

"FORM-MASTER and ROGUE!" Thrilling and Dramatic School Story of Harry Wharton & Co. **INSIDE**

The MAGNET 2^D

No. 1,364. Vol. XLV.

EVERY SATURDAY.

Week Ending April 7th, 1934.



**BUNTER
THE
ARTIST!**

FORM-MASTER AND ROGUE!



A Wonderful New Long Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars.

BY FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Unexpected!

"Go it!" Harry Wharton smiled a little as he spoke. Frank Nugent smiled, too. But Herbert Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, did not smile. He looked red and uncomfortable.

Wharton and Nugent were in their study, No. 1 in the Remove, when Smithy came in. They were discussing the approaching Easter holidays—a matter of interest to the Greyfriars fellows, as the school was breaking up soon for the "hols." But they politely "chucked" it as the Bounder came in, evidently with something to say.

But though it was plain that Smithy had something to say, he seemed to find difficulty in saying it. He made a remark about Easter, and then about the weather, and then about Mr. Smedley, the new master of the Remove, and then about a row between Hilton and Price of the Fifth Form. But it was quite clear that Smithy had not come there to talk about Easter, the weather, or the new beak, or rows in the Fifth.

It was quite unlike Smithy to hesitate, either in word or in deed. The chums of the Remove could not help wondering what it was that he found it so difficult to get out. So the captain of the Remove cheerfully invited him to "go" it.

Still Smithy did not go it. The colour deepened in his face, and he made a movement towards the door, as if to leave the study without saying what he had come to say. More and

more surprised, Wharton and Nugent gazed at him.

"My dear man, cough it up!" said Harry.

"It's nothing!" muttered Vernon-Smith.

"Rot! You've got something on your chest! Not a row with Smedley, I hope?"

Wharton looked rather serious as he asked that question. All the Greyfriars Remove knew that the new beak had a down on Smithy.

"Rats! Think I should worry about that?" growled the Bounder. "Blow Smedley!"

"Don't blow him too loud!" said Frank Nugent, with a grin. "Smedley's got a way of stepping around on tiptoe and hearing what fellows say. Don't let him hear you blowing him."

"Creepin' cad!" grunted the Bounder. "I never thought I should be sorry that Quelch went; but, by gum, we've got a rank outsider in his place! But I'm not bothering about him! Blow him! I want——"

"Go it!"

"I—I want——"

With a crimson face, the Bounder broke off again. It seemed as if he could not get it out.

He turned to the door which he had left ajar and shut it. Then he turned again to the two wondering juniors.

"Cough it up!" said Harry. "You're jolly mysterious about it, Smithy! If it was any fellow but you, I should think you'd come here to raise the wind and didn't know how to put it."

"You wouldn't think I had?" said the Bounder.

Harry Wharton laughed. Smithy, the only son of Samuel Vernon-Smith, the

City millionaire, was the richest fellow in the Remove, excepting Lord Mauleverer. Generally he had more currency notes than other fellows had half-crowns. One reason why he was the scapegrace of the school, and in constant trouble of one kind or another, was because he had always more money than was good for him. Certainly no fellow would have expected him to be in need of "raising the wind."

"Oh, don't cackle!" grunted the Bounder morosely. "If you want to know, that's it! I'm dashed if I know why I've come to you—we've never been friends—but—but I'm in a hole! Redwing can't help; it's out of his depth. What the thump are you blinking at me like that for?" he added, with an angry stare at the captain of the Remove.

Wharton's face had become very grave.

"I'd never have guessed it was that, Smithy," he said quietly; "and if it's as you say, I suppose it means that you've been playing the goat again, and getting into debt with some rotten outsider out of the school! You must be mad, I think! It's hardly a couple of weeks since you had the narrowest escape a fellow could have of being bunked, and your father was frightfully wild with you, and now——"

"Cut it out!" interrupted the Bounder rudely. "I didn't come here for pi-jaw! If you won't help me, you won't!"

He turned to the door, with a savage scowl on his hard face. But he paused, and turned again.

"You fool!" he said, between set lips. "If you knew how the matter stood, you——"

"You can tell me. But if it's that, I——"

"It is, and it isn't! I've been keeping as straight as a string since the Head let me stay on. If you know what my father's holding over my head, you'd know why. But—I owe a man ten quids! It's not a new thing—I've owed it to him for weeks. But he's kicking for it now, and I've got to square. That's how it is."

"Well, what is ten quids to you?" said Harry. "I've seen you with three or four fivers in your notecase!"

Nugent suppressed a grin. The Bounder's notecase and the unusual number of notes in it had often been seen in the Remove. It was partly from his rather ostentatious wealth that Smithy had earned his nickname.

With a black scowl, Smithy shoved his hand into his pocket and drew out a handsome and expensive notecase. He opened it, and displayed the fact that it was empty.

"Stony?" asked Wharton, with a stare.

"Stony to the wide!"

"Then you must have been splashing it about pretty freely!" said Frank Nugent. "How many losers have you backed at the Three Fishers?"

Vernon-Smith gave him an evil look.

"I suppose I was a fool to come here!" he said bitterly. "I've never asked a man to help me before, and it's not easy to ask. If there wasn't so much at stake—"

He broke off, gritting his teeth. "You rotters! You find it amusin' to hit a man when he's down, I suppose!"

"Sorry, old bean!" said Nugent. "No offence! But you're always stacked with money—"

"Oh!" ejaculated Wharton suddenly. "Has your father—"

"Guessed it?" sneered the Bounder. "Yes; my father's shut off the horn of plenty. He thinks I've had too much money in my pockets, and that it's helped to land me into trouble."

"Well, he's right there," said Harry. "You couldn't have played the giddy ox as you did with half-a-crown a week pocket-money like Bunter!"

"Oh, cheese it!" snarled Smithy. "Since I was sacked I'm kept to my allowance, and that's cut short—ten bob a week."

"Lots of fellows in the Remove would do a song and dance if they got ten bob a week to blow!" said Frank. "I should, I know."

"Oh, don't be a silly ass, if you can help it! I've borrowed money at the Three Fishers—weeks ago—before the trouble started. I never had any doubt that I could pay easily enough, of course. But now the horn of plenty's run dry! I've nothin'! I've got to square that man, or he'll come up to the school about it! Think I'd ask you if I could help it?"

"My hat!" murmured Wharton.

He understood now. The Bounder's narrow escape from the "sack" had taught him a lesson. But a past like Smithy's was not dropped easily. He was carefully avoiding new trouble, but an old trouble had cropped up. The way of the transgressor was hard; but the way of the reformed scapegrace was not easy.

"Your father——" suggested Harry.

"I can't ask him! I daren't, if you want to know! Can you lend me a hand? Will you? I'll square some

time; I shall have tips in the holidays. I'm not Bunter!" added the Bounder savagely. "Do you think I'm the fellow to sponge on you?"

"No, no! Now I know how it stands, I'd help you if I could. But we're not millionaires, Smithy! A tennor? I don't suppose we've got ten bob in this study between us, let alone ten pounds!"

The Bounder opened his lips—and shut them again. His pride was already bitterly hurt, and he would make no further appeal. But the dark, almost haggard look that came over his face went straight to Harry Wharton's heart. The scapegrace of Greyfriars was in deep waters, and this time it was not his fault; it was the miserable outcome of former recklessness that threatened him with disaster. He set his lips hard, and turned to the door and laid his hand on the door-handle.

"Hold on, Smithy!" Wharton spoke again hastily, as the Bounder opened the door. "Something might be done—give a fellow time to think——"

"There's no time!" the Bounder answered over his shoulder. "If I don't get ten pounds at once, or almost at once, I'm done for here! Wash it out! I shall have to manage it somehow."

He stepped into the Remove passage and stopped dead at the sight of a rather tall figure—the figure of Mr.

strange, and intensely irritating. It was more than enough to fill Smithy's mind, to the exclusion of other matters.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Bunter the Artist!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

"What on earth's that?" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Look!" said Billy Bunter complacently.

Bob looked, so did Johnny Bull and Hurreo Jamset Ram Singh. They looked, and they stared.

The three Remove fellows were coming upstairs to the studies, when they came on Billy Bunter on the middle landing. The fat and rotund figure of William George Bunter sprawled on the deep window-seat, where the tall window gave light to the landing; and a pair of podgy trousers leaped to the eye, as it were, as the juniors came up the lower stairs.

Bunter was busy.

A sheet of impot paper was spread before him on the window-seat. There was a pencil in his fat hand. His little round eyes blinked through his big round spectacles at his work. Bunter was drawing.

Bunter was no artist. Neither was he keen on drawing, which was a form of work, and, therefore, obnoxious to Bunter, who disliked work in any shape or form. Just at present, however, the fat Owl of the Remove was very keen. He grinned over the weird sketch that was gliding from his pencil. He chuckled—a fat chuckle. It was easy to discern that Bunter's picture was of a humorous nature, and appealed to him as very funny indeed.

Bob and Johnny and the Nabob of Bhanipur gazed at it. It represented a figure in cap and gown, brandishing a cane.

But really they had to guess that much, for it was almost as like a Zulu brandishing an assagai.

It is said that an artist of ancient Greece, wishing that there should be no mistake in the matter, wrote under his picture: "This is an ox!" Billy Bunter seemed to have taken a leaf out of that ancient painter's book, for he had written above his drawing, in large capital letters:

"THIS IS THE HEAD!"

This explanation made it clear that Bunter's fearsome picture was meant to depict Dr. Locke, the headmaster of Greyfriars.

"My only hat!" said Bob Cherry blankly.

"You blithering idiot!" said Johnny Bull.

"The blitherfulness of the esteemed idiot is terrific!" remarked Hurreo Jamset Ram Singh.

"Oh, really, you fellows——"

"Is that meant for the Head?" asked Bob. "What have you made the mouth wide open for, and the teeth sticking out?"

"He's grinding his teeth," explained Bunter. "In a rage, you know."

"Oh crikey!"

"I've nearly finished," added Bunter. "Look!"

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It's the Bounder's firm intention to "run straight." It's his Form-master's firm intention that he should live up to his old nickname and be sent away from Greyfriars in disgrace! WHY???

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ADVENTURE

Smedley, the new master of the Remove. There had not been a sound in the passage; but the new master was hardly a yard from the study door. Herbert Vernon-Smith looked at him, his heart beating. Had the man heard? His eyes glittered at the passing figure.

This was not the first time that the new beak's stealthy ways had come to the notice of his Form. "Creeper and Crawler" was the name already given to him in the Remove. Had he, passing the study door with his silent, stealthy tread, overheard the Bounder's words?

It did not seem so. He walked on towards the stairs without glancing at Vernon-Smith, or appearing to be aware that the junior had come out of Study No. 1.

The Bounder's eyes followed him, gleaming, till he disappeared down the stairs. Then he tramped away to his own study with a black brow. More likely than not the Creeper and Crawler had heard him; and already he was down on Smithy—had made it unmistakable that he was keen to "catch out" the scapegrace of Greyfriars. The Bounder went into Study No. 4, scowling.

But he soon dismissed the new beak from his mind; his own problem occupied his thoughts. "Raising the wind" was a new and strange problem to the fellow who had always had more money than he wanted—new and

At the foot of his extraordinary figure he wrote:

"HE'S A BEEST!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob. "If the Head saw that he would tell Smedley to keep an eye on your spelling, Bunty."

"Eh! What's the matter with the spelling?" asked Bunter.

Orthography was not Billy Bunter's long suit.

"Is there a double E in beast?" chuckled Bob.

"Oh, yes, that's all right!"

"I sort of fancied there was an A in it."

"Oh, no! You don't know much about spelling, old chap."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You howling ass!" said Johnny Bull.

"You'll get a whopping if that's seen. Skinner got an awful licking once for making a caricature of Quelch when he was here. What are you guying the Head for, you duffer?"

"He's a beast!" explained Bunter.

"I've had a licking. That old cat, Mrs. Kebble, made out that I'd taken the pie! I never did, you know! You fellows know whether I'm the sort of chap to sneak down into the kitchen after a pie."

"We do," chuckled Bob—"we does!"

"The knowfulness is terrific!" grinned Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"They made out that it was me,"

went on Bunter, with a reckless disregard for grammar—Bunter's grammar was on a par with his spelling—"because that creepy, crawly beast, Smedley, saw me on the kitchen stairs. He told the Head so. It was a sheer lie, you know! I wasn't there at all! I was in my own study at the time he saw me on the stairs—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" said Bunter warmly. "I was nowhere near the place. Besides, he wouldn't have seen me, only he goes about on tiptoe spying on fellows. I didn't know he was anywhere near, of course, or I shouldn't have gone down. How was I to know that the beast was creeping about spying on a chap?"

The three juniors chortled. Mr. Smedley's tiptoe ways were well known, and much commented on in the Remove.

But even the Creeper and Crawler couldn't have seen Bunter on the kitchen stairs if Bunter hadn't been there.

"The Head refused to take my word," continued Bunter. "That's no new thing; he's done it before."

"Go hon!" said Johnny Bull sarcastically.

"He jolly well has!" said Bunter indignantly. "More than once! Making a fellow out to be a liar, you know! I told him I wasn't there, and that I never knew that Smedley saw me, and that—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, don't cackle! He gave me six!" said Bunter hotly. "Six of the best, you know, for something I hadn't done! Luckily I'd eaten the pie, so they couldn't get that back."

"Oh crumbs!"

"Well, I'm jolly well going to let him know what we think of him!" said Bunter darkly. "When he sees this he—"

"You're going to let the Head see that!" gasped Bob.

"Yes, rather! I'm going to stick it on the door of his study for him to see," explained Bunter. "Then he will know what we think of him. Of course, he

won't know that I had anything to do with it."

"My only hat!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Think it's like him?" asked Bunter, with a complacent blink at his wonderful drawing.

"Like him! Oh crumbs!"

"The likefulness is not terrific."

"Well, I'm not sure that I've caught the likeness," confessed Bunter.

"That's why I've written on it that it's the Head, you know. It will make him sit up, calling him a beast—what?"

"I fancy you'll do the sitting up, old fat man," gurgled Bob. "You howling ass, if that's seen you'll be caught at once!"

"How will they know it was me?" demanded Bunter.

"Ha, ha! Nobody else at Greyfriars spells beast with a double E, unless Coker of the Fifth does."

"Oh rot!"

"Look here, you dunderheaded dummy!" said Johnny Bull. "You'd better tear that up before anybody sees it. You'll get a flogging."

"Yah!" retorted Bunter. "I'll watch it! Why, it's taken me nearly half an hour to draw this picture! The Head's gone to his House now, so I can get to his study, and stick it on his door all right. Only I shall have to be careful that that sneaking, creeping, spying cad Smedley isn't sneaking about on tiptoe as usual!"

"Are you speaking of your Form-master, Bunter?" asked a cold, hard voice that made the four juniors jump as if electrified.

Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull and Hurree Singh spun round as if on pivots. Bunter jumped clear of the window-seat, his eyes almost popping through his spectacles at the sight of the Remove master.

None of them had heard a sound. They had been quite unaware that Mr. Smedley was up in the Remove passage; and they had not heard him coming down. But there he was—stepping from the Remove staircase to the landing, with his silent tread; his hard, cold, sharp eyes fixed on the dismayed group at the window. They stood transfixed as he crossed the landing towards them.

"Oh lor'!" gasped Billy Bunter.

The fat junior's podgy brain fairly swam, as he realised that the Creeper and Crawler had heard his words—heard his own description as a "sneaking, creeping, spying cad."

That, certainly, was not the way in which any fellow should have spoken of his Form-master—especially in that Form-master's hearing!

"Oh scissors!" murmured Bob Cherry.

Johnny Bull gave a grunt. Mr. Quelch, the late respected Form-master of the Remove, would never have dreamed of coming silently on fellows from behind and catching what they were saying. The new man who had come in his place was very different from Quelch. Few Removites had supposed that they would miss Quelch very much when he went away to recuperate after influenza. But a couple of weeks with Smedley made them miss their old Form-master very sorely. Johnny Bull, at that moment, was very much inclined to tell the new beak what he thought of his manners and customs.

Headless of the three juniors, Mr. Smedley stepped to the window-seat, and picked up Bunter's picture.

Bunter blinked at him in terror.

That weird drawing was to have been fastened on the Head's study door, to apprise Dr. Locke of what the fellows—

at least, Bunter—thought of him! But nobody was to have known that it was Bunter's work! That was very important. It was awfully important! And now—

Now that absurd picture was in Smedley's hands, and he was staring at it grimly. He did not seem to think it funny at all!

"This is your work, Bunter?"

"Oh! No, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"What?"

"I—I mean, yes, sir!" groaned Bunter.

"You have ventured to make a ridiculous caricature of your headmaster, Bunter?"

"Oh lor'!"

"I shall place this paper," said Mr. Smedley, "in Dr. Locke's hands! He will deal with you, Bunter, for this insolence. I shall deal with you for the disrespectful words you have used. Follow me to my study."

With the paper in his hand, Mr. Smedley went to the lower stairs. Billy Bunter blinked after him in utter dismay and horror.

"Well, my hat!" murmured Bob.

"You've done it now, you fat ass."

"The donefulness is terrific."

Billy Bunter rolled off the window-seat. What would happen if that dreadful drawing was placed in Dr. Locke's hands, with Bunter denounced as the perpetrator, did not bear thinking of. Bunter tottered after his Form-master.

"I—I say, sir—" he gurgled.

Mr. Smedley walked on unheeding. He was going to Masters Studies, and Billy Bunter rolled shivering after him.

The Head had gone to his own house after classes, so the picture could not be handed to him yet. No doubt it would be placed before him when he was in his study that evening. Bunter had some hours of happy anticipation to look forward to! In the meantime, Smedley was going to deal with him for the expressions he had used—a licking to go on with, as it were!

"I—I say, sir!" groaned Bunter, as he followed the Remove master into the study that had been Mr. Quelch's. "I—I say—"

"You need say nothing, Bunter!"

Mr. Smedley opened the drawer of his writing-table and dropped the picture into it, evidently to leave it there till the time came to take it to the Head. Then he picked up a cane.

He pointed to a chair with the cane.

"Bend over that chair, Bunter!"

"I—I say, sir!" gasped Bunter, "I—I didn't mean that you were a sneaking, spying cad, sir—"

"Bend over!"

"I—I was speaking of another sneaking cad, sir—"

"What?"

"You—you ain't the only sneaking cad at Greyfriars, sir!" said Bunter hopefully. "I was speaking of—yarooooh!"

A lick from the cane impelled Bunter to the chair! He bent over it dismally. Whack, whack, whack, whack, whack, whack!

"Yow-ow-ow-ow-woop!"

"You may go, Bunter. After preparation this evening, you will be called before your headmaster. Go!"

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

Billy Bunter almost crawled away.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Rolling in Money!

"MAULY, old chap—"

"Oh dear!" said Lord Mauleverer.

It was tea-time, and a good many Remove fellows were coming

up to the studies. Billy Bunter, in a state of woe, was leaning on the balustrade of the Remove landing. Half an hour had elapsed since Bunter had captured that "six" in Mr. Smedley's study, and the first direful effects had worn off. But some painful twinges lingered. Smedley had been distinctly annoyed by hearing Bunter's unflattering description of him; and he had put considerable beef into that six!

Remove fellows, coming up to tea, glanced at Bunter as they passed, and some of them grinned. Lord Mauleverer came up with Kipps, of the Remove, and instead of grinning at the woeful Owl, he gave him a sympathetic glance. Mauly was a kind-hearted fellow. A kind-hearted and sympathetic

come! If you've got a half-crown you don't want, old chap—"

"What about your own half-crowns?" demanded Kipps.

"I haven't any, you ass! I tell you my postal order hasn't come," snapped Bunter. "I'm stony!"

"What's this, then?" asked Kipps. He dipped his hand into Bunter's jacket pocket and drew it out again with a half-crown in it.

"Oh gad!" ejaculated Lord Mauleverer.

Billy Bunter blinked at that half-crown! His eyes almost popped through his spectacles as he blinked. It sometimes happened, but rarely, that Bunter found an overlooked coin in his pockets. Certainly he had been quite unaware

"My hat!" exclaimed Frank Nugent, who was looking out of the door of No. 1 Study. "Have you been holding up a bank, Bunter?"

"And look here!" exclaimed Kipps. Another half-crown flashed into view, as he fished in Bunter's pocket.

"Why, that's twelve and six!" exclaimed the unsuspecting Mauly. "The fat bounder's rollin' in half-crowns."

"His jolly old postal order must have come, after all," said Peter Todd. "Bunter, you fat brigand, you're jolly well going to stand tea in the study this time, with all that cash."

"I—I—I say, gimme my half-crowns, Kipps!" gasped Bunter. His little round eyes were almost popping through his big round spectacles in his



With a black scowl, Vernon-Smith shoved his hand into his pocket, and drew out a handsome and expensive note-case. He opened it in front of Wharton and Nugent, and displayed the fact that it was empty. "Stony?" asked Wharton, with a stare. "Stony to the wide!" answered the Bounder. "Backing losers—what?" said Nugent.

fellow was just the fellow Billy Bunter wanted to meet at tea-time!

"I say, Mauly, stop a minute!" said Billy Bunter. "I say, I've been whopped, old chap! That beast Smedley—"

"Hard cheese, old fat man!" said his sympathetic lordship.

"And I've been disappointed about a postal order, too, Mauly!" said the Owl of the Remove sadly.

"For the first time?" asked Kipps, with a grin.

"You shut up, Kippers, while I'm speaking to Mauly! I say, Mauly, I told you I was expecting a postal order," said Billy Bunter, blinking at his lordship through his big spectacles.

"Yaas, I seem to have heard somethin' of the sort!" assented Lord Mauleverer. "I believe you mentioned it last term! Or was it the term before?"

"Oh, really, Mauly—"

"Come on, Mauly!" said Kipps. "You're teazing with me, you know!"

"Will you shut up?" snapped Bunter. "I say, Mauly! My postal order hasn't

that there was a half-crown in his possession.

"And what's this?" added Kipps. He passed the half-crown from his right hand to his left, dipped his right into Bunter's pocket again, and held up another half-crown!

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry, stopping to look on. Other fellows stopped to look on also. Some of them remembered—what Bunter had forgotten for the moment—that Oliver Kipps, of the Remove, was a conjurer of almost uncanny skill.

"And look here!" exclaimed Kipps.

Again he passed the half-crown to his left hand—or appeared to do so—dipped his right into Bunter's pocket and produced another coin!

"Why, you fat villain!" exclaimed Lord Mauleverer. "You're rollin' in it! That's three half-crowns!"

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

"And that's not the lot!" said Kipps. "Look here!" He jerked another half-crown from Bunter's pocket.

amazement at seeing so much cash extracted from a pocket, which, so far as he knew, contained only a handkerchief much in need of a wash. But if a pile of half-crowns had somehow been introduced into that pocket they were his—Bunter had no doubt on that point.

"Oh, you've got lots, without these!" said Kipps.

"I haven't!" roared Bunter. "I say—"

"Look here, then—"

Kipps fished again, and another half-crown appeared in view. So skilfully was the trick performed that the keenest eye could not detect the fact that Kipps was "palming" the same half-crown all the time.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bunter.

"And look—" It was another glimmering coin. Bunter's dingy pocket really seemed a mine of wealth.

"And look—" Another half-crown!

"Why, that's a pound!" exclaimed Skinner. "Where did Bunter get a

quid from? Anybody missed a quid?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why, you beast!" roared Bunter. "It's mine! I—I forgot I—I'd got all that money in my pocket—"

"And here's another!" exclaimed Kipps. "Why, he's loaded with half-crowns! Whose are they, Bunter?"

"Mine!" roared Bunter. "You gimme my half-crowns! You got them out of my pocket, didn't you? They're mine! The—the fact is, I—I happened to forget that I'd got 'em there—a quid isn't so much to me as it is to you fellows—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here," roared Bolsover major. There was quite a crowd on the landing now. "With all that oof, Bunter, you can settle up the half-crown you owe me."

"Mais oui!" exclaimed Dupont, the French junior, "and ze sheeling zat I lend you only zis morning, Buntair."

"Mine's eighteenpence!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Mine's ten bob!" grinned Monty Newland.

"I—I say, you fellows—" gasped Bunter.

"I guess you owe me a bob, from last term, you fat clam!" exclaimed Fisher T. Fish. "I kinder reckon you're going to square now, just a few."

"Pay up, Bunter!" chortled Johnny Bull.

"The payfulness is the proper caper, when you are rolling in esteemed and filthy lucre!" grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"I—I say, you fellows, I—I'll settle up after tea—"

"There won't be a lot left after tea!" said Squiff.

"Oh, he's got lots!" said Kipps. "Look here!" He flashed out another

half-crown from Bunter's pocket, then another, and another! There was a buzz of astonishment from the fellows who did not happen to remember at the moment that Kipps was a conjurer.

"And he was goin' to stick me for one!" said Lord Mauleverer. "Look here, Bunter, I'm not goin' to lend you a half-crown, see?"

"Who wants you to?" retorted Bunter. Where that mysterious accession of wealth had come from, Bunter did not know—unless some wealthy fellow had been "larking" in an extraordinary way by sticking it in his pocket without his knowledge. If that was it, it was the kind of "lark" that Bunter could really appreciate and enjoy! But wherever it came from, it was Bunter's—and that was that! Bunter in possession of thirty shillings in a lump was very different from Bunter in a sad, stony state! He gave Mauly a lofty blink and repeated his question with crushing contempt. "Who wants you to? Keep your measly half-crown, Mauly, and be blowed to you!"

"Oh gad!" said his lordship.

"But look here, where did you get all that money, Bunter?" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"I told you I was expecting a postal order, Wharton—"

"Don't say your postal order's come!" gasped Peter Todd.

"As a matter of fact, it—has!" said Bunter. "I—I forgot—a few half-crowns isn't much to me—not like you fellows! Gimme my half-crowns, Kipps! They're mine."

"That's the lot, I think!" said Kipps. He held up his left hand, closed. According to all appearance, Kipps had passed half-crowns into that hand, fished, one after another, out of Billy Bunter's pocket, and that closed fist

ought to have contained cash to the value of thirty shillings! Bunter made a clutch at it. But Kipps held the closed fist out of his reach.

"Hold on!" said Kipps, shaking his head, "before I hand over all that money, Bunter, I want to know whose it is?"

"Mine!" roared Bunter.

"Tell us where you got it!" said Tom Redwing, laughing.

"No bizney of yours where I got it!" snapped Bunter. "Still, I don't mind telling you fellows that I've had a postal order from one of my titled relations."

"Ha, ha, ha!" It was dawning on all the fellows where all that money had come from, and they roared.

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" said Bunter scornfully. "I told you fellows that I was expecting a postal order! Didn't I?"

"You did!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "The didfulness was terrific."

"Well, it's come, and I've cashed it," said Bunter. The Owl of the Remove had never been restricted by the trammels of the truth. "I happened to forget about it—it's not much to me, you know! Gimme my half-crowns, Kipps, you beast! They're mine!"

Bunter made another grab at the closed hand. But the schoolboy conjurer kept it high in the air out of his reach.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, make him gimme my money!" roared Bunter. "I say, I'll go to Quelch—I mean Smedley! I'll go to the Head! I—I'll—gimme my money, you beast! Hand it over! Wharton, you make him hand it over."

Kipps chortled.

"Well, I'll leave it to Wharton, as captain of the Form," he said. "Wharton, is Bunter to have what I've got in my hand?"

"Certainly!" answered Wharton, laughing.

"Right-ho, then!"

Kipps lowered his closed hand, and the Owl of the Remove clutched it. The closed hand opened—and Bunter blinked into the empty palm! He blinked in amazement! With his own eyes—and spectacles—he had seen Kipps pass half-crowns, one after another, into that hand! It had remained in Bunter's view all the time, and had not been anywhere near Kipps' pocket! Yet when it was opened it contained nothing!

"Wha-a-a-t—" gasped Bunter blankly.

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

"W-where's those half-crowns?" stutered Bunter.

"O where and O where can they be?" sang Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I say—where—what—where—"

"You silly ass!" roared Bob Cherry. "There aren't any half-crowns, you fat-head, except the one Kipps started with, and that was his own!"

"Wha-a-t—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And he got 'em by cashing his postal order, you know!" gurgled Skinner. "That's how he got 'em—and there aren't any!"

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

"Oh, you beast!" howled Bunter. It dawned on his fat brain at last. "You—you—you tricky rotter, you've been playing a conjuring trick on me—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh gad!" gasped Lord Mauleverer, almost weeping with merriment. "He—he—he got 'em by cashin' a postal order. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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Kipps slipped his arm through Mauly's and led him away up the passage. Billy Bunter blinked after them. So far from rolling in unexpected wealth, he was in the old familiar stony state, after all!

"I say, Mauly!" he squeaked. "I—I say, Mauly, old chap, where's that half-crown you were going to lend me, old fellow?"

"Eh? Didn't you tell me to keep my measly half-crown?" ejaculated Lord Mauleverer. "I'm keepin' it, old fat bean!"

Lord Mauleverer disappeared into Study No. 5 with Oliver Kipps. A crowd of laughing fellows dispersed into the other studies to tea. Billy Bunter was left on the landing—a sadder if not a wiser Bunter!

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Up Against It!

TOM REDWING was smiling as he came into Study No. 4. But the smile disappeared from his face as if wiped off by a duster as he looked at his study-mate, the Bounder.

Vernon-Smith was stretched in the armchair, his hands behind his head, staring before him with a black and gloomy brow. The sounds of merry laughter in the Remove passage had not brought him out. The Bounder of Greyfriars was in no mood for merriment. Redwing's face clouded as Smithy gave him a black, almost evil look.

"Sounds jolly out there!" sneered the Bounder. "Enjoyin' life, what—as that fool Cherry says."

"Have you done your lines, Smithy?" asked Redwing quietly.

"No!"

"You have to take them to Smedley after tea."

"Hang Smedley!"

Redwing suppressed a sigh. He proceeded to get tea in the study, the Bounder watching him with a scowling face. There was a long silence, but Tom broke it at last.

"Look here, Smithy! It's no good playing the goat! You were on the wrong side of Quelch when he was here, and you made up your mind to make a fresh start with the new boak. Why not stick to it?"

"Not much good, if I did!" sneered the Bounder. "The man's got a down on me—goodness knows why. I've done nothin' to him."

"I'm afraid he's got a prejudice," admitted Redwing. "I suppose it's because he's heard all about you, Smithy. It's a bit unusual for a fellow to be sacked, and then allowed to stay on. I'm afraid that Quelch didn't want you in the Form, and you can't really be surprised at it. Smedley seems to feel the same. But if you play up, he will see that you mean business."

"Oh, hang Smedley," snarled the Bounder. "He doesn't matter, anyhow. He's shown that he would be jolly glad if he could catch me out, and get me turfed out of the school. But I shall be turfed out, anyhow, if that man at the Three Fishers comes here after his money. And he will come, if I don't pay him." He gritted his teeth. "To think that, only a few weeks ago, I had only to ask the pater for anythin' I wanted—and now—"

"It's hard," said Redwing. "But—it's hard, and it's awkward, Smithy, but your father's right. You had too much money. You'd never have gone to the Three Fishers, with those High-cliffe cads, if you'd been short of cash.

Look here, if you wrote to your father, and explained to him that this debt was an old one—nothing new since what's happened—"

"He wouldn't believe a word of it! He doesn't trust me!" sneered the Bounder. "You're advising me to dish myself, Reddy. I tell you, the pater meant every word of it, when he disinherited me and cast me off, when I was sacked—he's giving me another chance, and I owe that to the Head, not to him! He's got it all cut and dried—to adopt his nephew, Lucius

RHYMES OF THE REMOVE.

No. 10.



This week our clever Greyfriars rhymester produces a rousing poem about HORACE COKER, the fool of the Fifth:

Oh, Coker! You have let us know

You'll mop up all the Form,
Because Removites put a heap
Of rubbish, while you were asleep,
Upon your bed in dorm!

Oh, Coker! Come! We want you so!
We're waiting—in a swarm!

Oh, Coker! Vernon-Smith has got
Some marking-ink for you,
While Nugent's got the table legs,
And Bulstrode has some rotten eggs
And I've a pot of glue!

Oh, Coker, you can have the lot!
So come, great Coker—do!

Oh, Coker! Skinner has some rats,
And Toddy has some gum!
Bob Cherry has a knotted rope
And Squiff has found some liquid
soap

Inside a gallon drum!
Oh, Coker, if you knew it, that's
For you! So, Coker, come!

Oh, Coker, come, and don't be slow,
For Wharton has a wheeze!

He's put a barricade of chairs
Across the bottom of the stairs
To catch you at the knees!

Oh, Coker! You like trouble, so
Try this lot, Coker, please!

Oh, Coker! Johnny Bull has found
Some paint to give away!

Dick Russell's air-gun really shoots,
And Bolsy's wearing footer-boots,
So won't you come and play?

Oh, Coker! Shush! Was that a sound?
He's coming, lads! Hurrah!

Oh, Coker! Mind you do not miss
The chairs! Bravo! He's down!
Where's Smithy's ink? We'll make
him swim!

Now give a man a chance at him!
Here, mind that stump, you clown!
Just let me land him one with this!
That's right! Now paint him brown!

Oh, Coker! Do you like the paint?
Well, that lot's for your eyes!

Now roll him in the liquid soap!
Stand back, and give old Bolsy scopol!
Well kicked, sir! That's a try!

Oh, Coker! You don't half look quaint!
So go back home! Good-bye!

Teggars, in my place, if I come a mucker here, I'm keeping this from him."

Redwing was silent again. He was not sure that Smithy was right, but he knew that his chum had to be extremely careful in dealing with a parent who had developed such unsparing sternness.

"I've got to get the money!" muttered the Bounder. "I—I suppose I could go down to old Lazarus, in Courtfield, and sell some things—but then—"

"It's got to be raised somehow," said Tom. "You've got friends to help you, Smithy! If I had money—"

"What's the good of that, when you haven't?"

"I have two pounds, and that's yours," said Tom quietly. "And perhaps Wharton—"

"I've asked him," said the Bounder bitterly. "He can't help! I dare say he would if he could, but he can't! Like me to go cadging from Mauly, like that fat sponger, Bunter?"

"Well, I suppose you're not friendly enough with Mauleverer to borrow from him. But—it's no good making matters worse by getting Smedley's back up. Get your lines done after tea, and take them down to Smedley—it's only fifty, and there's time—"

"Oh, rats! If I can't get out of this scrape, I'm done for here, I tell you! The Head's half-sorry he let me stay, I know that—it was only because he knew I was ruined at home if I went, that he called it off. If he hears a word of this—"

"You can tell him it's an old debt, before—"

"Think he'd believe me?" sneered Vernon-Smith. And Tom was silent again. The Bounder was too utterly unscrupulous in dealing with the beaks, to be believed easily. It was only too probable that his next row would be his last at Greyfriars. He was a dog with a bad name.

The Bounder sat down moodily and gloomily to tea. But after tea Tom noticed with satisfaction that he started on his lines. In his present perilous position Smithy was learning to be careful, and he realised that, bad as matters were, it was no use making them worse.

He wrote his fifty lines of Virgil with unusual care, too. The new master of the Remove undoubtedly seemed to have a down on him, and Smithy was not going to give him an opening if he could help it.

Having finished the imposition, he took it up, and left the study—leaving Redwing with a deeply thoughtful brow. Somehow Smithy had to be got out of his present miserable scrape, the result of earlier thoughtless recklessness. It was as pressing a problem to his chum as to himself.

The Bounder tramped down the passage to the Remove staircase. His brow was clouded, his lips set unpleasantly. The Bounder's luck had always been a proverb in the Remove, but it seemed to him that luck had utterly turned him down now. He was honestly trying his hardest to turn over a new leaf—though doubtless his chief reason was that his father grimly intended to disinherit him, in favour of his cousin, Lucius, if he was expelled from Greyfriars as he had so nearly been. Still, whatever his motives, he was trying hard—and it seemed cruel fortune that this old trouble should have risen up against him.

It was hard, and exasperating, to be short of money—which he had once flung recklessly away. And in the matter of the new master, too, fortune was

against him. He had fully intended to make a new start with the new man, and get on better with him, than he had been able to do with Quelch. Instead of which, the man was down on him from the beginning, watching him like a cat, as the Bounder bitterly expressed it. Quelch would not have been sorry to see him go, but Quelch's substitute, a stranger to him, was keener about it than Quelch had ever been.

There were bitter thoughts in the Bounder's mind and a bitter look on his face as he made his way to Masters' Studies, impot in hand. On the lower stairs he came on Billy Bunter, who blinked at the impot in his hand.

"I say, Smithy, hold on a minute!" squeaked Bunter.

"Let go, you fat ass!" snapped the Bounder, as the Owl of the Remove grabbed his arm.

"I say, are you taking those lines to Smedley?"

"Yes, ass, let go!"

"I say, be a pal, old chap!" breathed Bunter. "I say, Smedley's got a paper of mine he's going to show to the Head this evening—if you get a chance of bagging it—he may turn his back, you know—"

"You blithering idiot!"

"I say, it will mean a flogging if the Head sees it," groaned Bunter. "It's a picture of him, you know, calling him a beast, and—"

"Let go, blitherer!"

"If Smedley gives you a chance, bag it, old fellow!" pleaded Bunter. "It's in the drawer of his writing-table—I saw him put it there, and I say—whooop! Beast! Wow!"

Bunter sat down suddenly as the Bounder, tired of his importunities, gave him a sudden shove. In his present mood, Smithy was not likely to bother much about another fellow's troubles. And certainly he was not likely to try to bag a paper from Mr. Smedley's study, under the hard, sharp eyes of the beak! Billy Bunter sat down and roared, and Vernon-Smith went on to Masters' Studies.

He tapped at Mr. Smedley's door and entered.

"My lines, sir!" he said, as respectfully as he could; he was not in a very respectful mood.

The new master, was seated at his writing-table. He glanced up at the junior and gave him a curt nod.

"Wait!" he said.

Vernon-Smith waited, his eyes sullenly on the new master.

Mr. Smedley was apparently busy at the moment. He had opened a letter, and taken from it a crisp slip of engraved paper. Only a few feet distant from him, Smithy could see that it was a Bank of England note for ten pounds.

The master laid the banknote on the table. The Bounder, without giving much attention or taking any interest in the matter, supposed that he had received that banknote by post. Idly, the thought crossed his mind that it was exactly the sum he needed to get him out of his scrape at the Three Fishers. Mr. Smedley appeared to be reading his letter with attention, and Vernon-Smith waited for him to finish. He put the letter into his pocket at last.

His hard, cold, hawkish eyes turned on the Remove, and he rose rather quickly from the table.

Taking the banknote up, he dropped it into the table drawer, and pushed the drawer shut. Then he glanced at his wrist-watch.

"I am called away—I cannot look

at your lines now, Vernon-Smith," he said, "I have barely time to catch my train. You may place the lines on my table—"

He left the study—hurriedly, without stopping to finish. Herbert Vernon-Smith was left standing there, his impot still in his hand, staring.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Moment of Madness!

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH, standing by his Form-master's table, heard the hurried footsteps die away down the passage.

Mr. Smedley was gone!

He laid his imposition on the table. Then he turned to leave the study.

But he stopped!

He stood quite still, with a catch in his breath, the colour fading out of his cheeks.

A strange, a terrible thought had come into the Bounder's mind. It was a thought that drove the colour from his face, and made his heart beat with a strange, suffocated flutter. He stood motionless, startled, almost terrified by the dark and hideous thought that had crept, like a poisonous snake, into his troubled mind.

He was alone in the study. His eyes turned on the window. Smedley had said that he had to catch a train. Apparently the letter that had come with the banknote had called him away suddenly and urgently. If he was going, he could be seen from the window as he went down to the gates. It was not yet dark.

Hardly more than a minute later the junior spotted the rather tall figure of the new master in the quadrangle. In hat and coat, he was going down to the gates with long strides. The Bounder's eyes followed him. He noticed the plump figure of Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth, coming up the path. He noted that Prout averted his gaze as Mr. Smedley passed him—these two beaks were not on speaking terms. When they met, they affected not to see one another. Prout came on towards the House—Smedley went to the gates, and disappeared from sight.

Vernon-Smith drew a panting breath.

Smedley had left the study door open. Vernon-Smith stepped to it, and closed it quickly and quietly. Prout was coming in. He would pass that doorway on his way to his own study up the passage. Smithy did not want Prout to see him there.

Why? He hardly dared acknowledge to himself why.

He stepped back towards the table. He stopped a few feet from it; but his eyes were on the table drawer.

In that drawer the Form-master had carelessly dropped a ten-pound note, under the Bounder's eyes. It was not locked.

Smithy's face was white.

A ten-pound note—his to take, if he stretched out his hand! Exactly the sum he needed to see him clear! He had no hope—next to none—of raising that sum! He dared not ask his father. Only too certainly the millionaire would have taken such a demand as evidence that he was in trouble once more—at his old scapegrace game again! He dared not risk that. His chum could not help him. He had humiliated himself to ask Wharton, who was not his friend—and he had humiliated himself for nothing! And that blackguard at the Three Fishers was threatening him—if he was not paid he would come up

to the school, and that was the finish! And here, under his hand—

Such a hideous thought would never have entered Smithy's mind, but for the fact that he was not, now, his usual cool-headed self—worried and troubled, tormented by doubts and fears, with overwhelming disaster in prospect!

"You're mad!" he muttered huskily. "You fool—you're mad! Get out of it!"

He stepped to the door again. But he stopped!

Vernon-Smith did not open the door. Slowly, as if moved by some power outside himself, against his own will, he moved back to the table.

The fool—the idiot—had thrown a ten-pound note carelessly into an unlocked drawer! Serve him right to lose it! As, it seemed, he had just had it by post, no doubt he did not even know the number! Serve such a careless fool right! And he was the Bounder's enemy—picking on him for nothing—always on his track! A rotter—a spy—"Creeper and Crawler," as the fellows called him! Serve him right if— The Bounder realised that he was trying to make wretched excuses for a base and dastardly act! He was no fool. If he became a thief, he knew what he was doing!

The sweat stood out on his forehead. Afterwards, with a cooler head, the Bounder asked himself whether he could possibly have sunk so low, and decided that he never could have. But perhaps it was fortunate for him that the study door opened at that moment.

It opened softly but suddenly, and it startled the Bounder so terribly, with such dark and guilty thoughts in his mind, that he spun round with a loud, sharp cry.

It was a fat face that glimmered into the study, and two little round eyes glimmered through a pair of big, round spectacles.

Vernon-Smith, his face white and drawn, stared blankly at Billy Bunter. Bunter stared at him. He had not supposed that Vernon-Smith was still in the study when he arrived there, and he was surprised.

"You—you—" breathed the Bounder. He was feeling almost sick; his face was almost ghastly. Bunter blinked at him in astonishment.

"I say, Smithy, what are you up to here?" he asked. "Have you got it?"

"What?" breathed the Bounder. In his startled confusion of mind he supposed that Bunter was alluding to the banknote, not realising that Bunter could not possibly know anything about it. In mingled guilt and terror he gazed almost speechlessly at Bunter.

"He put it in the drawer—that table drawer," whispered Bunter. "I say, did you bag it?"

"You—you fool! Do—do you think I—"

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"Get out, you fat idiot!"

"You mind your own business, Smithy! You might have bagged it for a fellow when Smedley's gone—I saw him go out. That's why I came here. I'm jolly well going to have it."

Bunter rolled into the study, towards the table. Vernon-Smith caught him by a fat shoulder.

"You fool! Are you mad? Leave it alone!"

"Leggo, you beast! Think I'm going to leave it there for that rotter to show to the Head?"

"The—the Head!" stuttered Vernon-Smith. He pulled himself together. He realised that it could not be the banknote that Bunter was speaking of.

"Yes, the brute is going to take it to



Kipps dipped his hand again and again into Bunter's pocket, withdrawing a half-crown each time. The fat junior's little round eyes almost popped through his big, round spectacles, in his amazement at seeing so much cash extracted from a pocket, which, so far as he knew, contained only a handkerchief much in need of a wash. "Oh, crumbs!" he gasped.

old Locke after prep—and I'm jolly well going to see that he doesn't! I—Oh lor'!" Bunter spun round in alarm towards the open doorway as a heavy tread came along the passage.

A portly figure loomed into view. Mr. Prout, glancing in at the open doorway, frowned at the sight of the two Removees. As he had passed Mr. Smedley only a few minutes ago on his way out, he was aware that Remove juniors had no business in that study.

"What are you boys doing here, in the absence of your Form-master?" he demanded.

"Oh! Nothing, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I—I—I—"

"It was you, Bunter, who placed gum in your Form-master's armchair in his absence one day last week!" boomed Prout. "I sat in that gum, Bunter!"

"Oh, no, sir! I—I—I—"

"If you are here to play some trick, Bunter—"

"Oh, no, sir! I—I came with—with Smithy, sir. We—we're pals, you know, sir, and—and—and—"

"And why are you here, Vernon-Smith?"

"I brought my lines," answered the Bounder sullenly. He pointed to the imposition on the table.

"Oh!" grunted Mr. Prout. "Very well!"

Vernon-Smith and Bunter left the study—there was nothing else to do under Mr. Prout's eye. They departed, Prout's eye following them rather suspiciously. Then the master of the Fifth glanced round the study, possibly suspecting that some jape had been played, like Billy Bunter's famous exploit with the gum, in which Prout had so unfortunately sat by mistake. But there seemed to be nothing amiss in the room, and Prout closed the door, and rolled on to his own study.

One of the two juniors, at least, had a lighter heart when he found himself safe away from Masters' Studies. That one was Herbert Vernon-Smith. It seemed to the Bounder that he had had a moment of madness—he could hardly believe that it had, in actual fact, come into his mind to steal the banknote in the table drawer.

Bunter's interruption, and then Mr. Prout's, had, perhaps, saved him from sinking so low as to have become an object of horror to himself. But he believed, or tried his hardest to believe, that he never, never could have done it. Never, never, he told himself passionately, as he went back to his study in the Remove, and probably he was right, probably at the last moment he would have shrunk in horror from the act. Anyhow, he was safe from temptation now.

Billy Bunter's feelings were quite different. Bunter's precious picture was still there—waiting to meet the Head's eyes, when Smedley came back. But for that barging brute, old Prout, Bunter would have bagged it, and, whatever happened when Smedley missed it, he couldn't have shown it to the Head once Bunter had stuffed it into a study fire.

While the Bounder was feeling thankful that he was safe out of the Form-master's study, Billy Bunter, disappointed and exasperated, was watching for another chance.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Done in the Dark!

"I SAY, you fellows!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Oh, cackle!" said Bunter bitterly.
 "Thanks, old bean, we will!" said Bob Cherry.

It was getting towards the time for prep, and some of the fellows were in the Rag, mostly discussing the Easter "hols," when a fat and worried Owl rolled in. Billy Bunter's woebegone face did not seem to excite a great deal of sympathy.

If a fellow was such an ass as to draw a ridiculous picture of the headmaster, and such a silly ass as to let it fall into the hands of a beak, the Remove fellows agreed that it was rather comic than tragic. There was no doubt that Bunter deserved a licking for caricaturing the Head—and no doubt that he was going to get one when Smedley passed that precious work of art on for Dr. Locke's inspection. And Bunter's Form-fellows charitably hoped that it would do him good.

But Bunter was not anxious for good to be done him in that particular way. In fact, he objected strongly.

"I say, you fellows, you might back up a chap!" he pleaded. "Smedley's still out. I've been keeping an eye open for him. One of you cut along to the brute's study and bag that picture."

"Don't all speak at once, you men!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You're a plucky chap, Bob!"

"Hear, hear!" agreed Bob.

"You'll do it!"

"No fear!"

"Rotten funk!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If Smedley's out and you know where the silly rot is, why can't you go after it yourself?" demanded Tom Redwing.

"I've been after it," groaned Bunter. "but that old brute Prout barged in, and I had to cut! And when I went along a second time Lascolles and Mossos were in the passage—standing near Smedley's door and jawing! The

way beaks jaw is something frightful! Like a lot of dashed old women!"

"Well, even beaks don't jaw for ever!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Try again, old fat man!"

"Well, I'd rather one of you fellows did it!" explained Bunter. "I'm not funky, of course—"

"Of course not!" said Bob gravely. "Bursting with pluck! You want one of us to do it, because it's so nice to get whopped for bagging things from a beak's study!"

"Well, you see, he's bound to think I did it when he misses it," said Bunter. "He's sure to ask me. I can't very well tell a lie—"

"Eh!"
"What?"
"Oh, my only hat!"

"I say, you fellows, I dare say you wouldn't mind telling lies to a beak, but I'm rather particular about such things, you know. I'd much rather be able to say that I knew nothing about it! So if you'll do it, Wharton—"

"I don't think!"
"You can go into the study, as head boy you know. If any beak sees you and asks what you're after, you can say that you've got something to do for Smedley—as you're head boy of the Form, you know."

"So it doesn't matter if I tell lies?" asked the captain of the Remove. "Sorry, old man; it's not in my line!"

"I say, Toddy, it's up to you!" urged Bunter. "You're bound to back up a man in your own study. I shall get a fearful licking if the Head sees that picture, old chap!"

"Good!" said Toddy. "Fine!"
"Why, you beast!" roared Bunter. "I say, Dutton, old chap! Will you do it?" Billy Bunter turned his big spectacles on his other studymate, Tom Dutton, the deaf junior. "I say, will you go to Smedley's study—"

"Has he come in?" asked Dutton. "No, not yet."
"Then, how do you know he's muddy?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the juniors. Dutton's deafness was an affliction—not only to himself! It was rather an affliction to Billy Bunter now.

"Oh lor'!" gasped Bunter. "Not muddy—study—Smedley's study—"

"Well, you silly ass!" said Dutton. "Have you been playing tricks there again, like you did with the gum?"

"No!" roared Bunter. "Then what makes Smedley's study muddy?" demanded Tom Dutton. "If you've been making it muddy, you can look out for a whipping when he comes in."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter. "I say, what about you, Inky? You've got lots of pluck—"

"The pluckfulness of my esteemed self is terrific, my fat, idiotic Bunter," agreed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "But—"

"You cut off to Smedley's study, Inky, old chap! Safe as houses for you!" said Bunter eagerly. "You see, if anybody looked into the study they wouldn't see you in the dark, you being a black nigger, you know—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Removites, quite entertained by the expression on Hurree Jamset Ram Singh's dusky face. "You preposterous ass!" gasped the Nabob of Bhanipur. "The niggerfulness of my esteemed self is not terrific!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Oh, really, Inky! I say— Yooop!" roared Bunter. "Wharrer you pulling my nose for, you beast? Whooop! Leggo! Groooooogh!"

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, who was a dusky prince in his own far-off country, did not seem to like being described as a black nigger! He pulled Bunter's little fat nose, and pulled it again, and yet again.

That nose was as red as a freshly boiled beetroot when the fat Owl of the Remove succeeded in jerking it away.

"Ooogh!" gurgled Bunter. "Ow! Wow! Urrgh! By dose! Wow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Urrgh! Beast!" gasped Bunter. "I'd jolly well lick you, you black beast, only—yaroooh! Leave off kicking me, you mad nigger!"

Billy Bunter fairly fled from the Rag, followed by a howl of laughter. With Hurree Singh's foot lunging behind, he bolted out of the doorway. There was a crash in the passage as he met Coker of the Fifth.

A LAUGH FROM BRISTOL!

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"Ow!" gasped Bunter. "What—woooogh!"

"What—who—how—which!" gasped Coker. He staggered under the fat Owl's charge. "What the dickens—My hat! I'll jolly well—"

Bunter rushed on. Coker had only time to land one drive from his boot as he went. But Horace Coker's foot was large and his boot heavy; and a fearful howl floated back from Bunter as he disappeared.

"Oh lor'!" gasped Bunter, when he was safe at last, and he stopped, to pump in breath. "Oh crikey! Ow! Beasts! Letting a fellow down, after all I've done for them! Talk about an ungrateful tooth being sharper than a serpent's child! Oh dear!"

It was clear to Billy Bunter that he was not going to get any assistance in recovering that dangerous paper. With the selfishness he really expected of

them the Remove fellows did not want to be whopped for bagging that paper from their Form-master's study!

Having recovered his breath, the Owl of the Remove rolled dismally to Masters' Passage, to make one more attempt on his own.

There was no time to be lost, for it was close on prep, and Smedley was not likely to stay out much longer. Once he was back in the study the matter was hopeless. After prep Bunter was to be called before the Head, and he fairly cringed at the thought of standing in Dr. Locko's presence and seeing that remarkable pictorial effort in the Beak's hand!

He blinked into the passage through his big spectacles, and was relieved to see that Mr. Lascelles and Monsieur Charpentier had finished their "jaw" and gone. Nobody was to be seen in the passage.

Taking his courage in both hands, as it were, Bunter scudded along to Mr. Smedley's study and darted in.

His fat heart thumped.
It was dark, very dark in the study, but he dared not turn on a light. The fire was out, and there was only a pale glimmer from the window.

Still, he did not need a light. He knew where to look for that sheet of impot-paper, on which he had depicted his headmaster with such artistic skill! He had seen Smedley drop it into the table drawer, and Smedley had not locked the drawer.

With his fat heart bumping against his ribs, Bunter reached the table and pulled open the drawer.

His fat hand groped within. There were a good many papers in that drawer. There was a crackling sound of crumpling paper as Bunter clutched some up.

He had no time to sort them out—no light to see them by. But he had no doubt that his own paper was on top. If he took away two or three sheets of exercises along with it, it did not matter. They could go into the fire in Study No. 7 along with the picture.

In a state of quivering funk at the thought of being caught in the study, Bunter grabbed a pawful of crumpling papers, and darted away from the table. There were footsteps in the passage!

"Oh lor'!" groaned Bunter.

If it was that beast Smedley— He shoved the papers out of sight under his waistcoat. They were safe there; Bunter's waistcoat fitted like the skin of a drum. He blinked in terror at the doorway, glimmering in the light farther along the passage.

But it was only Mr. Capper, the master of the Fourth, who passed. Billy Bunter stood trembling till he had passed the doorway.

He heard Capper's door close farther up. Then he darted out of the study, anxious to get clear before some other obnoxious beak came along.

Footsteps again! The gasping Owl backed into the window recess in the passage. This time it was Mr. Hacker, the master of the Shell who passed.

Luckily, he did not glance into the window recess. Bunter heard his door close, and emerged from cover, and resumed his retreat.

Five minutes later he was safe in the Remove passage, with his prize still safely parked under his tight waistcoat, sitting in Toddy's armchair, in Study No. 7, and gasping stertorously for breath after his wild adventures.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Simply Awful!

THERE was a tramp of feet in the Remove passage. It was time for prep, and the juniors were coming up to the studies.

Billy Bunter, still gasping in the armchair in Study No. 7, blinked at the fellows passing the doorway. The Bouncer went by with a black brow; Vernon-Smith was seldom seen without a scowl on his face of late. Other fellows followed, and then Toddy and Dutton came into Study No. 7, and Toddy threw the door shut. He grinned at the fat, panting figure in the armchair.

"Don't try it on again, fatty!" said Peter. "Smedley's come in."

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bunter.

Evidently he had only made his desperate venture just in time. It was hardly more than ten minutes since he had been groping in the table-drawer in his Form-master's study.

Toddy and Dutton sat down to prep. Bunter remained where he was. He had other matters than prep to think of at present. When he moved there was a crumpling, crackling sound from the papers stuffed under his waistcoat. He had to get rid of these dangerous documents.

"I say, Toddy, you might stir up the fire!" said Bunter.

"It's warm enough!" answered Peter. "And if you want the fire stirred, why can't you stir it?"

"I'm sitting down!" said Bunter, with dignity.

"So am I!"

"Beast!" grunted Bunter. "I say, Dutton, stir up the fire!"

"Who's a liar?" asked Dutton, staring at him across the table. "Talking about yourself, as usual?"

"The fire's nearly out!" howled Bunter.

"If you're calling me a lout—"

"Oh crikey!"

Bunter rose from the armchair and stirred the fire himself. Really, it was easier than asking Dutton to do it.

Peter Todd gave him a suspicious look. "Have you bagged that paper from Smedley's study?" he asked.

"Oh! No! I haven't been near Smedley's study!" answered Bunter promptly. "I—I changed my mind, you know—"

"Well, if you've changed your mind, good—it was a silly one, and not much use to any fellow!" remarked Toddy.

"You silly ass!" hooted Bunter. "I don't want any of your idiotic jokes! Look here, you get on with prep, and don't watch a chap."

Peter Todd grinned. He had no doubt that Bunter had raided that dangerous paper from Smedley's study, and wanted the fire stirred to burn it in.

"You're a howling ass, old chap!" he said. "Smedley will know at once that you bagged the paper. Nobody else would want to."

"Well, he can't prove it," said Bunter, "and he jolly well can't show it to the Head, anyhow, if I burn it. I shall deny having been anywhere near his study, of course—you see, I haven't been there at all. Toddy! Don't you get making out that I've been to Smedley's study! And don't keep watching a chap—if I burn a few old papers it's got nothing to do with you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Peter Todd gave his attention to prep. Billy Bunter turned a podgy back to him, and proceeded to extract

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crumpled papers from under his waistcoat.

Keeping them screened from the view of his study-mates, the fat Owl blinked at them through his big spectacles, to pick out the picture of the Head, and make sure that he had it.

His eyes widened behind his spectacles.

The picture was not there!

Instead of making sure that he had it, Bunter only succeeded in making sure that he hadn't!

It was quite a blow!

"Oh crikey!" gasped the hapless Owl.

In that hurried groping in the table drawer in Mr. Smedley's study, he had clutched up several papers, careless what they were, so long as the absurd sketch of the headmaster was among them.

And it wasn't!

Evidently Mr. Smedley had dropped other papers into that drawer, since placing Bunter's picture there.

Bunter had captured a sheet of Latin exercises, no doubt intended for the Remove; a list of historical dates, compiled for the same purpose; and—most startling and surprising of all—a £10 Bank of England note!

He blinked at the Latin paper and the history paper; but he fairly gaped at the ten-pound note!

Bunter could hardly believe his eyes—or his spectacles.

Smedley, as all the Removites had learned by this time, was not a careful and conscientious Form-master like Quelch! But it was amazing that even a careless man should have thrown a ten-pound note into a drawer along with a lot of unimportant papers. Even Lord Mauleverer, who was careless with money, was not so careless as that!

"Oh crikey!" repeated Bunter.

He gaped at that crisp, rustling slip of paper! There was no mistake about it! Bunter had seen banknotes before, and knew one when he saw it again. Indeed, on one celebrated occasion when his father, Mr. William Samuel Bunter, had had great good fortune among the bulls and bears on the Stock Exchange, Bunter had had a ten-pound note of his very own!

This was a "tenner"—that rustling slip of paper was worth ten whole, solid quids!

"Oh crikey!" breathed Bunter, for the third time.

The Latin paper and the history paper mattered nothing. Smedley, when he missed them, would probably suppose that he had mislaid them—he would not suspect anybody of bagging such valueless things. But the banknote was a very different matter. Smedley, when he missed that, would suppose that it had been stolen!

Bunter's fat brain almost swam.

In his terror, he forgot even the wretched picture that had led him into this dire scrape! A licking from the Head for caricaturing that

venerable gentleman was nothing compared with this!

In his mind's eye, the wretched Owl could see himself "up" on a charge of theft—and sacked from the school! Sacked, as the Bouncer had been, but on a more disgraceful charge—sacked for pinching a banknote from his Form-master's study!

Of course, he hadn't pinched it! He had never dreamed that there could be a loose banknote lying with the papers in a table drawer! Who could have dreamed of such a thing!

"What's the matter, old fat man?" came Toddy's voice behind the fat Owl. Toddy could see only Bunter's podgy back; but he realised that something was amiss. "Got the goods wrong, or what?"

Bunter jumped! In his terror, he had forgotten that he was not alone. He crumpled that banknote in a trembling, fat hand. The Latin paper and the history paper dropped to the floor.

"Oh, you ass!" exclaimed Peter, staring at them. "Mean to say you've bagged Smedley's Form papers, instead of what you went after? Did you go in the dark or what?"

"I—I—I never went, old chap!" gasped Bunter.

"I see! Those two papers walked here, what?" asked Toddy humorously.

"Yes—no—I—I mean— Oh lor! I—I say, are you sure that Smedley's come in, Peter?" groaned Bunter. He turned an almost haggard face on Toddy. "Sure the beast is in, old fellow?"

"He went to his study, just before we came up for prep. You can't have been long ahead of him!" grinned Peter. "Get those papers out of sight, fathead! He may come up here to take you to the Head about that idiotic picture of yours!"

"Oh crumbs!"

Bunter hastily gathered up the two dropped papers. His fat fist remained closed on the crumpled banknote. In the terrified confusion of his mind one thought was coming clear—he had to get that banknote back to Smedley's study before it was missed, if it was not missed already! Even the obtuse Owl of the Remove realised that!

It occurred to him, too, that even if Smedley had gone to his study when he came in, he might not be there now.

(Continued on next page.)



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Most of the beaks were in the Common-room; and, as likely as not, Smedley might have joined the others there.

It was a hopeful thought to the hapless Owl! It was a chance of getting the banknote back where it belonged, and even of bagging, after all, that wretched picture of the Head.

"Where are you going, you fat chump?" exclaimed Peter Todd, as the Owl of the Remove rolled to the door.

"I—I'm going to take these papers back to Smedley's study—"

"You can't go down in prep!"

Bunter did not answer that. It was against the rules to go down in prep, but that was a trifling matter compared with getting rid of Smedley's banknote.

He shoved the two papers and the banknote back into their former hiding-place under his tight waistcoat. Then he stepped out into the Remove passage.

"Fathead!" said Toddy, and he shrugged his shoulders and resumed prep.

Bunter rolled along the passage towards the stairs! If only he had the luck to get to Smedley's study unseen, and did not find Smedley there—

But that was really rather too much luck to hope for! Loder of the Sixth was on duty that evening; and he was on the Remove landing, talking to Price of the Fifth; and he stared round at Bunter.

"Bunter! What are you doing out of your study in prep?"

"Oh lor!" gasped Bunter. "I—I say, Loder—"

Whack!

Loder slipped his official ashplant down from under his arm and landed it on Bunter's tight trousers. Loder was a rather heavy-handed prefect!

"Go back to your study!"

"Yaroooh!"

Bunter went back to his study—in a hurry!

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

By Whose Hand?

EUSTACE SMEDLEY, master of the Greyfriars Remove—known in other places by another name—entered his study, switched on the light, and closed the door.

He stepped to the window and drew the blinds.

Then he stood looking at his writing-table with a strange expression on his face.

He was curious—deeply, intensely curious—to know what might have happened in his study in his absence; and he could learn by a single glance into the table-drawer.

But he hesitated to take that glance! So much depended on it! He was sure—almost sure—of what he would discover! Yet he paused—with strange expressions fleeting on his hard, cold face.

Perhaps his conscience was stirring a little! The man with a borrowed name did not pretend to himself to be better than the average man. But he had never realised that he was a rascal—and he did not like to realise it.

He did not, in fact, want to be a rascal! He wanted to serve his ends and gain his purpose without being guilty of rascality—if he could!

So far, he had not stepped over the line! He had to admit that he had sailed very near to the wind, undoubtedly.

Lucius Teggers, junior partner in the scholastic agency of Leggett & Teggers, was at Greyfriars under the name of Smedley.

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The owner of that name was in Canada, in a post kindly found for him by Mr. Teggers, and little dreaming of the use that was being made of his name.

Nobody suspected—nobody could suspect!

Lucius Teggers had given himself leave of absence from the firm's office in Regent Street, London. Certainly, nobody was likely to guess that he was acting as Form-master at a school, under the name of the young tutor for whom he had secured a temporary post there!

All that had been easy enough! But his task at Greyfriars had not been so easy!

Everything he had heard of Herbert Vernon-Smith showed that the millionaire's son was a thorough young rascal; an unrepentant young blackguard, who ought to have been kicked out of any decent school!

Only because his father had cast him off had his headmaster given him another chance—and if he was "sacked" again, the millionaire was going to disinherit him, as he had threatened, and adopt another heir in his place—that heir being his nephew, Lucius Teggers!

A keen, watchful, stealthy, wary man, not particular in his methods, could have little difficulty in "landing" such a young rascal—when the man was in the position of the young rascal's Form-master!

All that he had to do was to bring the truth to light, and cause the headmaster to execute that deferred sentence!

A fortune running into millions was at stake; and Lucius Teggers was not a particular man! But it did not seem to him—so far—that he was playing a rascal's part. If the boy was decent and well-behaved, he had nothing to fear! If he was guilty of offences deserving expulsion from his school, why should he not be expelled?

That was Lucius Teggers' view; a view that satisfied his conscience, such as it was.

But since that affair of the "sack," and his narrow escape, the young rascal had been extraordinarily careful! Either he had turned over a new leaf, which Mr. Teggers did not believe, not having much faith in new leaves; or else he was uncommonly wary, which seemed to Lucius more probable. That he was the same dingy young rascal that he had always been, Lucius did not doubt; but it was not easy to catch him out.

Hard, cold, unscrupulous as he was, Lucius would have shrunk with something like horror from the thought of fastening a false charge on the boy. Such wickedness as that had not even occurred to him.

Neither did it seem necessary; when all that he had to do was to catch the Bounder in the act of reckless rascality, and hand him over to the punishment he richly deserved.

But he had not caught him yet!

Perhaps the young rascal had taken warning, and was unusually wary. Perhaps the fact that his father was now keeping him short of money, kept him from some of his former escapades, which, of course, had cost money, and a great deal of it. Anyhow, he was not caught yet; and all the stealthy prying of the Creeper and Crawler had discovered little! All that Lucius Teggers, alias Smedley, could be sure of, was that the Bounder was in want of money. His black looks, of late, hinted at trouble of some kind—and a word caught here, a sentence caught there by the stealthy man, made him fairly

sure of what the trouble was. And now he knew—for he had heard the words the Bounder had spoken at the door of Study No. 1 that afternoon—words that still rang in his ears!

"If I don't get ten pounds at once, or almost at once, I'm done for here!"

Such were Herbert Vernon-Smith's own words!

What could they mean, except that the man with a borrowed name was right? He was the same young blackguard as of old, only now that the money was short, he had plunged into debt, instead of paying his way among his shady associates outside the school?

The scapegrace of the school was in urgent, desperate need of ten pounds at once! That was certain! And that was why Mr. Smedley had had a ten-pound note in sight when the Bounder came to his study with his lines! That was why he had tossed it carelessly into an unlocked drawer and left the study hastily, on the pretence of being called suddenly away, leaving the young rascal there.

Mr. Smedley, to give him his false name, stepped to the table. Yet he still hesitated to open the drawer.

Was the banknote gone? And if the wretched boy had become a thief, whose fault was it? The man had a conscience—of sorts! To place temptation deliberately in the way of a boy whom he knew to be unprincipled—if that was not rascality, it was something terribly like it.

He shut his lips, hard! No—the fault was not his, he told himself. There was no temptation in stacks of money to anyone who was not a thief at heart! A man had a right to leave any amount of money anywhere—and anyone who touched it was an unclean thief, deserving of a thief's punishment. A fellow like Wharton, for instance, or Mauleverer or Bob Cherry—or Frank Nugent or Squiff—could they be tempted? The thought was absurd! In the deepest difficulties, they would never have dreamed of touching money not their own. Even a fellow like Bunter—even in his case, it was unimaginable. No! If a young blackguard, pressed by some rascally gambling debt, had done this—then he deserved all that was coming to him, and the man who had caused him to show up in his true colours was not blameworthy.

The fact that Mr. Smedley turned all this over in his mind, arguing it out, as it were, with his conscience, was proof enough that he was not quite satisfied with what he had done. So did he hesitate in opening the drawer.

Once, twice, he stretched out his hand to it, but did not pull it open. It was almost as if he feared what he would discover.

If the banknote was gone, Herbert Vernon-Smith was a thief, and would be dealt with as one! Expelled from school, disinherited and disowned by his father—well, a thief deserved as much!

He seemed to make up his mind at last, and with a sudden jerk pulled open the table drawer.

His hard, sharp eyes scanned the interior.

A good many papers were there—among them Billy Bunter's ridiculous picture of the headmaster. But the banknote was not there!

He had left it on top of all the other papers. And it was not to be seen—it was gone!

Mr. Smedley breathed hard and deep.

Slowly, quietly, he turned over the papers in the draw. He knew that the ten-pound note was gone. But he was



Vernon-Smith's eyes were fixed on the table-drawer, when the door of the study opened softly, but suddenly. It startled the Bounder so terribly, that he spun round with a loud, sharp cry, to stare at the fat face of Billy Bunter that glimmered into the study. "I say, Smithy, what are you up to here?" asked the fat junior.

going to make sure—absolutely sure! He could not afford the risk of a mistake!

It was not there! He closed the drawer at last! The banknote was gone, and his rival for a fortune was held in the hollow of his hand!

"The young scoundrel!"

Mr. Smedley muttered the words aloud!

Well, the young scoundrel was in his grip now! Mr. Smedley was not going to make the matter public at once. If Herbert Vernon-Smith had taken that banknote the first whisper of suspicion would cause him to destroy it, and thus destroy all evidence against him. That was not the plotter's game.

He intended to say nothing—nothing till he was sure that the young scoundrel had passed the note! Then, when he was sure of that, he would "discover" that it was missing! Then the black-guard of Greyfriars would have no retreat left—once the banknote was out of his hands!

When Mr. Smedley left his study to go along with a smiling face to Common-room, he locked the door after him. If fear, or repentance, or a mixture of both, drove the young rascal to make any attempt to restore what he had stolen, he was going to have no chance. The man with a false name did not think it likely; but he guarded against the risk.

With the key of his study door in his pocket, Mr. Smedley strolled along to the Masters' Room, where he chatted in great spirits with Mr. Capper and Mr. Twigg and Mr. Wiggins.

And after prep, when a fat and worried Remove junior came cautiously along Masters' Passage and turned the handle of Smedley's door, he found that there was no admittance!

"Oh crikey!" said Billy Bunter,

blinking at the locked door in utter dismay.

After prep the coast was clear—the beaks in Common-room. It seemed Bunter's chance.

In deep and dismal disappointment the fat Owl of the Remove turned from the locked door, and rolled dismally away.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Bunter and the Beak!

WINGATE of the Sixth looked into the Rag.

Most of the Remove and the Fourth were there after prep. There was a cheery buzz of voices; but one voice—which usually went on like the little brook, for ever—was silent. William George Bunter had nothing to say.

Bunter was sitting in a corner, silent, in deep and troubled thought. That banknote was not in itself a weighty article; but it seemed to weigh on Billy Bunter like several tons of lead. Bunter liked banknotes. He would have given a great deal to have a "tenner"—but now he had got one, it was really worse than having the tooth-ache! All he wanted was to get rid of it, and he couldn't get rid of it. He was beginning, indeed, to feel like a murderer who was unable to get rid of the body!

He had put the banknote in his pocket now for safety, until he could put it back in Smedley's study. He had come down after prep, half expecting to hear an alarm of a theft in the House, but there had been no alarm. There was still time—if only he could put that miserable slip of paper back where it belonged! But the locking of the Remove master's door put "paid" to any hope of that sort.

What was he going to do with it? He was trying to think out that problem when Wingate looked into the Rag and glanced round for him. In his dismayed state of mind over the banknote Bunter had almost forgotten the affair of the Head's picture. In other quarters, however, it had not been forgotten, and Billy Bunter was wanted.

"Bunter!" called out the prefect, and the fat Owl blinked round in startled alarm! With his fat mind full of the banknote, as it were, a prefect calling his name sent a spasm of terror through him. Had they missed it? Had somebody seen him leave the study?

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Wingate's calling you, Bunter!" roared Bob Cherry.

"I—I'm not here!" gasped Bunter.

"I—I—I mean, it wasn't me, Wingate!"

"You young ass!"

"I—I mean, I've not got it!" gasped Bunter.

"You're going to get it, I think!" said Wingate, with a laugh. "The Head wants you in his study, Bunter! Cut off!"

The captain of Greyfriars walked away, leaving Bunter to do as bidden. Bunter stood in dismay.

"Cut off, you fat duffer!" said Harry Wharton. "If you keep the Head waiting, you'll get it tougher."

"I—I say you fellows, I—I never did it!"

"Why, you fat owl, three of us saw you!" exclaimed Frank Nugent. "For goodness' sake, Bunter, don't tell the Head any lies about it!"

"You—you saw me!" gasped Bunter.

"Yes; and so did Smedley."

"S-smedley did!" stammered Bunter.

"He didn't. He was out—you jolly well know he was out, you beast!"

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"Potty?" asked Johnny Bull. "Smedley took it from you on the landing. Have you forgotten that, you howling ass?"

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "You—you mean that picture of the Head. Oh! Of—of course, that's what the Head wants to see me about, not—"

He stopped in time.

"Not what?" asked Nugent.

"Oh, nothing!"

"What else have you been up to, you fat fozzler?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Nothing, old chap! I haven't been anywhere near Smedley's study!"

"Have you been in Smedley's study bagging that picture?" asked the captain of the Remove.

"No! Oh, no! How could I have when that's what the Head wants to see me about? Besides, Smedley's got his door locked! I—I say, you fellows—"

"Cut off, fathead! What's the good of making the Head waxy?" said Squiff.

"Oh lor'!"

Billy Bunter rolled out of the Rag and made his way to Dr. Locke's study. It was clear that by that time Smedley had handed his famous work of art to the headmaster and that Bunter was to be called to account for it. That meant a "whopping." But, for once, Bunter was not thinking so much of the coming whopping as of other things. What was he going to do with that beastly banknote?

He had tried to replace it, and couldn't. Certainly it was open to him to go to Smedley and hand it over, as he had almost made up his fat mind to do in the first place, rather than take the risk of falling under suspicion of "pinching" it. But he dared not; it was no good thinking of it, because he simply hadn't the nerve to stand before the cold, hard eyes, and grim, sharp jaw, and own up to the man that he had gone rooting in his study.

If Smedley had been a good-tempered man like Mr. Capper, or even a pompous, ponderous gentleman like Prout, he might have done it; but he was afraid of the cold, hard, cat-like new master. He knew that, even if Loder had not turned him back, he would never have owned up to Smedley if he had found him in the study.

Somehow or other he had to get the banknote back in the drawer without anyone knowing. At all events, it had not been missed yet—Bunter was sure of that! A man who missed a banknote would inquire after it immediately—that seemed a safe conclusion. Somehow he was going to put it back before it was missed!

Bunter was quite a long time arriving at the Head's study with these troublesome thoughts thronging his worried fat mind.

But he arrived there at last and tapped at the door; and Dr. Locke's voice bade him enter.

The Head was alone in the study. In his hand was Bunter's work of art, at which he was gazing.

Bunter blinked at it, and at him!

Even the banknote was driven from his mind now, for a time.

"This is your work, I think, Bunter!" said Dr. Locke, lifting his gaze from the picture and fixing it on Bunter.

"Oh, no, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"Mr. Smedley has handed it to me, with the statement that he took it from you, Bunter!" said the Head, in a deep voice.

"Oh! I—I mean—"

"This is very disrespectful and very foolish, Bunter!" said Dr. Locke, less sternly than the fat Owl had expected. Bunter had expected the Chief Beak to be in a fearful rage. But perhaps the headmaster was not deeply concerned and disconcerted to find that Bunter of the Remove had an unfavourable opinion of him! Perhaps he did not attach very much importance to the opinion of William George Bunter!

"Oh! Yes, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"The—the fact is, sir, I—I—I didn't really mean that you were a beast, sir! I—I don't think you a beast, like most of the fellows, sir!"

"What?" ejaculated Dr. Locke.

"I—I don't really, sir!" groaned Bunter. "I—I—I think you're nice, sir! V-v-v-very nice indeed, sir!"

Dr. Locke gazed at him.

"Bunter, I shall make due allowance for your stupidity! I shall not cane you—"

"Oh, good!" gasped Bunter, in great relief.

"You will write out a hundred times 'I must not be foolish and disrespectful.'"

"Oh, yes, sir! But—but I don't think you are foolish and disrespectful, sir."

"Wha-a-at?"

"I don't really, sir. But, of course, I will write it out if you tell me to, sir!" gasped Bunter, in haste. "But—but how am I to word it, sir? Shall I say the Head must not be foolish and disrespectful, or Dr. Locke must not be foolish and disrespectful?"

"Bless my soul!" said the headmaster of Greyfriars, gazing at Bunter. "Is it possible that this boy is so inconceivably stupid as to misapprehend my meaning to such an extent?"

"Oh, really, sir! Didn't you say—"

"You are a very obtuse boy, Bunter, as indeed this foolish drawing sufficiently proves. You are to write out the sentence, 'I must not be foolish and disrespectful.' Do you understand me now?"

"Oh! Yes, sir! Oh, quite, sir!" Even Bunter understood at last.

"Put this absurd paper in the fire, Bunter, and leave my study!"

"Yes, sir!" gasped Bunter.

Having put the absurd paper in the fire, the fat Owl very gladly left the study. Dr. Locke gazed after him, and shook his head. William George Bunter's brand of intellect was almost too much for his headmaster.

Bunter, safe outside the study, rolled away in great relief. That beast, Smedley, had meant him to get a licking from the Head—and he had escaped the licking! All because he had heard Bunter describe him as a sneaking cad! Well, this was one up on Smedley. He hadn't had the licking, and very likely the Head would forget the lines! Bunter rolled away quite cheerfully.

Then the thought of the banknote returned, and his cheerfulness departed. He blinked cautiously round him, and rolled away to Masters' Passage. If Smedley's door was unlocked now—

Masters' Passage was empty! Hopefully, Bunter crept along to Mr. Smedley's door. He grasped the door-handle, and turned it.

The door opened. It was no longer locked! Bunter gave a gasp of relief!

He pushed open the door, and stepped in.

Then he stopped, with a squeak of dismay. Standing by the table was Mr. Smedley, staring at him.

It had not occurred to Bunter that the Form-master's door was unlocked because Smedley had returned to the study. It occurred to him now.

"Oh crikey!" squeaked Bunter, his eyes almost popping through his spectacles at the tall, hard-faced young man.

"Bunter, what does this mean? How dare you enter my study without knocking!" exclaimed Mr. Smedley angrily.

"I—I— Oh! I—I didn't—I—I mean, I—I came to—to—to—to—" stuttered Bunter. "I—I didn't know you were here, sir—that is, I came to speak to you, sir—not knowing you were here—"

Mr. Smedley picked up his cane. The fat Owl's startled confusion could give him only one impression—that Bunter had come there to play some trick, in vengeance for his late licking. Smedley had not forgotten the gum in the chair. He swished the cane.

Bunter blinked at him! Here was his chance of owning up, and handing over that wretched banknote!

But the beast was going to cane him, simply for stepping into the study! What would he do if Bunter owned up that he had rooted over his table drawer and taken away papers? It did not bear thinking of!

"Bend over that chair, Bunter!"

Whack, whack, whack!

"Now go! If you dare to enter this study again surreptitiously, Bunter, I shall take you to your headmaster for a flogging! Go!"

And Bunter, groaning, went.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

A Surprise for Smithy!

HARRY WHARTON glanced round the quad when the Remove came out in break the following morning.

He smiled as he caught sight of a scowling face. He was looking for the Bounder, who had hurried away by himself as soon as the Form was dismissed after second lesson.

It was a bright spring morning, and the sunshine streamed down on the old quadrangle of Greyfriars, on the old elms bright with the green of spring. Most faces were cheerful enough that morning—and Harry Wharton's was as cheery as any. There were, in fact, only two faces in all the Remove that had clouded looks—the Bounder's and Bunter's.

Nobody took any particular notice of Bunter's looks. The unimportance of Billy Bunter was unlimited.

But a good many fellows noticed Smithy's savage scowl, and Skinner told his friends that it was pretty plain that the Bounder had been backing the wrong horse—at which Skinner's friends chortled.

Other fellows, more charitable than Skinner, thought that probably Smithy had some trouble at home. It was widely known in the Remove that his father had been bitterly and savagely angry with him for getting "sacked"—and there was a rumour that that was why the Head had let him off, though only Redwing knew just how the matter stood.

It was certain that for some days past the Bounder had been a scowling, ill-tempered fellow, snapping, almost snarling, at fellows who spoke to him, with hardly a civil word for even his best chum. In that state of temper,

most of the fellows left Smithy to himself.

He was by himself now, slouching along under the elms, with his hands driven into his pockets. A black look drove Redwing away when his chum would have joined him.

Smithy was, in fact, almost in a state of desperation. The only resource he could think of was selling his bicycle, and some other things, in Courtfield, and thus raising the wind. He had many expensive things—but selling them to a second-hand dealer in a hurry was not likely to realise anything like their value, or half of it.

Ten pounds was not a small sum when a fellow tried to raise it by such means. And such a proceeding was sure to excite general attention—indeed, he could not have sold his bike without his Form-master knowing it. And his Form-master, as he knew only too well, was watching him like a cat.

Suppose there was an inquiry into why he had sold off his possessions to raise money? He suspected that the Creeper and Crawler had overheard his words at the door of Study No. 1 the previous day. In that case, he would be on the watch for just such a move! Suppose he had to go before his headmaster, and stand up to a stern and rigorous questioning? To admit that he, a schoolboy in the Lower Fourth, was in desperate need of such a sum as ten pounds, was as good as giving himself away bound hand and foot!

With black and bitter and desperate thoughts in his mind, the hapless scapegrace tramped under the elms, feeling like Ishmael of old, that his hand was against every man, and every man's hand against him.

Harry Wharton, undeterred by black scowling, came over to him—to be met by a savage and inimical stare.

"Looking for you, Smithy—" began the captain of the Remove.

"Leave me alone!"
"My dear chap—" said Harry soothingly.

The Bounder's eyes blazed at him. He was in a mood for a quarrel with friend or foe. Indeed, it would have been a relief to him to wreak his rage and misery on some victim.

He clenched his hands.
"You're asking for it, you fool! Can't you leave a fellow alone when he tells you to?" he snarled.

"If you'll give me a chance to speak, Smithy—"
"Hold your fool tongue, and leave me alone!"

Harry Wharton compressed his lips. He had a temper of his own, not always kept in such complete control as might have been desired. It was hard to take this sort of talk from anybody. But he could read the distress, as well as the bitter rancour, in the Bounder's face, and he controlled his rising anger.

(Continued on next page.)



Would secret signalling between the players of a football team pay? "Linesman" seems to think it would. Read what he's got to say on the matter.

SHOUTING INSTRUCTIONS!

MY "listeners" know that I spend most of my time, so far as the MAGNET is concerned, trying to be helpful and interesting on football matters. This week I want to start on a different strain, and to thank a reader for setting my mind running on a new track: giving me an idea which I had not previously considered.

My correspondent has done this with a seemingly innocent question. "While attending football matches," he writes, "I have noticed the players of some teams talking to each other quite a lot, while the players of other teams, if they talk at all, don't do it so loudly that the spectators can hear. Do you think the success of some of the clubs may be partly due to the talking which goes on, between the players, during the actual match period?"

As I say, I hadn't thought that success or failure on the part of a football team might be due to the talking, or otherwise, which goes on. But there is something in the idea.

Personally, I think, it can be very helpful to a football team if the members have such confidence in each other that when a bit of instruction is passed along, it is received in the right spirit, and carried out. After all, when a footballer is working the ball—a half-back, say—he cannot always spare the time to look upwards for his colleagues in order to pass to the very best advantage. And if he gets a hint from a pal he may be able to develop an attack much more effectively.

Let me insist, however, that the talking or the shouting must be intelligent, and much of it which I have heard, even among teams in the highest class, has not possessed that quality. For example, you will hear one player shout to another: "Hold it!" even when the ball is coming

to him in the most awkward way, and when he hasn't a ghost of a chance of holding it.

Then it must also be remembered that the players of the other side are not deaf, and when instructions are given in a loud voice, those opponents are able to range their forces in accordance with the instructions given, and thus negative the move. To be forewarned is to be forearmed.

SECRET SIGNALLING!

THINKING of this subject my mind wandered in a rather deep connection. I began to wonder if it would not be possible for the members of a football team to evolve a system of what might be called secret signals. Let me illustrate. Suppose, when a shouted instruction was given to a player by a member of his own side he knew that such instruction meant he must do entirely the opposite. A call of pass to the right might indicate that he was to pass it to the left, and so on. Such a scheme would do away with the snag in the talking which I have mentioned; that the other fellows also know.

Sometimes when I have watched Arsenal and Alex. James in particular, I have thought there was some secret signalling such as I have mentioned in operation. When a throw-in has been taken I have seen Alex. point to a colleague, but the ball has not been thrown to that colleague. This may have been mere chance, but possibly it is not so. I always suspect Arsenal of deep schemes, and such a scheme would, of course, be quite legitimate.

While talking about talking, there is one thing I would have my football playing readers note:

That they are not allowed, by rule, to shout with a view to putting an opponent off. If a player does this, his side is liable to be penalised.

There was an instance of this earlier in the present season, when a referee disallowed a goal for an offence which was

afterwards described as a mystery. Here is the solution of the mystery. As the ball came over, a player who was waiting for it to have a shot at goal shouted: "Right!" The opposing full-back was near, and he allowed the ball to go to the attacking forward. In the referee's opinion that shout had put the defender off his game, and the goal which was scored was quite properly disallowed.

SENSATIONAL BEGINNINGS!

THE exploits of the Leicester City centre-forwards this season has led a Nowstead Colliery reader "China," to ask me about Chandler and Gardiner. The latter, of course, is a young Scot who made a very sensational start in English football, scoring four goals on the Portsmouth ground in his first match over the border. I may add, in passing, that other centre-forwards have made this sort of start in big football which usually only happens in dreams. There was a player named Fred Howard, whom Manchester City, in an emergency, lifted into their first team right from the obscurity of Lancashire Combination football.

He scored three goals in the first thirteen minutes of his first game, and later in the same game added a fourth.

Arthur Chandler, the other centre-forward of Leicester, is an experienced player who has scored literally hundreds of goals. Born in London, he played for Queen's Park Rangers for three seasons, and is now in his eleventh season with Leicester City. In 1928 Chandler had a wonderful Christmas Day, scoring five goals himself in a match against West Bromwich Albion. Something like a Christmas stockingful, eh?

In reply to several correspondents I regret to say that it is impossible for me to undertake the task of getting autographed photographs of famous players. Most of the well-known footballers are ready to give their autographs, and when I look in the dressing-room of a football club in mid-week I usually find some players signing their names in autograph books. But signed photographs are another matter.

I am obliged to a Highbury reader for putting me right. He is rather upset at the suggestion that the idea now in operation at the Sheffield Wednesday ground, of having a board telling the scorers is a new one. He points out that they had such a board at Highbury some little time back; but it was pulled down when certain structural alterations were made to the ground.

"LINESMAN."

"Have a little sense, Smithy!" he said quietly. "You came to my study yesterday to ask me—"

"Like you to rub it in, you cur!" sneered the Bounder. "Yes, I asked you to lend me some money. Make the most of it! I wish I'd bitten off my tongue sooner!"

Wharton drew a deep breath.

"You're not an easy fellow to help, Smithy! But I'm going to help you, all the same! Can't you understand why I've come to speak to you, you ass? I've got the money!"

The Bounder almost staggered.

He stared at Harry Wharton uncomprehendingly.

"You've got the money?" he repeated blankly.

"Yes."

"Oh gad! You told me yesterday you couldn't—"

"I couldn't yesterday! I told you something might be done if you gave a fellow time to think! And—I've done it!" said Harry quietly.

"Oh gum!" said Vernon-Smith. He was still staring blankly at Wharton. The colour flooded into his face. "Oh gum! I—I say, I'm sorry—I'm a savage brute—I—I—if you knew how this has been tormenting me—"

"I think I do know, old chap!" said Harry, his face clearing. "It's all right—hard words break no bones! Well, look here, since you spoke to me yesterday, I've been raising the wind." He smiled faintly. "My credit's pretty good in the Form—I don't often borrow."

"Wharton, you've been borrowing money—to help me—"

Vernon-Smith could have bitten off his tongue for the bitter words he had uttered only a minute or two ago.

"That was the only way, old bean! Quids don't grow on bushes like blackberries! I've raised it up and down the Remove."

"You haven't mentioned—"

"Smithy!" said Wharton quietly.

The Bounder flushed again.

"No—no—of course you wouldn't!" he muttered. "Excuse me, I'm in rather a fluster! I never expected—"

never dreamed— But how the dickens did you get such a sum? It's rather a lot for the Lower Fourth."

"We've got a jolly old rich nobleman in the Lower Fourth!" said Harry, with a smile. "And he's a friend of mine."

"Mauloverer?"

"Yes. Mauly's lent me a fiver till the hols—"

"I can settle in the hols!" muttered the Bounder. "The pater will let me have all I want in the holidays. That's all right."

"Right as rain!" said Harry. "A fiver from Mauly; ten bob between Nugent and me; a quid from Johnny; and another from Inky; and ten bob from Bob. Nugent knows, of course—you spoke before him yesterday. The other fellows haven't asked any questions, and I've told them nothing."

"That's eight!" said the Bounder.

"And two from Redwing," said Harry, smiling. "Reddy knows what it's for, of course—he's in your confidence. I got it from him just before class—and told him I had the rest."

Vernon-Smith breathed hard. He had regretted bitterly, having humiliated himself by asking the captain of the Form for help. He did not regret it now! Wharton had saved him.

"Better get out of sight when I hand it over," said Harry. "I've got it all here—had it in my pocket in class."

The Bounder nodded, and they walked away together under the trees. In a secluded spot, entirely out of sight of all other eyes, Wharton handed the sum over to the Bounder—a five-pound note, four pound notes, and two ten-shilling notes.

Hurriedly Herbert Vernon-Smith thrust the money into his pocket.

"That sees you through?" asked Harry.

"Quite! Only a question of getting it to that brute at the Three Fishers—easy enough! He's not such a brute really—he lent me the money, and a man expects to get his money back when he lends it. I dare say it was a sprat to catch a whale—still—"

"But how—"

The Bounder laughed.

"Leave that to me!" he said. "I can cut out on my bike after class—"

Wharton opened his lips—but closed them again. He had done what was required of him; the rest was up to the Bounder. It was no business of his further.

"Well, that's that!" he said.

"Thanks no end!" said the Bounder. "I shan't forget this, Wharton! If you knew what I've been through since that brute started threatening to come up to the school with my I O U to show—"

"You can get that back all right?"

"Oh, yes, that's all right, when I square— By gum, I can hardly believe that I'm out of it. And to think that—" The Bounder broke off with a shiver as he remembered that moment of madness in Smedley's study. "It's all right now—right as rain!"

Harry Wharton nodded, and left him, and joined his friends, who were punting a footer. A little later the bell rang for third school, which was mathematics with Mr. Lascelles.

Herbert Vernon-Smith came in with the rest of the Remove, and many fellows noticed that he was no longer dispirited and scowling. He entered the class-room with a cheery face and an elastic step. It might almost have been supposed that he was keen on "maths."

But the lesson seemed very long to the Bounder. When, at last, Mr. Lascelles dismissed his class, Vernon-Smith hurried away at once for his bike.

He wheeled it out, without thinking, or caring, about a pair of hard, sharp eyes that watched him go.

Fellows had leave out of gates after class; and there seemed no particular reason why Mr. Smedley should be interested in a Remove fellow wheeling out a bicycle. But the new master of the Remove was very interested indeed!

He smiled his cold, cat-like smile as he watched the Bounder go. He turned away with that unpleasant smile lingering on his lips.

The Bounder was back in good time for dinner.

When he came in he gave Wharton a nod, and Redwing a squeeze of the arm. That was information enough for both of them. The Bounder was out of the scrape!

He had a smiling face at dinner in Hall. It seemed as if a weight had rolled from his mind and his heart.

Plenty of fellows noticed the change; and Skinner surmised that Smithy had, at long last, backed a winner. Mr. Smedley, at the head of the Remove table, noticed, of course, what was plain to all eyes. And the man with the borrowed name, judging by what he saw, had no doubt of what had occurred. He had no doubt that Herbert Vernon-Smith had gone out with a pilfered ten-pound note in his pocket and come back without it!

It would soon be time for the man with a borrowed name to "miss" that ten-pound note!

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Wharton is Not Taking Any!

"DEAR old chap!" Harry Wharton laughed. It was not of much use for Billy Bunter to address him as "dear old chap!" All Wharton's financial resources were exhausted! "Nothing doing, old fat bean!" said the captain of the Remove. "You see, dear old fellow—"

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Happily unconscious of danger, Bunter rolled off to Masters' Studies. He blinked cautiously before him as he went. But he did not blink behind him; and so he was quite unaware that Mr. Smedley, with a quiet tread, was following on his track.

"I see," agreed Wharton. "But I'm in the same state—stony! Absolutely nothing doing, Bunter! Try Mauly!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Or Kipps!" suggested Wharton. "Kippers can produce half-crowns out of your pocket—as many as you want."

"Do you think I want to borrow anything, you silly ass?" hooted Bunter.

"Eh! Don't you?"

"No!" roared Bunter.

"Then what did you call me dear old chap for?" inquired the captain of the Remove, naturally surprised.

"Look here, you beast—I—I mean, look here, dear old fellow—I—I—I'm in a fearful fix!" groaned Bunter.

"Hasn't it come?" asked Harry sympathetically.

"Eh! Hasn't what come?"

"Your postal order."

"Beast! I mean, I say, old fellow—dear old fellow! Do listen to a chap! It's up to you as—as head boy of the Form! I—I want you to help me—somehow. I say, it's awfully serious really—"

Wharton looked at the fat Owl of the Remove. It was nearly time for afternoon class, and the bell was expected any minute. But what he read in the worried fat face made Wharton come to a halt. Now that he gave Billy Bunter his attention he could see that there was something amiss with the fat junior—of a more serious nature than the non-arrival of his celebrated postal order!

"What's the row, fathead?" asked Harry good-naturedly. "Have you been playing another silly trick on Smedley or what?"

"Yes—I mean, no!" stammered Bunter. "That is, yes! Not exactly."

"You'll have to make it a bit clearer, I think," said the captain of the

Remove, shaking his head. "I'm not good at riddles!"

"I say, old chap, what's a fellow to do?" groaned Bunter. "I say, keep it dark if I tell you, won't you? Suppose they made out that I'd pinched it?"

"Wha-a-at?" Harry Wharton's face became very grave as he heard that.

"You benighted ass! What have you been doing now?"

"N-n-nothing I—I mean—"

"You've been raiding tuck from Coker of the Fifth?"

"No!" howled Bunter.

"Then what is it?"

"A—a—a—a banknote!" gasped Bunter.

Wharton jumped almost clear of the quad.

"A b-banknote!" he stuttered.

"Yes, old chap! Ain't it awful?" groaned Bunter.

"From Coker?"

"No, you idiot—Smedley!"

"You—you—you've pinched a banknote from Smedley!" gasped Wharton.

"You—you blithering idiot! Are you off your dot?"

"I haven't—I didn't—I wasn't—I mean— Oh lor'!"

Wharton was grave enough now. He realised that the matter was serious. Billy Bunter's ideas on the subject of property were rather elastic and accommodating. He never could quite grasp the difference between "meum" and "tuum." In matters of tuck Billy Bunter was a ruthless annexer. No fellow's cake or tarts or dough-nuts were safe if Bunter got wind of them. But a banknote was a very much more serious matter.

Billy Bunter's fat brain moved in mysterious ways its wonders to perform, and somehow or other he always worked

it out to his own fat satisfaction that he had some sort of right to anything in the eatable line if he could lay his fat fingers on-it. But even Bunter was not duffer enough to apply that remarkable mode of reasoning to a fellow's money. Still, he was such an inimitable, incomparable ass that there really was no telling what he might or might not do. Wharton was really alarmed now.

"Get it off your chest, before the bell goes, Bunter," he said sharply. "What have you done—sharp?"

"N-n-nothing!" stammered Bunter.

"You howling ass! Tell me at once, and I'll see what can be done! You can't—even you—can't have been such an utter idiot and such a putrid young rascal as to pinch a banknote!"

"No!" howled Bunter. "They might think I had, you dummy, but I haven't! I've got it in my pocket now—I wish I hadn't!"

"Oh crikey! A banknote of Smedley's—in your pocket!" gasped Wharton.

"Yes," groaned Bunter. "I—I've tried to shove it back, but it's no go. I wish I'd never touched it! You see, I never knew—"

"You never knew you'd touched it!" ejaculated Wharton, wondering whether the fat Owl was wandering in his mind.

"That's it. How was I to know—in the dark?" groaned Bunter. "You see, I sneaked into Smedley's study to get that picture—that picture of the Head, you know. You remember that spying beast copped me with it, and—"

"Yes, yes—"

"Well, I saw him put it in the table-drawer!" gasped Bunter. "I went there for it after he'd gone out, but Smithy was there, and then Prout butted in and I never got it. And—and you refused

to go for it when I asked you in the Rag—you know you did!"

"Get on with it, idiot!"

"Well, I got after it again, and it was in the dark. You see, I couldn't turn on the light—the beast might have seen it as he came in, and—and—"

"Cut it short, fathead!"

"I—I grabbed the papers from the drawer and bunked," gasped Bunter. "And when I got back to my study it—it was only a couple of Form papers and—and a ten-pound note with them!"

"Oh, my hat! Mean to say there was a ten-pound note loose in Smedley's drawer, along with Form papers?" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"Yes! Silly, careless ass, you know! I never got the picture—Smedley took it to the Head afterwards, and I had to go up. I thought it was going to be a whopping, but it was only lines—"

"Never mind that! What did you do with the banknote?"

"I—I was going down to take it back to Smedley's study, but Loder stopped me—it was in prep, you know. And after prep, when I went, the door was locked and I couldn't get in. And—and after that I—I went—but Smedley was there, and he whopped me, thinking I was going to gum his chair again, or something, and he told me I'd be flogged if he caught me there again, and—and—and I haven't tried since!" growled Bunter.

"You awful ass!" said Harry. "You should have handed it over to Smedley at once, and owned up what you'd done."

"Catch me asking the beast for a whopping!"

"But, you silly dummy, as soon as he misses the note there will be a fearful row, and if you've got it—" Wharton stared at the Owl of the Remove aghast. "He can't have missed it yet or we should have heard. There would be a row at once. But any minute—"

"Think I don't know that?" groaned Bunter. "That's why I'm telling you, old chap! I—I want you to help me." He blinked hopefully at the captain of the Remove. "I—I say, will you take it back to Smedley's study? I—I'll hand it over to you, see?"

"And suppose the row started while I had it on me!" ejaculated Wharton.

"Well, you see, I'm afraid of it starting while it's on me!" explained Bunter. "It's awful, you know! You take it!"

Wharton gazed at the fat Owl. Bunter seemed to realise, very clearly, what might happen if a missing banknote was found in his possession. What might happen if it was found in Wharton's possession was a matter of lesser importance, evidently. He fumbled in his pocket.

"You see, if I get rid of it—" said Bunter, hopefully.

"Don't give it to me, you howling ass!" snapped Wharton. "Take it back to Smedley at once! You'll catch him before class if you buck up."

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Have a little sense, Bunter! I believe what you've told me, as the matter stands. But once that banknote is missed by the man it belongs to who's going to believe that you took it by mistake if you've kept it? Keeping it means stealing it!"

"If you're trying to make out that I've stolen that banknote, you beast—" howled Bunter.

"Will you have a little sense?" hissed Wharton. "You must get shut of it at once—immediately! Can't you understand?"

"That's what I'm trying to do, isn't it?"

it? You take it and get it back to Smedley's study somehow—"

"I can't, you dummy, and you can't, either! It may be missed any minute, and if it's missed it will be called a theft! What else can it be called, you blithering idiot? You must take it to Smedley—"

"How can I?" gasped Bunter. "Think I'm going to tell that beast that I raided his study—rooted through his desk—bagged his papers—"

"That's better than being sacked for stealing, you fathead, and that is what it may come to now if you don't buck up and go to Smedley."

"Well, look here, you take it, and—and give it to Smedley! Don't mention me, you know! Say—say you found it!"

"Oh, you benighted dummy!"

"Or—or say you—you took it for a lark! Say—say anything you like so long as you don't mention me!" gasped Bunter.

"For goodness' sake, shut up! Will you take it back to Smedley?"

"No, I won't!" gasped Bunter. "I—I'd rather chuck it away! I—I say, suppose I put it in the school hospital

COVENTRY CHUM WINS A POCKET WALLET!

For the snappy Greyfriars limerick set out below, D. J. Farnshaw, of 140, Albany Road, Coventry, Warwickshire, has been awarded one of this week's MAGNET pocket wallets:

Billy Bunter thought, feeling awed:
"How nice it I were a lord,
I could dine in my splendour
On the best of provender,
Then drive through the town
looking bored!"

Have you sent in your effort yet, chum? If not, set to and try and win one of these splendid pocket wallets!

box? Then—then Smedley might suppose he'd put it there and—and forgotten it! And—and the cause of charity, you know—" babbled Bunter.

"Oh, you pernicious idiot!"

"It's no good calling a fellow names, Wharton! I've told you to get you to help me! Do you call this helping a fellow?" demanded Bunter indignantly.

"You ought to take it to Smedley at once."

"I'll watch it!"

"Well, look here—there's the bell going! Look here, make some excuse to get out of the Form-room in class, and take it back to the study and put it where you found it. That might work."

"I—I'd rather you did it, old chap. You see—"

"Idiot!" roared Wharton.

"Beast!" howled Bunter.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" came Bob Cherry's roar. "There's the bell, you men! You coming Wharton?"

Harry Wharton joined Bob and went on to the House with him. Billy Bunter blinked after him in deep indignation! This, apparently, was what Wharton called helping a fellow!

"Beast!" grunted Bunter.

And when the Remove assembled in their Form-room, with Mr. Smedley, that wretched banknote was still in Billy Bunter's pocket.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

No Go!

"PLEASE, sir!" squeaked Billy Bunter.

"Well?" rapped Mr. Smedley.

"May—may I go and fetch my map, sir?"

It was geography in that class, and the Remove had been told to bring in their maps. Bunter, with so much worry on his fat mind, had quite forgotten to bring his map.

This gave him a chance of acting on Wharton's suggestion. If he could get out of the Form-room while Smedley was occupied there with the Form, there was a chance of getting rid of that awful banknote. Smedley had locked his study door the previous evening—why, Bunter did not know. But it was unlikely that he had locked it in the day-time. Really, this looked like a healthy chance.

"Have you not brought in a map, Bunter?" snapped the new master of the Remove.

"I—I forgot, sir!" stammered Bunter.

"You will take fifty lines for forgetting your map, Bunter."

"Oh! Yes, sir! And may I—"

"You may look at Todd's map."

"Oh lor!" gasped Bunter. "I—I say, sir, if—if you don't mind, sir, I—I'd rather fetch my own map, sir—"

"Take a hundred lines, Bunter."

"Oh!"

Bunter was silent. The lesson proceeded, Bunter giving very little attention to the important subject of geography. He was cudgelling his fat brains for another excuse to get away.

"Please, sir—"

"Are you speaking again, Bunter?"

"Yes, sir! Please may I go to my study! I—I left a banknote—I mean, I left a half-crown lying on the table, sir—"

"You may not go to your study, Bunter! You may take another hundred lines, for giving untruthful excuses to get away from a lesson."

"Oh crikey!"

There were grinning faces in the Remove now. Every fellow in the Form, of course, knew that Bunter was "up" to something. Whether he had scented tuck in some of the studies, or whether he was simply trying to dodge work, they did not know. Only Harry Wharton knew the fat Owl's real reason, and he hoped that Bunter would get away with it. But the Owl of the Remove did not seem likely to have much luck. His little game was as plain to the Remove master as to the Remove.

Geography proceeded on its weary way for about ten minutes. Then Billy Bunter had another brainwave.

"Please, sir—"

The new beak's hard eyes fairly glittered at Billy Bunter. He was not a good-tempered man at the best of times; and he was tired of the fat Owl's antics, which was not surprising.

"Bunter! If you speak again—"

"I—I've just remembered, sir, that I left the tap turned on in the Remove passage, sir! M-a-ay I go and turn it off, sir?"

"Oh crikey!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Does that blithering bandersnatch really hope he will get by with that?"

Apparently Bunter did! He had a hopeful nature.

He blinked anxiously at Mr. Smedley! That he had left the tap turned on in the Remove passage, or that he would have cared two straws if he had, Mr. Smedley did not, of course, believe for a moment. But it was quite clear to him that Bunter had some very powerful reason for wanting to get away. In view of Bunter's recent trick in his

study with the gum, and his unexplained visit there the previous evening, the new beak fancied he knew what Bunter's reason was. His face set grimly. To the surprise of the Remove, and to Bunter's great relief, he answered:

"Very well, Bunter; you may go."

Up jumped Bunter!

He rolled joyfully out of the Form-room. But his way did not lie in the direction of the Remove passage. It lay in the direction of Masters' Studies!

The Remove fellows looked curiously at their Form-master. They did not like Smedley; but they did not think him a fool. It seemed improbable that he was really taken in by Bunter's transparent fibs.

Neither was he! Bunter having rolled away, the new beak picked up the cane from his desk.

"Wharton! I leave you in charge here for a few minutes!" he snapped. And he left the Form-room a minute after Bunter.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Bob. "Poor old Bunter! Well, he's asking for it—fairly begging for it."

"The begfulness is terrific!" grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"I guess that prize boob will get what he's asking for!" chuckled Fisher T. Fish. And the juniors chortled.

Billy Bunter, happily unconscious of danger, rolled off to Masters' Studies. The coast was clear, with all the fellows and their beaks in the Form-rooms. Bunter blinked cautiously before him as he went; but he did not blink behind him, and so he was quite unaware that Mr. Smedley, with his quiet tread, was following on his track.

He arrived at the door of the Remove master's study! He turned the handle. It was not locked.

"Oh good!" gasped the Owl of the Remove. And he opened the door.

"Bunter!"

"Oh crikey!"

Bunter spun round at that voice behind him. He fairly goggled through his spectacles at Mr. Smedley.

"So you were going to my study, Bunter!" said the new master of the Remove grimly.

Even Bunter could not deny it, with his fat hand on the door-handle. He could only blink at the unexpected apparition of his Form-master, like a fat rabbit fascinated by a serpent.

"You must learn, Bunter, not to play tricks in your Form-master's study. I shall endeavour to impress that on your mind!" said Mr. Smedley. "Now you are here, you may go into the study."

"Oh lor'!"

Bunter rolled dismally into the study! But he was no longer thinking of extracting the crumpled banknote from his pocket!

"Now bend over that chair, Bunter!"

"Oh dear!"

Whack, whack, whack, whack, whack, whack! The whacks of the cane rang loudly; but not so loudly as the fearful yells of Billy Bunter.

"Now," said Mr. Smedley, "you may return to the Form-room, Bunter."

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

Bunter limped out of the study and tottered back to the Remove-room. Mr. Smedley followed him. A general grin greeted the hapless Owl when he arrived. He groaned deeply as he took his place.

Geography was resumed! Billy Bunter made no more attempts to get out of the Form room. Even Billy Bunter's obtuse brain realised that that was a chicken that would not fight.

When the Remove was dismissed, Bunter rolled out, with the wretched tenner still in his pocket. It had to stay there! He did not roll in the direc-

tion of Smedley's study! Wild horses would hardly have dragged him in that direction again. What he was going to do was a problem that was rather too much for Bunter, and he gave it up!

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER

Missing!

DR. LOCKE raised his eyebrows.

He was surprised.

Classes were over; and the headmaster of Greyfriars had left the Sixth Form Room and walked majestically down Masters' Passago. He was going to drop into Mr. Smedley's study for a chat with the now master of the subject of his Form. Having apprised Mr. Smedley of his intention of so doing, the Head naturally expected to be expected, as it were! Instead of which, it looked as if the now master of the Remove had completely forgotten the existence of his majestic chief.

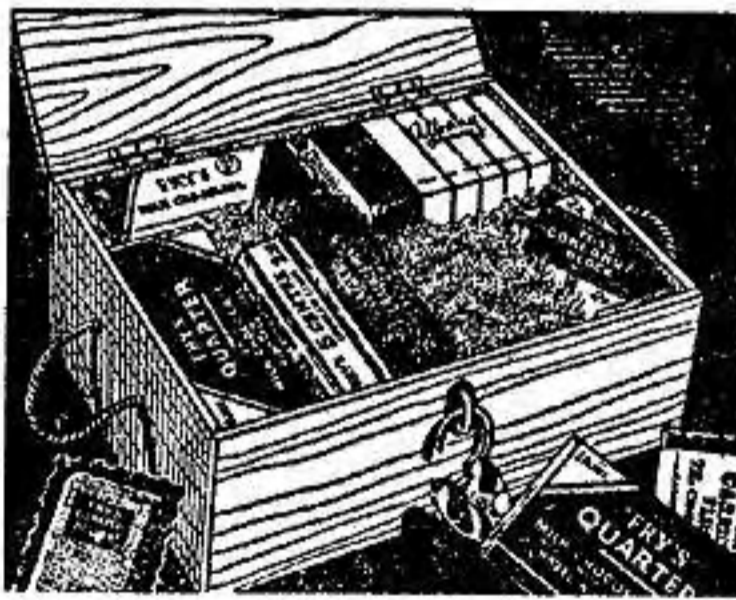
Mr. Smedley's door was open. Dr. Locke arrived there. Mr. Smedley did not seem to have heard his approaching footsteps. At all events, he did not look round as the Head appeared in the doorway.

He was standing by his table, of which the drawer was open. He was sorting over the papers in that drawer in a very excited and flustered manner.

Some of the papers dropped on the floor—others he threw on the table. His search in the drawer seemed extraordinarily eager and earnest. Dr. Locke was not a suspicious gentleman. Certainly he was not likely to suspect that that search in the table drawer had been carefully timed to meet his eyes when he reached the open doorway.

"What—what can have become of it?" Mr. Smedley muttered aloud as

(Continued on next page.)



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the headmaster looked in. "What—upon my word—what—" He threw papers on the table and groped in the drawer again.

"Am I disturbing you, Mr. Smedley?" asked Dr. Locke quietly, and with a faint inflexion of sarcasm.

The Remove master started and spun towards the door.

"Oh! Excuse me, sir—I—please step in—I beg you to excuse me—I am somewhat disturbed—a most singular occurrence—" he stammered.

Dr. Locke sailed into the study.

"You have mislaid something?" he asked politely. His manner hinted, in the gentlest possible manner, that fluster was out of place in a Greyfriars Form-master.

"A banknote, sir—"

"A banknote!" Dr. Locke's face became very grave.

"It is most odd, sir!" said Mr. Smedley. "I remember placing the banknote in this drawer yesterday afternoon—indeed, I remember that a boy of my Form was present when I did so, so there can be no mistake. Yet—"

"You do not mean to say that it is gone, Mr. Smedley?"

"It appears so, sir! I have searched through the drawer, twice, in the most careful way—examined all the papers, one by one—and the banknote most certainly is not here."

"Was it a note for a large denomination, sir?"

"A ten-pound note—"

"If the drawer was locked—"

"It was left unlocked, sir—"

Dr. Locke knitted his brows a little.

"You left a banknote for ten pounds, sir, lying loose in an unlocked drawer among loose papers!" he ejaculated.

"Surely that was very careless."

"I am not usually so careless, sir," said Mr. Smedley. "But the circumstances were a little unusual. I received the banknote by post, from a friend to whom I had made a small loan, sir, shortly before coming here. I laid it on the table while I read the letter. As it happened the letter called me away, and I had just time to catch the train to Lantham. I threw the banknote into this drawer, and closed it. Certainly, now I think of it, I should have locked the drawer, but naturally it never occurred to me that—that—"

"Possibly, Mr. Smedley, in the hurry of the moment, you placed the banknote elsewhere," said the Head. "It is inconceivable to me that it can have been removed from where you placed it."

"To me, also, sir; only that I am sure, in fact, positive, that I placed it here," said Mr. Smedley. "But it is no longer here."

"I think you mentioned that a boy of your Form was present."

"Yes; a Remove boy brought me lines, and was in the study at the time—in fact, I left him here when I hurried away."

"Then he must have seen where you placed the banknote?"

"I presume so, sir."

"You had better send for the boy, Mr. Smedley, and he may be able to tell us where you really placed the banknote," said the Head dryly.

Dr. Locke's tone was hardly pleasant. In the first place, he considered that, in haste or not, a Form-master should not have been so careless with a banknote. In the second place, he was assured that a man who was careless enough to leave banknotes in an unlocked drawer, was careless enough to forget just where he had left such an article. In the third

place, a missing banknote was a decidedly unpleasant and unsavoury incident, hinting of possible theft—a horrifying idea to the Head. Mr. Smedley was left in no doubt that his chief was displeased.

"I will send for the boy at once, sir," said Mr. Smedley. "It is, of course, possible, that in the haste of the moment—"

"Quite!" said the Head, with unusual grimness. "Please send for him at once!"

Mr. Smedley rang the bell for Trotter. That youth speedily appeared at the doorway.

"Trotter, please find Master Vernon-Smith of my Form, and ask him to come here at once!" said Mr. Smedley.

"Yessir!" The page departed.

Dr. Locke started a little at the mention of the Bounder's name. His face became graver than before.

"Was Vernon-Smith the boy who was present at the time, Mr. Smedley?" he asked.

"Yes, sir."

"You are sure that he saw the banknote?"

"I suppose so, sir. It was lying on the table when he brought in his lines."

"You say that you left him in the study?"

"I left the study first, sir. No doubt he followed immediately. He had no occasion to remain."

"But you did not see him leave?"

"No, sir. I went out of the House immediately I had got my hat and coat. I gave him no further thought."

Dr. Locke sat down. His face, generally kind and benign, was hardening. His old distrust of the scapegrace of the school was far from forgotten. It did not occur to him that Mr. Smedley was fully aware of the effect that the mention of that name, among all others, would produce on him.

"This is a most disagreeable matter, Mr. Smedley," said Dr. Locke, after a pause. "Although you have only recently come among us, you are aware of the somewhat dubious character of that boy—"

"I have learned from you, sir—"

"Quite so! He was sentenced to expulsion for breaking school bounds, and generally disgraceful conduct. Only the fact that his father adopted such an excessively severe attitude towards him induced me to give him another chance here. I made it a condition that his supply of pocket-money, which I learned had been outrageously large, should be strictly limited, and to that Mr. Vernon-Smith willingly agreed. I am sure that he has kept his word; and it follows that the boy must now have very much less money than he has been accustomed to have."

"But enough for his needs, no doubt, sir."

"No doubt, if his needs are normal. Not if he is still pursuing his former reckless ways," said the Head grimly. "I have requested you, Mr. Smedley, to keep him under observation. Have you any reason to suppose that this boy, Vernon-Smith, is in difficulties of any kind?"

"I cannot say so, sir, except—"

"Except what?" asked the Head sharply. "Kindly be frank, Mr. Smedley."

"I have noticed, sir, that for several days the boy has seemed to have some trouble on his mind, which may be connected with money, of course. I believe it has been generally remarked in the Remove and commented upon. Indeed, I have chanced to hear remarks on the subject among the boys. But," added

Mr. Smedley, with an air of great frankness, "I am bound to add, sir, that this has passed away. I have observed to-day that Vernon-Smith seems to have recovered his former spirits, and seems quite at ease."

"To-day," said the Head—"since the banknote was placed in that drawer, sir, under his eyes."

"Oh, sir!" ejaculated Mr. Smedley.

"Are you aware whether he had left the school to-day, Mr. Smedley?"

"I believe he went out on his bicycle after morning class, sir. Yes, I remember seeing him take out his bicycle."

Dr. Locke made no further remark. He leaned back in his chair, his brows lined with painful and troubled thought, waiting for the Bounder to come. Mr. Smedley stood by the table, his face grave and composed, giving no hint of the thoughts in his mind. It was almost too easy, the plotter was thinking. He had not even had to make the suggestion that Vernon-Smith had filched the banknote from the study—that dark suspicion had risen of its own accord in the Head's troubled mind. There was no doubt that the man with a borrowed name had played his cards well.

Indeed, had the Bounder, in that moment of madness in the Form-master's study, yielded to the miserable temptation that had assailed him he would have been delivered, bound hand and foot, into the hands of his enemy.

That he had done so, the man with a borrowed name had no doubt. All was plain-sailing now. His game was won! Lucius Teggers counted himself victorious in the rivalry for Mr. Vernon-Smith's millions—counting without remembering the fat existence of William George Bunter.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Guilty!

"O H, blow!" grunted Herbert Vernon-Smith.

The Bounder was with a little crowd of Remove fellows, punting a footer after class, when Trotter found him and delivered his message.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's the row, Smithy?" called out Bob Cherry.

"Smedley wants me in his study!" growled the Bounder.

"What have you been up to now?" grinned Bob.

"Nothing, fathead!"

"Better cut off, Smithy," murmured Tom Redwing. "No good keeping the man waiting."

"What the thump does he want me for?" grunted Smithy.

"Probably he'll tell you when you get there," said Harry Wharton. "Cut off, old bean! It can't be anything serious."

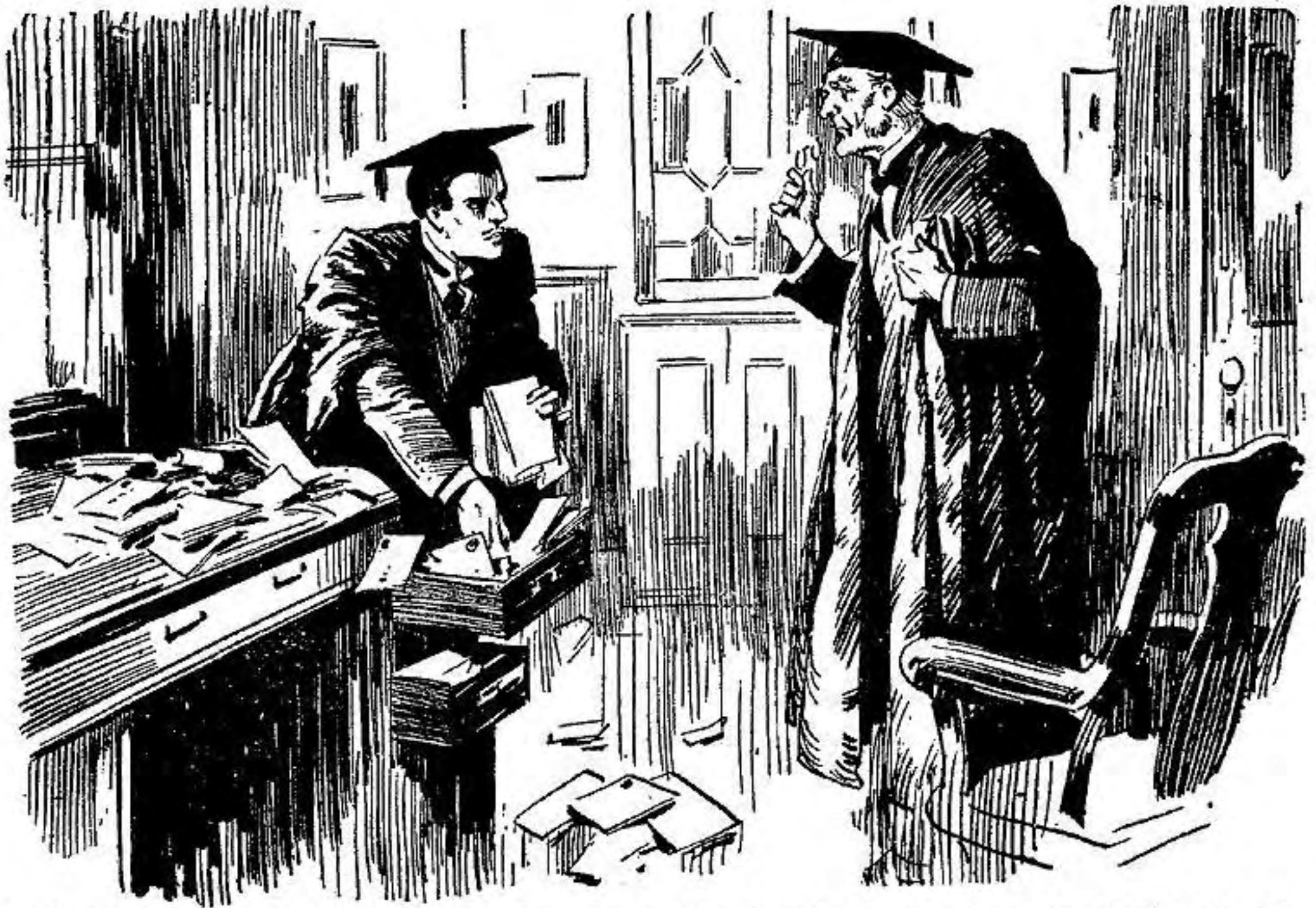
The Bounder gave another angry grunt, and, leaving the juniors punting the ball, lounged away to the House, and went in. His face was sulky as he arrived at Mr. Smedley's study, and tapped at the door. As he entered he gave a start at the sight of Dr. Locke there.

He drew a deep breath as he stepped in. The Head's presence, and the grim gravity in his face, showed that something serious was on the carpet. The Bounder was on his guard at once.

"You sent for me, sir," he said.

"Dr. Locke desires to speak to you, Vernon-Smith," answered the new master; and the Bounder faced the Head, his heart beating rather fast.

"Vernon-Smith," said the Head, in a low, grave voice that struck the



Mr. Smedley had opened the table-drawer and was scattering papers far and wide, when Dr. Locke called into the study. "You have mislaid something?" he asked politely. "A banknote!" said Mr. Smedley. "I placed it in this drawer yesterday. Indeed, I remember that a boy of my Form was present when I did so!"

Bounder with something like a chill, "I have to question you."

"What have I done now, sir?" asked Vernon-Smith, with a bitter emphasis on the last word that caused the Head's brow to darken.

"That is what I have to ascertain, Vernon-Smith. You brought some lines to this study for Mr. Smedley yesterday afternoon."

"Yes, sir," said the Bounder, in utter wonder.

"Mr. Smedley was called away suddenly, leaving you here—"

"That is so, sir."

"Did you see him place a banknote in the drawer of his table?"

"Yes, sir."

"That banknote is missing, Vernon-Smith."

The Bounder stared blankly at his headmaster. It was a moment or two before the full import of those words sank into his brain. The colour left his cheeks as he realised what it meant.

"Missing, sir!" he repeated blankly.

"Yes. Do you know anything of this, Vernon-Smith?"

The Bounder almost staggered. Missing—the banknote missing! How could it be missing?

Back into his mind that wild moment came—that moment of madness, when the hideous thought had entered his mind of taking the banknote the Form-master had so carelessly thrown into the drawer under his eyes.

He had not done it! He never would have done it! But the headmaster said that the banknote was missing! It could not be missing! How could it be missing, when he had not touched it?

"Missing!" he repeated. His voice was cracked and husky. "I don't know anything about it. How could I?"

Dr. Locke's eyes searched his face.

It was white, almost wild. The headmaster's own face grew harder. Any fellow might have looked startled, shocked, dismayed, horrified, at finding himself under such a terrible suspicion. But there was more than that in the Bounder's look. His conscience was not clear. The remembrance of that mad temptation was in his mind. Wharton or Bob Cherry would not have looked, in similar circumstances, as Herbert Vernon-Smith looked now. The Head knew that.

"You know nothing of it, Vernon-Smith?" The usually kind voice was like cold steel.

"Nothing, sir!"

"Did you remain in the study after Mr. Smedley left?"

"A—a minute or two, sir—"

"Did you take the banknote from the drawer?"

"No!" almost whispered the Bounder.

"Since the time when you were allowed to remain, after your sentence of expulsion, you have received no money from your father beyond your allowance?"

"No, sir!"

"Have you been in need of more money than you received?"

"I—I don't need more than any other fellow, sir," stammered the Bounder.

"Not if you are as well-conducted as the other boys, certainly," said the headmaster grimly. "But that is the question, Vernon-Smith. Your conduct has been so bad, that I was driven to expel you from the school. I have hoped that such a warning would induce you to reform, but I have no proof that it has done so. You have not answered my question. I warn you to deal with me frankly, Vernon-Smith! Answer my question."

"I—I'm not in need of money, sir."

"You are still eluding the question, Vernon-Smith! That can have, I fear, only one meaning—you have been in need of money! That you are not now in need of it, is a terribly serious circumstance, taken in conjunction with the fact that ten pounds is missing from this study."

"Oh!" panted the Bounder.

It seemed as if his legs failed to support his weight. He leaned his hand heavily on the Form-master's table, limp and sagging.

The man with a borrowed name looked at him, and his hard face twitched. But it set hard again. A thief—who would waste pity on a thief? Lucius Teggars had no doubt on that point, and, like Pharaoh of old, he hardened his heart!

The Bounder's brain was swimming. He almost wondered, for the moment, whether he really was guilty—whether he had, after all, filched that banknote from the drawer, in that moment of madness when the horrible temptation had assailed him. He knew how it looked—how it must look! The Head's voice seemed to come to him from far away.

"You left the school to-day, Vernon-Smith, on your bicycle? Tell me where you went."

The Bounder licked his dry lips. He could not tell the Head that he had gone secretly to the Three Fishers, to pay that miserable old debt.

"I—I went for a—a ride—" The hesitation, the faltering, did not escape his headmaster.

"Did you take the ten-pound note with you, Vernon-Smith?"

"No!" groaned the Bounder.

"Did you hand it to some disreputable associate outside the school, who had some claim on you?"

"No!"
 "Is it still in your possession?"
 "No!"
 "You deny having taken it?"
 "Yes!"

"Very well!" said Dr. Locke with a sigh. "The facts speak for themselves, Vernon-Smith, but you may be sure, very sure, that you will have justice, that you will not be condemned while the slightest lingering doubt remains. If you persist in your denial, the matter passes out of my hands. If you have anything to confess—"

"No!" breathed the Bounder.

"Understand me, Vernon-Smith! The police will be notified of the number of the note. It will be infallibly traced. If you have parted with it, it is now in circulation, and will be traced and identified by the officers of the law, in a very short time. Once that has happened, the matter is out of my hands, and the law will take its course. If the theft is traced to you, you must know what to expect. Unhappy boy, if you have anything to tell me, tell me before it is too late!"

"I've nothing to tell you."

There was a long silence. Mr. Smedley broke it.

"Vernon-Smith! Try to understand your position! Surely you understand that it is better to confess to your headmaster, than to stand before a magistrate."

"I've done nothing—"

"Very well," said Dr. Locke quietly. "For the present, you may go, Vernon-Smith. Remain within sight of the House. Mr. Smedley, you have the number of the banknote?"

"I have it here, sir."

"Very good! Vernon-Smith, I will give you one hour to reflect. If you come to me, within that time, I shall be able to deal with this matter myself. If not, the police will be notified of the loss of the banknote, and the matter will be in their hands. I advise you to reflect! You may go."

The Bounder went—white-faced, limp, with uncertain steps. Dr. Locke sighed deeply.

"I fear that there can be no doubt, Mr. Smedley!" he said.

"I fear not, sir."

The Head left the study, and went slowly and with a troubled face to his own. Mr. Smedley closed the door when he was gone. Then he smiled. It was not a pleasant smile.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Only Bunter!

"SMITHY!"

Five or six voices uttered the name in startled tones, as the Bounder came out of the House. Fellows looked round at him, on all sides. His look was startling enough, his face, white as chalk, his eyes burning. Tom Redwing ran up to him, and caught him by the arm.

"Smithy! What's happened—what—who—"

"For goodness' sake, Smithy, what is it?" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

The Bounder stood on the lowest of the House steps, in sight of a crowd of fellows. He was pulling himself together now; dismay and distress changing to fierce anger. The blow had fallen—unexpectedly. And undeservedly! He was done for, and this time it was not by his own fault.

"What is it?" he repeated, in a voice that was heard far and wide. He did not care if all Greyfriars heard him. "What is it? 'I'm going to be sacked, that's what it is—and I've done

nothing! I'm going to be sacked because I'm a dog with a bad name."

"What have you done?" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Nothing!"

"Oh, don't be an ass," said Bob testily. "A fellow isn't sacked for nothing! What do they think you've done then?"

"I can tell you that! There's been a theft in Smedley's study, and it's put down to me."

Harry Wharton started.

"A theft!" he exclaimed.

"Yes—and I'm the guilty party! I!" The Bounder burst into a savage, mocking laugh. "I'm going to be kicked out of here, sent home to be kicked out by my father—because that fool Smedley left a banknote lying about and some blighter has bagged it! They think I did."

"They must be mad!" exclaimed Redwing indignantly. "Surely the Head—he can't—"

"He does!"

Harry Wharton stood staring at Smithy! But for what Billy Bunter had told him, he would not have known what to think! But he knew what to think now—he knew that there had been a ghastly mistake.

"The Head thinks—"

Redwing.

"I've got an hour, to confess in!" snarled the Bounder. "Then they're going to send the number of the note to the police! The fools think I've passed it, and shall get nabbed! Let them think so."

"Oh, my hat!" breathed the captain of the Remove. Alone in the amazed, buzzing crowd, he knew where the banknote was!

"But—but why should they think that?" exclaimed Frank Nugent.

"Why? Because I'm a dog with a bad name! I was in the study yesterday when Smedley dropped the note into the drawer, without locking it! He left me in the study! They've worked it out that I was in want of money—that much is true enough, as some of you fellows know! So I pinched the banknote—quite clear, isn't it?"

"Oh crumbs!" said Nugent.

The fellows exchanged startled looks. From the way the Bounder put it, they could see that the Head had reason for regarding him with suspicion—apart from his bad reputation to begin with. Skinner winked at Snoop, who grinned. They knew that the Bounder had been hard-up lately, and they, at least, did not want much in the way of proof. But better and less suspicious fellows than Skinner and Snoop regarded the Bounder with doubting eyes.

He laughed again—a bitter, disagreeable laugh.

"You were in the study when—when—" muttered Johnny Bull. "And—and the banknote's missing—"

"Oh, I pinched it, of course," said the Bounder, in a loud, savage voice. "Can anybody doubt it? The Head hopes I didn't—Smedley hopes I did!"

"Smithy!" breathed Redwing.

"But I want to know," went on the Bounder, almost in a shout, "who did really pinch that banknote? It's gone—and somebody must have had it! Who's the thief?"

"Don't be a silly ass, Smithy!" snapped Bob Cherry. "There's no thief at Greyfriars!"

"Try to get the Head to believe that," sneered the Bounder. "He's going to sack me for stealing! The old fool!"

"Shut up, you ass!" exclaimed Peter Todd.

"Am I going to be called a thief?" roared the Bounder. "Nobody's goin' to call me a thief without bein' called

a fool and a liar, headmaster or no headmaster!"

"Hold your tongue, you ass!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "It's all right—I mean it will be all right!"

"All right, is it?" yelled the enraged Bounder. "Do you want to see me sacked, you rotter? Do you dare to say you believe—"

He clenched his hands, and came down the step towards the captain of the Remove, eyes ablaze.

"Shut up, fathead!" said Harry.

"There's been no theft, and I know it."

"What?"

"I tell you I know it!" snapped the captain of the Remove, "and thank goodness I do know it."

"What the thump can you know about it?" demanded the Bounder, utterly taken aback. "And there has been a thief—the banknote's missing—"

"There hasn't!"

"I tell you it's gone—at least, Smedley says so—"

"I know it's gone, but it's not been pinched! It's still in the school," said Harry. "It was taken by mistake by a blithering idiot who has been trying to put it back ever since—"

"What utter rot!"

"Is that true, Harry?" exclaimed Nugent, blankly.

"Yes; and lucky for Smithy it is, and that I know it—and lucky for that howling idiot that I knew it before it was called a theft!" said the captain of the Remove. "Where's Bunter?"

"Bunter!" yelled the juniors.

"Bunter!" gasped the Bounder.

"I say, you fellows!" Billy Bunter rolled up, blinking at the excited mob of Remove fellows through his big spectacles. "I say, what about tea?"

"You're wanted, Bunter," said Peter Todd.

"Well, here I am," said the fat Owl cheerily. "Is it a spread, old chap?" He blinked at the excited faces. "I say, you fellows, is anything up? What are you all burbling about?"

Wharton dropped his hand on a fat shoulder.

"Bunter! Look here—"

"Is it in your study?" asked Bunter; as it was tea-time, Bunter's fat thoughts naturally ran on tea.

"Smedley's missed the banknote from his study, and they fancy that Smithy has taken it" said Harry.

"Oh crikey!" Bunter's jaw dropped.

"Mean to say it was Bunter pinched it?" exclaimed Skinner.

"No!" snapped Wharton. "I've said that nobody pinched it! Bunter, tell them how it was!"

"I—I say, you fellows, I don't know anything about it!" gasped Bunter. "I—I say, I never touched it! I haven't got it in my pocket now!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"You've got it in your pocket!" shrieked Peter Todd.

"No!" yelled Bunter. "I've told you I haven't! Never seen it! Besides, it was all your fault, Toddy!"

"My fault?" gasped Peter.

"Yes, you beast! If you'd gone and got that picture back from Smedley's study I shouldn't have gone there in the dark and grabbed up rotten Form papers and a beastly banknote out of the drawer—"

"Oh!" gasped Bob Cherry. "You—"

"And it's jolly well Wharton's fault, too, if there's a row!" said Bunter warmly. "Only this afternoon I asked him to take the banknote back to Smedley's study, and he refused. You needn't deny it, Wharton—you jolly well know you did!"

(Continued on page 28.)

The MAN BEHIND the SCENES!



Starring FERRERS
LOCKE, detective,
and his clever boy
assistant, JACK
DRAKE.

BY
HEDLEY SCOTT

HOW THE STORY STARTED.

FERRERS LOCKE, the famous Baker Street detective, and his boy assistant, JACK DRAKE, are on the trail of two clever criminals—JULIUS TANKERHEAD and MERVYN VILLIERS, who have been pulling off big financial coups in connection with sporting events. Realising that Locke must be silenced once and for all, Tankerhead hires a dago convict to kill the detective. The plan fails. Locke next trails the two crooks to a private meeting-place, where he is captured by six toughs. All hope seems lost for the detective when suddenly he hears the friendly voice of Drake whispering from the other side of the door: "Hold on, gov'nor! I'm with you!"

(Now read on.)

Drake to the Rescue!

JACK DRAKE looked anxiously at the clock over the doorway of Monsieur Turrand's dingy cafe. Sitting in the far corner of the cafe no one had paid much attention to him or evinced any interest in his peculiar occupation of shuffling and dealing himself cards from a dirty, dog-eared pack. He looked for all the world a young Italian with neither fixed abode nor occupation. And there were many such who came and went to Turrand's. His manipulation of the cards suggested that his usual method of earning enough money to keep body and soul together was "sharping" some innocent, which was the impression Locke's young assistant wanted to convey.

Certainly, no one would have recognised him as Jack Drake, with his present unkempt appearance, untidy mop of hair, and "loud" Continental clothes.

From beneath lowered brows he had seen Ferrers Locke accompany the greasy proprietor through the doorway behind the counter. He had seen Monsieur Turrand return alone. That was five minutes ago.

And Ferrers Locke, before entering this haunt of criminals and out-of-works, had laid his plans carefully.

Drake was to give him five clear minutes. If, at the expiration of that time, he did not put in an appearance, Drake was to endeavour to follow him. That was one of the definite plans the detective had outlined in the event of his leaving the main room of the cafe.

Those five minutes had expired, and Locke had not appeared.

Drake rose from the marble-topped table and edged towards the counter. He had been in the place an hour, and now, keyed up for action, and a trifle anxious at that, it had seemed that he had spent hours in the place.

Leaning against the counter, he ordered a cup of coffee—and waited.

Would this greasy, over-smiling proprietor never leave his perch behind the counter?

Drake, waiting impatiently, blessed the villainous-looking gentleman with the cauliflower ear, sitting at the end of the cafe who suddenly beckoned Monsieur Turrand over to him. It was Drake's chance, and he took it. As the fat proprietor rolled towards his beckoning customer Drake edged along the counter until he reached the flap. Next second he had ducked beneath it and was crawling on all fours. The high counter hid his movements from the view of anyone in the cafe, and, although several eyes saw the big door at the back of the counter suddenly open, none observed the progress of Drake through that door, for he did not straighten up until he was in the passage to which it gave access.

The door swung back into position, suggesting to those who saw it that a gust of wind had moved it.

Drake traversed the passage quickly and stealthily. He came to the foot of the staircase and listened. From a room at the top of the staircase he heard the sounds of voices and coarse laughter.

Drake sped up the stairs like a cat. His heart was beating rapidly as he pressed his ear against the door, for his vivid imagination pictured something of the scene which was taking place on the other side. He heard the mocking tones of the leader of the six toughs, he heard the ping of the first stiletto striking the door—heard, too, his beloved chief's voice!

Drake made up his mind to a course of action on the spot. His hand gripped the door knob in a stealthy effort to turn it. The door remained firmly shut, as he had anticipated. Quickly he withdrew a bunch of skeleton keys and a peculiar-shaped whistle from his pocket. Then, waiting his opportunity, he breathed his encouraging message to Ferrers Locke:

"Hold on, gov'nor! I'm with you!" Then, with feverish haste, he started to fit key after key into the lock of the door, but it seemed an eternity before he found one that would turn the wards of the lock. He laughed mirthlessly as the thirteenth "skeleton" did the trick. Was it a lucky or unlucky omen?

The peculiar-looking whistle came into play after that. Drake placed it in his mouth and blew upon it, and at the same time he thumped imperiously on the door.

The immediate vicinity seemed to scream out echoes of the familiar police whistle.

The toughs inside the room paused in the baiting of their helpless prisoner, alarmed and thoroughly startled. The hammering on the door increased. The police whistles jarred unhappily on their guilty consciences. They did not know, of course, that these same whistles proceeded from one instrument, so designed as to give the impression that several whistles were being blown; they did not know, either, that one person—and a youth at that—was representing himself to be half a dozen policemen. The imperious summons on the door added to their consternation. They did what crooks invariably do when the police are hot on their trail—they vanished.

Locke, still pinned to the door, hid his feelings. He, of course, knew that this was a solo effort on Drake's part, and waited hopefully. The toughs scarcely paid heed to him. They bolted for the window, climbed through, and, one by one, jumped at and caught hold of the iron railings of the emergency staircase which snaked down to ground level.

Had the last one turned his head before essaying the jump he would have seen the door of the room open and an inquiring face peer round the edge of it. He would have seen, too, the ugly nose of an automatic pistol gripped in a youthful but very determined hand.

But Drake was soon reassured that pistol play would not be necessary.

"Okay, young 'un!" came Locke's voice. "The rats have scuttled off! Quickly—drag these darned hatpins out of the door!"

Drake obligingly dragged the "hat-pins"—in other words, the stilettos—clear, and Locke shook himself free.

"Good for you, young 'un!" he said easily. "I knew I could rely on you! Hallo! Here comes friend Turrand!"

Along the passage, then up the stairs, came the tread of feet. A moment later Monsieur Turrand burst into the room. His fat face was minus its customary smile. He, too, had heard the screaming police whistles, and had wondered mightily. He wondered still more when he saw Ferrers Locke and a complete stranger in the room.

Locke bowed mockingly.

"Your other friends have disappeared, monsieur," he said. "They didn't leave any message, but I'm afraid they will not return for lunch."

Monsieur Turrand started as he heard that very English voice, for he remembered Locke's broken English, with its flavour of Italian, when he had made his acquaintance a short while ago.

"But they left these little mementos behind, probably for you," continued Locke, and, with mock gravity, he handed over the bunch of deadly looking stilettos. "Personally, I have no use for them!"

He thrust the gleaming weapons into the fat proprietor's hands, and took Drake by the arm.

"Come on, my lad, let's get a little fresh air! Good-day to you, Monsieur Turrand! One of these days I hope to have the pleasure of putting you behind prison bars. Let us say—au revoir!"

The astonished proprietor seemed incapable of speech. He knew now that the Italian-looking pair were detectives in disguise; he knew that the six toughs had been scared off somehow—and he was mighty scared himself. This talk of placing Monsieur Turrand behind prison bars was most disconcerting, for there was an unpleasant ring of confidence in Locke's words, and Monsieur Turrand knew he had broken the law often enough to deserve a life sentence should he ever be brought before a judge and jury.

While the fat proprietor endeavoured to collect his scattered wits Locke and Drake speedily made their way downstairs, through the door behind the counter, and out through the cafe.

The Detective Bookmaker!

ROUND about the same time Julius Tankerhead was lunching with Mervyn Villiers, at the Sportsman's Club. They had chosen a table set well apart from the rest, and were able to talk with freedom.

Tankerhead was gazing at his watch. A cruel grin wreathed his lips.

"Well, if things have gone smoothly, Mervyn," he said, "our meddling friend, Locke, is repenting him of ever having nosed his way into our affairs."

"You think the Valento boys will beat him up?" asked Villiers nervously.

Tankerhead nodded.

"They're experts at the game," he answered, "and I paid them well. They don't know they were engaged by Julius Tankerhead." He chuckled boastfully. "To them I was a Mr. Blackbeard, with enough money to pay for the beating-up of a nose detective."

"Then they don't even know that their victim is Ferrers Locke," said Villiers.

"Not unless the poor mutt has told them. And, in any case, Locke would visit the cafe in disguise—you can bet

your life on that. Drink up, Mervyn! This is an hour for celebration."

But Mervyn Villiers was not so easily assured.

"Supposing Locke didn't go?" he hazarded. "Suppose he managed to escape? Suppose—"

Tankerhead stayed him with an impatient snarl.

"Ring off your supposer, Mervyn! I can put all that to a definite test very soon."

"How so? Are you going to meet the Valento boys?" asked Villiers.

"No, my friend. The Valento boys and I have finished acquaintance. But what's to stop either you or me calling upon Ferrers Locke some time this afternoon or evening? Then we shall soon know whether the Valento boys did their work!"

That suggestion put Mervyn Villiers at his ease. He even began to formulate plans for their next big coup, which concerned the running of a certain racehorse.

"Jove, Mervyn," exclaimed Tankerhead as he listened, "that's a great wheeze. You are certainly the lad for ideas."

Villiers permitted himself a modest smile. Then his features straightened quickly.

"But I'm not going through with this stunt unless Locke is definitely out of the way," he added. "The man fairly puts the wind up me."

The silence of the club-room was suddenly disturbed by Tankerhead's unrestrained laughter.

"Him! Why, he'll be out of business for two or three months. The Valento boys, as I keep telling you, are past masters at beating up a nosey guy. They all but kill their victims."

And even Mervyn Villiers gained fresh heart when at precisely four o'clock that same afternoon his partner in crime telephoned him.

"All okay, Mervyn," came Tankerhead's voice over the wires, and it was followed by a throaty chuckle. "I called on Locke this afternoon. He was in bed—hardly recognisable. Head bandaged—"

"What?" broke in Villiers. "Oh, good!"

"You should have seen him," continued Tankerhead. "He was a sight. Arms and hands all bandaged up. Groaning something terrible. The boys did a neat job. Locke is so bad, that the doctor, who was there when I called, said he'd have to go abroad for three months—if he were strong enough to be moved."

A laugh of relief reached Tankerhead's ears as he gave these details of Ferrers Locke's condition.

"And the boy, Drake," he continued. "Never seen a kid so cut up. Asked him how it happened. All he said was that his guv'nor had walked into a trap. No idea who was responsible for it."

These details brought a glimmer of excitement to Mervyn Villiers' eyes.

"Then it will be safe to continue with the Wexborough Stakes' idea, what?" he asked. "When do we go down to Epsom?"

"The day after to-morrow, my friend. See you there at the hotel. So-long!"

They rang off at precisely the same time as Ferrers Locke finished rolling up a length of bandage. Around him were several similar rolls of bandages—all of which had played a very useful part in the deception he had practised on Julius Tankerhead.

Drake was grinning.

"Guv'nor, you're a real card," he announced. "You think of everything, blessed if I thought Tankerhead would have the nerve to come here. And your groaning—gee, I almost began to believe that you really were a man in agony."

Locke's eyes gleamed.

"We're definitely on the trail, my boy. The visit of friend Julius proves our theory, that he was behind the attempted beating up. That he was the man in the black beard who hired that dago Dillone."

"And now he thinks you're out of commission he'll probably be starting his tricks in another direction," said Drake. "Gee, I'd like to see his face when he learns that all these bandages were put on for his especial benefit."

"That won't be yet awhile unless the six toughs get in touch with him," replied the detective, "but I banked on the six toughs keeping in the background. Tankerhead's visit this afternoon suggests, too, that he's finished his dealings with them."

"Why, guv'nor?"

"Well, for obvious reasons," said Locke somewhat impatiently. "If Tankerhead had got news of what happened at Turrand's do you think he would have come along here? No, my lad, he would have been so scared that he would have kept out of my way. In his conceit, friend Julius reckons that the beating up experts have done their stuff. Well, let him go on thinking so. It will help matters enormously."

"And what are you going to do now, guv'nor?"

"Going abroad," replied Locke curtly.

Drake started.

"Abroad? But, guv'nor—"

"Easy does it, my lad," grinned the detective. "Officially I'm going abroad for my health. Actually I'm setting up in business as a bookmaker."

Drake nearly jumped clear of the floor.

"I'm going to be Jules Martinez, a rich bookmaker from the Argentine, my lad," chuckled Locke. "I've been thinking things over very carefully. Friends Tankerhead and Villiers seem to make a lot of their money out of innocent bookmakers."

"How do you know?"

"Careful inquiries," answered Locke. "It appears that so far only Joe Blimers has escaped paying over a heap of money to one or the other of them. And it wouldn't be hazarding much to say that every coup they've pulled off has been crooked."

Drake began to understand.

"And you hope to get them to do business with you, is that it?"

"Quite correct," chuckled Locke. "My cards are being printed even now—Jules Martinez, the Argentine's richest bookmaker. In this business of crime detection, my lad, we have to do many strange things. Being a bookmaker is, I feel, the best method of getting to know how these crooks work their clever swindles. Do you think Tankerhead and Villiers will walk into the net?"

Drake shrugged his shoulders. The idea of his chief posing as a bookmaker rather took him aback.

"Well, I'll lay my first bet with you, young 'un," chuckled the detective. "I'll wager you three new suits to a box of cigars that either one or both of them is opening an account with me before the end of the week."

The detective was right. In fact he was surprised at the speed with which

Messrs. Tankerhead and Villiers sought him out, the moment it became known in London that Jules Martinez, the Argentine bookmaker, had decided to open up business in connection with any sporting venture, at an address in Pall Mall.

Certainly neither Tankerhead nor his partner recognised in the big, dark-skinned, genial looking man in the faultless lounge suit who paced up and down the carpet of a sumptuous office in Pall Mall their old enemy Ferrers Locke. Neither did they, for that matter, connect the youthful clerk who admitted them with Jack Drake. For both these persons, they had it on good authority, had departed for the south of France to take a rest cure.

A Fortune at Stake!

TANKERHEAD was oozing geniality as he introduced himself and his partner and accepted the choice Havana cigar Jules Martinez offered them.

"We both go in for a little flutter now and again, Mr. Martinez," volunteered the former. "And, of course, before we do business we'll satisfy you as to our bona fides."

Jules Martinez waved a hand that glittered with diamonds.

"Don't worry, my friends," he said with a beaming smile. "I have made inquiries already. Jules Martinez knows a sportsman when he sees one. At any time, gentlemen, I shall be pleased to accept any commission you care to put my way."

"And the limit?" questioned Tankerhead.

Jules Martinez spread his hands in a big gesture, that suggested the top of the world was the limit.

"There is no limit, gentlemen," he replied. "You are both honourable men. I trust to your integrity."

"Very well, then, Mr. Martinez," said Tankerhead. "Both I and my friend have a fancy to back the steeple-chaser Victory for the Wexborough Stakes on Saturday. What price will you lay us?"—he paused and quickly added—"Joe Blimers has offered us ten to one, but if—"

Jules Martinez seemed to take the hint. He glanced at a sporting paper.

"Well, if Mr. Blimers offers ten, I should be foolish to offer longer odds," he said carefully. "Still, in the circumstances, as this is our first wager, I'll be generous. I'll lay you twelve and a half to one that Victory doesn't win the Wexborough Stakes. How's that?"

"Done, Mr. Martinez," said Tankerhead. "Can you stand a hundred thousand pounds to eight thousand?"

The big bookmaker smiled scornfully.

"My friends, ten bets like that would not break me," he replied, and did not fail to note the greed which flickered in the eyes of his visitors. "The bet is on."

The conspirators made a careful note of that big wager in their pocket-books. They went out of that Pall Mall office as though they were walking on air. Already they could see their bank balances swelling to the tune of one hundred thousand pounds shared between them.

That they stood the risk of losing between them eight thousand pounds, never entered into their reckoning. To their way of thinking it was impossible for the horse Victory to lose the Wexborough Stakes, for their peculiar way of thinking was crooked, and the running of the horse was to be crooked, too.

Ferrers Locke, alias Jules Martinez, watched them go with a playful grin on his face. He had cast a snare and it seemed that Messrs. Tankerhead

and Villiers were walking into it with both feet, so to speak. That the wager of one hundred thousand pounds against eight thousand pounds was prompted by some crooked scheme he had not the slightest doubt. But even in the role of bookmaker Ferrers Locke was not taking unnecessary chances. He looked up the record of the horse Victory and found it most unpromising. On the book of form, by which students of horse racing select their fancy, Victory could no more jump the four mile steeplechase course in the Wexborough Stakes and win, than Locke himself could.

"Who owns this horse Victory, Jack?" he asked his clerk.

And the answer came pat.

"Mr. Henry Stafford, private owner and trainer, gov'nor. Lives at Epsom. Only keeps this one horse, Victory. Goes in for racing merely as a hobby. Never bets—"

"Good!" grunted Locke. "And what's the pedigree of Victory?"

"It's father or sire, as they say in racing circles, once won the Grand National, gov'nor," came Drake's quick reply. "It's half-brother, Desmond, is a smasher. Won the National once and been placed in the first three on two

occasions. This report says that in appearance there's hardly any difference between the two horses," added Drake. "Both are chestnuts, with a white blaze on the forehead."

Locke's eyebrows came together. "And who owns this half brother Desmond, my lad?"

"Sir Tony Walforde. Lives at his country house at Epsom most of the year. Sportsman, philanthropist, and big game hunter," was Drake's information as he snapped shut his own special reference book and placed it in the bookcase.

"By thunder!" Locke's eyes were gleaming. "Jack, my lad, I think I've fastened on the wheeze. I think I know why our clever birds have backed the despised horse Victory. And if I'm right, I can put a spoke in their wheel."

"You can't afford to be wrong, gov'nor," Drake reminded him. "Don't forget you stand to lose one hundred thousand pounds if this horse Victory wins!"

(Tankerhead and Villiers are booked for a big shock by the look of things—what? This great yarn gets more thrilling than ever next week, chums. Don't miss a line of it, whatever you do!)

COME INTO THE OFFICE, BOYS.

Always glad to hear from you, chums, so drop me a line to the following address: The Editor, The "Magnet" Library, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. A stamped, addressed envelope will ensure a reply.

ONE of my New Zealand readers has sent me along a yarn which sounds like a trick that even has "Mr. X.," our magical expert guessing! Imagine burying a halfpenny in sand for a few moments and then digging up what, to all intents and purposes, is a shilling! Sounds an easy way of making money, doesn't it? Well, here is the explanation of this seeming miracle of

TURNING COPPER INTO SILVER!

In the wonderful geyser district of New Zealand nature has played all sorts of tricks. There are boiling lakes, steaming cliffs, mud fountains, and all kinds of natural marvels. And the sands which turn copper into silver are just one of them. There are chemical deposits in these sands, which in a very few moments actually silver over any copper coins which are placed in them.

But that's not the only thing! Not far away from this particular spot there are other sands—and they work in the opposite manner. If you put a shilling in them and leave it for a little while, when you dig it up again you will find that it has become coppered! In other words, it looks like a halfpenny! So, as the old showman said, what you gain on the swings you lose on the roundabouts!

But I certainly think that these sands deserve to be numbered among my collections of "things you'd hardly believe"—and I thank my New Zealand reader for sending me the information. Jump to it, you other overseas readers! Let me have some more interesting, and almost unbelievable, paragraphs to pass on to your stay-at-home chums!

NOW for a selection of RAPID-FIRE REPLIES

to other readers' queries:

Where did Alonzo spend Christmas? (This reader signs himself "I Dunno," of Oxford.) Alonzo left Greyfriars when the other juniors did, and, as he hasn't said anything about how he spent his Christmas, we must just assume that he spent it with his "dear Uncle Benjamin." But Alonzo can be a bit of a dark horse at times!

How are "Magic-Colour" Inks Produced? ("Curious," of Worthing.) Certain dyes are mixed with the inks. They produce no apparent change in the ink itself, but they are soluble in water. Thus, when a brush dipped in water is passed across the printed ink, the dye begins to "run" and thus produces the "magic" colours.

Colours of Coats-of-Arms? ("Heraldic," of Bradford.) The colour known as *tenney* in heraldry is orange. The other heraldic names for various colours are: *Or*, gold; *argent*, silver; *azure*, blue; *gules*, red; *sable*, black; *vert*, green; *purpura*, purple; and *sanguine*, blood-colour. *tenney* and *sanguine*, are comparatively rare in coats-of-arms.

How long is the Famous Cresta Run? (G. G. B., of Haringay.) This well-known artificial snow-covered track at St. Moritz, Switzerland, is about 1,350 yards in length. Steel bobsleighs and skeleton sleighs are used on it, and it is reconditioned annually for the many sporting events which take place on it.

AND now for next week's programme. The big attraction, of course, is:

"THE BOUNDER'S BIG BLUFF!" By Frank Richards,

the next yarn in our splendid new series, featuring Harry Wharton & Co. and Vernon-Smith, of Greyfriars. You'll find it packed with humour and thrills—just the kind of yarn every "Magnetite" loves to read.

Then comes another bright and breezy issue of the "Greyfriars Herald," a first-class instalment of our detective thriller, "The Man Behind the Scenes!"—as well as our usual shorter features. A word of warning—be sure and order your copy in good time!

YOUR EDITOR.

FORM-MASTER AND ROGUE!

(Continued from page 24.)

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I told Wharton to keep it dark—now he's let it all out—"

"You blithering ass!" gasped Wharton. "Can't you see you've got to speak out, now they think the note's stolen, and put it down to Smithy?"

"Well, they wouldn't think it was stolen if you'd taken it and put it back, as I asked you to!" said Bunter. "And I should have got it back all right this afternoon if the Creeper and Crawler hadn't followed me from the Form-room and copped me at his study door."

"Oh scissors!"

Herbert Vernon-Smith stood staring at the fat Owl! He seemed hardly able to realise this sudden turn in his fortunes. From the depths of despair and impotent rage he had suddenly been restored to life and hope. He passed his hand over his brow, wet with perspiration.

"I say, you fellows, I don't mind you knowing," went on Bunter, blinking round at the Removites. "It's all right so long as the beaks don't know! Keep it dark!"

"Keep it dark!" gasped Redwing. "You fat chump, Smithy's accused of bagging that banknote, and he's up for the sack—"

"Well, let him be sacked, and be blowed! He's a bad hat, anyhow," said Bunter. "I dare say the Head knows what he's about."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Besides, now they say it's pinched, they might think I'd pinched it!" said Bunter, in alarm. "What about that?"

"It's all right, Bunter," said Harry. "I'm a witness, you ass, that you were trying to put the note back, after taking it by mistake."

"Well, that's all right!" admitted Bunter. "But Smedley will whop me for rooting in his study after that picture, though I never got it—"

"That's better than Smithy being sacked, isn't it, you blitherer?" gasped the captain of the Remove.

"No jolly fear!" said Bunter promptly.

"Oh, my hat!" said Vernon-Smith. "I rather think it is, Bunter!" He laughed. "If the Head whops you, fathad, or Smedley does, I'll stand you the biggest study spread you ever burst your waistcoat buttons over."

"Oh!" Bunter's fat face brightened. "Of course, old chap, I'd rather own up than see you sacked—I should miss you fearfully if you left—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come on!" said Harry Wharton, and he led the Owl of the Remove into the House.

A minute later, he was tapping at the door of the Head's study. He entered with Billy Bunter.

"Vernon-Smith—" The Head broke off. "Wharton! What—"

"We've got the banknote, sir!" gasped Wharton.

Dr. Locke stared at him.

"Wharton! The banknote! What—what do you mean?"

"I mean, Bunter's got it, sir—it wasn't stolen at all—Bunter's been trying to put it back ever since he got hold of it by mistake—"

"What?"

"Cough it up, you ass!" whispered Wharton.

"Oh, lor'!" A grubby hand went into a pocket, and reappeared with a grubby and crumpled ten-pound Bank of England note in it. Bunter laid it on the Head's table, under the head-master's astonished eyes.

For a long moment, Dr. Locke stared at that note as if it were the ghost of a banknote. Then he observed the number, and compared it with a number written on a paper on his desk. Then he gazed at the juniors.

"This is Mr. Smedley's banknote," he said. "You must explain—"

"Go it, you fat duffer!" whispered Wharton.

Bunter babbled it out.

"Bless my soul!" said the Head at last. He peered at Bunter over his spectacles. "Such—such stupidity as this is really—really amazing! But I am thankful that it is no worse."

"Bunter told me about it, sir, before class this afternoon," said Harry. "He would have taken the banknote back to Mr. Smedley at once, sir, only he was afraid of being caned for going to his table drawer."

"The foolish boy ran the risk of a terrible suspicion falling on himself," said the Head. "It is very fortunate for him that he told you, Wharton, before the note was missed."

"Oh lor'!"

"In the circumstances, as Bunter has come to me and explained the matter, I shall speak to Mr. Smedley and ask him to administer no punishment for your foolish conduct, Bunter," said the

Head. "You may go! Wharton, please ask Mr. Smedley to step here."

The two juniors left the study.

"I say, you fellows—"

No. 4 Study, in the Remove, was crammed. A feast was toward! Short of cash as the Bounder now was, his credit was still good at the tuck-shop; and so far as eatables and drinkables went, No. 4 was still a land flowing with milk and honey! Tea in the Bounder's study was a celebration that day; and Herbert Vernon-Smith's face was the brightest in a crowd of merry faces. There was hardly room for Bunter to squeeze in.

But room was made for him! For once, Billy Bunter was a welcome guest in the Bounder's study.

"Tricklé in, old barrel!" said Smithy. "Make room for Bunter, you men! He ought to be boiled in oil, but—"

"Oh, really, Smithy! It isn't every fellow who would have rushed off to the Head like a shot, as I did, just to save your bacon—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I say, that looks a decent cake! I'll have some."

And Bunter had some, and then some more, and after that, some more! It was quite a happy time for Bunter; and he was quite glad that Smithy wasn't sacked!

Mr. Smedley, in Dr. Locke's study, was probably not having so good a time! He listened to what the Head had to tell him in utter amazement—with which rage and disappointment were strongly mingled, Dr. Locke, in his relief and satisfaction at such a happy ending to what had threatened to be a terribly disagreeable and disgraceful matter, had no doubt that Mr. Smedley fully shared those feelings. But the master of the Remove, as he walked away from the Head's study with his banknote, did not look as if he shared them! Success had seemed to be within his grasp; but the man with a borrowed name still had his work to do!

THE END.

(Next week's yarn of the chums of Greyfriars is entitled: "The Bounder's Big Bluff!" and its excellence is such as to make this series the finest Frank Richards has ever written for the MAGNET. Avoid disappointment by ordering your copy in good time, chums!)

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All applications for Advertisement Space in this publication should be addressed to the Advertisement Manager, The MAGNET, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

TERRIFIC WARNFULNESS

This is to give notice publicfully that in future I will suefully prosecute any esteemed and ridiculous junior who slanderfully libels me by asserting remarkfully that I cannot speak correctful English!—(Signed) HURREE JAMSET RAM SINGH, Remove Form.



THE NEW Greyfriars Herald



JAPES FOR ALL FOOLS' DAY

Complete list of Brand New Japes suitable for April the First. Guaranteed never been worked before. Amazing! Amusing! Startlingly original! Devised by a specialist!—Price 5s. a doz. from The Jape King, Study No. 11, Remove.

No. 79 (New Series).

EDITED BY HARRY WHARTON.

April 7th, 1934.

HOW WILL HIS GARDEN GROW?

Summer Surprises for Stott

Our only explanation of Stott's sudden craze for gardening is that the spirit of Spring is liable to infect anybody—even Stott! It can't be denied that he has taken it up in earnest, anyway, and last week he was going into regular rhapsodies over gardens in general, and the garden he was going to cultivate in particular.

"The beauty of a garden—ah, how much more it is than the mere sum total of its dazzling colours and exhilarating perfumes!" he bleated, closing his eyes ecstatically. "Over and above these, one finds in a garden something immaterial—something eternal—"

"Tummy-ache!" suggested Skinner, who has no ear for poetical discourse. Stott glared.

"You call tummy-ache eternal?"

"Sorry. Thought you said 'internal'!" grinned Skinner. "What are you going to plant in this giddy oasis among the junior gardens, anyway?"

Stott frowned.

"Well, candidly, I don't know," he confessed. "Although I'm so keen on those beautiful blossoms which will adorn my plot, I don't know their names at present. I'll have to ask old Mimble about it, and get him to buy me some seeds."

A sudden light came into Skinner's eyes—the light of benevolence and goodwill, possibly.

"Don't ask Mimble—he's too busy with the Head's garden to worry about junior plots," he said. "Leave it to me, old bean."

Stott looked surprised.

"Didn't know you knew anything about gardens, Skinner."

"Which only shows how little you know about me!" said Skinner blandly. "What I don't know about gardening isn't worth knowing, I can tell you. You just leave it in my hands. I'll get you seeds that can be relied on for a display that'll knock Greyfriars backwards!"

So Stott left it to Skinner, and under Skinner's expert direction, duly planted the seeds. And now Stott is dreaming of the garden that's going to knock Greyfriars backwards when the summer comes.

From what we know of it, Stott's garden is going to knock Stott backwards, too!

We happened to hear Skinner on the phone, when he ordered the seeds. His exact words were: "Can you help me to raise some really strong weeds that'll turn a perfectly good garden into a giddy jungle?"—And the answer made him chuckle: "Good!"

Unless Stott gets busy digging it all up again, there's going to be the dickens of a garden on view among the junior plots this year!

GREYFRIARS 100 YEARS AGO

In Friardale Lane recently witnessed a deed of heroism which has brought credit and renown to the College from all parts of the kingdom.

At 11 o'clock in the forenoon, Summerville, of the Lower Fourth Form, was returning from the village with a new boy named George Wharton, who had just arrived by stage-coach, when a pair of runaway horses appeared, drawing behind them an elegant carriage in which sat two young ladies in a state of great apprehension.

The two young gentlemen saw at a glance that the reins were loose, both driver and footman having been thrown from the vehicle some distance down the lane. Observing the ladies' dire danger, they immediately dropped the bags they were carrying and prepared to do what lay within their power to bring the horses' mad career to an end.

As the carriage, which was rocking perilously, drew near them, they ran one on each side for a considerable distance till they were able to make a leap on to the shafts. Summerville then seized one of the reins and hung on to it with his full weight, while Wharton, displaying exceptional equestrian ability, mounted his steed and pulled in the reins hard. After a stern and exhausting struggle, the two juniors succeeded in bringing the sweating horses to a stop, not far from the college gates.

To their surprise and gratification, Summerville and Wharton then found that the ladies whose lives they had saved, wore a Princess and one of her ladies-in-waiting. The princess, who was remarkably calm after her terrifying ordeal, thanked the juniors most warmly and graciously, and insisted on taking a note of their names.

A few days later, Summerville and Wharton each received a gold watch, appropriately inscribed, as a souvenir of the momentous occasion.

Greyfriars hastens to congratulate the princess on her fortunate escape—and to congratulate Summerville and Wharton on their commendable courage in the face of danger!

The new boy was the great-great-uncle of the present captain of the Remove, and it will interest readers to know that George Wharton's historic watch is at Wharton Lodge to-day—and incidentally keeps perfect time!—(Ed.)



Coker Shows Them How

Pin-Table Expert at Work

It's surprising how natural a new game of skill comes to a chap who's really brainy.

Before he went to the pleasure fair on Courtfield Common this week, Coker had never seen a game of "Pin-table." Yet he was able to see the essentials of the game at once!

"It's a matter of position," he remarked, as Potter slipped a penny in the slot and released the balls. "If you stand with your left foot forward and your shoulders at right-angles to the table, then draw back the handle gently, and let it go when the spring's just depressed to the right position, you'll get top score every time!"

"Thanks very much!" said Potter, doing his best to carry out his leader's instructions. He scored 6, and Coker laughed sardonically.

"Hopeless!" he said. "Keep your shoulders more square, man, and don't pull the handle back too far! There you go again!"

Potter scored a miserable 65 with the ten balls, and Coker told him he'd probably improve in time—provided he followed Coker's instructions carefully.

Greene then had a pot, and couldn't get more than 60.

"You chaps really give me a pain in the neck!" Coker remarked, as he stepped up to show his satellites the game as it should be played.

"Watch this!"

Potter and Greene watched the expert at work with deep interest.

(Contd. at foot of next col.)

AMAZING EASTER-EGG

Cost Bunter Cash—and Tears

Get ready for shocks, you fellows!

BUNTER'S POSTAL ORDER HAS COME AT LAST!

What's more, it was a perfectly genuine one—and for a sum of no less than ten shillings! In sending it, Bunter's pater remarked that it wasn't deserved, and that it would have to last a long time; but that doesn't detract from the fact that a genuine postal order has arrived for William George Bunter!

We need hardly tell you the ten bob has already been "blown." Eight bob went on Jack, and the other two on Peter Todd's Easter-egg.

It's going to take Bunter a long time to forget Peter Todd's Easter-egg!

He was on it like a bird when he heard about it. Todd received a letter from his Uncle Benjamin by the same post as Bunter received his postal order. There was



(Contd. from previous col.)

With a scientific precision worthy of the physics lab., Coker took up his position, pulled back the handle, gauged the shot, and made it. Remarkable to relate, he scored only 1!

Still more remarkable, he scored nine more "one's" a succession.

We've been looking around for an explanation of his failure to score anything besides 1. We fancy we've found it.

There were no "noughts" on the table!

Coker hasn't had much to say about the game of Pin-table since that visit to the fair on Courtfield Common!

that Easter-eggs didn't interest him in the slightest, while two bob in cash undoubtedly did, he accepted it.

"Hand over your two bob, you fat Shylock!" he said.

"Judging by nunky's letter, that egg'll be worth ten bob at least; but I'm dashed hard up, so we'll call it a deal!"

"Good egg!" grinned Bunter.

And he felt pretty sure it would be, too!

So it was—in a way. But it didn't happen to be Bunter's way!

It looked a good enough egg on the surface, and Bunter's mouth fairly watered as he took it from Toddy and unwrapped it. It was when he opened the shell that Bunter got his shock!

There wasn't a chocolate or candy of any description inside it!

Instead, the egg was crammed to the limits of its capacity by the following articles:

Three massive books—"Self Help," by Saml. Smiles; "The Life of George Washington"; and "Eric, or Little by Little."

One flannel chest protector.

Bunter eyed that collection of articles for some minutes as though he found it difficult to credit the evidence of his own eyes. Then, eventually, as the full realisation that he had paid out two bob for a chest protector and some inspiring literature came to him, he uttered a strangled howl of anguish.

"It's a swindle—a howling fraud!" he moaned. "Take that rotten egg out of my sight and gimme back my two bob, you beast!"

"Sorry, old bean, but a deal's a deal!" grinned Toddy.

As we remarked before, it's going to take Bunter a long time to forget Peter Todd's Easter-egg!

"LUCKY OLD WIBLEY!"

Pluck Helped, Too

"Well, and how is my nephew getting on?" was the first question put to Mr. Quelch by Wibley's Uncle Josiah, when the latter paid an unexpected call, last Wednesday.

Mr. Quelch eyed Josiah Wibley, a sharp-looking man with beetling brows and bristling moustache, with a rather embarrassed eye. By a strange mischance he had only an hour before sentenced Wibley to detention for the afternoon as a reward for doing a bit of play-writing of his own during Roman History. It was decidedly awkward that a near relative of Wib's should turn up so soon afterwards.

"Ahem!" In a general sense he is progressing quite well with his studies; but there are occasions when I have to remonstrate with him for devoting to his hobby, the stage, time which should be spent in other matters," Mr. Quelch said. "In point of fact, my dear sir, I have had to detain him in the Form-room for this very afternoon!"

"How very annoying!" said Mr. Josiah Wibley, with a frown. "I had intended taking him out with me for the afternoon. With all due respect, my dear sir, I would remind you that my nephew is the son of a famous actor, and will probably adopt his father's profession in later life. I feel that it is perhaps not altogether right of you to penalise him for exercising his natural gifts in that direction."

That respectful remark led to an argument between the two. It lasted five minutes, and it became quite warm in patches. It ended in Mr. Quelch saying, with a faint smile:

"I'm afraid I can never agree with your contention, sir; nevertheless, in this instance, having regard to the fact that you have called, I will cancel the detention altogether. I will send for Wibley now."

"Pray don't trouble, sir. I can see you are busy, and I know where to find the boy," said Mr. Josiah Wibley, rising. "Many thanks for your kind consideration, Mr. Quelch. I'm sure my nephew will appreciate it—he is a fine lad really, you know."

Mr. Josiah Wibley then shook hands with the Remove master and walked upstairs to Study No. 6 in the Remove passage, where he took off his beetling brows and bristling whiskers, and became plain William Wibley of the Remove!

"Lucky old Wib!" was the general verdict, when the story was told.

Personally, we think that the first adjective should be preceded by the letter 'P'!

LANGUID LORD

Will pay suitable chappie 2s. 6d. a day to kick Bunter every time he comes within five yards of Study No. 12.—Apply LORD MAULEVERER, Study No. 12, Remove.

WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT?



Though Harry Wharton and Herbert Vernon-Smith are often at variance over Form matters, "Smithy" has a genuine respect for Wharton—and Wharton likes "Smithy"!

GREYFRIARS FACTS WHILE YOU WAIT!



The school fire brigade, under Wingate, swiftly quelled an outbreak in the school tuck-shop. Bunter was more cut up than Mrs. Mimble herself—at the loss of piles of tarts!

Claude Hoskins put up a record at a bargain sale organised by himself. Fisher T. Fish talked for 3 hours 45 minutes recently. He says he forgot all about the time—till Wingate called: "Bed-time!"

Making tea and toast for prefects is part of a lag's duties at Greyfriars. Wingate is a kind fag-master—but Loder's fag usually gets a cuff in return for his services!

W. G. Bunter visited a circus at Friardale, and took on the "Fat Boy" in an eating contest! Hewon hands down—and promptly spent the prize-money—on tuck!