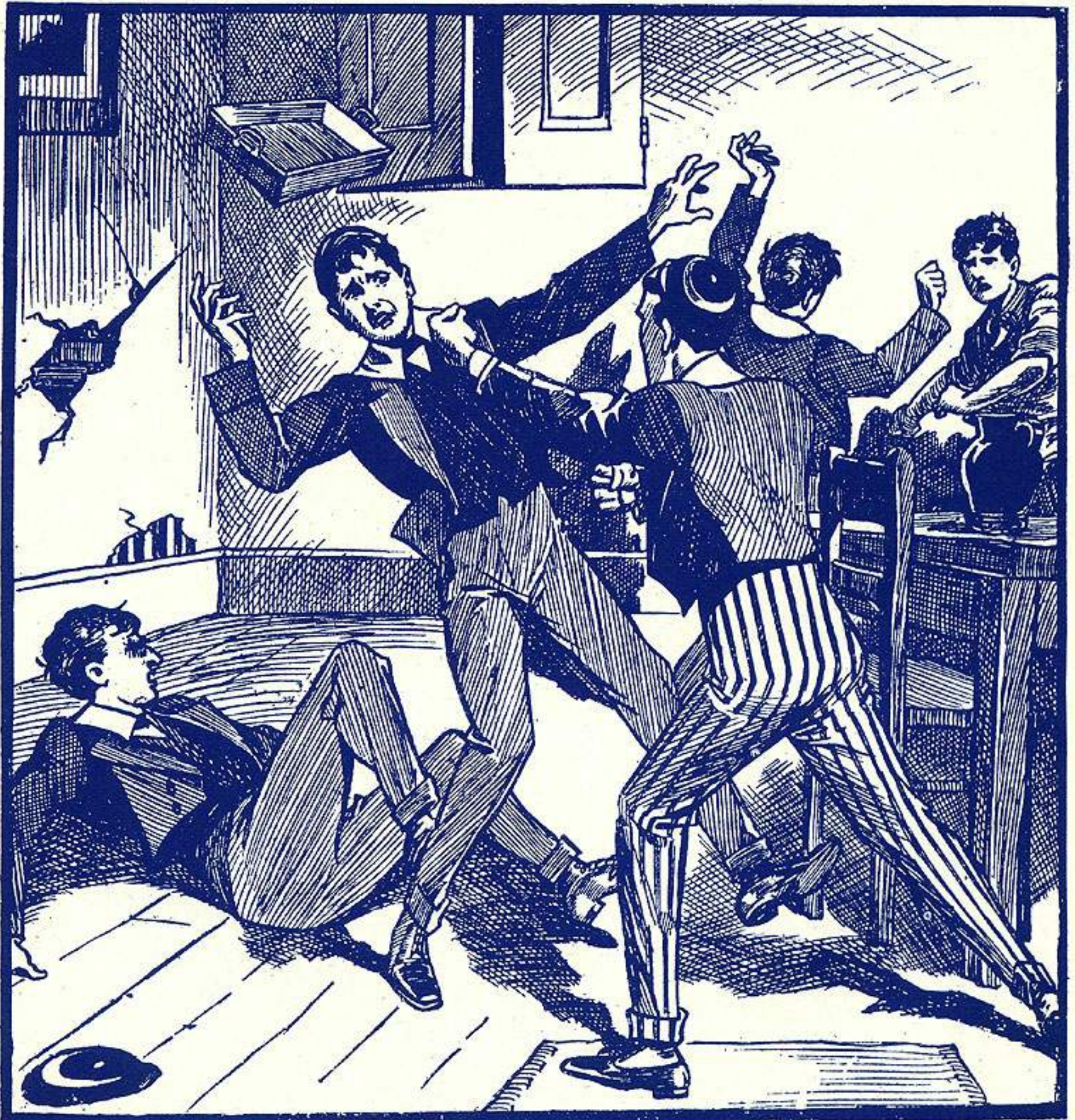


TOM REDWING'S CHANCE!



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THE BOUNDER TO THE RESCUE!

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TOM REDWING'S CHANCE!

By FRANK RICHARDS.

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

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

News for Smithy!

"SEEN Smithy, you fellows?"

Billy Bunter came up the Remove staircase with a letter in his fat hand.

Harry Wharton & Co. were chatting by the landing window, debating what was to be done with the afternoon, which happened to be a half-holiday. Wharton and Johnny Bull were in favour of footer. Hurree Janset Ram Singh favoured a long spin, as the weather was unusually bright and sunny. Nugent considered it a favourable opportunity for producing another number—long overdue—of the "Greyfriars Herald." And Bob Cherry didn't care what was done so long as it was done out of doors.

Billy Bunter interrupted the confabulation.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob, catching sight of the letter in the fat junior's hand. "Is that your postal-order at last, Bunter?"

"It's a letter for Smithy."

"Then what are you doing with it, you fat fraud?"

"I'm taking it to Smithy, of course. No reason why I shouldn't oblige a pal," said Bunter with dignity.

Whereat the Famous Five chuckled.

They could guess what Bunter's interest in the letter was. Vernon-Smith had the good fortune to be the son of a millionaire, and his letters often contained bigger remittances than ever came to any other fellow in the Remove, except Lord Mauleverer. Billy Bunter was on the trail of a loan.

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at!" snapped Bunter. "I shouldn't wonder if Smithy's anxious about this letter. It's in his pater's hand. I shouldn't wonder if there's a cheque in it. It's not currency notes, anyway."

"How do you know that, fatty?"

"Not heavy enough," said Bunter. "If it's a cheque, it must be for a good amount. Have you seen Smithy? I know he's anxious about a letter from his pater—I've seen him waylaying the postman several times."

"There he comes," said Harry Wharton, with a nod towards the staircase, where Vernon-Smith had just appeared on the lower landing.

The Bounder of Greyfriars came up the stairs with a somewhat clouded face. He looked as if he had had a disappointment.

"Anything up, Smithy?" asked Bob.

"No; only I've been disappointed about a letter," answered the Bounder. "My pater ought to have written before this."

"Oh, I say!" murmured Bunter, while the Famous-Five grinned.

"Post's just been in, and there's nothing for me in the rack," said Vernon-Smith. "May come to-morrow, though."

"I say, Smithy—"

"You fellows feel inclined for a spin this afternoon?" continued the Bounder, without heeding William George Bunter

in the least. "I was thinking of biking over to Hawkscliff."

"Hawkscliff!" repeated Wharton.

"Yes—where that chap Redwing came from, you know. I believe he went back there, and I'd like to find him."

"I say, Smithy—"

"It's a ripping afternoon for a run," continued the Bounder. "My pater's got a man looking for Redwing, but he hasn't found him yet. I might have better luck. You fellows are not down on Redwing, I suppose?"

"Not at all."

"Not a bitfully, my esteemed Smithy," assured Hurree Singh. "I look upon him with a friendly and ludicrous eye."

"I say, Smithy—"

"Dry up, Bunter!"

"But your letter!" howled Bunter. "It's come!"

"It hasn't, fathead! I've looked for it."

"Here it is!"

Vernon-Smith uttered an angry exclamation as Bunter held out the letter. He took it with his right hand, and tapped Bunter on the nose with his left at the same moment. There was a loud howl from William George.

"Yow-ow! Wharrer at, you beast?"

"Why can't you leave a chap's letters alone?" demanded the Bounder wrathfully.

"Yow-ow! I was obliging you, you beast!"

"Well, don't!" said the Bounder ungratefully.

He slit the envelope with his penknife in evident eagerness. The Bounder was keen on news of Tom Redwing, the sailorman's son who had come to Greyfriars under such strange circumstances a few weeks before, and had left so suddenly.

Billy Bunter clenched his fat fists for a moment, apparently with hostile designs upon the Bounder's nose; but he unclenched them again. A fellow who had just received a cheque was not a fellow to have his nose punched—by Bunter, at least.

Vernon-Smith's face lighted up as he unfolded the letter and looked at it.

"Oh, ripping!" he exclaimed.

"Good news?" asked Wharton.

"Yes, rather!"

Billy Bunter's eyes glistened behind his spectacles. He quite forgot that tap on the nose now.

"How much, Smithy?" he asked eagerly.

"Eh?"

"How much? Pounds?"

"What on earth are you burbling about?" asked the Bounder, staring at him. "Have you gone off your yocker?"

"Isn't it a cheque?"

"Ha, ha, ha! No."

"Postal-order?"

"No, ass!"

"Currency notes, after all?"

"You fat duffer, it's not money."

Bunter's face fell.

"Not a remittance! Oh! I—I've fagged upstairs with that rotten letter, and—and it's a swindle!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You want me to lend you something, Bunter?"

Bunter brightened again.

"You're a good chap, Smithy! You see, I've been disappointed about a postal-order. I happen to be short of money. If you can manage ten bob—"

"Scat!"

"Five, then!"

"Rats!"

"Well, what are you going to lend me, then?" demanded Bunter.

"My boot."

"Wha-a-at?"

"Boot!"

Billy Bunter dodged desperately. He was keen on a loan, but he did not want that. But he was not quite quick enough, and the Bounder's lunging boot helped him along the passage. Billy Bunter vanished into Study No. 7 with a roar.

"This is jolly good news," said the Bounder. "I'll read it to you fellows if you like—no need for that fat ass to chatter it all over the school. You fellows feel friendly towards Redwing, I believe?"

"Certainly," said Harry Wharton, with a nod.

Tom Redwing was remembered kindly by a good many fellows in the Remove. He had come to the school in a name that was not his own; but it had come out that he had done so at the request of Leonard Clavering, to enable Clavering to join the Colours. And when the Remove fellows knew the facts they were not at all down on Tom Redwing, though, of course, the sailor-lad had left.

Vernon-Smith looked over the letter again.

"Here it is—the bit about Redwing," he said. "My pater says: 'You will be glad to hear that Redwing has been found. It appears that he returned to his former home at Hawkscliff a few days ago, and information was at once sent to me. On your account, my boy, I am going to find time to see him, and I intend to send him to Greyfriars, taking charge of him myself. That will be his reward for saving my son's life. I have telephoned Dr. Locke on the subject, and he is agreeable.'"

"Jolly good!" said Bob Cherry heartily.

"Isn't it?" said the Bounder, very cheerily. "Only—only"—his face clouded a little—"Redwing was so thumping proud, I—I don't know whether he will accept my pater's offer. I'd like to see him and have a jaw with him before father sees him. If he knew he would be welcome here it might make a difference. If you fellows would care to come—"

"We'll come, with pleasure," said Wharton, looking at his chums.

"The pleasure will be terrific!"

"Good!" said Johnny Bull, with a nod.

"I liked that chap—not when I thought he was a spoofer, of course. But it turned out that he was all right. No harm in what he did, that I can see. I'll come!"

"We'll talk to him like a whole family

of Dutch uncles," said Frank Nugent, laughing. "If he won't come to Greyfriars with your pater paying the fees, Smithy, we'll kidnap him and make him come."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the chums of the Remove went out cheerily for their bicycles. All of them were glad to see Tom Redwing again, and certainly they had no objection to the sailorman's son in the Greyfriars Remove. Their views would not be shared by Skinner & Co; but Skinner & Co. did not count.

In great spirits the six juniors wheeled out their machines and started on the long ride to Hawkscliff.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Tom Redwing at Home!

"O H, gad!" Samuel Vernon-Smith, financier and millionaire, uttered that exclamation as the train stopped in the little local station of Cliff Edge.

He looked out of the carriage window. The station was open and airy, and the flower-beds along the platform were beginning to look bright in the spring. Beyond, the cliffs could be seen, shutting off the sea.

An ancient porter trundled lazily along and opened the carriage door, and the millionaire stepped out briskly. Mr. Vernon-Smith did everything briskly. He was an efficient gentleman—remarkably efficient. He was not in a good humour at the present moment. He was bound upon a benevolent mission—which was quite unusual on his part. Mr. Vernon-Smith did not err upon the side of an excess of benevolence as a rule. He was a hard man, and somewhat prided himself upon the fact.

But even the millionaire had a heart, and all the tenderness in his nature was bestowed upon his son, the Bounder of Greyfriars. And—in a lofty and imperious way—he felt the debt of gratitude due to Tom Redwing of Hawkscliff, who had saved the Bounder's life at the risk of his own. Mr. Vernon-Smith was on his way to Hawkscliff, to see the sailorman's son, and to deal handsomely with him—very handsomely.

But the efficient gentleman was not accustomed to travelling by train, especially slow trains. His habit was to whizz at top speed in a fifteen-hundred-guinea car. Mr. Vernon-Smith had thought many hard things of the petrol controller, whose edicts had deprived him of his terrific car. No longer could he settle back on his comfortable cushions while his car ate up the miles as if they were furlongs. He had to travel like a common mortal, and he did not like it.

"Oh, gad!" he repeated, as he stepped on to the platform. There was a breath of spring in the air and a whiff of salt from the sea; but Mr. Vernon-Smith did not even notice them. The atmosphere of Threadneedle Street was more congenial to his taste.

He was wondering dismally how he was to get to Hawkscliff. It was quite certain that a taxi could not be had at Cliff Edge for love or money. It was doubtful if one had ever been seen there, even in the piping times of peace.

The old porter blinked at him. Mr. Vernon-Smith was so crammed with energy and efficiency that he made slower people feel in a state of nervous tension merely by his presence.

"Is there a cab to be had here, my man?" he asked, as patiently as he could.

"A cab, sir?" repeated the porter.

"Yes, a cab."

"There was Bill 'Awkins' cab, sir—"



Meddling again! (See Chapter 1.)

"Where?" interrupted Mr. Vernon-Smith sharply. He did not want to listen to a biography of Bill Hawkins.

"It's in the yard, sir, but—"

"Take me to it."

"But, sir—"

"I have to get to Hawkscliff—quickly. Is it far from here?"

"Matter of a mile and a 'arf, sir. You go up the lane, turn to the right when you come to the pond, keep on by the fir wood, and then you see the Red Lion—"

"The cab, man, the cab!"

"I'm afraid that wouldn't be any use to you, sir," said the old fellow, shaking his head.

"My good man," said Mr. Vernon-Smith, repressing his impatience, "I am in a hurry. I have no time to walk through the fir wood, and wander round the pond, or whatever it is. Fetch the cab!"

"I don't think it would be any use, sir," said the porter, with another shake of the head. "You see, sir—"

"If it is the only vehicle here, I must make it do!"

"But without a 'orse, sir—"

"What?"

"You see, sir," said the Cliff Edge porter, in the same deliberate tones, "Bill 'Awkins has 'ired 'is 'orso to Farmer Giles, and—"

"Good gad!" gasped Mr. Vernon-Smith. "If there is no cab to be had, why could you not say so at once?"

"I was a-saying so, sir, when you interrupted me."

Mr. Vernon-Smith snorted. There was a faint glimmer in the old countryman's eyes. It was barely possible that, in his slow, rural way he was pulling the leg of this sharp and energetic gentleman from London.

"Is there no way of getting to Hawkscliff except by walking?" demanded Mr. Vernon-Smith. "Cannot I procure a vehicle somewhere?"

The porter scratched his head slowly.

"Mr. Rooke 'ires out 'is trap by the lower," he said. "But—"

"Where does Mr. Rooke live?"

"Matter of a mile from 'ere, sir. You turn to the left from the station, keep on to the old mill, and—"

"I may as well walk to Hawkscliff as

walk to Mr. Rooke's, then!" snapped the millionaire.

"Yessir! I was just a-thinking so, sir."

Mr. Vernon-Smith very nearly exploded.

"Please give me the directions for walking to Hawkscliff!" he gasped.

"Yessir, certainly, sir!"

The millionaire followed the porter from the station, and listened to the long and ample directions. Then he started. The old porter looked after him with a slow smile. Mr. Vernon-Smith had left a half-crown in his horny palm, instead of the twopence he was accustomed to. The old porter's reflection was that fools and their money are soon parted, and he bit the half-crown to make sure that it was a good one.

Mr. Vernon-Smith was not feeling amiable as he tramped up the rough lane to Hawkscliff. How anybody could consent to live in a village where there was no station was a deep mystery to him. He could not comprehend how anyone could prefer a place where there was no noisy, snorting horror to make night hideous and blacken the day.

He was not accustomed to walking, either. A mile and a half tired him. He had a good deal of unnecessary weight to carry. His forehead was wet under his silk hat, and his stiff collar was sticky, by the time he gasped into Hawkscliff, and the sight of the straggling fishing village, with the great sea and the cliffs, did not comfort him. Mr. Vernon-Smith did not care for the sea unaccompanied by an esplanade and a frontage of grand hotels.

The cottages and cabins of Hawkscliff were not even numbered, and there appeared to be no name to the street—to call it a street. Mr. Vernon-Smith was not feeling very benevolent as he gazed about him. However, an ancient native directed him at once to Tom Redwing's cabin. Everybody in Hawkscliff knew Tom Redwing. In a state of breathlessness and exasperation the millionaire arrived at the humble abode of the sailorman's son, who for a few short weeks had been a Greyfriars fellow under another fellow's name.

The door stood open, and in the door—
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way, in the pleasant afternoon sunshine, a boy was seated on a stool mending a net. He glanced up in surprise at the sight of the well-dressed, portly gentleman.

"Is this Redwing's cabin?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then you are Tom Redwing, I suppose?"

"That is my name."

The boy rose politely as he answered. Mr. Vernon-Smith looked at him curiously.

He saw a sturdy, sunburnt lad, with clear, quiet eyes, and an expression that was somewhat grave for his years. In spite of the millionaire's irritation, the lad's face made a favourable impression on him.

"I have called to see you, Redwing," he said. "I am Mr. Vernon-Smith."

"Vernon-Smith's father?" exclaimed Redwing.

"Just so."

"Will you please come in, sir?"

The millionaire stepped into the little cottage, and sat down on the chair Tom offered him. He glanced about the place. There were only two rooms in the cottage, one up and one down. The place was rough, and not in good repair; but it was scrupulously clean and tidy.

"You live alone here?" asked Mr. Vernon-Smith.

"Yes, sir; when I'm at home; but that's not often."

"You are an orphan, I understand?"

"Yes, sir."

"You are employed, I presume?"

Tom Redwing smiled.

"I am generally working, sir. I have to earn my bread."

"I have heard a good deal from my son about you," said Mr. Vernon-Smith. "I understand from Herbert that you are very keen on educating yourself, and that you have learned a good many things unusual for a boy in your station—Latin, French, and so forth."

Tom Redwing coloured a little.

"I have studied a good deal in my spare time, sir. The vicar has sometimes been kind enough to help me."

"My son has written me an extraordinary account of you. It appears that you have been at Greyfriars School, and actually stayed there some weeks under an assumed name."

Redwing was crimson now.

"I did not think I was doing any harm—at the time, sir. Leonard Clavering wanted to join the Colours. He was big enough to pass in, but his guardian would not have let him. I agreed to take his place at Greyfriars, to give him his chance. We both thought it fair enough. I—I found that wouldn't do—there were a lot of things I hadn't foreseen; and I confessed to the Head, and left."

Mr. Vernon-Smith nodded.

"Yes, yes. I understand that you made a good impression upon Dr. Locke, and upon your Form-master, Mr. Quelch. They are willing to receive you back at Greyfriars—under your own name, of course, and on a proper footing."

"They are very kind, sir."

"My son is also anxious that you should return. I understand that he regards you as a friend."

"He was the best friend a fellow could have, sir," said Redwing gratefully. "I shall never forget his kindness."

"You have placed us both under an obligation to you, Redwing," said the millionaire graciously. "According to Herbert's account, you saved his life at very great risk to yourself. That action must be rewarded."

"I don't want any reward, sir," faltered Tom Redwing. He was apprehensive of seeing the wealthy gentleman's

fat pocket-book come into view, and he did not want to hurt the feelings of Smithy's father.

"Nonsense!" said Mr. Vernon-Smith brusquely. "I am not in the habit of remaining under obligations, Redwing. It appears that you have a great desire to obtain a good education. Greyfriars is open to you. I have spoken to the headmaster on that subject. I have decided to send you to Greyfriars, at my own charge, and to maintain you there, with a due allowance of pocket-money. You will enter the school on an equal footing with the other boys, and if you make good use of your chances I will see that you do not want for a suitable opening in life when your leave school."

"Oh, sir!"

"You will be supplied with everything you need," added Mr. Vernon-Smith.

"I shall give carte blanche to the school outfitter. I will inform Dr. Locke that you will enter Greyfriars, say, on Monday."

Mr. Vernon-Smith rose, his business concluded. It was concluded—from his point of view. But Tom Redwing's point of view did not precisely coincide with that of the efficient gentleman from London.

"I am sorry, sir——" began Redwing.

"What?"

"You are kind—very kind indeed——"

"Quite so! Quite so! That is my intention."

"I thank you very sincerely, sir," said Redwing steadily. "I am grateful for your kindness, but I cannot accept your offer."

Mr. Vernon-Smith sat down quite suddenly, really as if Redwing had floored him.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Mr. Vernon-Smith is Not Pleased!

"WHAT?" gasped Mr. Vernon-Smith at last.

Tom Redwing had a troubled look, but his expression was very firm. The millionaire had not been especially tactful; but that was not why Redwing had refused.

"What?" repeated Mr. Vernon-Smith, scarcely able to believe his ears. "Did you say, Redwing, that you cannot accept my offer?"

"Yes, sir, thanking you all the same."

"Are you out of your senses?"

"I hope not, sir."

"I think you must be!" exclaimed Mr. Vernon-Smith angrily. "I have not wasted nearly a whole day, and made a long and inconvenient journey, in order to listen to nonsensical impertinence, Redwing! What reason, pray, have you for refusing my offer?"

"I don't want any reward, sir, for having helped your son when he was wrecked on the coast yonder," said Redwing. "Your son would have done as much for me, or anybody, and he wouldn't have asked a reward or taken it."

"My son is in a very different position from yours, Redwing!" snapped Mr. Vernon-Smith.

"I—I know, sir," faltered Tom. "I know that very well, sir. Perhaps I shouldn't have put it like that. I don't mean to be impertinent, sir. But I can't accept any reward for a thing that any fisherman on the coast would have done as a matter of course."

"It is not merely a question of reward," grunted Mr. Vernon-Smith. "My son desires that you should return to the school. It appears that you have abilities which could be cultivated. I am offering you a chance that seldom falls in the way of a boy in your circumstances."

"I know, sir; and I am very grateful for it."

"Well," said Mr. Vernon-Smith testily, "that settles the matter! You will be ready to go to Greyfriars on Monday."

"No, sir. I cannot go to Greyfriars at your expense," said Tom Redwing, very quietly but very firmly. "I am a poor lad, but I have never taken charity, and I never mean to take charity. It's very kind of you, but I cannot think of living at anyone's charge. I am not a beggar."

"Utter nonsense!"

Tom Redwing did not reply. There really was no reply to be made to that remark.

Mr. Vernon-Smith rose again, fuming. He did not understand, and he did not like the unexpected scruples of the sailorman's son. Independence and poverty were out of place together—in the millionaire's opinion.

"Is that your final answer, Redwing?" he snapped, at last.

"Yes, sir. I hope you don't think me ungrateful?"

"I do—ungrateful and disrespectful!"

"I am sorry, sir."

"What has put these nonsensical ideas into your head?" exclaimed Mr. Vernon-Smith irritably. "I should not have supposed that confounded Radicalism and Socialism could have penetrated to this remote village. I have never heard of such impertinence in my life! It is very plain that my son has been mistaken in you!"

"I'm sorry you think so, sir," muttered Redwing. "I know how kind and generous it is for you to offer me this. But——"

"If you mean what you say, I might as well go!" grunted the millionaire. "I shall not refer to the matter again, Redwing. If I go now, taking 'No' for an answer, the subject closes. You understand that?"

"Yes, sir; quite."

"And you still refuse?"

"Yes, sir."

"Very well!" said Mr. Vernon-Smith, compressing his lips.

He grabbed up his hat, and strode out of the cottage. Tom Redwing watched him from the doorway as he stalked angrily away. The last he saw of the millionaire was the gleaming silk hat, reflecting back the sunshine, as the gentleman from London turned into the lane.

With a sigh, Tom Redwing sat down again, and took up the net he was mending.

His face was clouded now.

He had been given a chance—such a chance as he had longed for. Tom Redwing would have given a great deal to enter Greyfriars, to spend his boyish years in study, and leave hard work until he was older. But the offer, kindly enough as it was meant, was an offer of charity—nothing more and nothing less. And the sailorman's son could not, and would not, take alms.

But he thought of Greyfriars—of the grey old buildings, the green old quad, the quiet class-rooms, the crowds of fellows, the wide playing-fields, and the cheery, boyish voices, and he sighed.

He had been happy there during his brief stay. He had made friends he could not forget. He thought of the Bounder's steady loyalty, of Bob Cherry's boisterous good-nature, of Wharton's quiet cordiality. They had been good to him, most of the fellows. There had been mean ill-nature from Skinner and Snoop and one or two others, but that mattered little—nothing! And they were willing to receive him back—would have been glad to see him one of themselves—and he could not go! He could not eat the bread of charity.

He was sorry that Mr. Vernon-Smith had gone away angry. He would have been very glad to placate Smithy's father. He could understand, and allow for, the toasty feelings of the portly gentleman, his impatience with anything approaching independence in one of a humble station. But poor Tom's independence was all he had, and he could not give up that.

He was thinking deeply as he sat in the sunny doorway, but his brown fingers were not idle. His work progressed steadily under his busy hands.

It was an hour or more since Mr. Vernon-Smith's departure when a sudden whir of bicycles woke the echoes of the rugged street.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" bawled a well-known voice, in tones that Stentor himself might have envied.

Tom Redwing jumped up.

With a clatter six cyclists stopped outside the cabin and jumped down, and Tom Redwing found himself surrounded by Harry Wharton & Co.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER. Nothing Doing!

VERNON-SMITH shook hands with Tom Redwing, and all the party shook hands with him in turn. There was no doubt that they were glad to see the sailorman's son again.

Tom Redwing, surprised as he was by the visit, was pleased. He was glad to see his old friends of Greyfriars once more. Their hearty greeting cheered him wonderfully. He had feared what they might think of the strange part he had played in the school; but it was clear enough now that Harry Wharton & Co., at least, regarded him in as friendly a way as ever.

"Didn't expect to see us here, did you?" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"N-no!" stammered Redwing.

"Taken you by surprise—what?"

"I'm glad to see you," said Tom.

"It's very kind of you to give me a look-in. You've come a long way, too."

"We're going to talk business," grinned Bob.

"Business!" repeated Tom, in surprise.

"The business is terrific, my esteemed and ludicrous friend," said Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"You're coming back to Greyfriars!" said Nugent.

"Can't be done," replied Tom, smiling.

"The donefulness will be—"

"Terrific!" chortled Bob.

"Go it, Smithy—tell him!" said Harry Wharton.

Tom Redwing looked rather apprehensively at Vernon-Smith, thinking of his father's visit that afternoon.

The Bounder was graver than the other fellows. He saw more difficulties in the way.

"Will you come in?" asked Tom. He smiled rather ruefully. There was hardly room in the little cottage for the numerous party from Greyfriars. "I'll trot the bench out here, if you like."

"Ripping!" said Johnny Bull.

A bench and a chair were lifted out of the cottage, and the visitors sat down round the doorway. It was pleasant there, with the straggling fishing-village before them, and the great blue sea beyond. Down on the beach an ancient fisherman was caulking a boat. Tom Redwing took up the net again, to work while his visitors were talking. The juniors looked at his occupation rather curiously. There were many things that the Greyfriars fellows could do; but they could not have mended a net as Tom was doing it.

"Go it, Smithy!" said Bob Cherry, stretching out his long legs from the

bench. "I say, it's ripping here, Redwing. I've a jolly good mind to be a longshoreman when I grow up."

Redwing smiled. But his eyes were on Vernon-Smith.

"My pater's written me about you, Redwing," said the Bounder. "He wants to send you to Greyfriars. He's coming down here to see you. We've all come to tell you that you've got to come. We want you, you know!"

"The wantfulness is terrific," concurred the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"You must come!" said Harry Wharton. "No reason why you shouldn't. The Remove will welcome you with open arms."

"Hear, hear!" said the rest in chorus. Tom's eyes shone, but he shook his head.

"You can't refuse my pater, Redwing," said the Bounder, looking at him very keenly. "He's coming here—"

"He's been here," said Tom quietly.

"Oh! Already?" exclaimed Vernon-Smith.

"He left about an hour ago."

"Then he's told you—"

"Yes."

"And you're coming?"

"I—I can't, Smithy!" said Tom Redwing, almost pleadingly. "Your father was kindness itself, and—and I don't want him to think me ungrateful. But I can't accept his offer, kind as it was."

"Why not?"

"I can't!"

"You don't want to come to Greyfriars?" asked Nugent.

"I'd like it better than anything else in the world," said Redwing wistfully.

"I explained to your father, Smithy. I—I've always been independent. I can't eat bread that somebody else pays for. It's impossible."

The Bounder compressed his lips a little.

"Come to that, nobody at Greyfriars pays for himself," he said. "Everybody's fees are paid by somebody."

"That's so," said Wharton, laughing.

"Mine are paid by my uncle, Redwing."

"That's different, Wharton!"

"Well, yes. But—"

"Couldn't you adopt Smithy's pater as your uncle?" suggested Bob Cherry.

Redwing smiled, but did not answer.

"The esteemed and ludicrous sahib would make a ripping uncle," remarked Hurree Singh. "That is a wheezy good idea."

"How did my pater take it when you refused, Redwing?" asked Vernon-Smith.

Tom coloured.

"I—I'm afraid he was rather angry, Smithy."

"I'll bet he was!" said the Bounder, with a grin. "The pater isn't accustomed to being refused. His word is law. I fancy he was in a rare wax."

"I'm sorry, Smithy. I wouldn't have seemed ungrateful to your father for anything. But—but—"

"But you want to come to Greyfriars?"

"Yes."

"Can't you stretch a point and come?"

"I don't think I ought to," said Tom slowly. "In fact, I know I ought not to. It might be different if I were a helpless fellow. I should have a claim to be looked after then. But I'm not. I know how to work, and I earn more than I need. I've saved money. I—I hope you won't be offended, Smithy, but—but it's really charity, though it's not meant like that, and I can't take it!"

His face was flushed, and he looked very handsome in his distress.

"But we've all come to persuade you to accept Mr. Vernon-Smith's offer," said Harry Wharton.

"It's very kind of you."

"In fact, we've come to make you come," said Bob.

"I wish I could!"

"You can if you like," said the Bounder, rather testily.

Redwing looked troubled, but he did not speak. There was a silence for some minutes.

The sailorman's son broke it.

"I'm afraid you fellows won't understand—considering my position. I don't mean to be conceited and—and cheeky. If I were a gentleman's son you would think it natural enough."

Johnny Bull gave a snort.

"Didn't you tell us your father was a sailorman?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Then you are a gentleman's son," said Johnny. "Don't be a silly ass, Redwing!"

"Hear, hear!" said Bob Cherry.

"It's good of you to say so," said Redwing. "But—if you put me on an equal footing with other Greyfriars fellows—would you do as I've done in my place, or would you—?" He paused, and looked at them.

"Blessed if I know, without thinking it out," said Harry Wharton frankly. "Mr. Vernon-Smith only means to be kind to you."

"I know that, and I'm grateful, though I'm afraid he doesn't think so. But I think I've done right."

"There's something in what Redwing says," remarked Johnny Bull, after a long pause, during which he had been thinking it out in his deliberate way. "Redwing hasn't any claim on Mr. Vernon-Smith, except that he saved Smithy's life. He can't accept a reward for doing that; and that's what it amounts to. I'm sorry Redwing won't come to Greyfriars; but I think he's right."

Redwing gave Johnny a grateful look.

"I thought you'd see it when you thought it over," he said.

"Well, you're a pretty ass!" exclaimed Vernon-Smith. "You came here to back me up, and now you're backing up Redwing."

"Facts are facts," said Johnny Bull stolidly. "A chap can't take money from a stranger, and that's what it comes to. Redwing's right."

The other juniors did not speak; but it was pretty clear that they really agreed with Johnny Bull.

So did Vernon-Smith, as a matter of fact. He was disappointed, and perhaps a little sore; but he respected and liked the sailorman's son all the better for his sturdy independence.

"Then there's nothing doing?" said the Bounder at last.

"It's rotten," said Bob. "You ought to come back, Redwing. Still, if you think you ought not, there it is."

"The therefulness is terrific!" said the nabob dismally.

Vernon-Smith knitted his brows.

"Something ought to be done," he said. "Something's got to be done. You say you've saved up money, Redwing. Lots?"

"Not lots," said Tom, with a smile.

"Enough to pay a term's fees at Greyfriars?"

"Seven pounds," said Tom.

"Oh, my only hat!"

"It's a lot of money for me," said Tom, laughing. "But our ideas of money are rather different, Smithy. I dare say you've got more than that in your pocket at this moment."

The Bounder had, as a matter of fact, four or five times as much as that in his pocket just then, but he only smiled.

"Well, you couldn't pay your own fees, that's a cert," said Nugent. "We shall have to carry out my suggestion, you fellows."

"What's that?" asked Tom.

"Kidnap you, and yank you off to Greyfriars, whether you like it or not!" Redwing laughed.

"Where did my pater go when he left you?" asked Vernon-Smith.

"Back to the station at Cliff Edge, I suppose."

"He's pretty certain to call in at the school to see me, as he's down here," observed the Bounder, rising. "I think I'd better get back."

Harry Wharton & Co. rose, too. There was evidently "nothing doing."

"Well, it's beastly, but it can't be helped," commented Bob.

"The sorrowfulness is terrific, my esteemed Redwing."

When the visitors departed, with a whirl of bicycles, Tom Redwing stood looking after them for a long time before he returned to his work. He sighed as he sat down again. The Greyfriars visit had brought the school back to him for a short time, and it intensified his regret. He would have given much to be able to enter Greyfriars and that cheery circle again. But it was not to be; and the sailorman's son dismissed the lingering thought from his mind.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Rough on Skinner!

SKINNER of the Remove met the chums as they came back into the School House at Greyfriars. Snoop and Stott were with him. The three were grinning.

"Brought him back with you?" asked Skinner. And his companions chuckled.

"Eh? What?" snapped the Bounder.

"You've been to see Redwing."

"How do you know?" growled Johnny Bull.

"Walls have ears," grinned Skinner.

"You shouldn't read out a letter with Bunter along the passage. So your pater is going to send Redwing back to Greyfriars, is he, Smithy?"

"Find out!"

"I've found out!" chortled Skinner.

"Well, you can tell your pater from me that we won't stand it. We draw a line somewhere at Greyfriars!"

"I should jolly well think so!" said Sidney James Snoop. "It was like the fellow's cheek to come here at all—practically an impostor. Now he's known for what he is, he certainly wouldn't be admitted here."

"It may interest you to know that the Head agreed!" snapped Vernon-Smith.

"Like his cheek, then," said Skinner.

"We've got all sorts in the school, I know. There's Linloy, who worked in a factory before he came, and that's bad enough—"

"What is there bad about that?" boomed Bob Cherry.

"There's Penfold, the son of a dashed cobbler," sniffed Skinner. "I think that's about enough for one school! Now, a dashed seaman's son—"

Skinner got no further.

Bob Cherry's grasp was on his collar, and Skinner was shaken till his teeth seemed to rattle in his head.

"You measly worm!" bellowed Bob, his rugged face crimson with wrath.

"You sneaking Prussian!"

"Gug-gug-gug-groogh!" came from the hapless Skinner as he struggled vainly in Bob's muscular grip.

Shake, shake, shake!

"Gug-gug! Leggo! Ow-ow!"

"You sneaking worm!" shouted Bob.

"I'll dashed seaman you! What would you be feeding on at this minute, you cad, if it wasn't for dashed seamen bringing you food, and risking their lives to do it?"

"Gug-gug-gug!"

"The Magnet Library.—No. 530.

"Don't kill him, Bob!" ejaculated Wharton.

"Gug-gug-gug!"

"You worm! You Hun! You sneak! You—you—you—" Every epithet was accompanied by a terrific shake, till Skinner felt lie a jelly.

"Hold on, Bob! There's Quelch—"

"Cave!"

The juniors suddenly became aware of the fact that Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, was looking on at the scene.

Bob Cherry released Skinner rather suddenly, and the unhappy Skinner collapsed on the floor in a gasping heap.

"Kindly calm yourself, Cherry!" said Mr. Quelch severely.

"Ye-es, sir!" gasped Bob.

Bob waited for the thunderbolt to fall. But the Remove-master fixed his eyes upon Harold Skinner.

"Skinner!"

"Gerroogh!"

"Get up, sir!"

Skinner staggered up, with a helping hand from Stott. His collar was torn, his hair ruffled, and his face crimson. He stood panting.

"Skinner, I heard your remark! It was a cowardly and foolish remark, and I am not surprised that Cherry showed his contempt in a somewhat energetic manner!"

"Oh!" murmured Bob. It appeared that he was not to get the thunderbolt after all.

"Skinner, I am afraid that you have a mean and snobbish disposition," continued Mr. Quelch. "You are not a credit to your Form, Skinner, or to your school. I am afraid, Skinner, that you have not the honour of Greyfriars very much at heart; and I am almost ashamed to have such a boy in my Form. I trust, Skinner, that you will reflect upon this, and endeavour to eradicate the contemptible meanness from your character," rumbled Mr. Quelch.

"Oh!" gasped Skinner.

"Well?" snapped Mr. Quelch.

"Yes-s, sir. I—I'll try, sir," groaned Skinner.

Mr. Quelch walked on, leaving Skinner gritting his teeth with rage, and the other fellows grinning. Not till the Remove-master was out of sight did Skinner venture to shake his fist after him.

Harry Wharton & Co. went on up the staircase. Vernon-Smith turned back into the quad at the sound of wheels without. The station hack from Friardale was rolling up to the house, with Mr. Vernon-Smith seated in it, looking far from amiable. A further experience of local trains had not improved the millionaire's temper, though he had fortunately succeeded in getting a vehicle from Friardale. He was frowning as he alighted at the steps.

"Wait!" he snapped at the driver, and followed his son into the house.

"Come up to the study, pater," said Vernon-Smith. "I thought perhaps you'd give me a look-in."

"I will come up to your study when I have seen the Head, Herbert. Wait for me there."

"Yes, father."

Vernon-Smith found Skinner in his study when he repaired thither. Skinner was his study-mate, and had a right to be there if he chose; but his company was undesired at the present time.

"My pater's coming up here soon," said the Bounder. "You might cut off when he comes, Skinner."

Skinner scowled.

"To jaw about Redwing, I suppose?" he sneered.

"That's not your business!"

"It's my business to stay in my own study if I want to," said Skinner coolly.

"And I'm jolly well going to do it!"

"You don't want to stay when my pater's here?"

"I do, and I shall!"

"You don't, and you won't!" said Vernon-Smith sharply. "If you don't clear off when my pater comes in, Skinner, I shall pitch you out!"

"Before your pater—what?"

"Yes, if necessary."

"We'll see," said Skinner.

He lounged by the study window till Mr. Vernon-Smith's footsteps were heard in the passage. Skinner had not lost his old enmity towards Tom Redwing, and he was very curious on the subject of Redwing's proposed return to Greyfriars.

As it was his study, he intended to be present during the talk between Mr. Vernon-Smith and his son. Delicacy was not one of Skinner's strong points. If Smithy didn't like it, he could take his father into the visitors' room.

There was a tap at the door, and Vernon-Smith opened it at once. The millionaire came in, and Smithy gave Skinner a significant look.

Skinner hummed a tune.

"I think you're going to give Snoop a look-in, Skinner," remarked the Bounder.

"Not at all," said Skinner airily.

"Well, step out for a bit, anyway, will you?"

"Sorry; but I've got some lines to do."

"Your lines can wait."

"Sorry; they can't!"

The Bounder placed the door wide open. Mr. Vernon-Smith was staring at the two from the armchair in puzzled surprise.

With perfect coolness the Bounder advanced on Skinner.

"Get out!" he said.

"Rats!"

The Bounder wasted no more time in words. He grasped Skinner, and whirled him towards the door.

"Upon my word!" ejaculated Mr. Vernon-Smith, in astonishment. "What does this mean, Herbert?"

Smithy did not reply. He whirled the struggling Skinner to the doorway, and pitched him head-foremost into the passage. There was a bump and a yell as Skinner landed.

Vernon-Smith closed the door, and turned, smiling, to his father.

"All serene, dad!"

"By gad!" said Mr. Vernon-Smith.

There was a sound of receding footsteps without. Skinner was strongly tempted to rush into the study again, and stand up for his rights. But he prudently decided that it was best to resist temptation!

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

A Chance for a Millionaire!

"YOU'VE seen Redwing, dad?"

Mr. Vernon-Smith grunted.

"I've seen him, Herbert."

"I hope you like him, father?"

"An impertinent young jackanapes!" was the millionaire's reply. "I don't see what you saw in the fellow, Herbert. He has refused to be sent to Greyfriars at my expense. By gad, I never heard of such impudence!"

"But—"

"So that's done with," said Mr. Vernon-Smith. "I was quite willing to be a friend to the lad—a good friend. He has thrown my kindness back in my teeth, and I've done with him; and I suppose you've done with him, too?"

"He saved my life, father," said the Bounder quietly.

"That doesn't give him a right to be impertinent to your father, I presume!" snapped Mr. Vernon-Smith.

"He didn't mean to be impertinent,

father," said Vernon-Smith earnestly. "He's afraid of losing his self-respect if he takes alms; and that's what he thinks it comes to."

"Oh, nonsense!"

"He's a good chap——"

"I dare say he may be. But the matter is closed now. If you choose to keep on friendly terms with him, Herbert, I have no objection. He seems an honest lad enough. But no doubt it is better for him to remain in his own station. Now, how are you getting on, my boy?" asked the millionaire, changing the subject.

But the Bounder was not prepared for the subject to be changed yet.

"About Redwing, father——"

"Never mind Redwing now! Good gad!" exclaimed the millionaire. "You don't want your father to go down on his bended knees to the cheeky fellow, do you?"

"No, dad," said the Bounder, smiling. "But something ought to be done. He risked his life to save mine."

"Yes, yes, I know! I would give him a hundred pounds, if he wished; but I am quite assured that he would refuse that, too."

"I'm sure he would."

"Well, then, there is nothing to be done."

"Father, he's a good chap, and he's saved my life. It would be a good thing for him to come to Greyfriars, if he could come on an independent footing. I've thought of a way."

Mr. Vernon-Smith grunted impatiently. He was evidently fed up with the subject of Tom Redwing of Hawkscliff.

But he was accustomed to indulging his son in every way, and he allowed the Bounder to continue.

"You're rich, father——"

"Well?"

"You could afford to endow a scholarship."

"What?"

"It would cost a lot of money, I know, but it would be a ripping thing. Lots of Greyfriars men have done it for the school."

"I'm not a Greyfriars man."

"You've got a son here," said Smithy, smiling. "A lot of Greyfriars men have been killed in the war. Why shouldn't you endow a memorial scholarship?"

Mr. Vernon-Smith looked thoughtful, and pursed his lips.

"That isn't a bad idea, Herbert."

"Millionaires in America do a lot of it," remarked Smithy.

"Yes, it's not a bad scheme," said Mr. Vernon-Smith thoughtfully. "Philanthropy is the best safeguard of wealth. There's no end of Socialism about now, and goodness knows what will happen after the war! A well-advertised step of that kind is an excellent idea! I could afford the money." He smiled. "But what has that to do with Redwing, Herbert?"

"Redwing could enter for it."

"But an open scholarship, allowing boys outside the school to compete, could be carried off by anyone."

"I know; but Redwing would have a good chance. I think he would have the best chance. He's a clever chap, and he's studied hard. He actually likes study," said the Bounder, with a grin. "He's especially strong on the classics, so you could make the scholarship a classical one—lots of Latin——"

"Huh!"

"Of course, he would have to take his chance with the other entrants—that's understood. Otherwise, he wouldn't be independent. If he wins, he comes to Greyfriars like any other scholarship

chap—like Linley or Penfold, for instance."

"If he doesn't——"

"Well, if he doesn't, it's because he's not so clever as I've supposed, and in that case he won't come. But I believe he could beat any other fellow of his age at the exam. Even Wharton is behind him in classics, and Mark Linley can't beat him; and they're the best in the Remove. He would have a jolly good chance, at least. And if he pulled it off, it would be all serene, wouldn't it? Of course, I know it would cost a lot of money."

"That is little," said the millionaire. "One way or another, I have a good many thousands squeezed out of me every year. It's that instead of something else. If you are so set on giving this boy a chance——"

"But for him, father, I should be deep down under the sea at this minute. It's a way of repaying the obligation."

"Oh, very well!" The millionaire reflected. "After all, it could be put on a patriotic footing—the capital invested in War Bonds, and so on. Three thousand pounds should do it, and the advertisement would be worth that."

Vernon-Smith made a grimace.

He did not expect his father to look at the matter of a memorial scholarship as Colonel Wharton or Major Cherry would have looked at it, but the business-like view of the millionaire worried him a little.

"I—I was thinking that the scholarship might be presented anonymously, father," he said hesitatingly. "Name of the generous donor not mentioned, and all that."

Mr. Vernon-Smith laughed heartily.

"You've got an old head on young shoulders, Herbert!" he said admiringly.

"Of course, that's the idea. The name of the generous donor is kept secret until public curiosity is aroused, and then revealed by accident. That's the way to get the best value for the money. You are a chip of the old block, Herbert! You'll make them sit up in the City some day!"

The Bounder did not reply. That was not what he had meant at all; but he would not appear to be setting up as a critic of his father.

"I'll do it!" said Mr. Vernon-Smith.

"Nothing will be known at first, excepting that a gentleman connected with Greyfriars is endowing an open scholarship as a memorial to Greyfriars men who have fallen. Excellent! I will see the Head about it before I go, and he can settle details with the governors—I am a busy man. You will see somehow that Redwing hears of the scholarship and enters for the examination?"

"Leave that to me, dad!"

With that the subject of Redwing was dropped, and father and son chatted for some time, till Mr. Vernon-Smith went down to interview the Head once more. In his interview with Dr. Locke, the millionaire probably did not speak quite so candidly as to his son, for he left the Head of Greyfriars with the impression that he was a most generous and philanthropic gentleman. When he left, Herbert Vernon-Smith accompanied him to the station in the hack, and the millionaire was in quite an amiable temper by the time he departed for London.

After he had gone, Dr. Locke sent for Mr. Quelch.

The Remove master found the kind old Head in a very smiling humour.

"I have received a surprise this afternoon, Mr. Quelch," the Head remarked. "I am sure it will surprise you also. Mr. Vernon-Smith wishes to endow an open scholarship in this school, as a War Memorial."

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Quelch.

"I have sometimes thought Mr. Vernon-Smith a somewhat hard man," said the Head. "I am very glad to modify my opinion. Strangely enough, he makes the condition that the examination shall be chiefly of a classical nature, with special reference to Latin prose and verse. It is surprising, and very gratifying, to find this keen regard for the classics in a busy City gentleman."

"Very!" said Mr. Quelch, in astonishment.

"I shall put the matter to the governors, who will, of course, be pleased to consent. I am very, very pleased indeed. The scholarship is to be open to all competitors, within and without Greyfriars, without distinction of any sort, for boys of an age not exceeding fifteen years. Mr. Vernon-Smith has expressed a hope that Redwing, the boy who was here under such strange circumstances, may succeed in winning the scholarship. It is a kind thought. Now, Mr. Quelch, if you have a little time to spare, we will deal with that matter."

"Most certainly, sir."

And the two masters were soon busy upon that most congenial task.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Skinner's Great Wheeze!

THE cad doesn't seem to be coming, after all."

Harold Skinner made that remark a week or so after Harry Wharton & Co.'s visit to Tom Redwing at Hawkscliff. He made it in Snoop's study—a quarter Skinner found more agreeable than his own when he wished to air his ideas.

"Redwing, you mean?" asked Snoop.

"Yes. Isn't it queer?"

"Jolly queer," said Stott. "The outsider ought to have jumped at the offer—if old Smith really made it."

"Well, Bunter said it was in Smithy's letter—he heard it read out."

"Bunter's a good bit of a Prussian."

"Yes; but Smithy said Redwing had refused the offer, so it was made right enough. I suppose the low cad hasn't the cheek to show his face here, now that he's known in his true colours," said Skinner sagely.

"Very likely," agreed Snoop. "To think of his having the cheek to shove himself in among gentlemen's sons! It beats me!"

Snoop was smoking a cigarette, and looking as seedy and weedy a waster at that moment as could have been found within the limits of the county. Snoop was a good deal of a snob, though what he had to pride himself upon was a mystery to other fellows.

"As he's not got the cheek to come," continued Skinner, "we sha'n't be able to show him the kind attentions we had in store for him."

"He, he, he!"

"But it would be a pity to let him lose them. Suppose we pay him a call?"

"Call on that low rotter?" ejaculated Stott.

"Why not?"

"What rot!"

"Not exactly a friendly call," explained Skinner. "We know where he is now—those fellows visited him the other day at some hovel at Hawkscliff. He lives in a dashed hovel, when he's not at work caulking boats or mending nets or digging for the farmers."

"He, he!"

"We could find his hovel easily enough," resumed Skinner. "Why not drop in on him?"

"Oh!" said Snoop, beginning to understand. "You mean to rag the cad?"

"I don't mean to take him to our

hearts and weep over him!" answered Skinner sarcastically.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, he's rather a beast, though," said Snoop dubiously. "You remember he stood up to Bolsover major when he was here? He hits jolly hard, and he's got a temper."

"I don't think he could handle the three of us, if he cut up rusty."

"No fear!" said Stott; and Sidney James Snoop assented to that.

"In fact," said Skinner coolly, "if he cuts up rusty, it would be a reason for giving him a thrashing, which would do him good."

"Good egg!"

"Well, let's be off," said Skinner. "It's a half-holiday this afternoon, and we couldn't use it better than by putting a low cad into his place and sittin' on him. I call that work of national importance!"

"Better keep it dark, though," grinned Snoop. "If Smithy—"

"Not a word to Smithy, of course. We'll tell him afterwards."

"Right-ho!"

Having finished their cigarettes, the three black sheep of the Remove descended the stairs in great spirits. The occupation planned for that afternoon was quite to their taste.

Tom Redwing had got on the wrong side of Skinner & Co. He had not even tried to be friendly with them. In fact, he had not concealed his contempt for their dingy blackguardism. That was an offence not to be forgiven. The only drawback to Skinner's scheme was that it involved a long bike ride, which was not in the slackers' line at all. But they were equal to even that exertion to carry out such an excellent scheme.

They wheeled out their machines, and found the Famous Five similarly engaged. Harry Wharton & Co. were going over to Cliff House that afternoon with Hazeldene. Bob glanced at the three slackers as they came out into the road.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Exerting yourselves this afternoon?" he asked.

"Looks like it, doesn't it?" replied Skinner.

"Race us into the village," grinned Bob.

And there was a laugh from the rest. Skinner & Co. were not likely to join in a cycle race if they could help it.

But, to the astonishment of the Co., Skinner nodded assent at once.

"I'll take you on, he said. "How much will you bet that we don't beat you to the village?"

"I won't bet anything," said Bob. "But if you beat us to the village, I'll let you kick me as hard as you like."

"Done!"

"Give them a start!" chuckled Johnny Bull.

"Oh, we don't want a start!" said Skinner airily. "We'll beat you on fair terms."

Snoop and Stott were simply blinking at Skinner. They weren't going to race to the village—not if they knew it.

"Look here, Skinner, you chump—" began Snoop.

"Oh, get on your bike!"

"I'm not going to race!" roared Stott.

"Do as I do," answered Skinner.

"Oh!" murmured Stott.

He understood, and Snoop understood. The juniors mounted in the road.

"Off!" called out Harry Wharton.

And they started.

The Famous Five shot ahead at once. Hazeldene kept level with them. For a minute or two Skinner & Co. rode in the dust behind their bikes, and then they tailed off.

The Co. went whizzing out of sight round the bend in the lane.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 530.

"Here's our turning," said Skinner, grinning.

The three turned into the short cut to Hawkscliff Lane.

They rode out of the Friardale road, chuckling.

"I wonder," remarked Skinner, in a thoughtful way—"I wonder whether it will dawn on those fathheads presently that we're not going to the village at all?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Snoop and Stott.

"I wonder whether it will dawn on them that I wanted to get rid of them, in case they guessed where we were going?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Skinner chortled over his deep cunning. The Famous Five had gone off helter-skelter for Friardale, and certainly they had no chance now of interfering with Skinner's little expedition—as they certainly would have done if they had known that he was going to Hawkscliff.

It was a long ride to the fishing-village, and before it was over the three slackers had lost their high spirits, and were in an irritable mood. Snoop grumbled at the whole scheme, and Stott growled, and Skinner answered them snappishly. In the saddle, up hill and down dale, the scheme did not seem so attractive as when discussed in the study over cigarettes. And those cigarettes, too, were taking their revenge now.

It was a trio of gasping, dead-beat

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slackers that arrived at last in Hawkscliff. They tumbled off their machines in the rugged street, and sat down in a weary, dreary row on a bench under a tree. There they sat for a good ten minutes, gasping and grumbling.

Skinner was the first to move.

"We've got to find Redwing's hovel," he remarked.

"Blow Redwing!" mumbled Snoop.

"I'm tired."

"Hang Redwing!" snarled Stott.

"Find him yourself! I'm fagged out, and I'm not going to move."

"Here comes a merry native," said Skinner. "I'll ask him."

An old boatman, on his way to the beach, passed the tree, and Skinner called out to him, without getting up from the bench.

"Hi, there! Can you tell us where Tom Redwing lives?"

The old fellow paused.

"Yes, sir! That there cottage."

He pointed with his pipe, and went stolidly on his way. The cottage indicated was within a dozen yards of where the three juniors sat.

"Not far to go," said Skinner. "Come on!"

Snoop and Stott growled; but they detached themselves from the bench, and crossed to the cottage with Skinner. Skinner did not trouble to knock at the door. That was too much respect to show to a poor person. He turned the handle and threw the door open. The cottage was empty, but the door was on the

latch, as in all the cottages in the little place. Nobody at Hawkscliff thought of locking his door when he went out.

"The cad doesn't seem to be at home," remarked Snoop, sitting down at once in the first chair that came to hand.

"Might be upstairs."

"I'll see!" remarked Skinner.

He went to the little, narrow stair and shouted up:

"Hallo! Anybody at home?"

There was no answer from above.

"The worm's crawled out, right enough," remarked Skinner. "Gone on a job somewhere, I suppose. The cad works, you know! Rather a disappointment; when we were going to be so nice to him."

"We've had all our trouble for nothin'," growled Stott.

"Well, we can wait."

"Oh, rats!"

"I dare say there's something to eat in the place," said Skinner coolly.

"We'll make ourselves at home, and have tea here."

"Oh, my hat!"

"As old friends from his school he couldn't refuse us hospitality, you know," said Skinner. "I believe these fisher folk are very hospitable."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gentlemen, make yourselves at home!"

And Skinner & Co., quite entertained at the idea, proceeded to make themselves at home in Tom Redwing's cottage.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Making Themselves at Home!

SKINNER & Co., having recovered a little from their exertions, explored the little cottage as a first step. The little bed-room was very neat and clean, somewhat to their disappointment; they had expected to find a dirty hovel, or had persuaded themselves that they expected it. A book was lying on the little table near the head of the bed—a well-thumbed Horace. Skinner & Co. had seen that Horace before, when Tom Redwing was at Greyfriars.

Skinner picked it up, and punted it across the room.

"Cheeky cad!" he remarked. "A sailor's son studying Horace! Why, we don't do that in the Remove! He likes it!"

"Sneakin' swot!" said Snoop.

"Shall we pitch the bed over?" grinned Stott.

But Skinner thought it prudent to draw a line at that, and they descended again to the little sitting-room. There they searched till they found a cupboard, into which they peered curiously.

"Well, there's grub," observed Stott.

"My hat! Does the fellow live on that!" growled Skinner. "Not much of a feed for fellows like us! Still, any port in a storm. I'm getting hungry."

"Same here," grinned Snoop.

Half a loaf and a piece of cheese and half a cold fish formed the supply of provisions. The healthy sailor-lad was not a tea-drinker; and there was no sign of tea, or sugar, or butter, or jam.

"Can't afford anything decent, of course!" sneered Snoop.

"We'll toast the cheese," said Skinner.

"There's no fire."

"We'll soon make one."

A search failed to reveal either coal or firewood. But Skinner was not to be defeated.

"Do you think Redwing would mind his guests making free with his furniture?" he asked.

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Suppose we used that chair for fire-

good. Is it a valuable chair, do you think?"

"Worth about tuppence," said Stott contemptuously.

"Say sixpence," said Skinner generously. "We'll use the chair, and give him sixpence when he come in—what?"

Snoop and Stott roared at the idea. They still hesitated to break up Redwing's property, however, and that was left to Skinner. That humorous youth did not hesitate. He had found an axe, and he proceeded to chop up the chair. The fragments were jammed into the grate, and a fire was lighted. It was soon roaring away up the chimney. The three visitors did not spare the fuel.

"That looks more cheerful," observed Skinner. "I'm sure if Redwing comes in he will be pleased to see us making ourselves at home. After all, you two fellows were his study-mates at Greyfriars. May as well shove this rubbish on the fire!"

He jerked a photograph from the little wooden mantelshelf. It was the photograph of a stalwart sailorman, with rugged features and a thick beard, framed cheaply but neatly.

"Hold on!" exclaimed Stott hastily. "That must be his pater."

"What does that matter?"

"Dash it all, Skinner, his pater was drowned in the submarine bizney!" said Stott uneasily. "Don't be a cad! He's bound to value that."

"What rot!"

Skinner was about to toss the photograph into the fire when Stott caught his arm. William Stott was a slow and somewhat stupid fellow, which partly accounted for his being so much under Skinner's influence; but Stott had his limits.

"Stop it!" he said.

"Look here, Stott—"

"Don't play the fool, Stott!" said Snoop.

"You're not going to touch his father's photograph!" said Stott. "It may be the only one he's got. Let it alone!"

"I'll do as I like."

"You won't!"

Skinner glared at Stott, and Stott glared at Skinner. Then Skinner forced a laugh, and replaced the photograph on the shelf.

"Oh, I don't mind," he growled. "Have your own way if you like. What does it matter about the ruffian's photograph?"

"It may matter a lot to Redwing."

"What does that matter, you fool?"

"Never mind. Let it alone, all the same!"

Skinner and Snoop sneered, and Stott reddened under their glances. As if to set himself right with his rascally friends, he became a little more rough with Tom Redwing's belongings, and several pieces of crockery dropped and smashed as Stott pitched them on the table.

Skinner toasted the cheese, feeding the fire with the remains of the chair, and then the precious trio sat down to tea—such as it was.

Such as it was, however, they finished the provision to the last crumb, and then solaced themselves with cigarettes.

The little cottage was getting thick with smoke when there came a footstep outside.

"Here comes the dear sailorman," grinned Skinner.

Snoop and Stott looked rather uneasy. The door opened, and Tom Redwing stepped in, evidently expecting to find the place empty, as he had left it.

Redwing looked tired, and his boots were muddy. He stopped in the doorway, in utter astonishment at the sight of the three visitors.

Skinner & Co. rose to their feet.

"Hallo! Here you are again!" said



"Ta-ta!" (See Chapter 11.)

Skinner affably. "So glad to see you, Redwing!"

"So jolly glad!" simpered Snoop. "It's quite like old times."

"We thought we'd give you a look-in!" chortled Stott. "You don't mind us making ourselves at home, do you?"

"No," stammered Tom Redwing, quite taken aback. "No! I—I never expected to see you here."

"Thought your old friends had forgotten you, eh?" asked Skinner, with a reproachful look, which made his companions chuckle again.

"I never thought of you as a friend, Skinner," said Tom Redwing quietly.

"If you come as a friend, you are welcome here."

"I was sure you would be hospitable," said Skinner agreeably. "We've made ourselves rather at home. You don't mind?"

"No."

Redwing's glance passed the table, and rested on the blazing wood fire.

"You don't mind us lightin' a fire, Redwing?"

"No," said Tom slowly. "But—"

"We couldn't find where you keep your firewood, so we've used a chair," explained Skinner.

"You've burned a chair?"

"Well, it looked something like a chair," answered Skinner. "I suppose it was a chair, of sorts. It burned very well. Of course, we're going to pay for the damage."

"Oh, certainly!" said Snoop, with a nod.

"Of course, you don't mind?" smiled Stott.

Tom Redwing looked hard at the three Greyfriars fellows. He did not want trouble with them; and he was not sure, for the moment, whether they had acted as they had done from sheer ill-breeding or from intentional insolence. He coughed a little as he came in, leaving the door wide open.

"Have a smoke?" asked Snoop.

"No, thanks!"

"No, I remember you never used to smoke at Greyfriars," said Sidney James, with a sneer. "Awfully particular for a longshoreman!"

"Check it, Snoop! We've come here

for a friendly talk with Redwing," said Skinner reprovingly. "Sit down, Redwing, old fellow, if you can find anything to sit on."

Tom Redwing did not sit down. He was puzzled and perplexed. If Skinner was really intending to be friendly, Redwing did not want to rebuff him. The three cheerful youths blew out clouds of smoke.

"So glad you've come in before we had to go!" continued Skinner. "I'm sure you like us paying you a friendly visit, Redwing?"

"Certainly, if it is a friendly one!" answered Tom.

"It's for a friendly talk. We feel that it's up to us to give you some advice, to prevent you from making a bloomer!" said Skinner airily. "There's some talk, I understand, of your going back to Greyfriars."

"Well?"

"It won't do, you know."

"No?" said Redwing.

"Not at all! Of course, I wouldn't hurt your feelings for worlds!" said Skinner, with a wink at his chums. "But Greyfriars really couldn't stand a fellow of your class, you know."

"Not at all!" said Snoop, with a serious shake of the head.

"Quite impossible!" concurred Stott.

Tom Redwing coloured.

"So that's what you have to say to me?" he said quietly.

"Yes. Of course, you'll understand that we couldn't possibly have you in the Remove—a fellow like you," said Skinner affably.

"We draw the line somewhere," explained Snoop.

"If the Head was duffer enough to let you in there would be a regular row!" continued Skinner. "Of course, I'm explaining this as a friend, so that you sha'n't risk putting your foot in it."

Tom's face was crimson now, and his eyes were gleaming.

"Is that all?" he asked.

"I'm sure you don't mind us putting it plainly," smiled Skinner. "It's really very friendly of us, you know. It would be very uncomfortable for you if you were planted at a decent school among

decent fellows who would be disgusted at you. We want to spare your feelings."

Snoop and Stott chortled. Harold Skinner was really surpassing himself, in the opinion of his friends.

"You see, when you began to eat with your knife, or pick your teeth with a fork, it would make the fellows feel ill," went on Skinner. "I'm sure you wouldn't like that, would you now?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Snoop and Stott.

"I think your visit had better come to an end," said Tom Redwing. "Would you mind getting out at once?"

"Oh, we haven't finished yet!"

"You have!" answered Tom. "I warn you, Skinner, that there's a limit to my patience. You had better get out."

"Isn't it rather an honour for a low fellow to have a visit from public school chaps?" inquired Skinner. "I expect you'll be bragging of it at your pub this evening."

"I don't think anyone would boast of your acquaintance, Skinner! But I've said enough. You're not welcome here, and I want you to go."

"My dear man, I shall please myself about that!" replied Skinner coolly. "At present I'm quite comfy here, thanks."

"Don't be cheeky, Redwing!" admonished Snoop. "If you don't know when you're being honoured it's time you learned!"

"Besides, we haven't paid for the chair yet!" grinned Stott.

"I don't want you to pay for the chair!" said Tom. "It was a cheeky cad's trick to burn it, but you need not pay for it. Only go, that's all!"

"Oh, we shall insist upon paying for the chair, full value," said Skinner. "We cannot remain under an obligation to a social inferior, Redwing. There's the money!"

He tossed a sixpence upon the table, amid irrepressible chuckles from Snoop and Stott.

Tom Redwing stared at the sixpence and at Skinner. He comprehended now that the cads of the Remove had no intention of paying for the damage they had done. It was only another of Skinner's pleasant little jests.

The sailorman's son clenched his fists hard.

"I should be very sorry to have to handle a Greyfriars fellow, though you don't do much credit to Greyfriars," he said. "But I've stood enough from you. Will you go?"

"Oh, no!"

"Then I shall put you outside!" said Tom.

"The three of us?" chortled Skinner.

"Yes, if you won't go otherwise!"

"Better get ahead and do it!" roared Stott.

"It's rather a big order, but you're welcome to try."

"You won't go?"

"Not till we choose."

Tom Redwing said no more. He picked up Skinner's sixpence and flung it out at the open door into the street. Then he advanced on Skinner, and the three young rascals piled on him at once, and there was a struggle.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Smithy Comes Down Heavy!

"BY gad, that sounds like a row!" The Bounder of Greyfriars uttered that exclamation in surprise as he jumped off his bicycle outside Tom Redwing's cottage.

Smithy had come down to Hawkscliff to see Tom Redwing, with news. The announcement of the Memorial Scholar-

ship had been made at Greyfriars, and the Bounder was eager to apprise his sailorman pal of the fact. And as Smithy alighted he was astounded to hear the sounds of a struggle proceeding in the cottage, with crashing of furniture, scuffling of boots, and deep panting and gasping.

Tom Redwing was such a quiet fellow that the idea of a row going on in his cottage was simply astounding. Vernon-Smith leaned his bike against the little fence outside, and stood staring at the cottage, doubtful what he ought to do. If a row was going on, Tom was not likely to want a visitor from Greyfriars at such a moment.

But the Bounder jumped as he heard a panting voice within:

"Get the cad down, you fellows!"

"Skinner!" ejaculated the Bounder.

"Down him! Hang him, he's as strong as a horse! Down the cad!"

Vernon-Smith fairly bounded to the doorway.

His face was dark with rage, and the gleam in his eyes would have scared the cads of the Remove if they could have seen it just then. The Bounder needed no explanation. He could guess what was happening now. It was a rag—in Tom Redwing's own cottage!

Redwing was struggling with the three as the Bounder burst in.

The sailorman's son, strong and sturdy and in the best of health, would have been a good match for two of the slackers, but the three were a big handful for him. He was holding his own against them, and that was all. Skinner's nose was streaming red, and Stott was blinking out of one eye. Snoop had been pitched over, and, with an expression of cattish rage in his thin face, he had caught up a tin dish, evidently to use as a weapon.

But that weapon was never used. The Bounder rushed in, and before Snoop even saw him coming Smithy's clenched fist smote, and smote hard. With all the Bounder's weight behind it his fist crashed on Snoop's sharp chin, and the unfortunate Sidney James went whirling across the room.

Crash!

Snoop dropped on his back, wondering what had happened. The Bounder did not give him another chance. He turned on Skinner.

Skinner was backing away, but he could not get away in time. The Bounder knocked his feeble defence aside and planted his knuckles upon Skinner's nose, and he joined Snoop on the floor.

"Oh, crumbs!" stuttered Stott in dismay.

"I'll leave that cad to you, Redwing!" said Vernon-Smith. "Out him with the others!"

Tom Redwing laughed.

Stott was driven back under a shower of blows till he joined his comrades on the floor. Skinner was getting up, when a back-hander from the Bounder sent him sprawling again, with a yell.

"Stay where you are," said Vernon-Smith coolly.

"Yow-ow!"

Redwing was breathing rather hard.

"I'm glad you looked in, Smithy!" he said simply.

"I'm jolly glad," said the Bounder.

"I seem to have come at the right time. Don't get up, Snoop. I shall knock you down again if you do!"

"Yow-ow-ugggh!" mumbled Snoop, sitting on the floor and nursing his chin.

"You rotter, Smithy!"

"Do you think I'm going to stay on the floor?" howled Skinner furiously.

"Get up if you like," said the Bounder.

"I'll soon put you down again!"

Skinner did not get up.

"Let them go, Smithy!" said Tom

Redwing, laughing. "It was what they would call a rag, I suppose. Let them go."

"No hurry! They're going to have a lesson. I saw three bikes outside. Are they your bikes, you fellows?"

"Yes, they are!" snarled Stott.

"Redwing, old scout, will you wheel those bikes to the doorway, while I keep an eye on these beauties?"

"Certainly," said Redwing, rather surprised.

He left the cottage, and the three on the floor looked at Vernon-Smith. They exchanged glances, debating in their minds whether they should chance it with the Bounder.

But they decided not to chance it.

Vernon-Smith looked too dangerous, though they were three to one; and Redwing was within hearing.

"How long do you think you're goin' to keep us sittin' here, Smithy?" asked Skinner, between his teeth.

"Only a few minutes, dear boy. You came here to rag Redwing, I suppose?"

"We came here to tell the low cad what we thought of him," said Skinner viciously. "We've done, it too!"

The Bounder nodded.

"I thought so. You're going to pay for it."

There was a clanking of the machines outside, and Tom Redwing looked in.

"Here they are," he said.

Tom supposed that the bikes had been fetched to the door for Skinner & Co. to start from there. But that was very far from being the Bounder's intention.

He stepped out of the cottage, and the three gasping rascals got on their feet and followed him out. Vernon-Smith stood by the three machines.

"You can get off now," he remarked.

"Well, give me my jigger, confound you!" growled Stott.

"Not at all!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"You're going to walk," said the Bounder coolly.

"Walk?" howled Stott.

"Walk ten miles?" yelled Snoop.

"Exactly!"

"Does that fellow want to steal our bikes?" sneered Skinner. "If our machines are left here, Smithy, I shall charge him with stealing them."

"Will you?" said Vernon-Smith. "I'll soon settle that, then."

He took the machines one after another, and sent them running across the street. They curled up on the ground, crashing.

"They'll stay there!" he said. "Lay a finger on them, any of you, and I'll start on you again!"

The three hapless raggars blinked at him in unutterable rage. Redwing laughed. The expression of the three was comic at that moment. Skinner & Co. had come there for a rag; and they were getting the rag.

"You're going to walk home," said the Bounder deliberately. "You may be able to get a train at Cliff Edge, change at Courtfield for Friardale; but I fancy that would land you home pretty late. Try it, if you like. The fare's only three shillings each."

"Oh, you rotter!" gasped Snoop.

"If your bikes suffer from the weather, it's your own look-out," added Vernon-Smith. "Redwing can't give them shelter, after what you've said, Skinner."

"We're going to bike home!" shrieked Snoop.

"Very well. Go for those bikes, and see what you'll get!"

"Oh, you—you—" Snoop fairly stuttered.

"I say, let them have the machines, Smithy," murmured Tom Redwing.

The Bounder shook his head. His face was hard as iron.

"You're a soft ass, Redwing!" he answered. I know how to treat these cads. If they have to walk home, they won't be in a hurry to pay you another visit. They're goin' to walk. Get off, you worms!"

Skinner looked at Snoop, and Snoop looked at Skinner. Stott, with a furious exclamation, strode towards the bicycles. He had to spin round the next moment, to defend himself. The Bounder was upon him with the spring of a tiger.

Buap!
Stott went down on his back. Skinner and Snoop, who were making a move forward, backed away again with ludicrous haste.

Stott rose slowly to his feet, his head singing. He did not make another attempt to reach the machines. He knew that he could not deal with the Bounder, and Redwing was quite able to handle Snoop and Skinner on his own. And though Redwing would have relented towards the unhappy raggers, he was evidently ready to back up Vernon-Smith.

"Get off!" snapped the Bounder. "I'm tired of your sulky chivvies here. If you don't start, I'll start you with my boot!"

"We—we can't walk," said Snoop, almost tearfully. "I—I say, Smithy, don't be a beast, you know!"

"Are you going?"
"Not without the bikes!" hissed Skinner.

"Then here goes!"
Vernon-Smith advanced on Skinner with his hands up and a gleam in his eyes. The cad of the Remove jumped away.

"Keep off, you cad! Keep off! I—I'll go!"
And he went.

There was no help for it. Skinner, almost suffocating with rage and chagrin, started down the rugged street, his face quite white with fury. Snoop followed him. Stott hesitated a moment or two, looking at the Bounder; and then he, too, followed.

Vernon-Smith watched them out of sight. They looked back several times, perhaps hoping that he had gone into the cottage, and that there was a chance of making a rush for the bikes. But the Bounder was on the watch, and they gave up that hope.

With feelings that could not be described in words, Skinner & Co. went tramping down rugged lanes and hilly paths on the long, long way to Greyfriars. The rag at Redwing's cottage could not, after all, be called quite a success.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Tom Redwing's Chance!

TOM REDWING was smiling, but he could not help feeling rather compassionate towards the three wretched slackers, booked for a ten-mile tramp over hilly country. The Bounder did not feel the slightest twinge of that sort. He was a good deal more angry than Redwing. But he smiled as he met the glance of the sailorman's son.

"Never mind those cads," he said. "Those bikes will suffer, if they're left out all night. Smithy."

"Let them!" said the Bounder indifferently.

"I'll shove them into a shed."

"Not your own shed?"

"No; there's one down the street. It may rain to-night, and anybody might walk them off, too."

"Just as you like," said Vernon-Smith. "Show me where the place is. I'll take them there. It's going to be my doing, not yours."

The shed belonged to an old fisherman, who agreed to take in the bikes till called for, for the moderate sum of half-a-crown, which Smithy handed him. The machines were put in the shed, and the Bounder and his companion returned to Redwing's cottage.

"You called to see me about something?" said Tom.

"Yes, Lucky I did, as it turns out."

"Not lucky for Skinner," said Tom, laughing. "I'm sorry I can't offer you any tea, Smithy. They've cleared me out."

"All serene, kid! I've brought you some news," said Vernon-Smith. "You want to get back to Greyfriars if you can?"

Redwing's face clouded.

"That's all over, Smithy."

"Not a bit of it! I've got a new wheeze. You remember Mark Linley? You were friendly with him at Greyfriars."

"He was helping me to work for a prize," said Redwing, with a smile. "A splendid chap."

"One of the best!" said Smithy. "What I mean is, you know on what terms he's at Greyfriars? He bagged a scholarship."

"Yes; I remember."

"Well, why shouldn't you do the same?"

"Oh!" ejaculated Redwing.

"You hadn't thought of that?"

"No."

"You could do it," said Vernon-Smith, watching Redwing's face. "You're as clever as Linley, and you've worked at classical bosh, and that stuff. You can construe Horace on your head; and nobody else in the Remove can touch him."

"But is there a scholarship going?" asked Redwing doubtfully. "Of course, I don't know anything about that."

"I've been looking down the list."

"You're awfully good, Smithy," said Redwing gratefully. "I never thought of that."

"There's something going just now that's the very thing for you," said Smithy calmly. "There's a Memorial Scholarship—founded recently in memory of Greyfriars men who have fallen in the war. It's open to all comers up to the age of fifteen, and the subject is chiefly the kind of rot you go in for. Of course, there's bound to be a lot of fellows enter—five or six in the Remove, very likely, and a sharp kid or two from the Third, and perhaps a dozen fellows outside Greyfriars. Well, my belief is that you could beat the Greyfriars fellows who enter; and I don't see why you shouldn't have a good chance against the rest."

Redwing looked very thoughtful. His eyes were shining. It was evident that he was very much taken with the suggestion.

"I don't know all the details of the thing," said the Bounder carelessly; "but it sees a fellow through for three years at the school, and there's an allowance for books and clobber and pocket-money. It's rather a better thing than Mark Linley's schol, so far as cash goes. If you could bag it, old scout—"

"If!" murmured Redwing.

"It's worth trying, anyway."

"Yes, rather! I could find time to work for the examination. I could go easy with my other work. I've got some money saved," said the sailorman's son thoughtfully. "When does the exam come off?"

"I don't know. Some weeks ahead, at least."

"Is there still time to enter?"

"Oh, yes, plenty of time for that. I don't think any names are down yet. In fact I am sure not."

"By Jove!" said Redwing, his eyes

glistening. "It sounds a jolly good thing, Smithy. If I could get it, I could come to Greyfriars, like Linley."

"That's it."
"I—I suppose the Head wouldn't object—"

"No fear. The Head agreed to let my pater send you, you know. I believe he was sorry you left."

"And—and the other fellows—"
Redwing hesitated. "Smithy, old man, you've been kind enough to treat me as a friend, but—but the other fellows—"

"You know, I'm the son of a poor man—a sailorman. I think myself that a sailorman's son is as good as anybody else's son, of course; but some fellows don't take that view."

"You'll find silly snobs everywhere, Redwing," said the Bounder quietly. "But we haven't many of that sort at Greyfriars. You've seen three of the worst this afternoon. But I think you know what Wharton and his friends, for instance, think of such matters. They don't value a fellow for the money his father's got in the bank. They don't think about money at all!"

"I—I know—"

"Mark Linley worked in a factory in Lancashire before he came. He's friendly with the best fellows in the Remove. Then there's Penfold. His father is the village cobbler at Friardale. Nobody cares twopence whether his father is a cobbler or a commander-in-chief. It's what a fellow is himself that counts."

Tom Redwing nodded.

"Fellows like Skinner and Snoop needn't bother you," said the Bounder. "They don't bother Linley. Of course, you don't want to be touchy, and always thinking that a fellow doesn't think you the same as the rest. That's the mistake some chaps make in such a case. But you're not that sort of ass."

"I hope not," said Redwing, laughing.

"I—I only want to be sure that I sha'n't be looked on as—as wedging in where I've no business, you know."

"My dear man, you'll be as welcome as the flowers in May! I think you know you can depend on Wharton and his pals—and they're at the top of the Remove. I suppose it wouldn't hurt you if Billy Bunter, for instance, didn't regard you as an equal?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Is it a go, then?" asked the Bounder. "You'll put in your name. I'll tell you what. Come and see Quelchy. I know old Quelchy thought it an awful pity for you to leave. You won his heart by taking a real interest in the stuff he has to ram into our heads with the pointer. Call on him, and let him advise you. He's a good old sort, though he's a dry stick; and he has a terrific sense of duty. Ask his advice, and take it."

"You—you think he'd care to see me?"

"I know he would."

"It's a go, then," said Redwing. "I'll come! When?"

"Make it Saturday afternoon. Quelchy's free then. I'll mention to him that you're going to call and ask his advice. I know he'll be pleased."

"He was very kind to me when I was there," said Redwing. "I'll do it, Smithy. I—I don't know how to thank you, old chap!"

"Don't try, my son! I'm really thinking of myself, you know. I want you at Greyfriars."

Redwing laughed.

"I sha'n't forget it," he said.

Vernon-Smith rose, and Tom Redwing walked with him to the limit of the village, the Bounder wheeling his machine. He mounted in the lane, and they parted. Vernon-Smith rode away cheerily on his bike, and Tom returned to his cottage, his brow very thoughtful.

but looking very happy. It was a great chance that had come his way; and he owed it to the Bounder even more than he knew. He was thinking of that, and he wondered that many of the Greyfriars fellows looked on Smithy as a hard nut. Tom only hoped that the time might come when he would be able to testify his friendship for the Bounder, and repay him in some way. And—little as Tom Redwing or Vernon-Smith knew it—the time was to come when the loyal friendship of the sailorman's son was to stand the Bounder in good stead.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Happy Walk!

"HOUR to wait, sir!" Skinner & Co. scowled hopelessly.

They had arrived at Cliff Edge, and asked about a train for Friardale. And that was the information the old porter gave them.

"An hour!" groaned Snoop. "We shouldn't be in for calling-over at that rate, as we've got to go round by Courtfield."

"There won't be any connection at Courtfield, sir," said the porter stolidly. "Last local leaves too soon. Change at Topfield and Woodlands for Courtfield."

"And wait at both stations, I suppose?" howled Skinner.

"Half an hour at Topfield, and three-quarters at Woodlands—"

"Oh, crumbs!" "And get home with the milk in the morning," said Stott. "Let's start walking it, for goodness' sake!"

The three juniors tramped out of the station again. They had screwed themselves up to the point of parting with three shillings each for a ticket; but with a total of two hours and a quarter to wait, and a walk from Courtfield to the school at the end of a slow journey, it was not good enough. They tramped back savagely into the lane.

"Eight miles to Friardale," groaned Snoop, jerking his head towards a sign-post. "Oh, you idiot, Skinner!"

"Oh you frabjous idiot!" groaned Stott.

"Oh, shut up!" snarled Skinner, who was feeling as savage and sore as his comrades. "How could I guess that hound Smithy would turn up?"

"What did you want to go to Hawkscliff at all for?"

"You silly idiot!"

"Oh, go and eat coke!" Skinner tramped off, and his comrades trailed after him. The bike ride to Hawkscliff had tired them out. But a walk of the same distance was a real horror to them, especially after the ride. Their legs were aching now.

The long, long lanes seemed endless. It was a beautiful spring afternoon, and a fresh breeze came from the sea, and really a long walk ought to have been very enjoyable, amid green English scenery. But the weedy slackers, who never took any exercise if they could help it, were not in a state to enjoy it. Long before they were half-way to Friardale, they were wearily dragging one foot after another, and every step was an effort. Smithy had certainly chosen the most efficacious method of punishing the unfortunate raggars.

A bicycle whirred behind them in the lane, and a bell buzzed. They drew sullenly to one side, and a cyclist hummed by. Skinner panted with rage as he recognised Vernon-Smith.

"Have him off that bike!" he hissed. The Bounder waved his hand to the three.

"Enjoying your walk?" he asked blandly.

Skinner made a desperate rush at him. Snoop and Stott were past rushing at anything. They could not have run from a mad bull.

Vernon-Smith had slowed down, but he kept a safe distance. He glanced back at the furious Skinner with a mocking smile.

"Tired dear boy?"

"Oh, you rotter!" panted Skinner.

"It'll do you good," said the Bounder encouragingly. "Quite a valuable lesson, in fact. Ta-ta! So happy to have met you!"

He drove at his pedals, and vanished in a cloud of dust.

"Oh, dear!" mumbled Stott. "You fool, Skinner!"

"You idiot, Skinner!" groaned Snoop.

"If we could only get a lift somewhere!" muttered Skinner.

But there was no lift to be had. One or two market carts had been sighted, but they were going in the wrong direction. A motor-car buzzed by, and they scowled at it.

Tramp, tramp, tramp!

The three slackers were feeling as if life were not worth living when they came wearily out into Friardale Lane at last. It was still another mile to the school, and they would have given the treasures of Golconda for a lift.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

From Pegg Lane a bunch of merry cyclists emerged in the gathering dusk. Skinner and Stott and Snoop looked at them with lack-lustre eyes. Dusk was falling, and Harry Wharton & Co. were making good speed on their way home from Cliff House.

But they slowed down at the sight of the three.

"By gad, you looked pumped!" exclaimed Hazeldene. "Where are your bikes?"

"Ow-ow!"

"You didn't follow us to the village," said Bob Cherry. "Didn't you feel up to that race?"

"Oh, dear!"

"Anything happened?" asked Harry Wharton. "Lost your bikes?"

"I—I say, lend me your bike, Wharton, to get home, will you?" groaned Snoop.

"My hat! That's rather cool! We've only got just time to get in for calling-over ourselves!" exclaimed the captain of the Remove.

"I'm dead beat. You're stronger than I am," mumbled Snoop.

"I hope so," said Wharton, with a laugh. "No reason why you shouldn't be strong, if you gave up smoking and slacking and did some exercise, though."

"I—I know," said Snoop, with unexpected humility. "Don't rub it in! I'm done for! I can't get home!"

"But what on earth's happened?" exclaimed Johnny Bull.

Skinner gave his comrades a warning look. There would be no help from the Famous Five if they knew the facts.

"A beast got our bikes away from us at—somewhere a long way off," he stammered. "We've had to walk home."

"My hat! You'd better go to the police-station, then!" exclaimed Wharton. "You can't lose your bikes."

"It—it was a Greyfriars chap—a rotten jape," stammered Skinner.

"The japefulness must have been terrific!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "It was too much japefulness, I think!"

"Who was it?" asked Wharton quietly, eyeing the dusty three.

"Smithy."

"Why did he do it?"

"Because he's a rotten hound!"

"Oh, rot!"

"You can get up behind me, Skinner,

if you like," said Bob Cherry compassionately. "I'll wheel you home."

"Hold on a minute!" said Harry Wharton grimly. "If Smithy landed them in this, Smithy had a reason. I wondered why Skinner offered to race us to the village. He was spoofing—he never kept in sight of us oven. Will you tell us where you've been, Skinner?"

"What does it matter? Give us a lift home."

"You've come a long way, I can see that," answered Wharton. "Have you been to Hawkscliff?"

"Hawkscliff!" exclaimed Bob.

"Oh!" ejaculated Nugent. "I begin to see light! That's why they didn't want us to know where they were going!"

"And Smithy caught them there!" exclaimed Hazeldene. "Have you been ragging that sailor chap at Hawkscliff, Skinner?"

Skinner gritted his teeth.

"It was all Skinner's doing," said Snoop feebly. "I say, do give us a lift, you chaps! I can't stand any more—I'm dead beat! We—we didn't want to go, really. And—and we've had an awful time."

"It was all Skinner's fault," moaned Stott. "Give us a lift! I'll never speak to Redwing again, if you like."

"You've been ragging Redwing at his own place?" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"Oh, dear! Yes. But—but we got nearly all the ragging."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And Smithy gave you a walk home! I understand. Well, I'm not going to interfere with Smithy, for one."

"No fear!" said Johnny Bull. "Smithy did right. I'd have given them a good hiding into the bargain."

"Skinner's nose looks as if Smithy did!" chuckled Nugent.

"And Snoopey seems to have picked up a blue chin somewhere!" roared Bob Cherry. "Ha, ha, ha! Did you run your chin on Smithy's knuckles, Snoopey?"

"I—I say, don't leave us!" gasped Snoop, as the chums prepared to remount their machines. "I'm sorry! Oh, dear!"

"Give us a chance!" moaned Stott.

"I—I'm aching all over."

Wharton hesitated.

"Well, let's take those two up," he said. "Skinner can stick it out. He's the worst, and he wants a lesson."

"Hang you!" snarled Skinner.

Snoop and Stott were allowed to mount. They stood on the foot-rests behind Harry Wharton and Bob, and were borne away by the cyclists. It was a very welcome rest to the weary slackers. Harold Skinner stood looking after them, with envy, hatred, and all uncharitableness in his look. Nobody had any compassion on Skinner. The juniors felt that he didn't deserve any. Skinner did not always get his deserts; but there was no reason why he shouldn't get them this time, in the opinion of the Co.

Harry Wharton & Co. vanished in the gathering dusk, and Skinner tramped on wearily.

It was dark when he reached Greyfriars, and Gosling was in the act of locking the gates. Skinner just squeezed in.

He limped into Hall for calling-over, and almost groaned out "Adsum" when his name was called. Vernon Smith regarded him with a smile, and the Famous Five were smiling, too.

After roll-call, Skinner limped out.

"He, he, he!" cackled Billy Bunter. "I've heard about it! He, he, he! I say, Skinner, you do look happy! He, he, he!"

Skinner hadn't even energy enough left to punch Bunter. He limped away in a

state of misery, and crawled to his study, where he sank into a chair, and stuck there like glue.

He was still there, motionless, when Vernon-Smith came in to do his prep.

"Still fagged?" smiled the Bounder.

No answer.

"It may interest you to know, Skinner, that Redwing will very likely be coming back to Greyfriars, after all," said Vernon-Smith.

Skinner's eyes gleamed like a snake's.

"Yes; I know what you're thinking, dear man!" said the Bounder, with a nod. "You've had a lesson to-day, Skinner. If Redwing comes back, you're going to treat him civilly. You're not going to play any of the kind tricks you're thinking of already. I'm going to see that you don't. If you do, my boy, you've got me to reckon with—and I'll

make you sit up in a way that will make your hair curl!"

With that the Bounder sat down to his prep, taking no further notice of Skinner's existence.

The next morning Vernon-Smith found an opportunity of speaking to Mr. Quelch; and the same day he was able to write to Tom Redwing at Hawkscliff that the Remove-master would be glad to see him on Saturday.

The Memorial Scholarship was the talk of the lower Forms at Greyfriars now, and several fellows had already made up their minds to enter for it. Only the Head, Mr. Quelch, and the Bounder know that the generous founder was Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith. Even Skinner never thought of suspecting that. But Skinner soon knew that Tom Redwing

was to enter. Perhaps Billy Bunter's long ears were responsible for that, as Smithy had talked of it with Harry Wharton & Co. in Study No. 1—and there was a keyhole to the door. And Skinner put his name down at once, feeling that he would even undertake work for the sake of a chance of beating the boy from Hawkscliff.

But with the exception of Skinner and his cronies, Tom Redwing had the good wishes of all the Remove; and all the chums hoped that Tom Redwing's chance would materialise in the return of the sailorman's son to Greyfriars.

(Don't miss "TOM REDWING—HERO!"—next Monday's grand complete story of Harry Wharton & Co., by FRANK RICHARDS.)

THE GREYFRIARS GALLERY.

No. 66.—WALKER and VALENCE.

NEITHER James Walker nor Rupert Valence has ever been among the leading characters of the Greyfriars stories. But both have played their parts at times, and of Walker we may hear again. Valence we have done with, I think; and I really do not know that his further fortunes would much interest me, for one. When one thinks of a fine fellow like Arthur Courtney giving his life for such a rotter it is easy enough to applaud the sacrifice—but not for Valence's sake. One can see the lesson of it; but that lesson is certainly not that a fellow of Valence's type is better worth keeping alive than one of Courtney's. It lies in the spirit of self-sacrifice too high to weigh such considerations.

Walker is a better fellow than Valence. It would not be altogether surprising to find him going straight for good. More than once he has shown that he will not go to the lengths that Loder and Carne will. His standard of honour is not as high as it might be; but it is a good deal higher than theirs.

The first story in which I can recall Walker as figuring at all prominently is that in which a prefect was put into a study in the Remove passage to keep order. The Remove, naturally did not approve of this scheme, and they proceeded to make the life of their

Remove refused to fag in "The Outlaws of the School." But he played no conspicuous part in the events that followed. It was Wingate who took the trouble in hand, and caned the rebels. Caning did not bring them to heel, and Wingate held counsel with Mr. Quelch, whose opinion was that, on the whole, fagging by the Remove might well be abolished. It was abolished, and, of course, the prefects of the wrong type resented that hotly.

But Walker, though he has had a share in the black sheeps' shady doings, though he is inclined to gambling and smoking, and all that sort of thing, is not a bully, and the juniors do not particularly dislike him.

He was unpopular when he backed up Loder at the time of the "Split in the Sixth." The Remove were heart and soul on Wingate's side—all the best of them, at least—and as Courtney would not stand for the captaincy in his chum's place, they went for Coker as captain. Coker did not keep the job. When there was a new election, with him and Wingate as candidates, Walker was among the very big majority who voted for the old skipper.

It was in connection with the match with the Old Boys that Walker showed up best, perhaps. Loder had counted upon his helping to sell that match. Walker was so incensed at the proposition that he knocked Loder down; and at a critical moment he won the game for his side by going for and holding a catch which was really Loder's. But he knew that Loder would put it on the floor, and he had no hesitation about butting in. He knew, for had not Loder purposely run him out when he was well set?

Quite lately we have seen Loder and Walker at odds again, and Walker putting up for the captaincy, but having to retire through Loder's foul play on the football-field, which resulted in a nasty hurt for him.

After that we may reasonably expect that James Walker will realise just how much the friendship of a fellow of Loder's type is worth. If he cuts Loder entirely, and sticks to games, work, and his duties as a prefect, there is no reason why he should not yet be a credit to the Greyfriars Sixth Form. For there is some good stuff in him.

Valence is not entirely a villain. He showed up in better colours at least once. After the trouble with Sir Hilton Popper, when Arthur Courtney took upon his shoulders the burden of his chum's guilt, and was brutally thrashed by the testy old baronet, Valence lay low for a time. But poaching had got into his blood. He started again, and got Percy Bolsover in it with him. Heavy trouble came of it. Sir Hilton's head-keeper was shot, and the Greyfriars poachers were suspected of the crime—though, at worst, it was realised that if they had done it they had done it by accident. It was not they, and the keeper did not die, though at one time it was feared he would. But the matter was so very grave that it was quite impossible for Dr. Locke to allow Valence to stay on. Bolsover, a junior, was considered as having been under the Sixth-Former's influence, and got off with a flogging. But Valence was ex-

pelled—there was simply nothing else for it. He came back as a new boy. Before that happened, however, his sister Violet had come to Greyfriars to plead with the Head for his consent to Rupert's return. The Head was moved by her pleading, but he had to refuse. Then Valence, with his face stained and otherwise altered, appeared at the school as Trevelyan, a new boy from Cornwall.



Rupert Valence

It was a difficult part to play, and he could not have played it had everyone's hand been against him. But those who saw through the imposture kept silence—till Valence fell foul of Banks, the bookmaker.

Then the crisis came. It was through good nature that Valence had got into Banks' power. He was helping Hazeldene against the pressure put upon him upon by Banks. The bookmaker gave him his alternative—stand aside and see Hazel victimised, or have his secret given away.

Now, Valence owed Hazel nothing. There had never been any special bond between them. Loder or Carne would have smiled cynically at seeing a Removeite under the thumb of Banks. Neither would have lifted a finger to help him, even without risk to themselves.

But Valence stood firm. What moved him then it is hard to say; but whatever it may have been—the memory of Courtney's sacrifice, perhaps, or the gentle influence of his sister Vi, who had stood by him so finely—he stood firm, and, in doing so, showed that there was real good in him. And he had his reward, though he had not worked for a reward. When the whole story came out the Head was so impressed by his conduct that he agreed to his staying on—no longer as Trevelyan, but under his true name.

Perhaps it would have been better for him if he had gone. You may say it would certainly have been better for his sister and for Courtney. But who knows?

Valence could not live up to the standard he had set himself. Bit by bit he slipped downhill again. And the end for him at Greyfriars came in the way you all know. It was a miserable ending for him—but not for Arthur Courtney!

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 530.



James Walker

new special warder intolerable. They played all sorts of tricks on him—ghosts among others—and he cleared out at length. Even Courtney, whom the juniors all liked, found the position too hot for him; and in the long run the Remove got rid of the intrusive prefect.

Walker was one of those for whom the

Extracts from "THE GREYFRIARS HERALD" and "TOM MERRY'S WEEKLY."

ROUGH ON RACKE!

By MONTY LOWTHER.

I.

"PARCEL for you, Tommy!" I delivered that interesting piece of information, plus the parcel mentioned, last Saturday morning, as our worthy skipper came downstairs with Manners.

Now, I always set a good example to the Form by rising early—ahem! I was expecting a remittance by the morning post, and that may, of course, have had something to do with the fact that I was one of the first chaps down that morning, and making a bee-line for the rack—no pun intended, Aubrey!

There wasn't a letter for me, however, but there was a small parcel for Tom Merry—in Miss Priscilla Fawcett's hand.

The aforesaid Thomas caught the package on his nose, and glared. Then his frown faded as he spotted the handwriting. Tommy is really no end fond of his devoted guardian, who, in her turn, simply worships him. She wouldn't hit me, though. She always imagines her darling Tommy is still a baby in long clothes, and she treats him as such!

Tom Merry cut the string and drew out a letter, and a little box of—

My eye caught the label. Cough pills!

Manners and I exchanged glances. "What does she say, Tommy?" Manners inquired sympathetically.

Tom Merry groaned inwardly.

"Oh, my hat!" he ejaculated. "Listen to this, Manners—and you, Monty. 'My darling Tommy,—I am enclosing a box of Dr. Feedem's Cough Pills, which I specially want you to take regularly, three times a day, before meals. I am sure I can rely upon you doing this, my darling child. I am calling to see you very soon.'"

"Phew!" whistled Manners. "That's done it! You'll have to take them, Tommy!"

Tom Merry made a grimace.

"Yes, I suppose I shall!" he said slowly. "I wouldn't offend Miss Priscilla for worlds. Still, it's no laughing matter, you asses! What are you cackling at?"

"Ha, ha! Nothing! All serene!" I gasped, and Manners choked down his mirth with an effort. "B-but they mightn't taste so bad, Tommy! Why not try one now?"

"Not a bad idea!" agreed Tom Merry. "My hat, she's given me a dose here! Just look at the label!"

He pointed to a phrase that filled us all with awe. It was "One hundred pills."

Poor old Tommy!

Gingerly he opened the box and selected one of the awful concoctions reposing inside. Then he roared:

"Ugh! Ah! Ugh! Grooh!"

"Taste all right?" I inquired innocently.

"Ugh! Grooh!"

"Well, why don't you take it out?" demanded Manners. "There's no need—"

"Grooh! I've—ugh!—chewed it up!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come, come, Tommy!" I said. "You're making a lot of fuss about one tiny pill! Pull yourself together!"

"Ugh! Taste one yourself! Grooh!"

I did.

So did Manners.

We took good care not to chew them! But even with the pill resting on the tongue the flavour wasn't really nice. Needless to say, our pills didn't stay long in our respective mouths.

"What do you think of them, Monty?" Manners asked me, wiping his mouth with his handkerchief.

"Horrid!" I replied, doing likewise. "It's a bitter pill for Tommy to swallow!"

Tom Merry groaned again, but whether it was the effect of the joke or the pill I can't surmise.

The breakfast-bell went then, and we headed for the dining-hall, Tom Merry still gasping spasmodically.

But after breakfast he seemed quite his old self again.

"What are you going to do about it?" I questioned him, as we came out.

He gave me almost a haggard look.

"I don't know!" he said wearily. "I—I suppose I must take them. If I don't, what shall I say to Miss Priscilla when she comes?"

And this time I refrained from asking him if that was a conundrum, and consoled him with:

"Buck up, old scout! You can swallow them whole next time, you know!"

To which Tom Merry nodded gloomily.

"Yes, I suppose that's the only way!" he said dolefully.

"Unless——" I began.

"Well?"

"Unless you take the letter out into the quad——"

"What on earth——"

"Then you can say with truth that you 'carried out her instructions!' I concluded triumphantly.

But the only appreciation I received for this excellent joke was a snort from Manners, and:

"All serene, Tom! We might have known a rotten joke was coming!"

II.

"YOU fat rotter! Let that cake alone! It's all we've got for our tea!"

Manners, as the above remarks indicate, does not live up to his name all the time. But really there was good cause for his indignation. We had just returned to the study after dinner that day. Talbot had delayed us in the passage, and jawed footer for a full ten minutes, and during that time Baggy Trimble had not been idle. As it happened, we interrupted him in the middle of a huge cake which we had intended for tea. He started guiltily.

"Oh, really, Manners!" he said, with an effort at indignation. "Only just a little snack, you know. I didn't have much for dinner, and——"

"No; only enough for three chaps!" snorted Tom Merry. "Where's that stump?"

"Baggy takes the cake!" I murmured. "But, hold on!" A really brilliant thought struck me. "I beg to suggest a unique but effective punishment for our friend Baggy!"

"Why not make him take a pill?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good egg!" chorused Tom and Manners. There was only one dissenter. And as this was Trimble himself it was only to be expected he wouldn't agree!

He protested strongly.

"Oh, really, you fellows!" he expostulated. "Look here, hold on, I say! I can put you up to something, you know!"

"How can you put us up to something we know?" I demanded, shamefully misusing Baggy's sentence. But it was lost on the obtuse Baggy. He only looked puzzled.

"Eh? Look here, I may know something!"

Tom Merry appeared to reflect.

"You may!" he assented. "But we've got no proof of that! But it's quite possible, by Jove!"

"Though not very probable!" I interjected.

"Look here——"

"Mercy!"

"Oh, you shut up, Lowther! Tom Merry, listen to me—keep those pills away!—I'll tell you. It—it was Racke!"

"Eh? What was Racke?" asked Tom Merry.

"Racke sent those pills! It wasn't Miss Priscilla at all!" Baggy blurted out.

We stared.

Baggy had succeeded in impressing us at last, and his confidence returned.

"That's what made you start—eh?" he burbled. "I suppose you don't mind me having a piece of this cake, just a corner——"

"We jolly well do!" I roared, and decided the point by replacing it—the cake, not the point—in the cupboard, and locking the door.

"Now, then!" said Tom Merry sternly. "How do you know this, you fat Ananias?"

"I—I happened to be passing Racke's study——"

"When your bootlace came undone?" asked Tom.

"Yes; that was just it. I——"

"Rather a singular circumstance," said Tom Merry, with crushing sarcasm, "considering you're wearing button-boots!"

"I—I mean to say a—button came off!"

"No; it didn't! They're all intact!"

"Off my trousers!" roared Baggy. "Can't you fellows take my word? I heard, quite by chance, of course, Racke & Co. discussing it. Racke and Crooke were arguing on who was to take the parcel down to Rylcombe."

"Is this true?" asked Tom Merry, eyeing the fat junior keenly. "You're not lying to save your skin?"

"Oh, really!" protested the indignant Baggy. "Look at the postmark!"

"The wrappings round the pills in your pocket, Tom," I remarked; and he fished it out.

Faintly on the dark-brown paper we traced the word "Rylcombe."

"That clinches it!" said Tom Merry, between his teeth; "but—but how did he copy the writing? That puzzles me!"

"Didn't you miss a letter from Miss Fawcett last week?" said Manners suddenly.

"My hat! Yes! The rotters! I—I'll skin 'em! And I should have swallowed these disgusting things—a hundred of them—if I hadn't found out!"

"Yes; the beasts!" I said, sympathetically. "They were trying to 'Fawcett' on you, Tommy!"

"B-rrr!"

Baggy was allowed to go. When he had departed, Tom Merry turned to us.

"You fellows ready?" he asked grimly.

"We're doing nothing this afternoon, so we've plenty of time to attend to those rotters!"

"Right-ho!" I said heartily. "Coming, Manners?"

III.

"JUST in time!" We beamed genially on Crooke, whom we came upon in the act of locking the study door.

"Just in time!" I repeated cheerily. "Racke here, and the merry Scrope? Pleased to see you, Racke!"

Racke scowled. He did not seem to reciprocate the feeling.

"I'm afraid we shall have to interrupt your little party, Racke," said Tom Merry grimly. "Lock the door, Manners!"

Manners turned the key in the lock.

Racke started to his feet angrily. Crooke was sneering. Scrope was looking uneasy.

"Hang you! What do you want?" Racke snarled.

"Just a little talk about a box of pills you were good enough to send me!"

"Hang you, what do you mean? I've sent you no rotten pills!"

"It's no use your denying it, Racke," said Tom. "Anyhow, we're not going to waste time over your denials. Besides, we've come here to do you a good turn!"

"Eh? What the dickens do you mean?"

"I've noticed, Racke, that lately you've been coughing rather frequently," went on Tom Merry, with the same exasperating coolness. "Have you noticed it, Manners?"

"I have!" agreed Manners solemnly.

"And you, Monty?"

"Most assuredly!" I assented.

"So under the circumstances," continued Tom calmly, "I am going to do a real act

of kindness. You want something to stop your cough, Racke—"

"I—I—" "Before it goes any further, Dr. Feedem's Cough Pills are the very things! As Crooke and Scrope, being in your company, are likely to catch your cold, I think it will be advisable to give them a dose also! Collar them, you fellows!"

"Don't you dare—" roared Racke, jumping up. "I tell you— Gug-gug-grrr!"

A curious ending to a sentence—what? But when one has a box of cigarettes jammed into one's mouth one is apt to say all sorts of funny things. And that is what happened to Racke.

Crooke and Scrope went down before our charge, and seemed in no hurry to rise. Tom Merry cut down a picture or two from the wall, and one by one the three blades were tied up with the cords thus obtained, their hands behind their backs, Tom Merry utilising the cord for the purpose. Their glares were simply Hunnish by this time. Racke did not have much to say. He was busy, frantically chewing cigarettes—rather a disgusting thing to do, as I pointed out to him.

Tom Merry produced the pills, and I produced a pin.

"Now, Racke," said Tom, selecting a well-coated pill, "kindly open your mouth! You won't? Very well! Monty, that pin please!"

"Ow! Keep off, Lowther! Ug-grooh!" The pill was in! And Racke had chewed it!

"How do you like them, Aubrey?" I

inquired blandly. "Nice, powdery flavour, ain't it?"

Glare!

"Now a nice cut of fat pork—"

"Ugh! Don't!"

"Or a slice of greasy ham—"

"Don't!" pleaded Racke.

"Chuck it, Monty!" laughed Tom Merry, who had just succeeded, with the aid of Manners, in popping a pill into Crooke's mouth as he was yelling "Yow-ow!"

"There, Crooke!" he added pleasantly.

"There's your little dose! Don't snap your teeth so ferociously, or— There; I told you so!"

Crooke had also bitten through his pill!

Scrope came last, and was served in like fashion. Scrope, however, managed to swallow his dose whole.

Then we crowded out of the study, roaring, but from a very different cause.

We were in the middle of tea when Mr. Railton looked in, with a snite.

"Kindly go to the 'phone, Merry!" he said. "Your guardian, Miss Fawcett, desires a word with you!"

Tom Merry left the study, to return five minutes later.

"What do you think, you fellows?" he announced. "It wasn't Racke at all!"

"What!"

"Miss Priscilla rang up from Rylcombe to say she's calling to-morrow to see me. She

wanted to know whether I'd taken the pills she sent me."

"Oh, jiminy!" I gasped. "What did you tell her?"

"I said that unfortunately there had been an accident with them. She didn't mind at all. She's bringing some more with her!"

"Why is she in Rylcombe?" Manners wanted to know.

"She's visiting an old friend of hers there," explained Tom, grinning. "Curious, ain't it? We've been rather hasty with Racke & Co. Might as well go and tell them we're sorry!"

We went. Racke & Co. were at tea, having freed themselves of their cords soon after we left them.

"Peace!" said Tom Merry hastily, as Racke jumped up at the sight of us. "We've come to say we're sorry, Racke. We've found out it wasn't you at all!"

"You can take your sorrow somewhere else!" Racke snarled savagely. "As a matter of fact, we were planning to send them yesterday, only we couldn't get the dashed things! Somebody else sent them, I see. I hope they nearly poisoned you!"

"That's enough, Racke! Come on, you fellows!" said Tom Merry. "I'd mop up the rotters, only they've had enough for one afternoon!"

So Trimble had not lied, after all. Racke had not carried out his scheme, but the fates had decided he should suffer for it, nevertheless. Which, on the whole, was rather rough on Racke!

THE END.

THE CATERPILLAR'S BLUNDER!

A Story of Highcliffe School. :: By FRANK COURTENAY.

"ONE more week," yawned my chum De Courcy—known to everybody who matters as the Caterpillar—"an' my doom, Franky, is sealed!"

"Cut it short, you silly duffer!" I said, laughing. "Is it the Governors' Exam you're worrying about?"

"Precisely, dear boy! It haunts me night an' day, in my wakin' hours, in my sleep. I've not swotted up a single line, an', what's more, I don't intend to. A little learnin', Franky, is a dangerous thing."

I confess I felt a bit sorry for the Caterpillar. You see, every fellow in the Fourth has to enter for the Governors' Exam, whether he likes it or not.

To make matters worse, Mobby was conducting the show. And Mobby's got a nasty knack of singling out the weak spot in a fellow's armour. Even a fellow who's swotted night and day for weeks goes into the Form-room on that eventful morning with his knees knocking together.

But the Caterpillar, with his usual distaste for work of any description, hadn't done a stroke. And time was flying fast. In a matter of days now he would meet his fate.

"Look here," I said, "there's still time for something to be done. Why don't you put your shoulder to the wheel, and make up for lost time? If you'd care to stay up a couple of hours each night—"

"My dear man—"

"And swot like the very dickens—"

"Really, Franky—"

"I shall be pleased to give you a hand. You'll be able to march in to Mobby with a stout heart and a smiling face. When you're asked to give the dates of the world's greatest battles, you'll be able to rattle 'em off like—like a house on fire. When you're asked who Plato and Sophocles and Euripides were, you'll be able to say they're losom pals of yours almost. And when it comes to Latin verse—"

"Don't!" said the Caterpillar feebly. "I can't bear it! It's all very well for fellows like you, Franky, who were born with galvanic batteries inside you; but the mere mention of work is exhaustin' to this child." I shrugged my shoulders.

"Very well. If you don't choose to swot while there's yet time, you must face the music."

The Caterpillar stretched his elegant limbs on the sofa, and closed his eyes. I thought he had gone to sleep; but presently he shot up with a jerk.

"Franky, old top," he said, "it's no good. Somehow or other, I must dodge that beastly exam!"

"You can't!" I grinned,

"I must arrange to catch mumps, or somethin', on the eve of the exam."

"You'd be spotted, as sure as fate, and called over the coals for malingering."

"Well, I must make plans for Mobby to be spirited away, or kidnapped, or somethin' of that sort! These things have been known to happen, y'know."

"I shouldn't try it on. Kidnapping masters is a punishable offence under the Defence of the Realm Act. You can't very well walk off with Mobby in your waistcoat-pocket. And he's a very downy bird is Mobby."

The Caterpillar sighed wearily.

"Such is life!" he said. "You know what Byron says:

"Life is mostly froth and hubble;
Two things stand like stone—
Dodgin' duty at the double,
Leavin' work alone."

"You burbling chump! Byron didn't say anything like that; and you've twisted the text round to suit your own ends, too! Look here, Caterpillar, old man! Putting it bluntly, you're a lazy slacker! Once upon a time I thought I'd dragged you out of the rut. I haven't. You're worse than ever. Instead of spending your time scheming how to get rid of Mobby, why don't you pile in and swot? I'll cut the footer for the sake of giving you an hour now, if you like. Hand over that Latin primer, and we'll go through a few of the exercises—"

"No dashed fear!" said the Caterpillar firmly. "I've made up my mind, an' my will is as unalterable as the laws of the Swedes an' Prussians. By hook or by crook I'm goin' to get Mobby out of the way. I don't mind any other master takin' the exam. I shall be able to pull the wool over the eyes of anybody else. Mobby's the only fly in the ointment. An' Mobby must go!"

"So will you if you start any Dick Turpin stunts here! You'll be fired out of Highcliffe on your neck!"

My chum made no answer.

"Caterpillar! Rupert, old man—"
Snore!

I saw that I might just as well attempt to reason with a brick wall as with the Caterpillar just then. When he slumbered nothing short of an earthquake could shift him.

So I gave it up.

II.

THE Caterpillar carried on the same as usual after our conversation—that is to say, he didn't carry on at all. He just slacked and dozed; and when the eve of the exam came round he had got no forrarder.

He lounged into the study while I was

polishing up my notes, and chucked himself down on the sofa as if life had nothing more to offer.

I chuckled. I suppose a fellow oughtn't to chuckle when he sees a ship in distress; but the fed-up-and-far-from-home expression on the Caterpillar's face was too comical for words.

"Well," I said, "have you bribed a couple of burly sporting gents to give Mobby a crack on the head?"

"No."

"What then? Have you drugged his coffee?"

"Too much fog to go to such extreme measures," said the Caterpillar glumly. "It wouldn't really matter, as it's Mobby; but—"

"But, my dear chap, you'll have to do something! You've only a matter of a few more hours."

"Don't dwell on it. Don't put me in such a state of harrowin' trepidation that I shall take a header into the Sark."

"You should have taken my advice," I said unsympathetically. "A week's coaching, and you'd at least have been able to put up some sort of a show to-morrow. As it is, you're stumped. Mobby will turn and rend you."

"Let him! I'm tired of life!"

The Caterpillar was very down in the mouth for the remainder of the evening. I had seldom seen him look so genuinely worried. And, goodness knows, he had enough to worry about. When Mobby discovered next morning that the Caterpillar's knowledge on every subject was nil there would be some fireworks sizzing about.

The Caterpillar declared, when rising-bell went next morning, that he felt just like Charles Peace before he faced the hangman. And I could quite believe it.

As we tramped downstairs—I had succeeded in routing the Caterpillar out of bed—the sound of much splashing came to our ears.

"Mobby having his morning tub," I remarked.

We paused and listened. The musical splashing still went on, accompanied by much gurgling and grunting.

Suddenly the Caterpillar swung round upon me. The light of inspiration was in his eye. Hope had returned to his despairing heart.

"I know!" he exclaimed. "The very thing, begad! I'll pinch Mobby's togs!"

"But how—"

"Listen, Franky, my pippin! The only article of apparel Mobby's got in the bath-room is his dressing-gown. So if I hop into his bed-room an' lay hands on his two suits

(Continued on page 16.)

THE CATERPILLAR'S BLUNDER!

(Continued from page 15.)

of clothes, he'll be dished, diddled, and done!"

"I chuckled. If the Caterpillar carried out his little scheme successfully he would certainly win hands down. The idea of Mobby conducting an exam in a dressing-gown was too funny.

And he wouldn't be able to borrow anybody else's togs, either. Mobby is not exactly a stock size, and none of the other masters' garments would fit him.

The Caterpillar, for once in a way, gave a demonstration of rare hustle. He whipped into Mobby's bed-room, and returned, shortly afterwards staggering beneath a huge bundle.

"The whole of Mobby's togs!" he gasped. "Sunday best and all! The sun's beginning to shine, Franky!"

"What are you going to do with that little lot?" I exclaimed.

"When I was a boy there used to be a hollow tree situated on the outskirts of the cricket-ground. Thither will I wend my merry way."

And the Caterpillar disappeared before the occupant of the bath-room could discover his loss.

I was jolly excited when we went in to brekker. I can tell you, I was the only fellow in possession of the Caterpillar's secret, and I wondered how things were going to pan out.

Mobby didn't appear in Hall. His absence was a sure sign that the Caterpillar had worked the oracle.

"They'll appoint one of the underlings to take the exam," he murmured to me. "That won't be half bad. I can plead my cause with anybody but Mobby."

The Caterpillar was in high feather at being able to pull the thing off at the eleventh hour like that.

But it's always the unexpected that happens, and it happened now.

The Caterpillar and I were strolling towards the Form-room, when an excited little cove in a dressing-gown dashed up to us.

"Can you come to my assistance, boys?" he jerked out. "Some scoundrel—some

dabbler in practical jokes—has purloined two suits of my clothing!"

The Caterpillar turned a sickly yellow. "Eh? What? Who are you?" he stammered.

"I am Mr. Mobbs' brother! I am spending a few days at Highcliffe, and I slept last night in my brother's bed-room. He slept and breakfasted in the spare room. Whilst I was having my bath this morning somebody appropriated my garments! It is outrageous!"

"I've never seen the Caterpillar look so utterly cut up as he did then.

"Oh, crumbs! Oh, my hat! Carry me home to die, Franky!"

"I will not rest until the culprit is brought to book!" said Mobby's brother. "I will not rest, I say—"

The Caterpillar didn't stop to listen. He moved away like a fellow in a dream.

At that precise moment Langley of the Sixth bore down upon him.

"Buck up, you fellows," he said, "or you'll be late for the exam! Mr. Mobbs is waiting for you in the Form-room. Over the top, and the best of luck!"

And the Caterpillar, with feelings too deep for words, passed on to meet his doom.

THE END.

The Editor's Chat.

For Next Monday:

"TOM REDWING—HERO!"

By Frank Richards.

Next week's story is one of the best. You are all interested, I know, in the sailor's son, with his fine, high pride and his longing for a really good education. In this story you will read of the trouble made for him by his enemies—among whom Ponsonby of Highcliffe is to be reckoned—and of how he heaped coals of fire on the head of Pon. I don't think you will find that he has made a friend of Pon, in spite of all. It is not in our little Ponsonby to be friends for long with any decent fellow.

BY REQUEST.

So many requests for a list of the MAGNET stories in the order of their appearance, have reached me that I am going to give the list, though I cannot afford space for many at a time.

Perhaps it is a queer desire. Many people would think so. But I know to what it is due. It testifies to the extreme keenness of my readers—a keenness which the Greyfriars Gallery has something to do with whetting. The gallery is now nearing its end—not many more characters remain to be written about—but the interest does not wane, it seems.

Some of the titles will not tell you a great deal. But I shall give them all.

Take a word of warning, though! It is no use sending in back number notices in shoals. I am not accepting any of these just now, and shall not accept any for some time to come. Those I have in hand will take a lot of working off.

Greyfriars Stories in the "Magnet."

- 1.—"The Making of Harry Wharlon."
- 2.—"The Taming of Harry."
- 3.—"The Mystery of Greyfriars."
- 4.—"Chums of the Remove."
- 5.—"Kidnapped!"
- 6.—"Allons at Greyfriars."
- 7.—"Rivals of the Remove."
- 8.—"In Hiding."
- 9.—"The Nabob's Diamond."
- 10.—"The Captain's Election."
- 11.—"Billy's Boom."
- 12.—"Harry's Sacrifice."
- 13.—"A Jolly Half-Holiday."
- 14.—"Billy's Competition."
- 15.—"Wharlon's Operatic Company."
- 16.—"Stage-Struck."
- 17.—"A Jolly Outing."
- 18.—"Roughing It."
- 19.—"The Greyfriars Challenge."
- 20.—"Billy's Treat."
- 21.—"The Famous Four."
- 22.—"Fun by the Sea."
- 23.—"The Greyfriars Riot."
- 24.—"Four on the War-path."
- 25.—"The Triumph of the Remove."

NOTICES.

Correspondence Wanted.

By Thos. North, 55, Fernbrook Street, Lewisham, S.E. 13—with boy readers of eighteen anywhere.

By Godfrey Burt, 34, High Street, Winterton, Doncaster—with boy readers of fourteen.

By Miss Myfanwy Williams, 5, Blaenychdach Street, Grangetown, Cardiff—with girl readers anywhere interested in stamp-collecting.

By Edgar Isaacson, 41, MacAslin Street, Glasgow—with boy readers interested in stamp-collecting.

By Fred Holland, c/o G.P.O., Manchester—with anyone interested in shipping or woollen or cotton trades, with a view to expanding knowledge on both sides.

By Kimon Fisher, 14, Derby Road, Caulfield, Melbourne, Australia—with boy readers in U.K.

By Walter H. Ashley, c/o Watts Book Arcade, Burwood Road, Auburn, Melbourne, Australia—with boy readers in Vancouver, Canada, New York, Brazil, and Mexico.

Back Numbers, Etc., Wanted.

By G. W. Leighton, 16, Wallace Road, Portsmouth—MAGNETS before 400.

By H. B. Handford, 57, Grosvenor Street, Harborne, Birmingham—24 back numbers of "Nelson Lee Library" from No. 100.

By A. Glynn, 29, Retreat Place, Morning Lane, Hackney, E. 9—MAGNET and "Gem," Nos. 1913-1915.

By Ronald Rushen, 95, Mildred Avenue, Watford—any story of Figgins & Co. before 450—any MAGNETS before 450—must be cheap.

By A. J. E. Howe, 5, Market Place, Peterborough—MAGNET, Nos. 1-499—clean—1d. each offered.

By H. Myers, 135, Peckham Road, Peckham, S.E. 15—cheap accordion or concertina.

By A. Talmage, 84, Queen's Road, Bayswater, W.—clean copies of MAGNET before 472—1d. each offered.

By the Jayantic Magazine Society, 3, Ware Street, Ashton-under-Lyme—old magazines and books to send to soldiers and sailors.

By Donald Dunkin, 40, Russell Place, Great Harwood, Lancs—No. 1 of the MAGNET, and earliest number in 1917 of "Penny Popular."

By W. Crompton, 13, Chatham Street, Bolton—Double Numbers of "Gem" and MAGNET before 1915.

By W. Precious, 15, Nummill Street, Scarborough Road, York—"School and Sport."

By Walter Darke, 125, Western Road, Southall—"Lad From Lancashire," "D'Arcy the Detective," "Towser's Peril," "Figgins' Fig-Pudding," "Surprising the School."

"Great Postal Order Conspiracy," "School on Strike," "St. Jim's Airmen," "Tom Merry's Secret Society."

By J. Farcombe, 34, Canute Road, Southampton—any old "Gem" and MAGNET.

By James Stewart, jun., 5, Morgan Street, Hamilton, Lanark—numbers containing early adventures of Bounder and Tracy.

By C. Lawson, Parrott's Grove, Hawkesbury, near Coventry—both volumes of "Dick Sands, the Boy Captain," "Adrift in the Pacific," "Mystery Island," "School and Sport."

By H. B. Davey, 54 Spring Gardens, Earis-

heaton, Jewsbury—"Gem" and MAGNET, Nos. 1-250; also "School and Sport," "1895 Without a Name," "Rivals and Chums," and "Through Thick and Thin."

By O. Watch, Redholm, Patcham—"Tom Dutton's Triumph" and "Midnight Marauders."

By H. Goodger, Morgranbi, Napango Line, Queensland, Australia—any six MAGNETS between 1 and 400.

By C. Marcroft, Willow Flat, Private Bay, Napier, New Zealand—"Wun Lung's Secret," "School and Sport," "Kildare for Iceland," "Tom Merry for England," "Hero of Wales," "Son of Scotland," "Tom Merry & Co.," "The Terrible Two," "Loyal to the Last."

By Victor Lye, 69, Wycliffe Road, Clapham, S.W.—"After Lights Out."

By C. J. Reynolds, 487, Paisley Road, West Lothian, Glasgow—"Mystery Island."

By E. Bothell, 19, White Horse Street, Hertsford—back numbers of "Gem" and MAGNET wanted for men at the front.

By W. McCathie, Deepdale, Natal, South Africa—stories dealing with Bunter, Wingate, and Coker; also Christmas Numbers of "Gem" and MAGNET, 1908-1915.

By David Stirling, 45, Pideon Street, Balingate—MAGNETS, 400-412—1d. each offered.

By H. Lines, Kingsbury Road, Minworth, Birmingham—"Boys' Friend," numbers containing "The Secret City"—in good condition. Write first.

By Harry Townsend, 6, Park Road, West Croxland Moor, Huddersfield—MAGNET and "Gem," Nos. 440-470.

By Miss Rita Lee, 17, Lewisham New Road, High Cross, S.E. 14—"The Bully's Chance," "Wingate's Folly," and "Surprising the School." 2d. each offered.

By John Gardner, 13, Inca Street, Heaton Norris, Stockport—"Fall of the Fifth," "Hurroo Slugh's Peril," "Bob Cherry in Search of his Father," "The Cock of the Walk," "Coker Minor," "The Toll," "The Bounder of Greyfriars," and "Wibley's Wheeze."

By H. Whitworth, 14, Manlove Street, Wolverhampton—MAGNET, Nos. 361, 397, 400, 404, 411, and 419; "Gem," Nos. 405 and 406. Please write first.

By Robert Thompson, 31, Dudley Street, Brooks' Bar, Manchester—12s. to 15s. offered for cinematograph with films and sketch; must be good.

By Wm. Blythe, 96, Upper Canning Street, Liverpool—"Hero of the Hour."

By G. E. Gittins, 55, Bewdley Road, Stourport—MAGNET and "Gem," Nos. 200-380; "Boys' Friend," 250-750; "Greyfriars Herald," 4-12; "Penny Popular," 100-200. Please write first.

By T. Donovan, 27, Rute Street, Liverpool—"Last in the League," "Hinton of the Rovers," "School and Sport," and "Cousin Ethel's Schooldays."

Your Editor