With a snarl of rage the chief strode towards the stairs, which he mounted three at a time. Then, darting along a stone-flagged passage, he burst into a

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room in which Husky, with his wrists and forearm swathed in bandages, was lounging against the fireplace.

With a steely look in his eyes that boded ill for his rascally associate, the chief rapped out:

"You've failed! There's no need for you to tell me that!"

"Yes; and you'd have done the same if you'd been in my place," Husky responded in surly tones. "That there Ferrers Locke and his kid are very devils!"

"Devils or no devils, that's no excuse for your failure. What good are you to me if you don't carry out my orders? Another failure like this, Husky, and—well, you won't have the chance of trying a third time. And I suppose now, by your infernal bungling, this cursed detective knows that an attempt was made to settle him?"

"Looks like it," Husky retorted, as he held up his bandaged arm. "And look here, chief, I'll tell you straight, if we ain't careful, they'll prove one too many for us some day."

"Getting cold feet, you cur? What d'you mean by proving one too many for us?"

"What I say. Why, they'd got wind of it long before we arrived, and were waiting for us."

"You're mad! It's impossible!"

"That's all you know about it. I tell you they knew we were coming. Why, they'd rigged up a dummy to look like Locke, sitting at his table downstairs, and yet directly I'd opened a top window they were on me like a streak. A bullet from a pistol as near settling me as anything. See here, where it's chipped my ear," and the speaker pointed to one ear, the tip of which showed evident traces of the passage of the missile. "It's my belief," he remarked deliberately, "that they've been warned, chief. Someone has given the game away!"

"So that's your excuse, is it?" sneered the chief. "Because you're so white-livered as to let this hound Locke and his strip of a boy get the better of you, you'd try to throw the blame on someone else."

"White-livered?" Husky shouted, his face flushing crimson. "White-livered, did you say? No more white-livered than yourself. Look here, you think yourself mighty clever. The next time you've got a job of that sort on hand, have a shot at it yourself, and see how you'll get on!"

With eyes that fairly blazed with rage, the leader of the gang started back a pace.

"You hound!" he shouted. "You dare to talk to me like that?" And his hand slid downwards to his hip pocket.

Quick as the movement had been, it was not passed unnoticed by Husky, who, evidently prepared for such a contingency, whipped out a heavy revolver and levelled it direct between the eyes of the man before him.

"Just as well keep your hand where it is, chief!" he snarled. "You're slick, but not slick enough; and two can play at that game!"

For the space of several moments there was almost unbroken silence in the room. It's two occupants glared at each other like wild beasts. The silence was unexpectedly broken by a strange, cackling laugh, a laugh followed by a cracked voice.

"Fools! Here, put those shooting-irons away!"

And with a bound, a strange, squat, diminutive figure sprang forward. A strange, mis-shapen specimen of humanity, whose head set deep in his

shoulders, seemed too large for the body supporting it, and whose long, skinny arms were out of all proportion to the rest of his frame.

With a sweep of his hand, he flung Husky's arm upwards, as with a crack, a bullet from the weapon buried itself in the wooden ceiling overhead. Then, with his other hand, he gripped the chief's wrist just as he was on the point of snatching his weapon from his pocket.

With an oath, the chief attempted to wrench himself free, but in vain; and, after omitting a volley of vituperations, was forced to desist in his efforts, being utterly powerless in the grasp of the strange creature who clutched him. Although small of stature, it was obvious that the dwarf possessed the strength of two ordinary men.

"Fools!" the dwarf again shouted, as with a sweep of his long arms he sent the two combatants staggering apart. "What good would you have done if you'd marked each other? Leave Ferrers Locke alone for the present. Cute as he is, he'll find he's no match for us in the long run," and again the cackling laugh echoed out. "He, he, he!" the dwarf chuckled, rubbing his hands together. "Here are you two quarrelling like wild cats when there's one of the biggest hauls we've ever come across, almost ready to be scooped in."

"Biggest hauls! What d'you mean? What d'you know about it?" snapped the chief.

"What do I know about it? Why this. While you two were playing the fool down here, a phone message came through from the Snark."

"The Snark! Did he give the code signal?"

"Shouldn't have been such an idiot as to say it was the Snark, unless I was certain!" came the swift retort. "Rang up from a public call-office and told me that the Chief Commissioner up at the Yard has received a communication from the secretary of the Nawab of Golcoondabad, who's on his way to England from Paris, asking his advice as to the safeguarding of the prince's jewels, which, as you know, include the world-famous Star of Golcoondabad."

"And what did the Commissioner suggest?"

"Placing them in a safe deposit company. But the Nawab's not taking any, as he's a great fancy for being able to change his jewellery at a moment's notice, if he wishes to."

The eyes of the chief sparkled greedily.

"Here, you two," he jerked out suddenly, the recent quarrel with his subordinates driven from his mind in the excitement of the moment. "You both remain here. My car's at the door. I'll get away to the club at once! Shall be sure to get hold of some news there. Don't leave here on any account till I return. You may be wanted at any minute!"

And, without further words, he dashed from the room.

Drake Strikes a Trail!

FOLLOWING up his suggestion that he should visit the various theatrical costumiers on the chance of learning whether any of them had loaned out a District Messenger Boy's uniform, Jack Drake lost some little time on the morning following the attempt made at Baker Street, to carry out his proposed campaign.

Without stating his reasons, Locke had



With a sweep of his hand the squat, diminutive figure flung Husky's arm upwards as, with a crack, a bullet from the weapon buried itself in the ceiling overhead. Then, with the other hand, he gripped the chief's wrist just as he was on the point of snatching his weapon from his pocket. (See page 24.)

briefly informed Drake at breakfast, that, following some experiments in his laboratory, he had one or two calls to make that would occupy him till well up to lunch-time, so that the youngster had ample time at his disposal.

Searching through a directory, Jack soon had a list of every theatrical costumier in London. Hailing a taxi, he set out in the direction of Covent Garden, whence he commenced a systematic round.

Firm after firm he called upon, with always practically the same result, many of them not even stocking such uniforms. The few who did so, had not had any application for them for months past; and the lad was almost giving up the quest as hopeless, when he arrived at the last name on his list.

It was an unpretentious shop in the Westminster Bridge Road, the proprietor of which eyed him curiously as he repeated his oft-made request to loan a messenger-boy's uniform.

"Umph!" grunted the man suspiciously. "Fancy dress dance, eh? Same yarn as the other fellow spouted."

Jack pricked up his ears.

"Then I gather you let one out recently?" he said eagerly.

"Let one out? Yes! An' a fool I was to let it go without a deposit, for the chap hasn't brought it back!"

Drake could scarcely restrain his excitement.

"Not brought it back? That's awkward!" he sympathised.

"More awkward for me than for you. You see, the chap who loaned it wasn't short of oof. He offered me a fiver to change for the deposit, as a matter of fact. None of your Bank of Exchange,

either, and—well, as I hadn't enough cash in the till to give him change, I let him go, though I reckon it doesn't jappen again, you bet!"

"And is there no means of finding him?" Jack asked, with eagerness.

"Oh, he give me his name and address, though that don't count for nothing if he ain't straight. I wrote to him, and he hasn't even answered though—"

He broke off abruptly, for at that instant a postman entering the premises, flung a postcard on the counter.

"Well, I'm blowed!" the proprietor of the shop ejaculated, as he glanced at the communication. "Reckon you've brought me luck, youngster; here, read it for yourself!" he added, extending the card as he spoke.

Taking it from the outstretched hand, Jack could not repress a start as he glanced at it. Where had he seen that bold handwriting before?

"Gosh!" he muttered to himself. "If it isn't written in the same fist as the envelope containing the dope they sent the gov'nor I'll eat my hat!" Then, stifling his excitement, he read aloud:

"Sorry forgot to return uniform; will bring it back about nine this evening."

There it ended, without even any attempt at a signature, and, on turning it over, Jack found to his disappointment that the postmark was so blurred as to be undecipherable without the aid of a magnifying-glass. But the discovery, apart from that, was more than worth all the trouble he had taken. For not only was Drake convinced that the man who had written the card was the same who had addressed the letter, resulting in the death of the puppy,

but, if he played his cards properly, he would not only have the opportunity of seeing the individual, but of shadowing him.

Choking back his excitement, Jack turned calmly to the proprietor of the shop.

"What time do you close?" he asked. "Almost any time. You see, I pull down the blinds, but a business like this keeps me up pretty late."

"Then if I come round about ten, and this costume has been returned—of course, I'll pay a deposit now," Drake added hastily.

"You can have it then, same thing. 'Cause if the shop's closed, you can knock at the side door."

"Right-ho!" agreed Jack cheerily; and, handing over the amount required as a deposit, quitted the premises, and, jumping into the waiting taxi, was soon on his way to Baker Street.

Here he found a note from Ferrers Locke, to the effect that, as he would not be back before the evening, Drake was to get on with anything he had in hand.

After a hasty lunch, Drake filled up the interval till the time arrived for him to start West by catching up some back work in arranging and tabulating the various press-cuttings and notes that had accumulated.

At length the moment for a start arrived; for, although Drake had informed the shopkeeper that he would be back about ten o'clock, this statement was far removed from his actual intentions, he having decided to take up a position from which he could see everyone who entered the shop not a moment

later than eight-thirty, so as to avoid the possibility of missing the unknown, should he return the messenger boy's uniform.

Prompt to the moment he had fixed in his mind Jack arrived outside the shop, though he was not recognisable as the smart lad who had previously entered.

Clad in a suit of a decidedly loud check, and cap tilted well over one ear, and wearing cloth leggings, he looked a typical stable lad. A wisp of straw that he was chewing gave a finishing touch.

As usual, the thoroughfare was crowded with bustling pedestrians, and it was an easy matter to stroll backwards and forwards before the dingy little shop without attracting undue attention.

Drake kept up this monotonous vigil for quite half an hour, till at length, glancing through the glass door for about the hundredth time, he saw two men at the counter.

Pressing up to the window, and ostensibly gazing at two wax figures arrayed in fancy costume, Locke's assistant obtained a good view of the interior. A thrill of satisfaction ran through him as he saw his erstwhile friend, the proprietor, produce from a parcel before him the dark blue suit and pill-box cap that had been the cause of that wearisome vigil.

Both of the men at the counter had their backs towards Drake, so that all the lad could determine at the moment was that, whilst one of them had adopted a cheap, flashy style of dressing, his companion—a thick-set, bull-necked man—with a flaming scarf around his neck in place of a collar, wore a suit of clothing that had undoubtedly seen better days.

Jack Drake smiled grimly to himself, as, having apparently settled matters to their mutual satisfaction, the customers turned to depart. For the first time, Locke's assistant was able to get a glimpse of their features.

Convinced that the men before him were strangers, he moved a trifle nearer the shop door, so as not to miss them when they emerged, as he had determined not to let the opportunity of shadowing them slip through his fingers. Then the unexpected happened.

Staggering along beneath the load of a heavy sack on his shoulders, an unkempt man tripped on the greasy pavement, and, colliding with the young sleuth, caused him to lurch heavily against the strangers as they stepped into the street.

"Blow ye! Can't yer see where yer's coming to, yer young cub?" growled the bull-necked man, as he drove his elbow into Jack's chest.

"Keep yer 'ands off, mate! You needn't 'owl. Can't yer see 'tain't my fault?" retorted Drake readily, acting up to his assumed character.

"Well, clear out, that's all!" came the reply, accompanied by a menacing gesture. "Come on, mate," he added, turning to his companion.

And, without so much as a backward look, the men crossed the road.

If Jack Drake had but known! For no sooner had the strangely-assorted pair gained the kerb on the opposite side than the owner of the flaming scarf jerked out:

"See 'oo the kid was?"

"What, the youngster who barged into us?"

"Yes, 'im. 'E's Ferrers Locke's mate!"

"Aw! Get on with it! You're batchy!"

"Batchy, am I? We'll soon see! And don't you kid yerself 'e were 'angin' around there for nothin'."

"Then you think—"

"Think, be hang, you thickhead! 'Ere, turn down 'ere. It's a quiet street, and I'll bet yer 'alf a thick 'un as the yob'll be round the corner in 'alf a tick!"

A Tight Corner!

ACTING on this suggestion, the roughs instantly turned into a narrow side thoroughfare, and stopped to light a cigarette, this action giving them a full view of the street they had traversed.

"Told yer so," the short man growled. "The younker's up to a tracking game. Lamped 'im just as 'e dodged back when 'e seed me turn. Look 'ere, mate, it's time we put the kybosh on 'im."

"Which we can't very well do 'ere. Too many people about. We shall have to shake him off."

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"Shake 'im 'orf? Not 'im!" was the derisive reply. "You ain't 'alf fly enough. You leave it ter me, an' I'll show yer a dodge wot'll make ye fair blink!"

And, touching his companion on the arm, the speaker again lurched forward.

Utterly oblivious of the fact that the very men he was bent upon shadowing were aware of his identity and his purpose, Jack Drake, whilst keeping well in the rear, never let them get out of his sight.

In this fashion several streets were traversed, the lad wondering more and more what had induced his quarry to follow such an apparently erratic course.

Then a sharp turn round a corner hid those whom he was following from view, compelling the young sleuth to hasten his footsteps, lest another turn amidst the labyrinth of passages in which he found himself would cause him to lose them altogether.

A few moments elapsed before he could gain the corner round which the two men had passed. Those few moments, however, had sufficed for the bull-necked man to utter a peculiar whistle that instantly brought a hang-dog-looking fellow to his side. A few rapid words in a low tone passed between them, words that were followed by the newcomer drawing some object from his pocket, which he exhibited with a broad grin.

"Got yer," he laughed wheezily, "check clobber and gaiters! Leave 'im to me!"

Those who had given him his instructions passed on, their accomplice sliding against the wall, crouched low.

Too old a hand to take unnecessary risks, Jack knew the danger of taking a sharp turn round a corner. He stepped, therefore, well into the centre of the narrow passage before attempting to make his way down it, a movement on his part that in all probability saved his life, for even as he turned the unseen watcher leaped forward with arm upraised.

Instinctively the lad's arm flew up in an attempt to ward off the impending blow, while at the same instant he leapt nimbly aside. The sandbag in the ruffian's hand, instead of descending with deadly effect, caught Drake on the side of the head, though even then with sufficient force to send him crashing senseless to the mud-encrusted roadway.

The startled ejaculation that had been forced from Jack's lips caused the instigators of the attack to halt, when, swinging round, they hastened back to the cowardly attacker, who was stooping over his victim.

"Done 'im in fair, and no mistake," this individual grinned, as he pocketed his weapon.

Without replying, the taller of his two comrades stooped and turned the prostrate lad over.

"He's only stunned!" he grunted.

"Stunned, is he? 'Ere, let me give him another crack!"

"You keep your hands where they are. I reckon we'll do more with the kid alive than as a stiff 'un! Got any place you can shove him in till I get something to fetch him away?"

"Got wot? What's yer lay?"

"Never you mind what I'm up to. You can find somewhere to stow him? Won't do to let him be here till a cop comes along, you fool!"

"Be 'ere when a cop comes up? Not much!" interrupted the man who had

dealt the dastardly blow. "Wot's wrong with the river, mate? It's handy."

"Stow it!" came the sharp rejoinder. "You're smart enough as it goes, but you can't see an inch further than the end of your fat nose. Look here, this kid's only second fiddle, and I reckon if we handed him over to the chief, he'd make use of him to get Locke as well into our hands."

"How?" ejaculated the bull-necked member of the trio.

"Never mind how. We'll leave that to him. But it's a chance not to be missed. And the chief can do what he likes with him when we get him to headquarters."

"Umph! Maybe you're right, pard. Come on, Lurcher!" the speaker added, turning to the individual with the sand-bag. "There'll be a couple o' jimmy-o-goblins for yer if yer stow the kid away till our pal 'ere comes fer 'im!"

Scratching his head thoughtfully, "Lurcher" remained silent for a few seconds; then, lowering his voice, commenced to speak rapidly.

The result of the conversation being that the still unconscious lad was hoisted on to the shoulders of his assailant, and then, a cellar-flap in the paving having been raised, Jack was dropped through the opening with as little care as though he had been a sack of coke.

How long he remained unconscious Jack could never say, but it was with a racking pain in his head that he again opened his eyes and endeavoured to penetrate the gloom by which he was surrounded, and tried to recall what had happened.

Then, like a flash, the meeting with the strangers outside the costumier's, that had culminated in the unexpected attack upon himself, flashed through his brain.

But where was he?

Drake moved slightly. The rustling of straw as he did so, assuring him as to the material of the couch upon which he rested, and also assuring him—what was even more to the point—that his limbs were unfettered.

A swift glance, as he struggled into a sitting posture, told him that wherever he was it was below ground, for although he was absolutely unaware of the time, whether night or day, it was evident that there was not any window to his place of detention.

Stiff and sore as he was, he at once determined to investigate his surroundings. It was with a sigh of relief that he discovered a box of matches in his pocket.

With a hand that, despite his efforts, trembled slightly, he struck one, and as its faint light flashed out, assured himself that his surmise was correct. He was indeed in a cellar, the walls of which were dripping with moisture, and the sole contents of which, with the exception of the pile of rubbish on which he had rested, were a few broken cases scattered around on a floor that was reeking with filth.

A second match was ignited, revealing this time a double cellar-flap above his head, and a door at the far side of the dingy cellar, which proved upon inspection to be locked.

"This is a go, and no mistake!" muttered Drake ruefully.

Seating himself upon one of the up-turned cases, he began to revolve in his mind his best course of action.

It did not take him long to realise the cause of the attack made upon him. Robbery was out of the question, for though with a smashed glass, his wrist-watch was still upon his arm, and a touch against his side assured him that his

wallet—which contained a fair amount of money—was still in his possession. No; by some means or other his identity must have been discovered, and he was now in the power of that unknown crook whom he and his chief had determined to hound down.

That the trap above was one giving access to the street, he had little doubt, and he might hammer on it and shout for help; but, remembering the locality in which the attack had occurred, he at once gave up that idea. More than that, he had a notion that someone stood guard over that flap, as the oft-repeated foot-falls overhead indicated.

"No. Whatever he attempted would have to be off his own bat, and the sooner the attempt was made the better, a decision that, having arrived at, he at once proceeded to act upon.



The heavy iron in Jack Drake's hand was whirled aloft, to descend with a thud on the closely-cropped head of the man peering downwards. With a hollow groan and a convulsive attempt to retain his balance, the man crashed headlong down. (See this page.)

He commenced to draw the case upon which he had been seated beneath the cellar-flap. Then a clang of metal rang out as his boot came into contact with something.

A third match revealed the cause; he had kicked the remains of what had at one time been a poker against the iron hooping of the case. With a gasp of delight the lad snatched the poker up. That it had been burned half-way and was rusted with age, he cared little; he was now in possession of a weapon that would prove of the utmost service in emergency.

Again the empty case was dragged forward slowly, but barely had he got it in the position he desired than a faint rumble caught his ear, a noise that increased in volume every moment.

Pausing, he listened intently.

"My hat!" he muttered "A motor, and in a place like this! What can it mean?"

Nearer and nearer came the crunch of wheels, till they reverberated overhead, followed by a jarring of brakes, proclaiming the fact that the vehicle had come to a standstill. The muffled sound of men's voices followed, though too indistinct for the prisoner to catch the words, and then, like a flash, the reason for the unexpected visit of an automobile burst on him. The ruffians who had attacked him had, likely enough, come to remove him to some other place of confinement. Well, they should find him ready. This time he would not be taken by surprise, and, setting his teeth grimly, the lad grasped the broken poker and waited.

A creaking of rusty hinges, and half of the trap above him was flung on one side, followed by the light of an electric torch being flashed around.

"Curse the kid!" snarled a voice. "The brat must 'a' come to and shifted," and in order to gain a better view of the interior, the speaker, kneeling down, thrust his head and shoulders through the aperture. Such an opportunity was not to be missed. The heavy iron in the lad's hand whirled aloft, to descend with a thud on the closely cropped head of the man peering downwards.

With a hollow groan and a convulsive attempt to retain his balance, he crashed headlong down.

Then, before those with him had time to recover from their surprise, Jack had leaped on the case which he had placed in position, and had swung himself upwards into the outer air. Again the short length of iron came into play, and a second man staggered back.

Nimble dodging a third who came at him, the intrepid youngster dashed wildly down the deserted thoroughfare, neither knowing nor caring where his steps would lead him. His one thought being to get away.

"After him! After him, you fools!" roared someone, apparently the leader of the gang.

There followed the pad of feet in hot pursuit.

Jack raced on over the ill-paved street, lighted only by a few faint stars that blinked from between the tall roofs of the buildings on either side. Suddenly turning a bend, he found himself faced by a broad, open space, on which here and there, red, green, and white lights twinkled.

It was the river. That mighty waterway, the Thames.

A jubilant shout arose from his pursuers, as they, too, caught sight of the murky waters.

"Got him! Got him!" they yelled.

But, swift as a deer, Jack darted across the wharf on which he found himself. For one second he stood poised on the extreme edge; then, throwing his arms upwards, launched himself through space.

(Has Jack Drake escaped the unwelcome attentions of his pursuers only to run into a worse fate, or will he win through to safety? Mind you read the continuation of this powerful mystery story in next week's bumper issue of the "Magnet.")

TO AND FROM YOUR EDITOR!

(Continued from page 2.)

SIGNATURES!

Just a word to remind Magnetites that they should pay more attention to the writing of their signatures at the foot of letters, etc. I'm not grumbling—not a bit of it. I'm merely thinking of the future when some of my loyal chums will enter business, and when their signatures will be very much in evidence. It seems to be 'pretty' general, this careless scrawling of signatures, and while to me it is amusing trying to unravel the tangle of ink at the end of some of my readers' letters, it won't be so amusing to business men. Write your signature as clearly and as legibly as possible. After all, you are proud of your name. Why try to disguise it?

THE TIDY FELLOW!

As a boy I had a habit of shoving my things all over the place. If I wanted my footer boots—well, the house had to be turned out before they were found. But that little game didn't last long. Father saw to that! But leaving aside the painful conclusion to my untidy habits, let me hasten to say that the "tidy" chap is far better off than the

fellow who leaves his things lying about all over the shop. If he's in a hurry he can put his hands on whatever he wants in about two ticks. Again, he can find his things in the dark, if ever he's unfortunate enough to be stranded in the dark. I'm not preaching—at least, that is not my intention. We all profit by other people's mistakes; you profit from my early ones, chums.

THE SMILER!

There's always an answering smile for the fellow who walks through life with a laugh on his lips. I don't mean the inane type of grin, but the cheery smile that blossoms out at just the right time. If you can smile when things are going wrong you're the chap to get on. But let the smile be a genuine one. No good smiling at things going wrong in an irritating way. The real resolute character smiles his way over hosts of difficulties that bring other less cheery chaps to their knees. Watchword—smile!

THE "HOLIDAY ANNUAL"!

I am always being asked questions about the "Holiday Annual" by new readers of the MAGNET. Of course, it cannot be expected that a newcomer who picks up a copy of the MAGNET can understand all about Greyfriars inside five minutes. But he will have the hang of things after he has read one of Mr.

Frank Richards' rattling yarns. But no sooner has the fresh reader got to know about the Remove than he wants more. That's a dead cert, and here is a wrinkle. Every Magnetite has got or will get the new volume of the "Holiday Annual" with its stunning budget of stories. But all outside friends ought to make it their business to secure the book, too, for the "Holiday Annual" is the most reliable moneysworth to be found.

NEXT WEEK'S THE WEEK!

Look out for the Result of our Cricketers' Competition! Names of winners will appear in the MAGNET next Monday! Somebody's going to walk on air next week, and that somebody will be the winner of the First Prize of Ten Shillings a Week for a Year. The second victor will have the pleasure of Five Shillings a Week for a Twelve-month. There are sixty-two other prize winners. The MAGNET in all its splendid history has never made such a topping award as this. There's one more point. We cannot all be winners, but we can have our share in the victory by wishing jolly good luck to the chums who have "brought it off." They are Magnetites, and all the best to them is the wish of

Your Editor.

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