

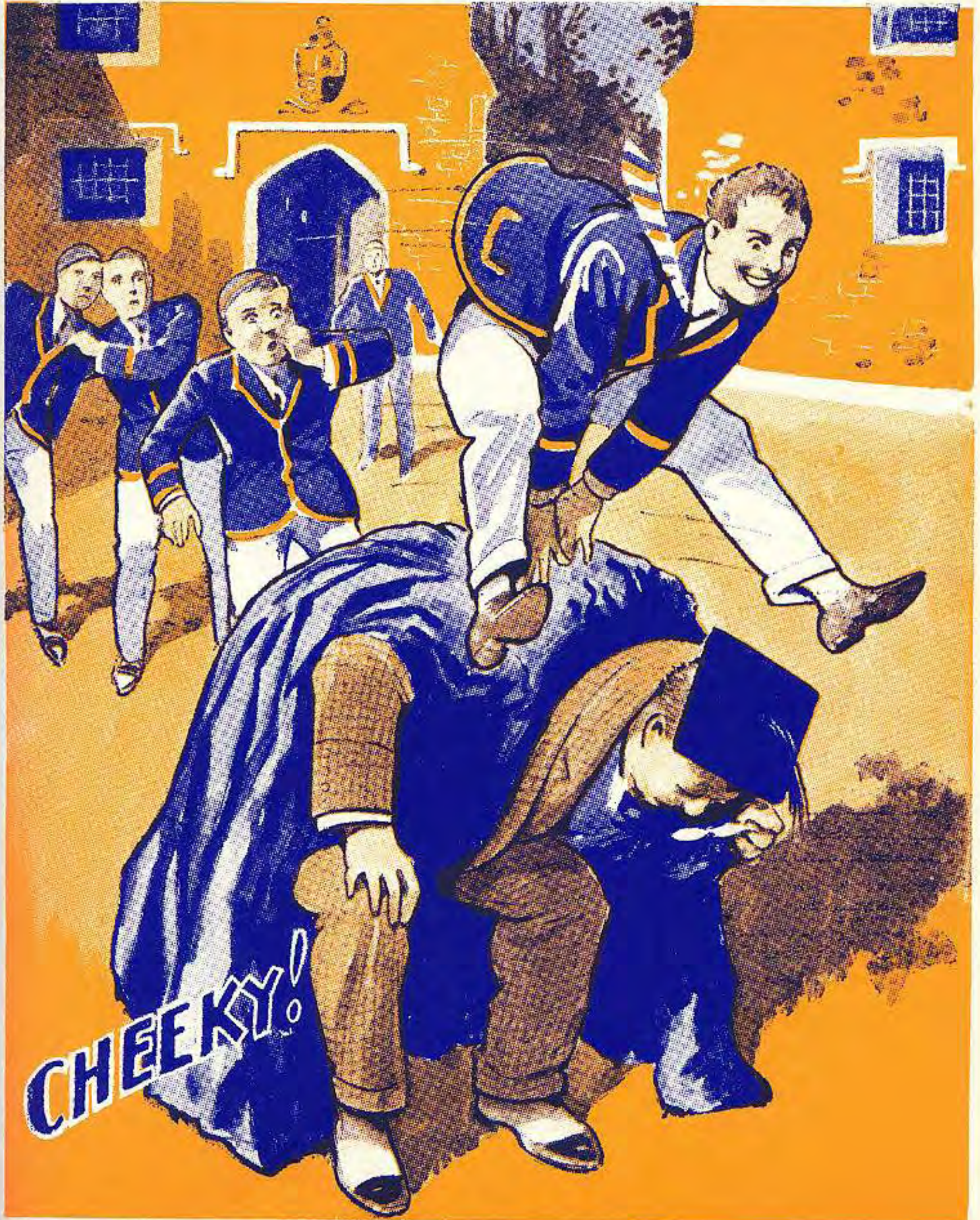
A FIGHT FOR A FORTUNE—BOY versus FORM-MASTER!

The MAGNET^{2D}

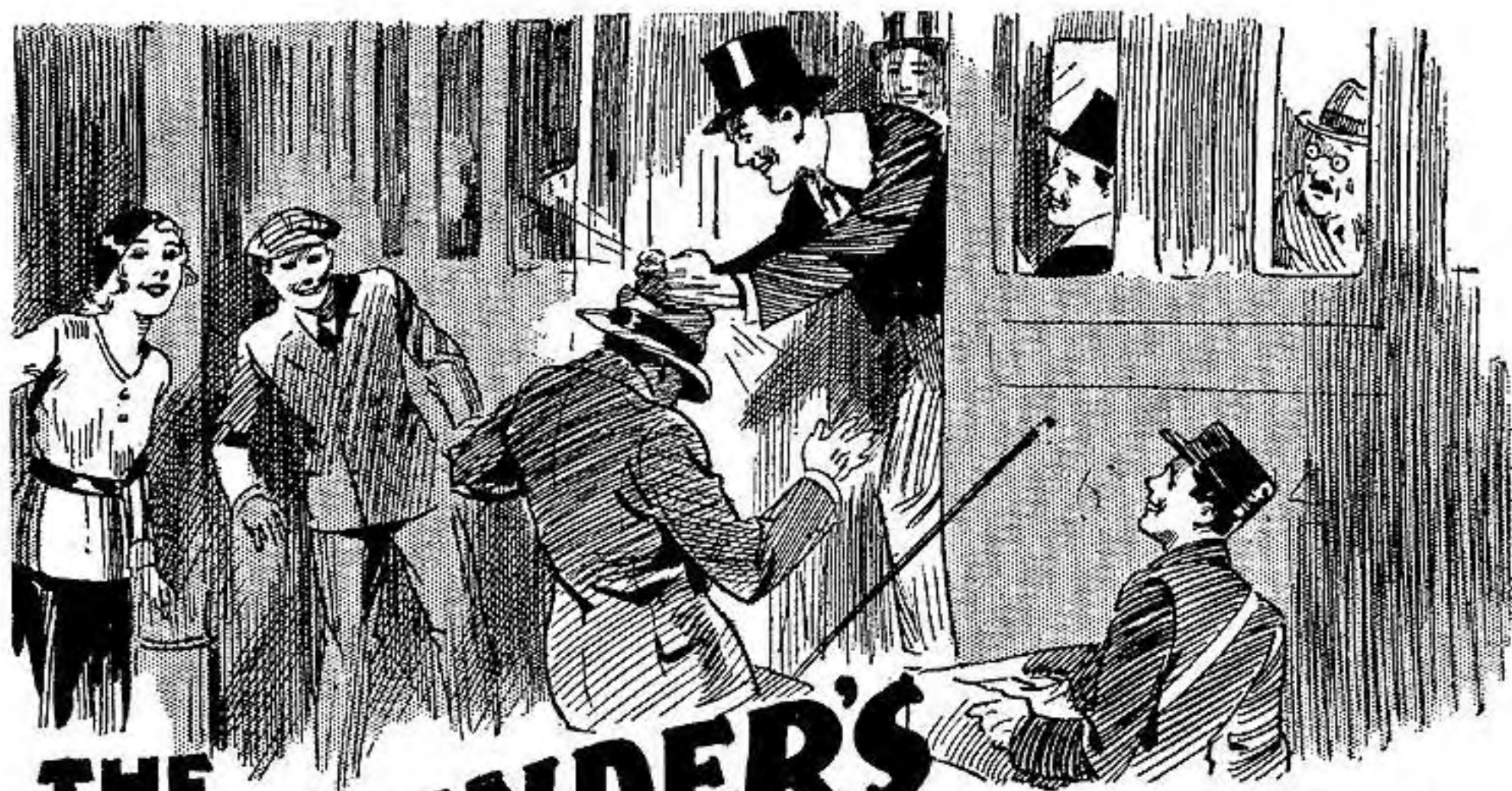
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EVERY SATURDAY.

Week Ending April 14th, 1934.



A THRILLING AND DRAMATIC SCHOOL STORY STARRING HARRY WHARTON & CO.,
THE FAMOUS CHUMS OF GREYFRIARS.



THE BOUNDER'S BIG BLUFF!

BY FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Artful Bunter!

WHAT price leap-frog?" asked Bob Cherry. Harry Wharton & Co. chuckled.

Really, Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth, looked as if he was offering them a chance—if any fellow could possibly have had the nerve to play leap-frog with a Form-master!

The Famous Five of the Remove were coming along the path under the old Greyfriars elms. They sighted the portly Prout, ahead of them, bending. Apparently Prout was scanning the path for something he had dropped. Bent almost double, with the folds of his gown flapping gently in the breeze round his ample form, Prout really looked a tempting object.

Leaning on an elm, near him, was Billy Bunter of the Remove, watching him with interest through his big spectacles.

"Shall we?" murmured Bob, gazing at Prout.

"Fathead!" said Harry Wharton. "The leapfulness over an esteemed Form-master's absurd back is not the proper caper," chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The rowfulness would be truly terrific."

Perhaps it was fortunate that Mr. Prout rose upright just then. Bob Cherry was, as usual, in exuberant spirits, which exuberance sometimes led him beyond the bounds of discretion. However, Prout resumed the perpendicular, breathing rather stertorously. Bending over was rather an exertion to the plump Prout. It was a long time since he had seen his knees.

"Bunter!" said Prout, turning his glance on the Owl of the Remove.

"Oh, yes, sir!" said Billy Bunter, without moving.

"I have dropped a cigar!" said Prout. "Can you see it, Bunter?"

"I'm rather short-sighted, sir—" "Can you see the cigar I have dropped?" snapped Prout.

Billy Bunter blinked to and fro, without shifting his position.

"Can't see it anywhere, sir!" he answered.

Grunt from Prout! "An obliging boy, Bunter, would look for it!" he said severely.

"Oh, really, sir—" Bunter did not move. Perhaps it was because he was not an obliging boy. Perhaps he had other reasons! Anyhow, he did not move.

"You are a lazy, idle, disobeying boy, Bunter!" said the Fifth Form master, with increasing severity.

"Yes, sir!" said Bunter cheerfully. "If you were in my Form, Bunter, I should cane you."

Bunter was glad that he was not in Mr. Prout's Form!

Mr. Prout grunted again, moved a little farther along the path, once more bent double, and resumed his scanning. Billy Bunter grinned. Catching sight of Harry Wharton & Co., he gave them a fat wink.

"He's tucking in his tuppenny again!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Look here, he's asking for it—"

Bob made a forward movement. Frank Nugent caught him by one arm, Johnny Bull by the other.

"Stop, you ass—" "Chuck it, you goat!"

But Bob was not to be denied. He was, as before stated, in exuberant spirits, and the temptation was too great. He jerked himself free and sprinted forward.

"Bob!" gasped Harry Wharton.

But Bob Cherry did not heed. Mr. Prout, bent double in the middle of the path, was beautifully placed for a leap. On the grassy path he did not hear Bob's footsteps, and was happily unaware of what was coming.

Wharton and Nugent, Johnny Bull and Hurree Singh, watched their exuberant chum in dismay. Billy Bunter blinked at him, with his eyes almost popping through his spectacles.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

Bob Cherry reached the bending Form-master. His hands rested lightly for a moment on the portly back, his legs flew out, and he vaulted over. In the twinkling of an eye he landed on the other side of Prout.

"What—what—what—" came in stuttering tones from the astonished master of the Fifth Form.

Prout jumped upright.

"Who what—what—" stuttered Prout. "Who—stop—how dare you? Boy!"

Bob was sprinting on.

Even the unthinking Bob realised that after leaping over a bending Form-master's back it was only prudent to put the greatest possible distance, in the shortest possible time, between himself and that Form-master!

But a plump figure plunged after him, and a plump hand grabbed at the back of his collar and he was jerked back.

"Oh!" gasped Bob.

"Boy!" gurgled Prout. "Boy! Cherry! Did—did—did you—did you jump over my—my back? Goodness gracious! I repeat, Cherry, did you jump over my back?"

Prout knew that Bob had jumped over his back, but though he knew it, it still seemed quite incredible. Such a happening had never happened before in all the long history of Greyfriars School. Prout's back was a most important back,

being Prout's. It was difficult, almost impossible, to believe that a Lower Fourth junior really had played leap-frog over Prout's back!

"Oh!" gasped Bob. "Yes, sir! I—I—I—"

"How dare you, Cherry!" boomed Prout.

Bob could not answer that question! Now that he had done it, he hardly knew how he had dared!

"Such audacity—such impertinence!" boomed Prout. "Amazing! Incredible! Unprecedented—"

"Sorry, sir!" stammered Bob. "You—you see—" He broke off helplessly. It was no use trying to explain to Prout how tempting he had looked with his portly figure bent double.

"If you were in my Form, Cherry, I should cane you with the utmost severity!" thundered Prout.

Like Bunter a few minutes ago, Bob was glad that he was not in Prout's Form!

"I shall report this—this outrage, to your Form-master, Cherry! I shall go immediately to Mr. Quelch—I mean, to Mr. Smedley—and report this unprecedented outrage!"

"Oh, sir! I—"

"Enough!" roared Prout.

Purple with wrath and indignation, Prout marched off in the direction of the House, forgetful, in his indignant wrath, of the dropped cigar he had been looking for.

"He, he, he!" came from Billy Bunter as the portly Prout disappeared.

"Oh scissors!" murmured Bob. He gazed at his dismayed chums as they joined him in equal dismay.

"You silly ass!" said Harry Wharton.

"You burbling fathead!" said Johnny Bull.

"You howling chump!" said Frank Nugent.

"You terrific duffer!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"He, he, he!" chuckled Billy Bunter. "I say, you fellows, old Prout's in a fearful wax. You're for it, Cherry, when he goes to Smedley! He, he, he!"

"Oh, shut up, you fat owl!" growled Bob. He was only too well aware that he was "for it" when Prout reported his extraordinary performance to Mr. Smedley, the new master of the Remove.

"He, he, he!"

"I say, he said he'd dropped a cigar," said Nugent. "Let's look for it, and take it back to him. Might put him in a good temper."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, shut up, Bunter."

"Beast! I say, it's no good looking for that cigar—Prout dropped it farther up the path—nowhere near here—in fact, I don't think he dropped one at all—you know what an old ass he is—"

"Ring off, fathead!"

Harry Wharton & Co. proceeded to search along the path under the trees for the lost cigar. It was barely possible that if it was found and returned to Prout it might have the effect of a peace offering. With great care, they searched and scanned and rooted, and passed, at length, out of Billy Bunter's sight along the path.

All that time Billy Bunter had not moved. But when the Famous Five were out of sight, Bunter moved at last. And when he moved, a large Trichinopoly cigar was revealed, which had been concealed by the fat junior's foot.

"He, he, he!" chortled Bunter.

He blinked round cautiously, stooped, and picked up the cigar and slipped it into his pocket. Then, with a cheery grin, the Owl of the Remove rolled away; leaving Harry Wharton & Co.

still rooting after that lost cigar—which, in the circumstances, they were not likely to find!

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Smithy Is Not Taking Any!

"**B**LOW!" growled Smithy.

Herbert Vernon-Smith, the Remove fellow who was called the Bounder of Greyfriars, was standing in his study, No. 4 in the Remove. He ran his hands through his pockets as if in search of something, and his hands came out empty. Tom Redwing, his chum, glanced at him inquiringly as he gave that irritated growl.

"What is it you wanted, Smithy?" he asked.

"A smoke!"

"Oh, don't be an ass!" said Redwing. "You're not starting that foolery again."

The Bounder laughed.

"No. I just forgot," he answered. "A leopard doesn't change his spots all of a sudden, Reddy. I forgot for a minute that I was taking a leaf out of your book, and settin' up as a shinin' example to Greyfriars."

Redwing grunted.

Smithy, the scapegrace of the school, was a reformed character these days. But how much his reform was due to a desire to do better, and how much was

The Bounder's idea of a good holiday is a "rorty" time on the Continent.

His father's idea of a holiday best suited to his wayward son is a combination of work and play under the guardianship of a tutor. And these entirely opposed views result in the Bounder's Big Bluff!

due to wary caution, was rather a question. Certainly, since the time when he had been nearly "sacked," the Bounder seemed to have turned over a new leaf. He never broke bounds, he had nothing to do with Pon & Co. at Highcliffe; there were no sporting papers in his study, or smokes in his pockets. But the fellow who had always been a scapegrace and a rebel probably found the path of reform a little monotonous. Excitement, running risks, and displaying his nerve, were like meat and drink to the reckless Bounder.

"It's all right, old bean," said Smithy, laughing. "I'm tocin' the line; jolly nearly as spotless as that model Wharton—outside, at least! I'm not breakin' out till the Easter hols. The pater's goin' to cut me off with a shillin'—or perhaps without even a shillin'—if I got sacked. Think I'm likely to risk it?"

"I hope not," said Redwing.

"Not a single cigarette in the study!" sighed the Bounder. "Frightful disappointment to a beak huntin' for them—that's one consolation."

"You don't think—"

"No, I don't think I know!" said Vernon-Smith coolly. "Our jolly new beak, Smedley, has been nosin' into this study more than once. Cherry saw him comin' in once; Squiff saw him comin' out another time; Hazel's seen him, too. I've never spotted him, because he does it when I'm out of gates. But I've had the tip."

"The man's a bit of a rotter, I'm

afraid," said Tom uneasily. "Quelch never did that kind of thing. I'm afraid he's got a prejudice against you, Smithy—which, after all—"

He paused. "Isn't surprisin'?" grinned the Bounder. "Oh, not at all! He's fearfully keen on catchin' me out—but I'm not givin' him a chance. He watches me like a cat; puts in a bad word for me with the Head whenever he can; noses into my study when I'm out of gates. Well, let him rip! He can't catch any fish where there's none to catch."

"Stick to that, and it's all right!" said Tom, smiling.

"I'm stickin' to it—here! We're just on the hols, though." Vernon-Smith's eyes gleamed. "I shall be able to shake a loose leg in the holidays. No beaks and prefects to watch a fellow—what? And the pater will hand out the tin in the hols, though he's been keepin' me short here. I've had a rotten time lately, old bean, but I'm goin' to make up for it at Easter."

Redwing's face clouded.

"That's rather rotten, Smithy! I wish you'd come with me for Easter—"

"Sailorin' on your father's ship? What a life! Catch me spendin' the hols windjammin' in the North Sea! Thanks all the same," added the Bounder, with sarcastical politeness. "Master Herbert Vernon-Smith thanks Master Thomas Redwing for his kind invitation, which circumstances compel him regretfully to decline—"

"Oh, ring off! Look here, are you coming out?" asked Redwing. "Let's get some fresh air, instead of talking rot."

"I say, you fellows—" A fat face and a big pair of spectacles glimmered in at the doorway of Study No. 4.

Billy Bunter rolled in. He shut the door behind him and blinked at Herbert Vernon-Smith through his big spectacles.

"I say, Smithy—" he began.

"Sorry!" said the Bounder politely. "My pater keeps me down to my allowance now, and I've nothin' to lend."

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"Let's get out!" said Redwing.

"You shut up, Redwing, while I'm talking to Smithy! I say, Smithy, old chap, I've got something for you," said the fat Owl of the Remove. "As soon as I got it I thought of you at once."

"What the thump—"

"If you're going out you can take it with you," said Bunter. "I know you daren't smoke in the study like you used to now Smedley watches you about. But you'd like a smoke again, wouldn't you, old chap? What about a jolly good cigar?"

"A what?" ejaculated the Bounder blankly. Smoking on Smithy's part was chiefly an affectation; its attraction to him was the fact that it was strictly forbidden at Greyfriars. But when he smoked he smoked cigarettes, and certainly would never have dreamed of venturing on cigars.

Billy Bunter, with a mysterious air, fumbled in his pocket. He drew therefrom a large, thick, black Trichinopoly cigar. It looked a hefty smoke. Certainly the Bounder, tough as he was, would not have liked to tackle it. It was a little flattened by Bunter's foot having been placed over it during Prout's search, and a little shaggy from having been kept in Bunter's pocket since; but it was still in a smokable condition—if any fellow wanted to smoke it. Certainly the Bounder did not.

"Look at that, old chap!" said Bunter impressively.

"My only hat!" said Smithy.

"Some cigar—what?" asked Bunter. "You see, I—I've met my—my uncle

to-day, and he gave me this cigar. He always smokes the most expensive Havana cigars, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Bounder. "Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" snapped Bunter. "You can see that it's a jolly expensive cigar—"

"I can see that it's not Havana, you fat Owl!"

"Oh, isn't it?" ejaculated Bunter.

"You fat dummy!" said Tom Redwing. "That's one of the big cigars that old Prout smokes—a Trichinopoly. Have you been raiding in the Fifth Form beak's study, you fat ass, and bagging his smokes?"

"Well, it's a jolly good cigar, anyhow," said Bunter. "It's not old Prout's. So far as I know, he never dropped a cigar in the quad, and I certainly never put my foot on it while he was looking for it."

"Oh crumbs!"

"Knowing how you like a smoke, Smithy, I've brought it here for you," said Bunter temptingly. "Like it?"

"Well, my hat!" said the Bounder blankly. "You've pinched a cigar from old Prout to give to me? Haven't you heard that there's a proverb about bein' just before you're generous?"

"Well, we're pals, old chap," said Bunter. "And the fact is, this cigar is worth a couple of bob. And it isn't old Prout's, either; I bought it for you in Courtfield, old chap. I thought you'd like a treat. There it is, old fellow."

Bunter laid the cigar on the study table and turned towards the door; then, as if struck by a sudden thought, he turned back.

"I say, Smithy, if you've got a bob you don't want—"

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

He understood now why Bunter was so generously offering him that cigar. Certainly it had cost Bunter little enough, and he could afford to give it away. But he was not giving it away for nothing. The loan of the moderate sum of a shilling was required in exchange.

"You see, I've been disappointed about a postal order," explained Bunter. "I was expecting one from a titled relation of mine, but—but it hasn't come. It's a bit absurd, but I happen to be stony at the present moment. If you've got a bob, Smithy— You've got a bob in your pocket, old chap—"

"I've got a bob in my pocket!" agreed the Bounder.

"Oh, good!"

"And it's staying there!"

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

Vernon-Smith picked up the cigar from the table. Billy Bunter gave him a wrathful blink through his big spectacles.

"Here, you gimme my cigar!" he exclaimed. "If you're too jolly mean to lend me a bob, I'm jolly well not going to give you that cigar! You give me that—Ow! Wow! Yaroooooh!"

Smithy gave him the cigar. Taking Bunter by a fat ear with one hand, he gave him the cigar with the other—pushing it down his fat neck.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Redwing.

"Ow! Beast! Leggo! Wow!" gasped Bunter. "You'll spoil that cigar! Ow! Leggo, beast! Yaroooooh! Ow!"

"Come on, Reddy!" The Bounder walked out of the study, laughing, and Redwing followed him, laughing, too. Billy Bunter—not laughing—was left in Study No. 4, wriggling frantically in his efforts to extract the cigar from the back of his podgy neck.

It was not easy to extract! For some minutes Billy Bunter, like the young man of Hythe who was shaved with a

scythe, did nothing but wriggle and writhe. But he got the cigar out at last. It was shaggier than ever—indeed, it looked quite hairy! Prout, probably, would never have smoked that cigar had he recovered it, after all.

"Beast!" gasped Bunter.

He eyed the cigar. Bunter would rather have had a "bob" than a cigar any day. Still a cigar was a smoke! Billy Bunter would never have dreamed of spending money on smokes. But he rather fancied himself as a reckless, doggish sort of fellow, who smoked. If he could get a cigarette for nothing, he would smoke it. Now he had got a cigar for nothing. Really, it would have been a pity to waste it. Bunter decided to smoke it.

He stepped to the door, with the intention of going along to his own study to enjoy that treat. But he stopped in time. Peter Todd, in Study No. 7, was no admirer of doggishness. If he found Bunter smoking in that study, he was only too likely to introduce a fives bat, or a boot, into the matter. And he was sure to make a sudden end of the cigar. Bunter paused.

Instead of going out of the study, he closed the door, and rolled over to the Bounder's expensive armchair, and sat down therein. Smithy and Redwing had gone out, so he was not likely to be disturbed there. He snipped off the end of the cigar in quite a man-of-the-world manner, struck a match, and lighted up.

Leaning back in the armchair, with his fat little legs stretched out, his podgy thumbs inserted in the armholes of his waistcoat, in the objectionable way he had, Bunter smoked Prout's cigar.

It was quite a hefty smoke. Rings rose from the cigar and floated to the study ceiling. Bunter blew out smoke, and enjoyed himself—or, at least, was determined to believe that he did!

Thicker and thicker grew the atmosphere in the study, till it rather resembled that in the bar-room at the Cross Keys. Billy Bunter blinked through a haze, or, rather, a fog, of tobacco smoke. He was more than half-way through that potent cigar, when he was conscious of a strange feeling stealing over him.

He hardly realised what it was like at first; then it was borne in upon his mind that it was like a feeling he had had on a steamer in the Channel on a rather rough day. It was like a feeling he had had after smoking some cigarettes he had bagged from Price of the Fifth! But it was worse—much worse—and growing worse still.

Bunter ceased to smoke!

He pitched the unfinished cigar into the grate. The movement sent a sudden awful thrill through him.

"Oh lor'!" gasped Bunter.

His complexion, generally rich and red, faded to a deadly white, with a touch of green. He hardly dared to breathe. Slowly, slowly, Billy Bunter raised himself from the armchair. Slowly he tottered to the door. He was going to be ill—he knew that he was going to be ill—fearfully ill—frightfully ill—awfully and dreadfully ill! He tottered out of the study. He tottered along the Remove passage to Study No. 7. He tottered in.

"Toddy!" said Bunter, in a hoarse whisper.

Peter Todd stared round at him. He gave a jump at the sight of Bunter's ghastly face.

"What the thump—" gasped Toddy.

"I—I—I—"

"What the dickens—"

"Urrrrghh!"

Peter caught him as he collapsed,

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Vials of Wrath!

"MR. SMEDLEY!"

Prout boomed!

Mr. Smedley, the new master of the Greyfriars Remove, gave quite a start, as he entered his study in Masters' Passage.

A portly figure was standing in the middle of the room.

It was the figure of the Fifth Form master, evidently waiting there for the new "beak" to come in.

"Really, Mr. Prout—" snapped the new master.

"I came here to speak to you, sir! Finding that you were not here, sir, I waited for you, sir!" boomed Prout.

"Really, you need not have taken the trouble Mr. Prout!" said Smedley.

These two beaks of Greyfriars were not on friendly terms. They never spoke in Common-room; they never nodded in the quad; they ignored one another's existence completely.

It was quite interesting to the other beaks, for whom it provided a little titbit for conversation. But it rather puzzled them, too.

Prout had been quite pleased when he heard that Mr. Smedley was coming to Greyfriars, in the place of Mr. Quelch, now on leave. He had known the young man's uncle at Oxford, and had been prepared to give young Smedley the welcoming eye and the glad hand! Not having seen Smedley since he was a small boy of six or seven, Prout was heartily pleased to see him again.

Smedley, on his side, had been so far from pleased that he had snubbed Prout, rejected his well-meant advice, and as good as told him to mind his own business! Which, of course, offended Prout terribly, and changed his kind regard for the new master into a deep and settled aversion.

It rather puzzled the other beaks. Prout was a portentous bore, and given to patronising younger men on the staff. But that hardly accounted for Smedley's icy standoffishness, which had so deeply wounded and offended Prout.

Certainly nobody was likely to guess that Mr. Smedley, a stranger to Greyfriars, was not Mr. Smedley at all, but another man who had borrowed his name, and was therefore anxious to keep at armslength anybody who knew any genuine Smedleys!

All the staff knew that Mr. Smedley had been recommended to the Head by the well-known scholastic agency of Leggett & Teggers, who supplied beaks, when they were wanted, to half the schools in the kingdom. How was anyone to guess that Mr. Teggers had, for reasons of his own, dispatched the real Smedley to Canada, and come to the school in his name?

Even Vernon-Smith of the Remove, whose cousin Lucius Teggers was, had never seen that particular cousin, and assuredly never dreamed that he was playing the part of Form-master at Greyfriars.

In these peculiar circumstances it suited "Mr. Smedley" to keep the plump Prout at a safe distance, and avoid all talk about his old friend Charles Smedley at Oxford—of whom he knew absolutely nothing!

So now, finding Prout in his study, he gave him a stare so icy that an iceberg would have been warm in comparison.

If Prout was trying to bridge the gap, to heal the breach, Mr. Smedley was not going to encourage him. He stepped into the study, and held the door wide open for Prout to pass out.

Mr. Prout's face grew a deeper purple. He disliked this young man intensely. He generally alluded to him

to the other beaks, as "the Puppy." He showed little civility to him, and expected none! But, really, he did not expect this sort of thing! This was really the limit!

"Sir!" said Prout, in his booming, fruity voice. "Sir! I came here—I repeat, sir, that I came here—"

"You have already told me so, sir, and I can also see it with my own eyes," said Mr. Smedley icily. "But as I have no recollection of having asked you to call on me, sir, and as I am somewhat busy at the present time—"

"Sir!" said Prout, breathing heavily. "This treatment, sir—"

"If you have anything to say to me, Mr. Prout, will you oblige me by being brief?" inquired Mr. Smedley.

"I am coming to the point, sir; but I shall take my own time, sir—I shall not submit to being hectorated, sir, I may say bullied, by a young man—a—a—a puppy, sir!" boomed Mr. Prout.

It was out at last! For weeks Prout had been on the verge of telling Smedley what he thought of him. Now he had told him!

Mr. Smedley compressed his lips in a thin, tight line. His narrow eyes glinted at Prout.

"This language, sir—" he gasped.

"What I have said, sir, I have said," boomed Prout. "I am prepared, sir, to answer for my words in the presence of the headmaster, sir. And I repeat that I will not be insulted, sir, by a

with it most severely. **Yes** allude to—"

"I allude, sir, to a young ruffian, a young hooligan, an obstreperous young reprobate, sir!" boomed Prout.

Prout did not really think all those disagreeable things about Bob Cherry. But he was very angry, and in his righteous wrath he found some solace in slanging Mr. Smedley's Form.

"I think I know to whom you must be alluding, sir," said Mr. Smedley, with a nod. He had no doubt that it was Smithy. "I have every reason to be dissatisfied with the boy—as, I am given to understand, his former master had. If he has insulted you—"

"Sir! Do you, or do you not, call it an insult, an outrage, to leap over



Leaning back in the armchair, Bunter puffed at Prout's cigar. He was more than half-way through when he was conscious of a strange feeling stealing over him. "Oh lor'!" he gasped, pitching the unfinished cigar into the grate. Then his complexion, generally rich and red, faded into a deadly white with a touch of green!

"I will, sir!" boomed Prout. "I will be brief, sir! I have this to say, sir, that I refuse to be insulted, sir—insulted is the word—I refuse to be insulted, sir, by boys of the worst-conducted Form at Greyfriars, sir—boys who were unruly, sir, when Mr. Quelch was here—but who now, sir, pass all bounds of impertinence—I should say insolence—insolence, sir—"

Prout paused, but not like Brutus, for a reply. He paused for breath.

Mr. Smedley cut in:

"If you have a complaint to make of a Remove boy, Mr. Prout—"

"I have, sir!" boomed the Fifth Form master. "Otherwise, sir, I should not have entered your study, sir! No doubt, sir, the boys in your Form model their manners upon those of their Form-master—I think it very probable, sir! Such manners—"

"If you will come to the point, sir—" suggested Mr. Smedley.

young rascal—a young ruffian—a young reprobate in your Form, sir!"

Mr. Smedley's manner changed.

Such a description as that, so far as the new master of the Remove was aware, could apply to only one member of his Form—Herbert Vernon-Smith! He did not make due allowance for Prout's state of boiling wrath, which led him to exaggerate.

Taking his hand from the door, which he had been holding open all this time, Mr. Smedley stepped towards the Fifth Form master with an almost cordial expression on his hard face.

The "Creeper and Crawler," as he was called in the Remove, had his own reasons for being down on Vernon-Smith, and getting that reckless youth into the Head's black books as much as possible.

"Indeed, Mr. Prout!" He was quite civil now. "I am sorry if a boy of my Form has insulted you, and I shall certainly take the matter up, and deal

a Form-master's back, sir, in the quadrangle, sir—"

"Wha-a-t?"

"I was stooping, sir, looking for something I had dropped, sir, when that boy—that young ruffian, sir—that reprobate—actually leaped over my back, as if I were a small boy playing leap-frog, sir!" roared Prout. "Do you call that an insult, sir, or do you not? And at what, sir, are you laughing?" howled Prout, as the young master's features twitched, in spite of himself.

"Nothing, sir!" Mr. Smedley composed his features at once. "I—I regard this with the greatest seriousness, so much so, sir, that I will not deal with it personally, but request you, sir, to report it to the headmaster."

"Oh!" ejaculated Prout, taken aback. "I will come with you, sir, and lay the matter before Dr. Locke," said

Mr. Smedley. "A flogging, I think will—"

"If that is your view, sir, I will certainly accompany you to the Head at once," said Mr. Prout.

"Please do so, sir; and I have no doubt Dr. Locke will take a view as serious as my own, and will administer a flogging to Vernon-Smith."

"To—to—to whom?" ejaculated Mr. Prout.

"Vernon-Smith."

"I fail to understand you, Mr. Smedley. I was not alluding to Vernon-Smith."

Mr. Smedley stared at him.

"You were not alluding to Vernon-Smith?" he repeated.

"Certainly not!" hooted Prout.

"I quite understood, from your description—"

The new beak broke off, setting his lips. He realised that he had taken a little too much for granted. The wish had been father to the thought!

"Cherry, sir—Cherry is the name!" boomed Prout. "Cherry, sir, of your Form! If you desire me to come with you to the Head, sir—"

"Oh, nonsense!" snapped Mr. Smedley.

He had no desire whatever to report Bob Cherry to the Head for a flogging. Indeed, so far as his hard nature was capable of liking anyone, he rather liked that cheery, if somewhat noisy, member of his Form.

Prout jumped.

"Did you say nonsense?" he gasped. "Am I to understand, sir, that you have characterised my observations as nonsense?"

"Hem! I think it is unnecessary to trouble the Head in this trifling matter," said Mr. Smedley. "I will certainly deal with Cherry. I will see

him at once and inquire into the matter."

"I have already informed you, sir, of what has occurred."

"Oh, quite! Nevertheless, I must hear what the boy has to say. I will see him without delay, sir. I can say no more than that."

"I require, sir, his immediate and severe punishment!" boomed Prout.

"And I shall, sir, decide the matter, which is in my hands as the boy's Form-master."

With that Mr. Smedley walked out of the study. Prout was left snorting.

"Puppy!" he gasped.

Smedley's footsteps died away down the passage.

"Puppy!" repeated Prout.

He marched out of the study with his elephantine tread.

"Puppy!" he snorted, for the third time.

"Mr. Prout, what—what—really—"

Mr. Capper, coming up the passage, halted, in blank astonishment. "Sir! Are you addressing me, sir? What—"

Prout blinked at the master of the Fourth Form!

"Eh? What? No!" he gasped. "I did not see you, Capper. I—I was—"

"Really, Mr. Prout—"

"I assure you, Capper—"

"Oh, very well!" said Mr. Capper, and he passed on, wondering whether Prout had been drinking.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Proof Positive!

"SMITHY'S been going it!" grinned Skinner.

"My hat! He has, and no mistake!"

"The silly ass!"

Some of the Remove fellows were

coming up to tea. Skinner and some other fellows had stopped in the open doorway of Study No. 4.

Judging by the state of that study, Smithy had been "going it," hot and strong! At all events, somebody had! The study fairly reeked with tobacco smoke.

The scent of cigarette-smoke had not been an unusual phenomenon in that study, until recently. But no study in the Remove had ever reeked of tobacco as the Bounder's study did now. It almost shrieked!

"The silly ass!" said Kipps. "Smithy's the man to ask for it, and no mistake."

"I guess he'll get what he's asked for, the prize boob, if Smedley happens to come up!" grinned Fisher T. Fish.

Skinner sniffed—and sniffed!

"More like cigars than cigarettes," he remarked. "Smithy's been goin' it this time! Silly ass not to leave it till the hols."

"Where's Smithy now?" asked Lord Mauleverer.

"Gone out with Redwing somewhere, I believe," said Skinner. "He had a jolly good smoke before he went."

"The howlin' ass! Look here, get the window open and wave somethin' about," said Lord Mauleverer. "If the Creeper and Crawler came creepin' and crawlin' along now—"

"Cave!" whispered Hazeldene. "Here he comes!"

"Oh, gad!" murmured Mauly.

The rather tall figure of the new master of the Remove appeared in sight from the staircase. The little crowd at the doorway of the Bounder's study dispersed to their own rooms. There was no time to carry out Mauleverer's benevolent suggestion.

Mr. Smedley's hard, cold eyes glanced at the juniors as they moved away. He noted at once that they were interested in something in Study No. 4.

He had come up the Remove passage to go to Study No. 13 and speak to Bob Cherry on the subject of the "outrage" that had made Mr. Prout so justly indignant, but which Mr. Smedley himself regarded as rather a trifling matter. But he was far more interested in Study No. 4 than in Study No. 13.

He was accustomed to keeping an eye like a hawk's on that particular study, and he never lost a pretext of coming up to the Remove passage, for that reason. Seldom did the scapegrace of Greyfriars go out of gates without the Creeper and Crawler finding an opportunity of glancing into his study, and sometimes searching it. Indeed, it was only the fact that the Bounder's reform was, so far, sincere, that had saved him from inevitable detection and its consequences.

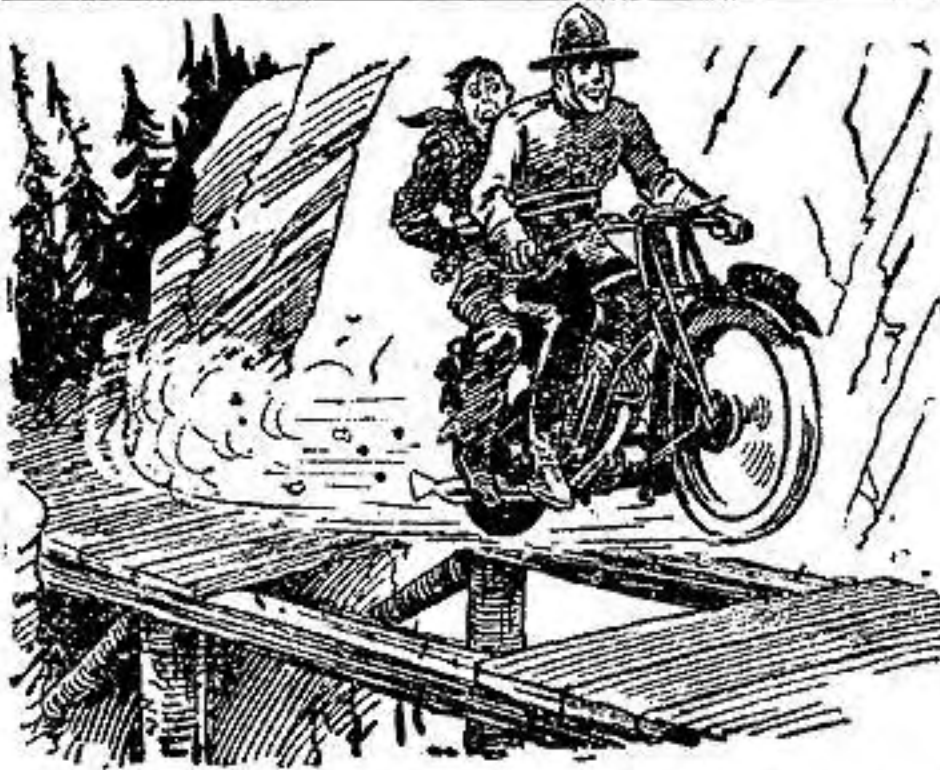
Smedley was aware that the Bounder was out of gates now. He had seen him go. But there was evidently something in his study that had excited interest in a number of his Form-fellows.

He quickened his pace, stopped at the open doorway of Study No. 4, and looked in. Then he sniffed—and stared!

Knowing the Bounder's old reputation as he did, he never looked into that study without expecting to detect the scent of cigarettes. So far, he had had no luck. Now he had all that he could have wanted. It looked as if the young rascal had been utterly careless, for once!

"Upon my word!" muttered the new master of the Remove.

There was genuine disgust in his face. The study was simply reeking with



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tobacco-smoke—the study of a junior boy in the Lower Fourth Form!

This was the boy who had been allowed to stay on, after his sentence of expulsion, and given another chance! This was what he was making of it!

This was the boy whose whole future depended on his conduct at school, who would be disinherited by his father if he was expelled!

Disinherited, in favour of his cousin, Lucius Teggers, the man who, known at Greyfriars as Mr. Smedley, was now gazing in disgust into his smoky study!

A grim smile came over the hard face.

This one act of recklessness had delivered Vernon-Smith, bound hand and foot, into the hands of his rival for a fortune!

Smoking in the studies was an offence, punished by a caning, or, at the worst, a flogging. But in the Bounder's case it was more serious—a fellow who had once been sacked, and only given another chance on the clear condition that he altered his ways! This was a proof that he had not altered them or had any intention of altering them! In the Bounder's case it was proof that reform was a hopeless proposition—that he was laughing in his sleeve at the kind-hearted headmaster who, with many inward misgivings, had stretched a point and given him another chance. This meant the finish for the scape-grace of Greyfriars.

Standing in the doorway, Mr. Smedley sniffed and stared—and smiled! Along the passage a good many fellows eyed him!

He turned from the doorway at last. His face was grave now. He shut the door carefully.

"No one is to enter this study!" he rapped out.

The juniors exchanged glances.

Five fellows had just come up the Remove staircase. They stopped and looked along the passage.

"Something's up!" murmured Frank Nugent.

"Looks like it!"

Harry Wharton came up the passage towards his Form-master. He could see that the Creeper and Crawler had found something out. Little as the captain of the Remove liked Smithy's shady ways, he liked less the creeping and crawling methods of the new beak.

"Is anything the matter, sir?" asked Harry.

"Yes, Wharton, something very serious is the matter!" said Mr. Smedley. "Vernon-Smith has been smoking in his study to a disgraceful—indeed, a disgusting—extent. This door is not to be opened until I return with the headmaster. You will see to that, Wharton."

"Oh!" said Harry.

Mr. Smedley hurried away to the stairs. He was generally rather slow and stealthy in his movements. Now he was very rapid! He wanted Dr. Locke on the scene before any of the smoke had a chance to clear off—the Head was to savour the full richness of it!

"Well, my hat!" said Bob Cherry. "Smithy's done it this time! Has he really been smoking?"

"You should sniff the study!" grinned Skinner. "Reeking!"

"The silly ass!"

"I—I suppose it's no use tryin' to clear off the smoke now Smedley's seen it!" sighed Lord Mauleverer. "What a benighted ass that man Smithy is!"

The fellows had come up to tea, but hardly anyone was thinking of tea now. Smedley had gone to fetch the headmaster, and the Removites waited in almost thrilling excitement for that

stately gentleman to appear. What he would say and do when he found a junior study reeking like a tap-room, was a deeply interesting question.

"It's the sack for Smithy!" said Skinner, shaking his head. "The beaks are fed-up with him already—he only

RHYMES OF THE REMOVE.

No. 11.



The unhappy lot of a junior school captain on compulsory games practice days is the subject of this week's clever poem by our Greyfriars Rhymester.

We're waiting to start footer practice,
A healthy two hours of fresh air!
The chaps are all keen, but the fact is
They do not all seem to be there!
Old Wingate is fuming and hooting,
And I have to hear what he says:
He gives me the job of uprooting
The chaps who delight
To keep well out of sight,
On compulsory practice days!

I have to go after each sinner,
And see that he's put through the hoop!
There's Bunter, Alonzo and Skinner,
Mauleverer, Fishy, and Snoop.
I know I shall meet with excuses:
A touch of pneumonia pays,
Bronchitis and flu have their uses,
And Bunter's in bed
Feeling next-door to dead,
On compulsory practice days!

I find Mauly prone on the sofa,
Enjoying a well-earned repose.
I waken that elegant loafer
And boot him downstairs on his nose!
I find Snoop and Skinner are resting,
And smoking, their room in a haze.
I sling them, despite their protesting
Outside on their necks,
They're a couple of wrecks,
On compulsory practice days!

Alonzo is studying Plato,
Or reading, with tears in his eyes,
"The History of a Potato!"
He looks up at me with surprise.
I bellow: "It's practice, you duffer!"
He nods with a far-away gaze.
I see I must make 'Lonzy suffer,
And teach him to scoot
With the toe of my boot,
On compulsory practice days!

I know Fishy's counting his dollars,
A pastime that fills him with glee.
He glares at me grimly and "hollers,"
"Git! Travel! Absquatulate—see?"
His orders are quite unavailing,
I'm used to his businesslike ways.
Next moment he's dizzily sailing,
Downstairs like a bird,
It's always occurred
On compulsory practice days!

I soon solve my last little puzzle,
And find Bunter having a feast.
"You think you can stay here and
guzzle?"
I ask, and the Owl answers: "Beast!"
I hook Bunter out of the study,
He rolls down the stairs in a daze;
My footer-boots, heavy and muddy.
Then help him to rise,
And the Owl simply flies
On compulsory practice days!

got off last time by the skin of his teeth. Blessed if it doesn't look as if he wants to go!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here comes the Beak!" murmured Bob Cherry.

There was a hush of the buzzing voices as the headmaster appeared on the landing at the end of the passage, followed by Mr. Smedley.

The juniors respectfully backed away as the Head sailed up the passage. His face was very stern.

Mr. Smedley turned the door handle and threw open the door of Study No. 4. A breathless crowd watched the Head as he looked in—and sniffed!

"Bless my soul!" said Dr. Locke, and he coughed. "Disgraceful! Disgusting! Incredible!"

"I regret very much that a boy in my Form—"

"I am glad, Mr. Smedley, that this has been brought to my notice!" said the Head grimly. "If Vernon-Smith has been guilty of this there is only one way of dealing with such a boy. I understand, however, that another boy shares this study with Vernon-Smith."

"Redwing, sir—a very well-conducted boy—"

"Yes, yes; I have noticed the boy, and am satisfied that he would be guilty of nothing of this kind. Where is Vernon-Smith now?"

"Do you know where Vernon-Smith is, Wharton?" asked Mr. Smedley.

"I think Smithy's out of gates now, sir!" answered Harry.

"Let him be brought before me immediately he comes in, Mr. Smedley!" said the Head.

"Very well, sir!"

The two masters went down the passage, leaving the Removites in a buzz once more. When they went into the studies to tea there was only one topic over the numerous tea-tables—Smithy, and the undoubted fact that he was "for it."

Mr. Smedley, in his study, smiled!

His game was won at last!

It was time, too! The school was about to break up for Easter, and it was by no means certain that the temporary master of the Remove would return after the holidays.

That depended upon whether Mr. Quelch had by that time sufficiently recovered his health to resume his duties at Greyfriars! Lucius Teggers had expected to find an easy task at the school! He had only to contrive to show up a young rascal in his true colours!

But the disconcerting fact that the Bounder had reformed, and was "going straight," had made his task far from easy! Now, however, all was plain sailing!

The young scoundrel, after weeks of wariness, had broken out again with utter recklessness—and he was done for. So it seemed to Mr. Smedley, alias Teggers!

Billy Bunter certainly could have told him differently! But Billy Bunter just then could not have told anybody anything! Billy Bunter was lying on the hearthrug in Study No. 7, in a state of misery that might have moved a heart of stone.

Bunter was unconscious of the unexpected outcome of his having smoked Prout's cigar in Smithy's study! He was, in fact, unconscious of everything but the series of earthquakes and volcanic eruptions that were going on in his fat inside!

Nobody thought of Bunter—least of all, Mr. Smedley! Bunter groaned and gurgled, unremembered!

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Called on the Carpet!

WINGATE of the Sixth was standing in the doorway of the house a little later when Vernon-Smith came in. Redwing had come in at the gates with him, but he had stopped to speak to some fellows in the quad, and the Bounder lounged into the House on his own.

Smithy was looking cheerful enough after his walk in the fresh spring air, and his thoughts were of an agreeable kind; he was thinking of the "high old time" he was going to have in the holidays, to make up for having had to "toe the line" so carefully this term at school.

The scapegrace's reform was probably not much more than skin deep. But so long as he was at Greyfriars, at all events, Smithy was toeing the line with the greatest care; and he certainly was not looking for trouble at the present moment. Trouble, however, was what awaited him.

"Vernon-Smith!" Wingate called to him as he came in. "Go to the Head's study at once!"

Smithy glanced round at the Sixth Form prefect. He was surprised and he was irritated. He had come in rather late for tea, and he wanted to go to his own study, certainly not the Head's. And a summons to the headmaster's study could only spell trouble!

The Bounder's face darkened sullenly. It seemed that he was going to be landed in trouble, whether he toed the line or not. It was rather discouraging for a fellow whose footsteps were, in any case, extremely uncertain on the path of reform.

"What does the Head want me for, Wingate?" he grunted.

"I fancy you know, you dingy young sweep!" answered the Greyfriars captain, with a touch of contempt. "Anyhow, get going."

With a blacker brow than before, the Bounder went to the Head's study. He wondered bitterly what it was this time! The Creeper and Crawler was always spying on him; always trying to catch him out; but there was nothing against him now—nothing for the Creeper and Crawler to discover! But something was up, that was clear, and the Bounder was in a savage and resentful mood as he tapped at the Head's door—giving a tap that was rather like a bang!

"Come in!" Vernon-Smith slouched in. The imperative knock on the door, the careless slouch as he entered, did not tend to mollify the Head. His face grew very stern as he fixed his eyes on the most troublesome fellow at Greyfriars School.

"Wingate said you wanted me, sir!" said the Bounder.

"That is the case, Vernon-Smith," said the headmaster quietly. "You are aware that you were allowed to remain in the school, Vernon-Smith, on the understanding that you changed your ways and improved your conduct. As it now transpires that you have not done so, I fear that I cannot allow you to return here after the Easter holidays."

Vernon-Smith looked at him. His resentful, half impertinent manner left him at once. He was taken utterly by surprise. For a moment or two he stared at his headmaster blankly. Then, very quietly, he spoke.

"May I ask what I have done, sir?"

"I need not tell you, Vernon-Smith, that smoking is strictly forbidden here. A foolish boy who smoked a cigarette

would be lightly punished, but such is not the case with you. You——"

"I have not touched a cigarette, sir, for weeks."

Dr. Locke raised his eyebrows.

"Do you deny, Vernon-Smith, having smoked in your study in the Remove this afternoon?"

"Certainly, sir!"

The headmaster looked at him long and hard. Unfortunately his experience of the Bounder made it impossible for him to place any reliance on Smithy's word. It was Smithy's peculiar theory that "beaks" were fair game, and that all was fair in carrying on his warfare against authority. His word, to his headmaster, was worth nothing.

"I hardly know what to say to you, Vernon-Smith," said Dr. Locke, after a pause. "I repeat that it is not a matter of the thoughtless and foolish smoking of a cigarette. Someone has been smoking in Study No. 4 of the Remove to an outrageous and disgusting extent. I cannot believe that it was Redwing."

The Bounder smiled involuntarily at the idea of Tom Redwing smoking in the study, and to an "outrageous and disgusting" extent.

"It certainly wasn't Redwing, sir!" he said.

"Then it was you, Vernon-Smith?"

"Not at all, sir."

"Then who was it?" demanded the Head.

"Nobody, sir."

"What?"

"Nobody has been smoking in my study, sir," said the Bounder coolly. "If anyone has told you so, sir, it is an untruth."

Dr. Locke gazed at him. He was not likely to believe that statement when he had the evidence of his own eyes, not to mention his nose, that Study No. 4 in the Remove reeked with tobacco smoke.

"Vernon-Smith! Mr. Smedley informed me——"

"Mr. Smedley must have made a mistake, sir!" said the Bounder. "I'm afraid he's rather glad of a chance to report me, sir."

"How dare you say so, Vernon-Smith?" exclaimed the Head.

The Bounder's face set stubbornly.

"Every fellow in the Remove knows that Mr. Smedley is down on me," he answered. "It's the talk of the Form."

"Your bad reputation in the school, Vernon-Smith, would scarcely make a good impression on your new Form-master," said the Head sternly. "Mr. Quelch, when he was here, regarded you as the worst boy in his Form, and I have no doubt that Mr. Smedley has found you as troublesome. There is no question of a mistake in the matter, when I have had absolute proof——"

"That is impossible, sir!"

"Wha-a-t?"

"You cannot have had proof, sir." The Bounder was cool as an icicle. "There can be no proof of what has never happened."

"I have been personally to your study, Vernon-Smith."

"You've found nothing there, sir, that I should object to your seeing," answered the Bounder.

"Is this brazen impudence?" exclaimed the Head. "I found your study reeking—absolutely reeking—with tobacco smoke!"

The Bounder almost staggered.

"My study!" he gasped.

"Your study, Vernon-Smith!"

Smithy blinked at him. Obviously, if the Head said so, it was so. Smithy felt as if his head was spinning for a moment or two. He had never smoked in the study since he had found out that Smedley was watching him. He was not such a reckless ass as that. He blinked at the Head dazedly,

"Now, Vernon-Smith——"

"It was not I, sir." The Bounder recovered himself a little. "I've been out of gates with Redwing. I never——"

"Then how do you account for the condition in which Mr. Smedley found your study, and in which I found it when your Form-master called me there?"

"I—I can't! Unless some other fellow——" The Bounder stammered. "I—I can't make it out. But I never did. I'm not such a fool! Redwing can tell you that I never smoke in the study."

"Someone has done so, to a disgusting extent!" said the headmaster dryly. "But if you deny it——"

"Of course I do!" gasped the Bounder.

"Very well. I am sorry to say that your word is worth nothing, Vernon-Smith. But if you deny it there shall be an investigation."

"I've been out, sir. Some fellow must have smoked in my study while I was out."

"A very improbable thing," said Dr. Locke, in his driest manner. "But I shall certainly investigate the matter, in order that there may be no shadow of doubt." The headmaster rose. "You may come with me, Vernon-Smith."

He left the study, followed by the Bounder. With a grave, stern face the Head made his way to the Remove passage, Smithy at his heels. On the Remove landing they came on Tom Redwing. He was waiting there for his chum, and he looked rather alarmed at the sight of the Head.

"What's the row, Smithy?" he whispered, when that stately gentleman had passed.

Vernon-Smith shrugged his shoulders.

"Oh, I'm for it again!" he answered.

"What have you done?"

"Nothing!"

And leaving Redwing staring, the Bounder followed Dr. Locke into the Remove passage.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Only Bunter!

"**W**HARTON!"

"Oh! Yes, sir!" Harry Wharton jumped up at the sight of the stately figure of the Head in the doorway of Study No. 1.

The Famous Five of the Remove were at tea in that celebrated study. They were discussing eggs and toast, and, at the same time, Bob Cherry's exploit with Prout. There had been no "row" so far, on account of Bob's leap-frog exploit with the Fifth Form master, and the chums of the Remove wondered rather uneasily when it was coming.

At the sight of the Head in the study doorway, Bob supposed that it had come. But, to his surprise and relief, the Head took no notice of him. Dr. Locke was there to speak to the head boy of the Form.

"Wharton, kindly ascertain if all the Remove boys are in the studies," said the Head.

"Yes, sir," said Harry, in wonder.

"I desire to see the whole Form," said the Head.

"Very well, sir."

Dr. Locke stepped back into the passage. The Bounder stood there, silent and bitter. Redwing had joined him, but in the presence of the Head he could ask no questions, and he could only wonder in dismay and doubt what new trouble had fallen on the scapegrace of the school.

The captain of the Remove went along the passage, and the juniors came out of the studies. Most of the Form were



Grasping Bob Cherry by the collar, Mr. Prout proceeded to march the junior away to Masters' Studies. "Look here, sir, leggo!" hooted Bob, as fellows glanced towards him, grinning. "I'll come with you to Mr. Smedley—but I'm not going to be dragged." "Pah!" snorted the master of the Fifth. And he dragged on.

in to tea—all but six or seven, who, owing to a shortage of cash, were teaing in Hall. Dr. Locke moved up the passage and stopped outside Study No. 4, which was still thick with smoke. The Removites realised that his second visit had something to do with that smoky study, which was rather a relief to some of them. Skinner was thinking rather uneasily of a packet of cigarettes in his table drawer, and Fisher T. Fish thought, with terror, of a certain account-book in which he kept the details of little loans he made among the fags. But it was evident now that it was the Bounder who was, so to speak, the beak's game.

Dr. Locke glanced over the assembled juniors in the passage.

"Some of the fellows are in Hall, sir," said Wharton. "Shall I call them, sir?"

"Please do so, Wharton!"

There was a pause, while the fellows in Hall were brought on the scene. They came up wondering.

"Is the whole Form here now, Wharton?"

"All except Bunter, sir."

"Where is Bunter?"

"In his study, sir! He seems to be ill."

"Ill!" repeated Dr. Locke. "If Bunter is ill, Wharton, he should have gone to the House-dame, and you, as head boy of the Form, should have seen that he did so."

Wharton coloured.

"Yes, sir; but I've only just seen him—"

"Very well. Never mind for the moment. My boys, you are all aware of the state of Vernon-Smith's study," said the Head. "Vernon-Smith has

declared that it was not he that smoked there."

"Oh crumbs!" murmured Skinner.

"Phew!" breathed Bolsover major.

Some of the fellows grinned.

The Bounder's lip curled. Not a fellow in the crowd believed his statement, any more than the headmaster did.

"If some other boy has done this foolish thing," said the Head quietly, "I call upon him to stand forward and tell me the truth. The matter is serious for Vernon-Smith—so very serious that, in the circumstances, I shall not punish the boy concerned, if it should prove to be some boy other than Vernon-Smith."

There was silence.

The Head paused for a reply; but he paused in vain. Through the silence a strange, weird sound came from Study No. 7.

"Oooooogh! Urrrgh!"

Dr. Locke started a little.

"What—what is that?" he ejaculated.

"Only Bunter, sir," said Peter Todd.

"He's rather sick, sir."

Peter was rather under-stating the matter. Bunter had been in such a dreadful state that Toddy and Dutton had gone along to another study to tea. The hapless fat Owl was left alone in Study No. 7.

"Wurrrrgh!"

"Bless my soul!" said Dr. Locke.

He stepped to the doorway of Study No. 7 and looked in.

Billy Bunter was stretched on the hearthrug there, face down. He was wriggling, or rather squirming. Horrid groans and gurgles came from him. The worst of it had passed off. But

Bunter was still feeling bad—very bad indeed. Prout's cigars were hefty.

"Bunter!" exclaimed the Head.

"Urrgh!"

"Bunter, get up at once!"

"Oh!" Bunter blinked round over the spectacles that had slid down his fat, little nose. "Is—is that the Boak? I mean, the Head! Oh!"

He staggered to his feet, and Dr. Locke gazed in alarm at his ghastly, fat face. For the moment he forgot even the serious matter that had brought him to the Remove quarters.

"Bunter, are you ill?"

"Ow! Oh, no, sir! Yes, sir! Oooooogh!"

"Too many tarts," came a voice unknown from the passage.

And there was a subdued chuckle.

"Bunter, you—you stupid and greedy boy! Is this caused by a reckless indulgence in pastry?" exclaimed the Head.

He had observed something of the manners and customs of William George Bunter of the Remove.

"Oh! Ow! No, sir!" groaned Bunter. "I haven't had my tea, sir. Ow! Oooooogh!"

"Then what is the matter with you?"

"Ow! Nothing, sir! Oooooogh!"

The Head gave a sniff. A faint aroma of cigar hung round Bunter. Even without that the Head would have been suspicious. Bunter's extraordinary state, in fact, could only be attributed to one cause. It was fairly clear that the hapless Owl had been smoking, not wisely, but too well.

"Bunter, you have been smoking!" exclaimed the Head.

"Oh lor'! Oh, no, sir!" gasped

Bunter. "Not at all, sir! I—I—I feel a bit queer, sir. I—I think I—I've been overworking a little, sir."

"Ha, ha, ha!" came a yell from the passage.

The juniors really could not help it—at the idea of Billy Bunter overworking. If there was one thing from which it was absolutely certain that Bunter would never suffer, it was overwork.

"Silence!" snapped the Head. "Bunter, it is clear to me—"

"Oh, my hat!" came a howl from the Bounder. He remembered Bunter's offer of Prout's cigar in Study No. 4. "Bunter!"

"Be silent, Vernon-Smith! How dare you—"

"It was Bunter!" howled the Bounder. "Bunter, you fat scoundrel, you've been smoking in my study!"

"Oh lor'! I—I haven't!" gasped Bunter. "I haven't been—urrgh!—smoking at all! I—I never—urrgh!—smoke! I—I gurrgh!—wouldn't! I never touched Prout's cigar—"

"Prout's cigar!" gasped Harry Wharton. He remembered the vain search under the elms for that lost cigar.

"Bless my soul! Is it possible, Bunter, that you have been so foolish, so incredibly stupid as to smoke a cigar!" exclaimed the Head.

"Oh, no, sir! I never found Prout's cigar! I never put my foot on it while he was looking for it!" gasped Bunter. "Smithy knows I never had it, sir! I offered it to him—"

"Wha-a-t?" "I never—gurrgh!—I wouldn't—wurrgh!—I haven't—yurrgh!" said Bunter lucidly.

"I think I understand," said Dr. Locke. "You found a cigar belonging to Mr. Prout, and you were so foolish as to smoke it, Bunter. You smoked it in another boy's study."

"I—I didn't, sir. I—I wasn't in Smithy's study at all. Redwing knows; he heard me speaking to Smithy. Besides, Toddy would have made a fuss—I mean—Gurrgh!"

Dr. Locke looked at him, and looked at the Bounder. Every face in the crowded passage wore a grin now. The matter had been serious—very serious! But it was growing rather comic. Billy Bunter's wild adventures with a strong cigar could only be taken hilariously.

"Vernon-Smith, it—it appears that this foolish boy, Bunter, smoked a cigar in your study during your absence, I presume."

"Yes, sir. He was there with it when I went out," said the Bounder. "I forgot all about it after shoving it down his neck."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hem! In—in—in the circumstances, you are—are exonerated, Vernon-Smith. It is clear that—that—" Dr. Locke turned to Bunter again with a grim frown. "Bunter, you utterly stupid boy—"

"Oh, really, sir—Wurrgh!"

"You will follow me to my study, Bunter!"

"Gurrgh!"

Another earthquake was happening to Bunter. He staggered, and leaned over the table, heaving and gurgling.

"Hem! On the whole, you need not follow me to my study, Bunter," said Dr. Locke hastily. And he stepped out of Study No. 7.

"Wurrrrrgh!"

"I am glad, Vernon-Smith, that this matter has been cleared up satisfactorily," said the Head.

And without waiting for the Bounder

to reply, he rustled away to the stairs. Every fellow present was grinning or chuckling, and the situation was growing rather ridiculous, which was exceedingly uncomfortable for a dignified gentleman like the headmaster of Greyfriars. Dr. Locke beat quite a hurried retreat. And as he went down the Remove staircase, there was a roar in the passage:

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Dr. Locke's brows were knitted, and his lips tightly compressed as he rustled down Masters' Passage, and stopped at Mr. Smedley's door. He tapped at that door, opened it, but did not enter. Mr. Smedley, who had been smiling at agreeable thoughts of his own, ceased to smile instantly, and faced his chief with a grave, composed face.

"You have seen Vernon-Smith, sir?"

ARE YOU A JOKER?

M. Robinson, of 19, Daniel Street, Wellington, S.I., New Zealand, is, and he's won a

SPECIAL PRIZE

for sending in the joke below.



Angry Shopkeeper: "Here, what do you mean by throwing a brick through my window?"

Pat (in broad tone and not without surprise): "Faith, an' how was Oi to know the wasp was on the inside?"

Note.—All jokes and Greyfriars limericks should be addressed to: "Limericks and Jokes" Editor, c/o MAGNET, 5, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.4 (Comp.).

"I have seen him, Mr. Smedley!" rapped the Head. Bitterly annoyed by the absurdity of the scene in the Remove passage, the headmaster was passing it on. "A ridiculous mistake has been made."

"Sir!" said Mr. Smedley blankly.

"It transpired," snapped Dr. Locke, "that another boy—a foolish boy named Bunter—found a cigar belonging to a Form-master, and smoked it in Vernon-Smith's study."

"I can hardly believe—"

"You may believe it, Mr. Smedley, as I have ascertained the facts. And I am compelled to point out, sir, that had you ascertained the facts before reporting the matter to me, you would have saved my time, and saved me from participating in an absurd scene, sir."

"Dr. Locke—"

"On another occasion, sir, I shall be

obliged—greatly obliged—if you will take the trouble to ascertain how the matter really stands before wasting my time which, Mr. Smedley, is of some value."

With that the headmaster turned and swept away, leaving Mr. Smedley to digest that little lecture as best he could.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Rough Luck!

"O H, my hat!" gasped Bob Cherry.

Bob was taken by surprise. He was strolling along to the Rag after tea when Mr. Prout happened. A sudden grasp on the back of his collar apprised him that Prout was in the offing.

Bob twisted round and stared, or rather glared, at Prout.

"I—I say, leggo my collar, sir!" gasped Bob.

Instead of letting go his collar, the Fifth Form master tightened his grip.

"Come with me!" boomed Prout.

Prout had let the sun go down on his wrath! That wrath, instead of diminishing with the passage of time had rather improved, like wine, with keeping.

Mr. Smedley, in his keen interest in the Bounder, and in his deep annoyance at the outcome of that affair, had quite forgotten Prout and the leap-frog incident. Moreover, he was busily occupied at the moment in his study; and probably would not have bothered about the affair had he remembered it.

It was quite otherwise with Prout. Prout's dignity had been outraged—a playful junior had leap-frogged over his portly and majestic back. Prout was far from regarding that as a trivial incident, due to the exuberance of juvenile spirits. It was serious—awfully serious—to Prout! And the fact that the offender—the iniquitous offender—had not been punished, added to the gloomy and deep resentment of the dignified Prout! If such things passed unpunished, it was time, in Prout's opinion, for the skies to fall!

Hence his grasp on Bob's collar! He had been looking for that cheery youth, and now he had found him.

He proceeded to march him away to Masters' Studies. Bob had to go, with that grip on his collar! But he wriggled and objected! Prout was not his Form-master, and had no right to lay hands on him.

"Look here, sir, leggo!" hooted Bob.

"Come!" boomed Prout. "I am taking you, Cherry, to your Form-master! We shall see whether you are to be allowed to escape scot-free, sir—yes, we shall see! If your Form-master does not deal with you to my satisfaction, Cherry, I shall take you to your headmaster. Come!"

"Oh crikey!" murmured Bob.

Prout kept hold of his collar, no doubt aware that the junior would have dodged and scudded had he been released. Bob, on the other hand, had no desire to be marched along by the collar, like a naughty fag of the Second Form. Already half a dozen fellows were glancing towards him and grinning. Coker of the Fifth pointed him out to Potter and Greene, with a chuckle. Temple of the Fourth winked at Fry, who chortled. Bob's cheeks were crimson.

"Let go my collar, sir!" he exclaimed. "I'll come with you to Mr. Smedley—but I'm not going to be dragged."

"Pah!" snorted Prout. And he dragged on.

"Look here—" howled Bob, as he

was jerked round the corner into Masters' Passage, followed by several chuckles.

"Pah!" repeated Prout. Bob's blue eyes gleamed! It was true that Prout had cause of offence—his plump and stately back was not to be leapt-frogged over with impunity. But this was altogether too thick.

Bob Cherry gave a sudden twist and jerked his collar away from the Fifth Form master's podgy fingers. He jumped clear.

"Upon my word!" gasped Prout, jumping after him.

Bob jumped back. "Look here, I'll go to Mr. Smedley!" he gasped. "You—"

"I shall take you! I—" Prout grabbed at him, and Bob scudded up the passage to his Form-master's study. Evidently he had to go to that study; but he did not choose to arrive there with Prout's paw on his collar.

"Stop!" gasped Prout. "Boy! Stop!" He plunged after Bob Cherry, who put on speed.

It was quite a race up the passage! Bob Cherry won by a neck!

He reached Mr. Smedley's door rather breathlessly, with Prout's clutching hand outstretched behind him.

To tap and hurl the door open and rush in was the work of a second. There was no time to lose! It was rather an unceremonious way for a junior to enter his beak's study! But time was not available for standing on ceremony, with a clutching hand almost on his collar!

"If you please, sir—" gasped Bob, as he hurtled in, rather like a cannon-ball.

There was a startled exclamation in the study.

Mr. Smedley sprang up from his table.

There was a letter in his hand, an envelope on the table. He had been reading the letter.

The next moment he thrust the letter into his pocket before Bob's eyes could fall on it.

The action was unusual enough, and the next moment Bob knew the reason. He could not help seeing the envelope lying on the table.

That envelope was addressed to Herbert Vernon-Smith, in the well-known hand of his father, Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith, the millionaire financier.

Another moment, and Mr. Smedley had thrown a sheet of blotting-paper over that envelope.

But Bob had seen it!

The new master's face was almost convulsed with rage as he glared at the breathless and startled junior.

"Cherry! What—how dare you!" he almost choked.

"Sorry, sir!" gasped Bob. "I—"

Mr. Prout rolled in the next second, and it was clear why Bob had bolted into the study so suddenly. Smedley's glance turned from Bob to Prout.

"This boy, sir—" boomed Prout.

"What does this mean?" exclaimed Mr. Smedley. Bob, most certainly, had never dreamed of catching the Creeper and Crawler in the very act of surreptitiously reading a letter addressed to a boy of his Form. But he had caught him in the act quite unintentionally.

The Remove master, by the rules of the school, had to keep a supervising eye on correspondence addressed to members of his Form. Such correspondence always passed through a master's hands.

But that supervision, of course, did not extend to opening a fellow's letters and reading them. Only in case of some

suspicious circumstance could a fellow's letters be opened.

That especial letter, being addressed to Smithy by his father, could not by any stretch of the imagination be regarded as doubtful in any way.

The Creeper and Crawler was spying!

What his motives might be for spying into a fellow's letters, Bob had no idea, but there was no doubt about the fact.

And the fact that a junior had discovered him at that stealthy occupation, had evidently thrown Mr. Smedley into a bitter fury.

His face was white; his eyes glinted, his hard lips were drawn back in almost a snarl. He seemed uncertain for the moment, whether to wreak his rage on Bob or on Prout! Prout was booming:

"This is the boy, Mr. Smedley, whom I reported to you and who has not been punished for an outrage—an unprecedented outrage—I was bringing him to you, sir, when he rushed away from me—"

The gleaming, glinting eyes turned on Bob! Bob, the man knew, had seen that envelope on the table, and his startled look told that he knew what it meant. And he could "whop" Bob—and he certainly could not whop Prout! Bob was selected as the victim!

Smedley picked up his cane, with a deadly look in his eyes.

"I insist, sir, upon adequate punishment for this boy, sir!" Prout boomed. "If you do not choose to administer it, sir, I shall appeal to the headmaster, sir—"

"You shall be satisfied, Mr. Prout!" said the new master quietly. He was cool again now—cool and quiet; but with a deadliness that might have reminded one of a snake. "Cherry! Bend over that chair!"

Bob Cherry, in silence, bent over the chair! Whether Smedley would have "whopped" him on Prout's account was by no means certain. But he knew that he was going to be whopped for what he had seen in the study.

The cane came lashing down. Six swipes rang like pistol-shots through the study.

Mr. Prout looked on in grim approval.

But as the lashes descended, that approval changed to grim disapproval. Prout was, on the whole, a kind-hearted man. His dignity—his most precious possession—had been outraged; and such

an outrage called for condign punishment. But this was rather too much.

"Enough, s i r, enough!" exclaimed Mr. Prout, as the sixth swipe fell and the cane rose again. "Six" was always the limit at Greyfriars, but it was clear that Smedley was going on.

Whack! Down came the cane again.

"Mr. Smedley!" exclaimed Prout.

The new master gave him a bitter look.

"You have insisted, sir, upon a severe punishment for this junior," he sneered. "I am meeting your views."

Whack! came ringing down again.

Bob Cherry was tough; and he could stand a licking. He had stood a good many in his time. But this was quite out of the common—Quelch had never whopped a fellow like this! In spite of himself, Bob gave a sharp cry as the cane landed once more.

Up it went again. Smedley was not finished yet. But Mr. Prout made a stride forward and grasped the descending arm.

"Stop, sir,!" he boomed.

"Release my arm!" Smedley was panting with rage. "How dare you meddle, sir, between me and a boy of my Form! Stand back, sir!"

Prout's eyes gleamed from rolls of fat. "Mr. Smedley," he said distinctly, "if you strike that boy again I will take him to Dr. Locke and report your cruelty and brutality, sir."

Smedley turned on him. For a moment the glances of the two Form-masters met and crossed like swords. Prout glared dislike and contempt and scorn, and the younger man's glance fell before his. Mr. Smedley breathed hard, and threw down the cane.

"This boy was punished, sir, on your complaint, and on your request," he muttered. "If you are satisfied—"

"Had I been aware, sir, that any boy would be treated in this study with such brutality I would never have reported him!" boomed Prout. "And if Dr. Locke was aware—"

"You may go, Cherry!" interjected Mr. Smedley hastily.

Bob Cherry wriggled from the study. He left Prout still booming!

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

A Blow for the Bounder!

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH took down a letter from the rack in break the following morning with a cheery smile on his face. That letter was addressed to him in his father's hand.

Of late the Bounder had not been particularly pleased by letters from his irate parent; generally they contained lectures on past shortcomings and grim warnings for the future—and never remittances. The Bounder was on strict allowance now. But he was pleased to find a letter from his father that morning.

(Continued on next page.)

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It was the day before break-up, and on the morrow he would be home; and he had no doubt that his father's letter contained references to the Easter holidays, and perhaps at long last a "tip." Now that school was to be left behind for a time, surely his once-fond father was going to drop the attitude of the stern Roman parent!

He went out into the quad with Redwing, and Bob Cherry followed him and tapped him on the arm.

"I think I ought to give you a tip, Smithy!" said Bob quietly. "I think that letter of yours has been read!"

The Bounder stared.

"Bunter hasn't had hold of it!" he said.

"Smedley has."

"Smedley! I suppose even Smedley wouldn't spy into a fellow's letters from a fellow's father!" said the Bounder in astonishment. "Besides, you can see that the envelope hasn't been opened."

"It's been stuck down again," said Bob, "and it looks as if it's been done jolly carefully."

"Look here, what are you getting at?" exclaimed Vernon-Smith impatiently. "Smedley's a spying cur, but he doesn't spy into a fellow's letters, I suppose. He's always trying to catch me out; but he can't expect to spot anything against me in a letter from my father."

"What makes you think, Cherry—" began Redwing.

"I don't think—I know!" answered Bob quietly. "Smedley had that letter open, and was reading it when I barged into his study last evening. He took it out of me because I'd seen him, the rotter! If there's anything in that letter that would give the Creeper and Crawler a handle against you, Smithy, you'd better be on your guard—he's read it."

"Well, my hat!" said the Bounder blankly. "Thanks for the tip—but I think you must have made a mistake, all the same. I don't see why even that spying cad should be interested in my letters from home."

"Well, you can believe it or not, as you like," said Bob rather gruffly. "I thought I'd better tip you, that's all."

And Bob walked back into the House.

Vernon-Smith walked on with his chum, and they stopped on a bench under the olms, where Smithy opened the letter. The Bounder was puzzled by what Bob had told him, but not specially interested. Certainly he did not believe that the Creeper and Crawler was any too good for such an act, but he could not imagine why the man should do such a thing. Had he been aware that "Mr. Smedley" was in reality Lucius Teggars, his rival for an inheritance of millions, he would have understood why the Creeper and Crawler was interested in all communications passing between the millionaire and his scapegrace son. But Smithy had no suspicion of that.

"Thank goodness the term's ending, Reddy!" said the Bounder, as he slit the envelope, which showed no signs of having been opened before it reached him. "There's a good time comin', old bean! While you're on that jolly old tramp in the North Sea with your pater you can think of me paintin' the town red and makin' up for the last rotten few weeks." And the Bounder chuckled.

"I'd rather think of you playing the game, Smithy, and trying to make your father think better of you!" said Tom quietly.

"A fat lot the pater cares, so long as I'm not sacked from here!" jeered the Bounder. "That's what got his goat!"

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I shouldn't wonder if there's a tenner in this letter now we're breakin' up."

But there was no "tenner" in the letter when Smithy opened it. Neither did the letter, when Smith perused it, seem to afford him the expected satisfaction. On the contrary, it drew a black scowl to his brow, and when he had finished reading he threw the missive from the millionaire to the ground, and leaned back on the bench, breathing hard, with glinting eyes.

Evidently that letter had contained a surprise for the Bounder of Greyfriars, and not a pleasant surprise.

Redwing eyed him anxiously. The breach between father and son was a trouble to his mind, and he would have done much to heal it. It looked now like widening.

"I'm not standin' it!" The Bounder spoke in a low voice, between set lips. "I'm not standin' it! I'll never stand it! Never!"

Redwing asked no questions. But Smithy picked up the letter again and shoved it into his hands.

"Read that and tell me if you think that a fellow ought to stand it!" he snapped savagely.

Tom read the letter slowly. He realised that it must have been a shock to his chum, though it was not wholly a surprise to himself. Smithy never could get quite used to the new attitude taken up by his once over-indulgent father. But Redwing knew that the millionaire's determination was like iron. His affection for his only son, which was genuine enough, only made him more determined. A fellow who had so nearly been kicked out of his school in disgrace had to be brought up short and sharp. And there was no doubt that Samuel Vernon-Smith was putting his foot down hard.

All the Bounder's plans for a "high old time" in the Easter holidays, as a compensation for toeing the line at school, were knocked on the head by that letter. Indeed, it was fairly clear that his father had read his unspoken thoughts on that subject and grimly put "paid" to those plans in advance.

"Dear Herbert,—I have considered very seriously the subject of your Easter holidays. This is my decision. I cannot take the risk of your falling into your former reckless ways and losing all that you have gained by your late good behaviour. Your friends in London are not of the kind that I can trust you with; neither do I think that a trip abroad would do you any good. You've got an uphill task before you, my boy, and you must set your shoulder to it. Business will take me abroad most of the time, and I cannot, and will not, leave you to carry on as formerly."

Redwing paused at that point and looked at the Bounder.

His chum's face was almost pale with chagrin and bitter anger.

But Tom did not speak.

It was useless to say that he approved of the millionaire's decision; that meant a quarrel with his chum. Silence was golden. He dropped his eyes to the letter again, and went on reading:

"These are the arrangements I have made. You will spend the vacation with a tutor I have engaged for the purpose. This gentleman, a Mr. Pickering, lives at Ampinge, near Folkestone, and he will take you into his house and board you there. He will help you with your studies; but you will have ample leisure for healthy exercise and such relaxations as cycling, boating, swimming. The

place is somewhat secluded, but very healthy. Mr. Pickering expects you on break-up day, and you will, therefore, proceed directly to his residence when you leave Greyfriars. Your usual allowance will be paid you by him. You will have a quiet, beneficial, and, I trust, happy holiday with Mr. Pickering. The precise address is Seacliff Bungalow, Ampinge, Folkestone.

"Your affectionate father,
"SAMUEL VERNON-SMITH."

Redwing sat silent after reading the millionaire's letter. He could understand and sympathise with the bitter disappointment of the Bounder. Yet he knew that Mr. Vernon-Smith was right—the wild and reckless escapades that Smithy had planned for the vacation would have been an ill preparation for the ensuing term at school.

"What do you think of that?" The Bounder broke the silence at last. "Think I'm goin' to stand it?"

"It's rough, in a way," said Redwing, hardly knowing what to say.

"Only in a way?" sneered the Bounder.

"Do you know this man Pickering?"

"Never heard of the brute before."

"I dare say you'll find him all right! Some Johnny who takes in pupils during school vacations. Sort of crammer, I suppose."

"I'm to cram—in the hols—instead of having a good time!" The Bounder gritted his teeth. "I'm not standin' for that!" Smithy clenched his hands. "Never! Never! Pickering can expect me at the dashed bungalow to-morrow if he likes! I'm not goin'!"

"Your father will know at once if you don't arrive there, Smithy! Better take care, old chap!"

"I'm not goin'!"

Redwing opened his lips—and closed them again. Argument only made the Bounder more obstinate. He had said that he was not going—but he had to go! Disobedience to his father was too serious—with his unknown cousin, Lucius Teggars, in the background! The Bounder's position, now, was too precarious for him to venture to take risks.

The clang of the bell for third school called them in.

Vernon-Smith's face was pale, set, his brows knitted, when he went into the Form-room with the Remove.

Mr. Smedley's eyes fell on him, watchfully, curiously.

The Bounder was too deep in his own dark and angry thoughts to heed it. But Redwing noticed it, and he wondered.

According to what Bob had said, Mr. Smedley had read that letter in his study over-night! He knew that Smithy was booked to spend the Easter vacation boarding with a tutor. It seemed to Redwing that the new master, aware that Vernon-Smith had now had his father's letter, was watching the effect of it on him.

Tom did some thinking in third school—not wholly on the subject of the lessons! When the Remove came out he went into the quad with the Bounder.

"Smithy, old man, I believe Bob was right, and that that man Smedley read your letter," he said abruptly.

Vernon-Smith gave an impatient grunt.

"Shouldn't wonder. What does it matter, anyhow?"

"I mean, if he read it, he knows about your father's arrangements for your holidays—"

"Let him!"



As Mr. Smedley was about to bring his cane down on Bob Cherry again, Mr. Prout made a stride forward and grasped the descending arm. "Stop, sir!" he boomed. "Release my arm, sir!" said the new Form-master, panting with rage. "How dare you meddle, sir, between me and a boy of my Form! Stand back, sir!"

"What I mean is, Smithy, he seems to have a down on you—goodness knows why! But you know how he jumps at a chance of bowling you out!"

"He can't bowl me out in the hols, I suppose!"

"Well, he might," said Tom slowly. "Knowing as he does that you should be with Mr. Pickering, he might take the trouble to see whether you're really there—and if you're not—"

"What utter rot!" snapped the Bounder. "The man will be thinking of his own holidays, not mine! Think he's likely to take a trip to Folkestone to see whether I'm with the tutor-wallah! What rubbish!"

"Well, I suppose it's not really likely—"

"You're talking rot!" said Smithy. It was only a vague suspicion in Tom's mind, and he dismissed it. The Bounder gave it no thought whatever. The Bounder's thoughts were occupied with angry, impracticable, desperate schemes to get out of that dull and dreary Easter that his father had arranged for him.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Who Wants Bunter?

"I SAY, you fellows—"

"Have a cigar!" said Bob Cherry.

"Ha ha, ha!"

The Famous Five chortled. Billy Bunter's adventures with Prout's cigar were still a topic of much merriment in the Remove.

Bunter, however, had recovered from that cigar. He was thinking of

quite other matters now—on the day before break-up. Bunter, as usual, was at rather a loose end for the holidays.

As usual, that magnificent residence, Bunter Court, seemed to fail to attract him homeward. As usual, everybody failed to realise that what was needed to make a holiday a real success was Billy Bunter's fascinating society. As usual, it was a question, not of what was to be done, but of who was to be done! As there was no prep that evening in the Remove, Bunter had time to give this important matter full consideration.

"I say, you fellows, don't cackle!" said Bunter. "I say, I'm rather anxious about old Smithy."

"What!" ejaculated the Famous Five in astonished chorus.

If Billy Bunter was anxious about Smithy, it was the first time on record that he had felt any anxiety about any fellow but his own fat and fatuous self.

"I mean it!" said Bunter. "I dare say you fellows are thinking about your Easter hols—"

"Right on the nail!" agreed Harry Wharton. "We are."

"Well, you always were selfish!" remarked Bunter. "I'm a bit anxious about old Smithy! I think of others, you know."

"Fan me!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry! Look what a rotten time the chap's had lately," said Bunter. "The Head down on him, jolly near sacking him; the Creeper and Crawler watching him like a cat; his pater keeping him short of money! I can tell you I sympathise with him a lot."

"Well, my hat!" said Frank Nugent blankly.

"He's been talking about having a jolly good time in the vac, to make up for it!" said Bunter. "But I've noticed that since he had that letter from his pater he's been frightfully shirty. Do you fellows think his pater is going to keep him short in the hols, same as he has here this term?"

"We haven't thought about it at all, as it doesn't happen to be our bizney," grunted Johnny Bull.

"Well, you're selfish, as I said!" assented Bunter. "Now I've thought about it a lot! If Smithy's going to splash money about, as usual, in the vac, and have a jolly good time, a fellow might do worse than go home with him. But if he's going to be kept under his father's eye, and kept short of money, and all that, it's no catch!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry.

The Famous Five were able, now, to spot the cause of Bunter's kind concern for the Bounder.

It was not easy, in any case, for the fat Owl to land himself on a fellow like Vernon-Smith for the hols. It was a matter of difficulty! And if Bunter overcame that difficulty, and did land himself, and discovered that there was nothing to be had that was worth having, it would be really awful!

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" said the Owl of the Remove peevishly. "You fellows only think of yourselves. Look here, Smithy's been talking about trips to France, and all that, in the vac. I heard him tell Skinner that they have roulette there

(Continued on page 16.)



(Continued from page 13.)

now in the casinos. Think he's likely to pull it off?"

"I should say not!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "He ought to be jolly well kicked, if he does! But it's not likely."

"Well, I'd like that all right!" said Bunter. "And I should be jolly useful to Smithy in France, speaking French as I do! For goodness' sake, leave off cackling! I'm really worried about Smithy! If he's going to have a rotten time, with his father scowling at him and calling him to order, a fellow doesn't want to be landed in that sort of thing."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, do shut up cackling!" roared Bunter.

But the chums of the Romove persisted in cackling! They quite understood that this was a difficult matter for Bunter; but they did not seem to sympathise in the very least.

"On the whole," said Bunter, "a fellow can't be too careful! I think, on the whole, that I'll put up with you chaps!"

"Better think again!" suggested Harry Wharton.

"Much better!" grinned Bob.

"Shut the door after you, Bunter!"

"What I mean is, I couldn't possibly come with you fellows—I've tried it before, and it turned out rotten! Hardly my style!" said Bunter calmly. "Mauly's very keen to have me for the hols; but I can't stand that old uncle of his—"

"Not to mention that the jolly old uncle can't stand you!"

"Yah! Toddy wants me, but I can't very well spend the vac in Bloomsbury, can I?" said Bunter. "Not if I can help it."

"Or if Toddy can help it!" suggested Bob.

"Beast! I was thinking of going up to Scotland with Ogilvy but—but—I don't like the idea."

"I've no doubt Oggy feels the same about it!"

"Yah!"

Billy Bunter rolled out of Study No. 1, leaving the fellows there laughing. They resumed their discussion of their plans for the Easter hols—plans which did not include W. G. Bunter.

That fat youth rolled up the passage to Study No. 4.

He blinked into that study.

Herbert Vernon-Smith was alone there. His looks showed that he was in a savage temper; indeed, his temper had driven Redwing away.

Bunter blinked at him dubiously.

Smithy had hardly made a secret of his intention to have an uproarious time in the hols, to make up for his thin time at Greyfriars since he had been driven to the path of reform.

But he certainly did not look, at the present moment, like a fellow who was booked for an uproarious time.

His look, in fact, was very discouraging to Billy Bunter.

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Still, Bunter's own position was not that of a fellow who could afford to pick and choose.

Having failed to land himself on anybody for the vac, it looked like Bunter Court for Bunter, with the company of his brother Sammy and his sister Bessie, for which Billy Bunter did not yearn in the very least.

Vernon-Smith turned a black scowl on the fat figure standing in the doorway. But—rather to Bunter's surprise, and certainly to his relief—that scowl faded away.

Something had been working in the Bounder's mind. It seemed as if the sight of Billy Bunter coincided with what was in his mind, somehow.

"You!" he said. "You can come in!"

Bunter rolled in.

"Shut the door!"

Bunter shut the door.

"After all, it might work!" said Vernon-Smith, addressing himself rather than Bunter. "You've got nothing on for the vac, of course, and you don't want to go home! You'd do anything if you could make anything out of it."

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

Billy Bunter's eyes and spectacles turned on the study cupboard. As the Bounder, rather unexpectedly, had asked him in, it was Bunter's opinion that a little light refreshment would not come amiss.

Vernon-Smith laughed.

"There's a cake in the cupboard, fatty," he said. "Help yourself."

The cake was on the table in the twinkling of an eye. It was really almost like magic.

"I say, Smithy! Gurrgh!" Bunter's mouth was full. "I say, this isn't a bad cake! Not like the cakes I get from Bunter Court, of course—but a jolly good cake! I say, your pater isn't such a beast, you know, to let you run up as much as you like at the tuck-shop!"

The Bounder did not answer. His eyes, under his knitted brows, were fixed on Bunter thoughtfully.

"Any fool could do it," he said suddenly.

"Eh?"

"You're not booked for the vac?"

"Well, a lot of fellows have asked me, but I haven't decided—"

"Cut that out!" said the Bounder rudely. "You came here to stick me."

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"Well, I'm goin' to let you stick me."

"That's a rather rotten way of putting it, Smithy! Still, if you really want me, old chap—"

"I don't!" said Vernon-Smith coolly. "I'm goin' to tell you somethin', Bunter, that the other fellows don't know! If you gabble it out—"

"I hope you can trust me to keep a secret, Smithy!"

"I'll kick you from one end of Greyfriars to the other, if you gabble. Understand this—if you jaw about it, the game's up! Listen to me! I've fixed up a holiday with Pon & Co., of Highcliffe—"

"I'll come, old fellow!"

"You won't!"

"Look here, you beast—"

"Hold your silly tongue, and listen! My father's arranged for me to go from here to-morrow to a tutor's place near Folkestone. If I don't turn up there, the tutor-wallah will let it out, of course, and all the fat will be in the fire! But he's never seen me. If another fellow went—"

"Eh?"

"And kept his mouth shut, it would be all right! You're going instead of me!" said the Bounder of Greyfriars.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Smithy's Scheme!

BILLY BUNTER blinked at the Bounder. His eyes almost bulged through his spectacles. He even ceased to masticate cake, in his astonishment.

The Bounder was grinning now, a rather savage grin. His deep reflections on the thorny subject had borne fruit!

There was nobody who knew him within miles of Folkestone. If a Greyfriars fellow arrived at the tutor's, calling himself Herbert Vernon-Smith, who was to be the wiser?

He could provide the fellow with all necessary proofs of identity!

The substitute for the Bounder would have the Bounder's books, clothes marked with his name, his box, and, in fact, all things that were his.

Mr. Pickering could not have the slightest suspicion that the Greyfriars junior who arrived was not the Greyfriars junior he expected.

So long as a schoolboy called Vernon-Smith was staying with him, he would be satisfied, and his communications with Mr. Vernon-Smith would be satisfactory.

There was, so far as the Bounder could see, only one difficulty—finding a fellow to play the part!

That, certainly, did not seem easy.

Then, Billy Bunter barging in, solved that difficulty for him!

Certainly the Bounder would have preferred some fellow like Wharton, or Nugent, or Bob Cherry—some fellow who would do him credit.

But it was absolutely certain that no such fellow would consent to take part in such trickery.

Bunter was the man!

Vernon-Smith had settled that! But Bunter hadn't—so far, at least. He blinked at the Bounder in blank astonishment. And as he recovered from his amazement, he looked far from enthusiastic.

He was there to beg, if he could, a holiday with the millionaire's son! But this was a very different proposition! Bunter Court, though not attractive, was as good as a tutor's, or better! The very word tutor suggested work; Bunter hated work.

"Well, you fathead!" gasped Billy Bunter at last. "Wharrer you mean? How could I go instead of you?"

"That's all right. The man doesn't know you, or me, either."

"Still, if he's expecting you, he won't be expecting a fellow like me," said Bunter. "If he knows anything about you, Smithy, he will be expecting to see a rather loud sort of fellow—a bounder, in fact! And if a gentleman walks in—"

Bunter stopped. The expression on Herbert Vernon-Smith's face warned him that it was time to stop.

For a moment Smithy very nearly threw over his carefully-thought-out little scheme, in his intense desire to kick Bunter out of the study!

But he restrained himself.

Bunter devoted himself to the cake. He had no idea of playing up to the Bounder's extraordinary scheme. But he sagely considered that he had better finish the cake before making that plain.

"To-morrow, when we break up," said the Bounder quietly. "you'll take a ticket for Folkestone. You'll arrive at Seacliff Bungalow, Amping, and give my name. You'll keep it up all through the Easter vac—while I'm goin' my own way, and havin' a good time. You fat fool, I'm goin' to make it worth your while!"

Bunter munched cake.

"I'll tell you the advantages," said

Smithy, in the same quiet tone. "There's a weekly allowance of ten bob—not much to me, but a fortune to you."

"Oh, really, Smithy—"
"You'll get that! The tutor-wallah will want you to work—but you can do precious little of that! I shouldn't do much, I fancy."

"I'd jolly well watch that!" said Bunter. "But—"

"The pater keeps me short of cash," went on the Bounder. "But I'm not kept short in other ways. I can run up any bills I like at the tuckshop, or at the garage. It will be the same at the tutor's. You'll find some grub-shop handy, and you can run up bills there."

"Oh!" said Bunter. He began to be interested.

"If you want to swank about, riding in cars, you can find some local garage, and spread yourself as much as you like."

"Oh!" repeated Bunter. "You'll take my box, and a lot of my clothes, and dress decently for once in your life—"

"Oh, really, Smithy—"
"You'll have a good time—"

"What about theatres?" asked Bunter. He was beginning to consider the proposition seriously now. It began to look like a good thing!

"I believe there's a theatre at Folkestone! You can book all the seats you want."

"Oh!" said Bunter.

Still devouring cake, the fat Owl of the Remove blinked at the Bounder thoughtfully, through his big spectacles. He was beginning to like this idea. The tutor might want him to work—but it was precious little work he would get out of Bunter! Even Quelch had never really been able to make Bunter work! For the rest, it looked a good thing!

Mr. Vernon-Smith was strictly limiting his son's ready cash in the well-founded belief that too much money had been Smithy's undoing. But in all other matters he was as liberal as ever. The Bounder could spend as much as he liked, so long as the accounts came before Mr. Vernon-Smith, and were approved by him. Indeed, the millionaire was anxious for his son to spend money as freely as of old, on harmless pleasures. He wanted it to be clear that he was acting not penuriously, but for the boy's own good, little as Smithy appreciated it.

Bunter's little round eyes began to gleam behind his big, round spectacles. He was fairly well aware how the Bounder was situated. He could not put a "quid" on a game of billiards, but he ran up a bill at the school shop; he could not drop in at Pon's study at

(Continued on next page.)



This week's bright and breezy Soccer talk by "Linesman" deals with further interesting queries sent in by MAGNET readers.

ENGLAND v. SCOTLAND.

DURING this month of April two big Soccer matches will be played at the Wembley Stadium: the game between England and Scotland and the Cup Final. The battle for the "old tin pot," as the footballers call it, can be left for the moment. The international game is the prime topic.

I don't need to be told that the International Championship is already settled. I know it. Wales will finish on top of that little table in which the countries of the British Isles are concerned, no matter what happens in the England v. Scotland game.

All the same, this contest at Wembley on the fourteenth of this month will be a real affair. I think if the choice were given to the Scots of winning the International Championship or beating England, the latter would be the decision. Scotsmen will be at Wembley in their thousands to cheer on the chosen wearers of the thistle.

My own view is that England will win, even though the Scots have brought in certain players to their team who have complete knowledge of the ways of English players.

On the last two occasions when these England—Scotland duels have been fought at Wembley, England has come out on top by a comfortable margin—five goals to two and three goals to nothing.

Maybe there will be some player or players in one of the two sides who will make his name in this coming game. I shall never forget, in this connection, the debut of Sammy Crooks, the Derby County outside-right. He first played for England against Scotland, at Wembley—little more than a lad—in 1930, but he played with all the assurance and confidence of a veteran.

The trouble with many players, when they first appear on this Wembley enclosure before a huge crowd, is that they get a bad attack of stage fright, and are

quite unable to do themselves justice. The man with the big match temperament is the player for whom both countries look; the fellow who can forget all about the crowd, and simply play the game as a game.

BIGGER FOOTBALL ARENAS!

WHILE I am talking about big crowds, I may refer to a communication I have received from a MAGNET reader, who says he can't understand why the big football clubs don't build even bigger arenas. He has noticed—quite correctly—that the attendances at some of the biggest games this season have been greater than ever. Thousands of pounds have been sent back to would-be ticket buyers, and so far as many matches are concerned, thousands of people have been locked out.

This idea of bigger football arenas is all very well in its way, but there are snags in it. Football, to my way of thinking, is a game which one wants to watch from comparatively close quarters in order to enjoy the proceedings, and to realise the significance of the happenings.

I can tell you now why I don't like to see matches at Wembley. I am given a place in the seats reserved for the newspaper writers. They are good seats, too, and on top of the world, as we might put it. But those places are such a long way from the pitch that all the players look exactly alike—and resemble so many midgets running about. From such a vantage point one gets the happenings all wrong. I have sometimes, at Wembley, held my breath when a shot has been sent in. I have thought it was going to the net. But when it has passed over the line I have seen that it was about twenty yards or so wide—nearer the corner-flag than the goal.

The farther one gets away from the playing pitch the less enjoyable the proceedings, and although it would be possible to build a football arena which would be capable of holding a quarter of a million

people, a lot of those people would not enjoy the game. They would be too far away.

PRACTISING BALL CONTROL!

THE other day I was pleased to accept an invitation to visit the Highgate School, and to watch the lads practising football. They were under the direction of Mr. A. H. Fabian, who is well known as a cricketer, and who has played for Derby County at football.

This football coach at Highgate has adopted what I think is a very good idea for the training of the young players. Two of them are taken out at a time on to what is really a hard lawn-tennis court. One is on each side of the net, and they play a game of tennis with a football, heading the ball instead of kicking it. Obviously they must not allow the ball to bounce twice, and they score points against each other just as if they are playing lawn tennis. This practice is a very good way of learning how to control the ball with the head, as the ball has to be headed both with the sides of the head and the forehead.

If any of my young readers are deficient in the art of heading a football, I would advise them to try this method of improving themselves. It has worked very well at Highgate.

A young player from York has been very disappointed this season because he has not been invited to play in better-class company. He thinks he is good enough for promotion. Maybe he is, but I should be very much surprised to learn that he has been completely overlooked. All the big football clubs have their scouts, who are ever out and about, and they don't miss much.

Not so long ago I had a chat with one of these scouts, and I asked him if he would give me, for the benefit of MAGNET readers, some rough ideas of the sort of players for whom he is always on the look-out. He outlined his general principles in a few terse sentences, which I can pass on as interesting. These are his first four slogans:

- A good big 'un beats a good little 'un.
- A good fast 'un beats a good slow 'un.
- A good young 'un beats a good old 'un.
- A good-tempered 'un beats a bad-tempered 'un.

Under which of those four headings do you come? It is worth while to analyse yourself occasionally. Anyway, I have told you the sort of players whom this particular scout looks for.

"LINESMAN."

Highcliffe for a card-game, but he could phone for a car whenever he wanted one on a half-holiday.

The Owl of the Remove could have enjoyed life on those lines. This scheme for the hols began to appeal to him very strongly.

Vernon-Smith grinned sourly at the sight of the growing satisfaction in his fat face.

He knew that Bunter would play up as soon as he understood that it was to his benefit—as undoubtedly it was!

Nobody wanted Bunter. And here was a chance for him. Really, it was the chance of a lifetime for Bunter!

He finished the cake thoughtfully. Thoughtfully, he finished a plate of tarts after the cake.

"Well, look here, old chap, I don't see why I shouldn't oblige you," said Bunter, at last. "Of course, we're pals—"

"Don't talk rot!"

"Oh, really, Smithy! If I'm going to oblige you—"

"You're not. You're going to jump at the chance of gettin' a holiday for nothin', you fat freak."

"You cheeky beast!" roared Bunter indignantly. "I jolly well won't do it for you now—so there!"

"All right. I'll ask somebody else. Shut the door after you."

"What I mean is I'll do it like a shot, old chap! Rely on me!" said Bunter. "And, I say—"

"Mum's the word!" grunted Smithy, as Tom Redwing came into the study. Bunter chuckled.

"Right-ho! Not a word, of course. I'm fly!"

"Shut up, idiot!"

"It's all right. I'm not going to tell Redwing anything—"

Redwing looked from one to the other. Bunter bestowed a fat wink on the scowling Bounder and rolled out of the study. His problem was solved now. He was "fixed up" for the hols.

Tom glanced after him as he went, and then looked at the Bounder again. He was rather puzzled.

But Vernon-Smith said nothing. He

did not intend to confide that peculiar arrangement for Easter even to his chum. The less said about it the better. Redwing found him in better spirits for the rest of that evening, and hoped that he had made up his mind to carry out his father's wishes as cheerfully as possible. That was a comforting hope to Redwing when he parted with his chum the following day, little guessing what was in the Bounder's mind.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Off for the Hols!

"YOU fellows coming my way?" asked Billy Bunter.

"No fear!" answered the fellows promptly.

"The no-fearfulness is terrific!"

"I was going to offer you a lift in my car!" said Bunter, with dignity.

"Eh?"

"What?"

"My car!" said Bunter. "Smithy—I mean I'm going to phone for it."

Harry Wharton & Co. grinned. They had heard a good deal, at one time or another, about the magnificent cars belonging to Bunter Court. They were prepared to believe in the existence of those cars when they saw them.

"I think," said Bob Cherry gravely, "that we'll make the school bus do to get to the station. We might lose our train if we waited for Bunter's car."

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

Sniff, from Bunter!

"Well, the car will be here pretty soon," he said. "If you'd like a lift to the station I'll take you. If any of you happened to be going Folkestone way, I'd give you a lift all the way."

"Oh, my hat!"

"I'm going down to Folkestone for the vac," explained Bunter. "Friends there, you know—rather a decent place! Sorry I can't ask you there, but my friends are a bit particular whom I bring."

"You howling ass!"

"Oh, really, Bull! I'd like to ask

you," said Bunter calmly. "But your manners, you know—"

"Who's the happy man?" asked Nugent, with a grin.

He was wondering whom Bunter had succeeded in "sticking" for the hols.

"Nobody you know," answered Bunter loftily. "Friends of mine. Rather magnificent seaside bungalow. Not people you chaps would be likely to know. Quite decent class—"

"Kick him!" grunted Johnny Bull. "Beast!"

"Well, have a good time, old fat bean," said Harry Wharton, laughing.

He was not particularly interested in where Bunter went for Easter, so long as it was not Wharton Lodge!

"Oh, I'm going to!" said Bunter airily. "Splendid place. Everything first-class—boating, bathing, motoring, you know. And he won't get much work out of me, I fancy!" Bunter chuckled.

"He? Who?" asked Bob.

"Oh! I—I mean—him, you know," stammered Bunter. "That is, nobody!"

"Well, my hat!"

"I'm not going to tell you fellows anything. The fact is, there isn't anything to tell you. There's no secret about it, you know," said Bunter hastily.

The Famous Five gazed at him.

"I'm going down in a car," went on Bunter. "Drop you fellows at the station, if you like. Smithy's got nothing to do with it, you know. It's one of my cars from home."

"Smithy!" repeated Bob blankly.

"Yes. Of course, a fellow can stand a fellow a car when a fellow's obliging a fellow—what? That's only fair. Not that Smithy's standing me a car, you know. I only mean to say—yaroooh!"

Billy Bunter broke off with a howl as a finger and thumb closed on his fat ear like a steel vice.

He spun round, to blink at the scowling face of the Bounder.

"Ow! Leggo!" yelled Bunter. "I wasn't going to tell these fellows anything, Smithy, you beast! I haven't let anything out, have I, you chaps? Leggo my ear!"

Still holding on to that fat ear, the Bounder led Billy Bunter away. The Famous Five gazed after them, and then at one another.

"What the dickens—" ejaculated Harry Wharton.

"Something's up between those two!" said Bob Cherry, in wonder. "That fat duffer was just going to let something out."

"Seemed like it."

However, what was "up" between Bunter and the Bounder did not interest the Famous Five very much. They had plenty of other things to think of that morning, with the school breaking up for the holidays.

Vernon-Smith led the fat Owl out of earshot. Bunter rubbed his ear, which was red, and rather painful, and glared at him through his big spectacles.

"You potty, piffing porpoise!" growled Smithy. "Haven't you sense enough to keep your silly mouth shut?"

"Beast!"

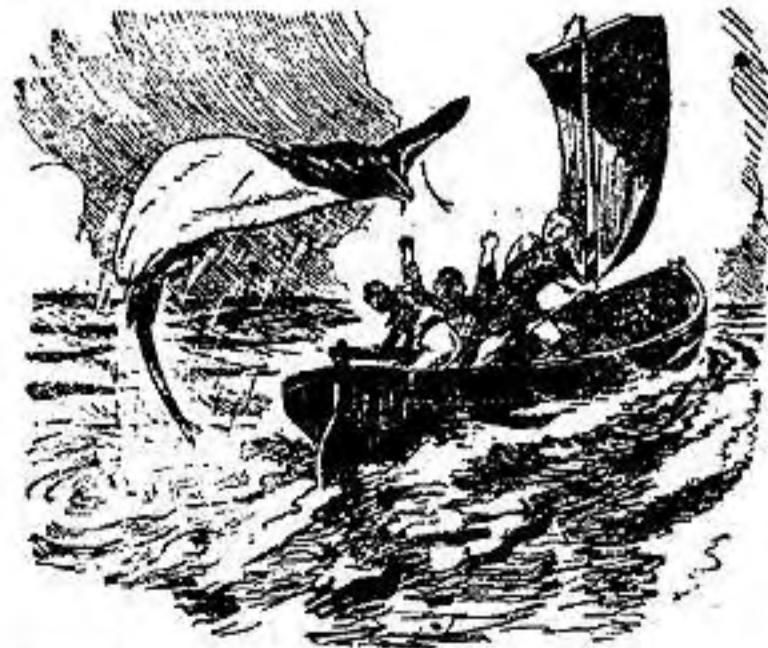
"Do you want to give the whole game away, you piffing idiot?"

"Oh, really, Smithy—" Bunter rubbed his suffering ear. "I was only offering my friends a lift in my car—"

"Your car?" snarled the Bounder.

"Yes, my car, you beast!" said Bunter warmly. "All you've got to do with it is to order it from the garage at Courtfield and send the bill to your pater. It's my car, and I'll jolly well

Famous Frank Richards writes every week in "The Ranger"



Fighting a Flying Fish!

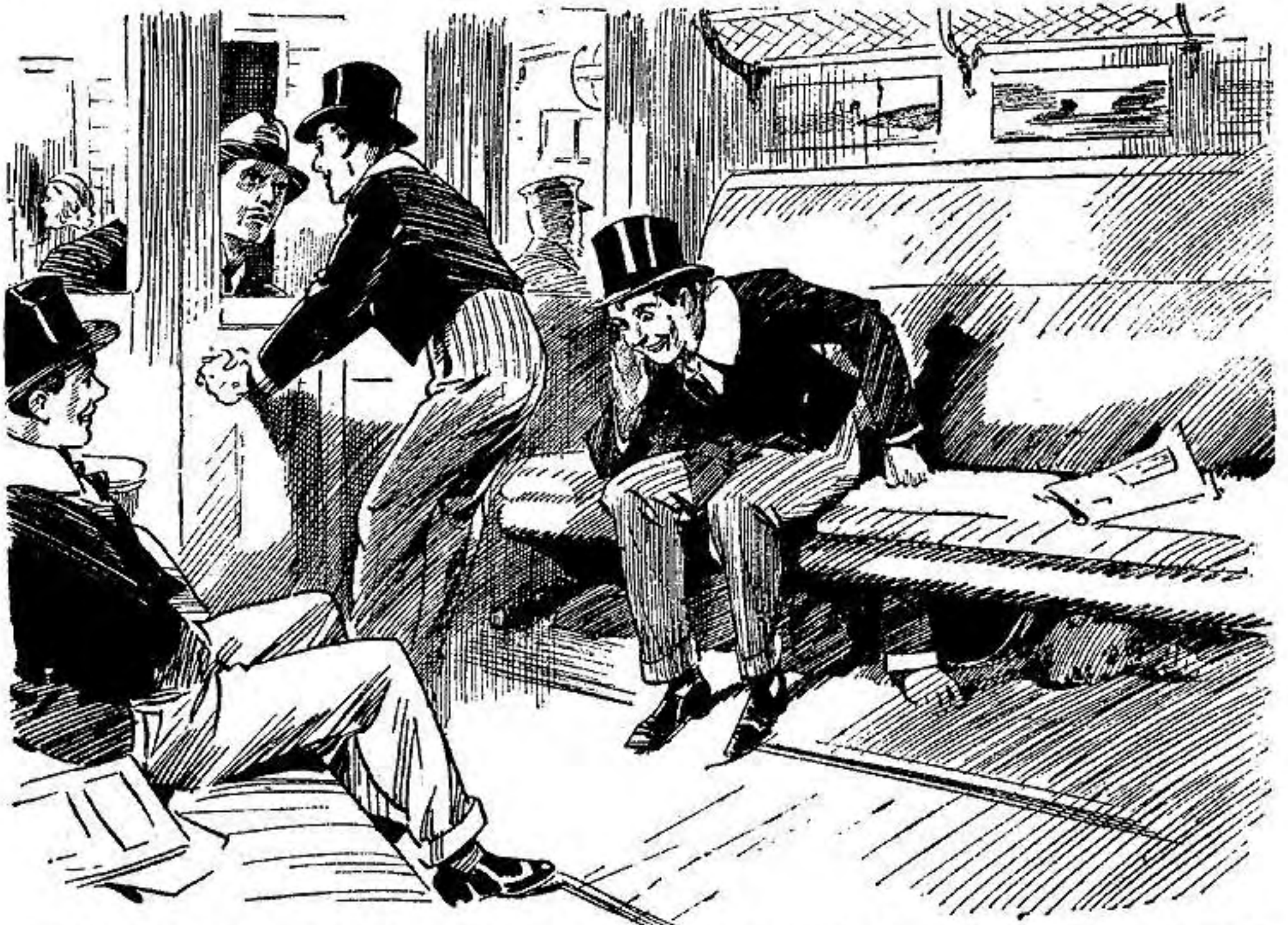
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Vernon-Smith dropped on hands and knees and wedged himself under the seat. There was a ripple of merriment from Pon & Co. "Shut up, you cacklin' duffers!" hissed the Bounder. "If the beak comes to this carriage keep him out, see?" "By gad, he's here!" said Pon, grasping the door-handle and holding it fast, as the tall Form-master stared through the open window.

give my friends a lift in it if I jolly well like to, so yah!"

"Shut up, you fat fool!"

"Beast!"

"Redwing's gone," said Vernon-Smith. "I've just seen him off. I wanted him to get clear before we started. Now, the sooner we're gone, the better. The car may be here any minute. Be ready!"

Harry Wharton had gone, with a crowd of other fellows, on the school bus, when a car came from the Courtfield garage for Vernon-Smith.

Billy Bunter got into that car, with the Bounder and his baggage. It was quite a handsome car—the Bounder did these things in style. Bunter was going all the way to Folkestone in that car. Expense was no object to the Bounder. The bill from the garage would go to his father at the end of the term, as usual. The millionaire did not stint his son in such things. And an item in the account for a car from Greyfriars to the tutor's house, on break-up day, was all to the good, from Smithy's point of view, as it helped to keep up the deception.

Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith was not likely to suspect that that car had carried any person other than his son to the tutor's bungalow at Folkestone.

Billy Bunter would have liked to swank about "his" car, but the Bounder kept a sharp eye on him. He noticed, too, that Mr. Smedley was hovering about, and he remembered Bob's warning, and Redwing's vague suspicion founded on it. And he made it a point to speak to the Courtfield chauffeur, for the Creeper and Crawler to hear while he hovered. In the hearing of Mr.

Smedley he gave the man the address he was to drive to, so that Smedley, if he was interested in the matter, should have no doubt that Smithy really was going there.

"Taking Bunter with you, Smithy?" asked Skinner, coming up as the fat Owl clambered into the car.

"I'm givin' him a lift," answered the Bounder carelessly.

"Room to give another fellow a lift?" asked Skinner.

"Sorry; no!"

The Bounder did not want Skinner's keen eyes on the scene. He was glad to get away from questioning and observation, and it was a relief to him when the car turned out of the gates of Greyfriars.

His own plans were cut and dried, but it was necessary to keep them dark—very dark, indeed!

While the Owl of the Remove kept up appearances for him, at Mr. Pickering's, Smithy was going with Ponsonby & Co. of Highcliffe, in search of the "high old time" he had promised himself.

He had not confided to Pon & Co. the fact that he was in his father's black books, and that the horn of plenty had run dry.

Had those nutty youths been aware that the millionaire's son was very nearly "stony," and that, from a financial point of view, he was not worth their while, Pon & Co. most certainly would have turned him down.

Smithy was keeping that little circumstance to himself. So far as Pon & Co. were aware, he was still the wealthy Bounder, with heaps of money to splash about.

The car left the Courtfield road and

headed for Lantham. As it ran on the Bounder cautioned Bunter as to the part he was to play at Mr. Pickering's. But the fat Owl gave him very little attention. Bunter was quite satisfied with his own astuteness, and did not need instruction.

At Lantham Railway Station there was a halt. That was where the Bounder was to join his Highcliffe friends. Leaving Smithy and his baggage there, Billy Bunter rolled on his way, fairly sure that he was going to have a good time at Mr. Pickering's, and quite sure that if he didn't he was not going to remain there.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Not Nice for Bunter!

"O H crikey!" said Billy Bunter. He sat up in the car and blinked through his big spectacles.

"Is that the place?" he asked.

"That's it, sir!" said the Courtfield chauffeur.

"Oh lor'!"

Bunter was not pleased.

Some fellows might have been pleased by what they saw. There were white, chalky cliffs, with the sea rolling on a shingly beach. In the background there were wide-stretching downs, green with the fresh green of spring. There was a little cluster of cottages near the sea, and boats drawn up on the shingle. But on the road there was only one house in sight, and that was a bungalow of far from imposing size. It had a gate on

the road, and a long path leading up to the house. The only sign of civilisation that Bunter could perceive was a telephone wire.

"Oh lor'!" he repeated.

Nobody appeared in sight at the bungalow. The whole place had a deserted look.

Certainly there was no such thing as a tuckshop or a garage in the immediate neighbourhood.

A fellow keen on boating, swimming, bathing, walking, or cycling, might have had quite a good time there. Billy Bunter cared for none of these things.

He blinked at the place in dismay.

So this was the show that that beast Smithy had landed him in! Bunter was strongly tempted to "chuck" the whole thing at the start, and tell the chauffeur to drive to the nearest railway station.

But he didn't! Bunter Court was not a strong attraction, for the excellent reason that on near approach Bunter Court diminished into Bunter Villa.

Having informed his people that he was spending the vacation with friends, Bunter did not want to arrive home unexpectedly; neither did he suppose that his unexpected arrival would cause rejoicing there.

He resolved to give the "show" a trial.

It might turn out better than it looked. If not, Bunter was not likely to remain there long.

And he was hungry. What he wanted chiefly at the moment was a meal—a large, solid meal!

But it was with a frowning fat brow that William George Bunter rolled out of the car.

"Shove the bags down here!" he grunted.

There were two suitcases in the car, with Vernon-Smith's initials on them, packed with things that also had the Bounder's name or initials.

The chauffeur lifted them down, and made a movement to carry them up to the house. It was rather a walk from the road.

"I said shove them down here!" snapped Bunter.

The chauffeur looked at him.

"You don't want them taken up to the house, sir?" he inquired.

"No, I don't!"

"Very well, sir!"

The chauffeur, surprised, but probably not displeased, for the suitcases were rather heavy, set them down in the grass by the gate.

Vernon-Smith had warned Bunter to keep the chauffeur clear of the people in the house. They were to suppose that it was Vernon-Smith who had arrived, and the driver, of course, knew it was not. A chance word might have "dished" the whole deception.

In the circumstances, it was easy for Bunter to carry out his instructions, which was fortunate. Had it not been easy, Bunter probably would not have carried them out.

The Courtfield man looked at Bunter again.

"Anything more, sir?" he asked.

"No; you can get off!" said Bunter.

Possibly the driver was thinking of a tip. If so, he thought of it in vain. Bunter wasn't thinking of it. The man went back to the car.

He resumed his seat, backed, and turned.

Bunter watched him go.

So far as the scheme was concerned, Bunter was glad to see the car go before anyone came out of the house. Still, it was with rather a sinking heart that he watched the car disappear up the road towards distant Folkestone. He was fairly landed now, whether he liked the place or not. He was not even sure

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that the grub was good. Even that fearful risk had to be taken now.

Leaving the suitcases where they lay, Bunter opened the gate and plugged up the shingly path to the bungalow.

Arrived at the porch, he rang the bell.

There was some delay before the door was opened. Bunter rang again and knocked, and then rang once more.

Finally the door was opened by a middle-aged man in horn-rimmed spectacles and a shabby alpaca jacket.

"Master Vernon-Smith?" he asked.

"Oh, yes; didn't you hear my car?" grunted Bunter. "I've been knocking and ringing for ages. Get my bags in."

The horn-rimmed man looked at him.

He was shabby, and Bunter took him for some sort of a manservant, probably a combination of gardener and odd-job man. It did not occur to his fat brain that this was Mr. Pickering.

"I am sorry you had to wait, Master Vernon-Smith!" said the horn-rimmed gentleman quietly. "My housekeeper is a little deaf, and doubtless did not hear you. And my study is at the back of the house."

Bunter blinked at him.

It dawned on him now that this was the "tutor-wallah."

"Oh!" said Bunter. "Oh, all right! Send out a servant to get my bags in, will you?"

"I keep no servants but an elderly housekeeper, who, I fear, would not be

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our useful
LEATHER POCKET WALLETS

Said Bunter: "I've run out of tin.
I'm selling my diamond pin.
Now, chaps, make a bid.
Who says twenty quid?"

"Twenty kicke," said Bull, with
a grin.

Congratulations to G. Pope, of
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able to handle baggage," said Mr. Pickering.

"Oh crikey!" said Bunter.

"The chauffeur—"

"He's gone."

"Well, well, please come in; we will see about the bags afterwards."

Billy Bunter rolled into an apartment which an estate agent would probably have described as a "lounge hall."

It was about ten feet by twelve, with well-worn linoleum on the floor, and furnished chiefly with a hat-rack and a baggy umbrella.

Bunter blinked round him.

Evidently Mr. Vernon-Smith had considered that a taste of Spartan simplicity would be good for his son.

What the Bounder, accustomed to every luxury that money could buy, would have thought of the place Bunter could not imagine.

What Bunter thought of it was very plainly visible in his fat face. He was restrained by no consideration of politeness towards his host.

But Mr. Pickering did not seem to observe it.

As he crossed the little hall Bunter noticed that he walked with a limp. He opened a door and ushered Bunter into a room.

"This is your room, Master Vernon-Smith," he said.

Bunter blinked round it.

It was quite a comfortable room,

though very barely furnished. The window gave a wide view over green rolling downs—which did not appeal to Bunter in the least.

Bunter grunted.

Mr. Pickering did not grunt—but had Bunter taken the trouble to observe him, he might have observed that Mr. Pickering was no more pleased than himself.

It was obvious that Mr. Pickering was poor; and no doubt it had been a good thing for him to obtain a resident pupil who was the son of a millionaire. But that millionaire's son did not make a happy impression on Mr. Pickering.

"I trust that we shall be able to make you comfortable here," he remarked mildly.

Another grunt from Bunter. He doubted it very much.

"A very healthy situation," said Mr. Pickering.

Grunt!

"We shall work in my study. Perhaps you would care to see it now?"

Grunt!

"We will arrange that to-morrow. Perhaps you are hungry after your journey."

"No perhaps about it!" said Bunter. Mr. Pickering coughed.

"I will speak to Amelia at once. We have supper at eight," said Mr. Pickering. "Amelia will get you some tea now. Perhaps," added Mr. Pickering thoughtfully, "you would care for an egg for your tea—after your journey!"

Bunter gazed at him.

An egg for his tea! One egg!

Leaving him in a speechless state, Mr. Pickering went back into the hall. Bunter stood as if rooted to the floor.

This was what he was landed in! Miles from everywhere, and an egg for his tea—one egg! No wonder that beast Smithy had dodged it!

"Oh crikey!" said Bunter at last.

Had not the car gone, it was probable that Bunter would have been gone even before Amelia had had time to boil that egg for his tea.

But the car had gone—and Bunter was landed!

Landed—in this!

Billy Bunter was conscious of one desire at the moment, stronger even than his desire for a square meal—the intense desire to be within hitting distance of Herbert Vernon-Smith's nose, and to land his fat fist upon it, with all his weight behind the punch!

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

A Narrow Escape!

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH gave a sudden start.

"Oh, my only hat!" he breathed.

Ponsonby & Co. glanced at him.

They were in a first-class "smoker" in the London train in Lantham Station. The train was not yet due to start, and passengers were going up and down the carriages.

Pon and Gadsby and Monson had already lighted cigarettes. The Bounder was not smoking. He had rather got out of that bad habit lately; also, he was not taking risks till he was safe away from Greyfriars. Lantham was ten miles from the school, but the Bounder had learned to be careful.

He was in a corner seat, with his eye on the platform, and he spotted a rather tall figure moving along among a dozen others. The hard, cold face, the sharp, narrow eyes, the short moustache over the set mouth, were only too familiar to him. It was Mr. Smedley, the master

of the Remove—alias Lucius Teggers, if the Bounder had only known it!

Smithy's heart thumped.

In other circumstances it would not have mattered a straw if any Greyfriars beak had seen him sitting in the London train. But back into his mind flashed what Bob Cherry had told him. Mr. Smedley had read that letter from his father, and had seen him start in the car from Greyfriars, ostensibly for the tutor's at Folkestone. If he spotted him in the London train with the Highcliffe crowd—

"What's the row?" asked Ponsonby, in wonder.

The Bounder hurriedly changed his position to the farther side of the carriage.

"That's my beak!" he muttered. He kept his face to the opposite side of the carriage as the tall figure passed the window, walking along the platform.

His heart was beating painfully.

Pon & Co. glanced at the master as he passed. Mr. Smedley apparently had come on from Courtfield, and was changing trains. There was nothing to be surprised at in the fact that the Remove master was going to London; for all Smithy knew, he lived in London—as, in fact, Mr. Lucius Teggers did. But it was rather unfortunate for the Bounder that he was going to take that particular train.

"Well, what about it?" asked Gadsby. "Your beak doesn't bite, does he?"

"Don't you want him to see you with us?" asked Monson.

The Bounder breathed hard.

"Has he passed?" he asked.

"Yes; he's lookin' for a carriage, I think," said Ponsonby. "What—"

"Did he look in here?"

"Just glanced in."

"The rotter!" muttered the Bounder.

"He couldn't have spotted me, or he would have opened the door."

"Couldn't have seen more than the back of your head," said Ponsonby. "But what's the row? Afraid of bein' seen in a smokin' carriage?"

"Yes, that's it!" Smithy had no intention of explaining the real state of affairs to his Highcliffe pals. "It means a row."

"Term's over," said Gadsby. "Mean to say your beak would drop on you after break-up? He's got nothin' to do with you now."

"He's a meddlin', interferin' ass!" said Vernon-Smith. "Keep an eye open for him, Pon. If I'm seen here it means a fearful row."

"Oh, all right!" yawned Ponsonby.

He leaned out and looked along the platform; then he turned back into the carriage with a grin on his face. The Bounder's evident dread rather entertained his nutty Highcliffe friends.

"He's comin' back!" said Pon.

"Keep out of sight!" grinned Gadsby.

"Get under the seat!" chuckled Monson.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Vernon-Smith scowled savagely at his three "friends." It did not mean to him merely a row if he was spotted in a "smoker" by his beak. Smedley had spied into his letter. And if he learned that Smithy was not, after all, going to Folkestone, what would he do? Of Lucius Teggers' secret motives the Bounder knew and suspected nothing. But he knew that the Creeper and Crawler was keen and anxious to land him in trouble, and a word to his father—

At that moment the Bounder repented from the bottom of his heart the reckless scheme he had formed. In his father's present mood he hardly dared to think

what might be the result if the incensed millionaire discovered his trickery.

But repentance came too late. Bunter was on his way to the tutor's, and here was Vernon-Smith in the London train. It was too late to retrace his reckless steps now.

Monson had made his suggestion in jest, but the Bounder—catching at a straw, as it were—acted on it. He dropped on hands and knees and wedged himself under the seat. Pon & Co. regarded that proceeding with great hilarity. There was a ripple of merriment in the carriage.

"Shut up, you cacklin' duffers!" hissed the Bounder. "If he comes to this carriage, keep him out. See?"

"Right as rain!" grinned Ponsonby. "He's not our beak; we'll keep him out all right! By gad, he's here!"

Ponsonby grasped the door-handle inside as it was grasped outside by the tall young man on the platform. He held it fast.

Mr. Smedley stared at him through the open window.

"Let me enter, please!" he snapped.

"Sorry! No room!" answered Ponsonby.

"What do you mean? Release this door at once!"

"Sorry—can't!" said Pon, shaking his head. It was rather amusing to Pon to "cheek" a Greyfriars beak.

Mr. Smedley, still holding the handle, stared in with glinting eyes. He could see, of course, that there was plenty of room, as there were only three fellows visible in a carriage that would hold six passengers. In his glance into the carriage when he had passed it a minute or two since he had seen four.

"Will you let me enter this carriage?" he said in a suppressed voice of anger.

(Continued on next page.)

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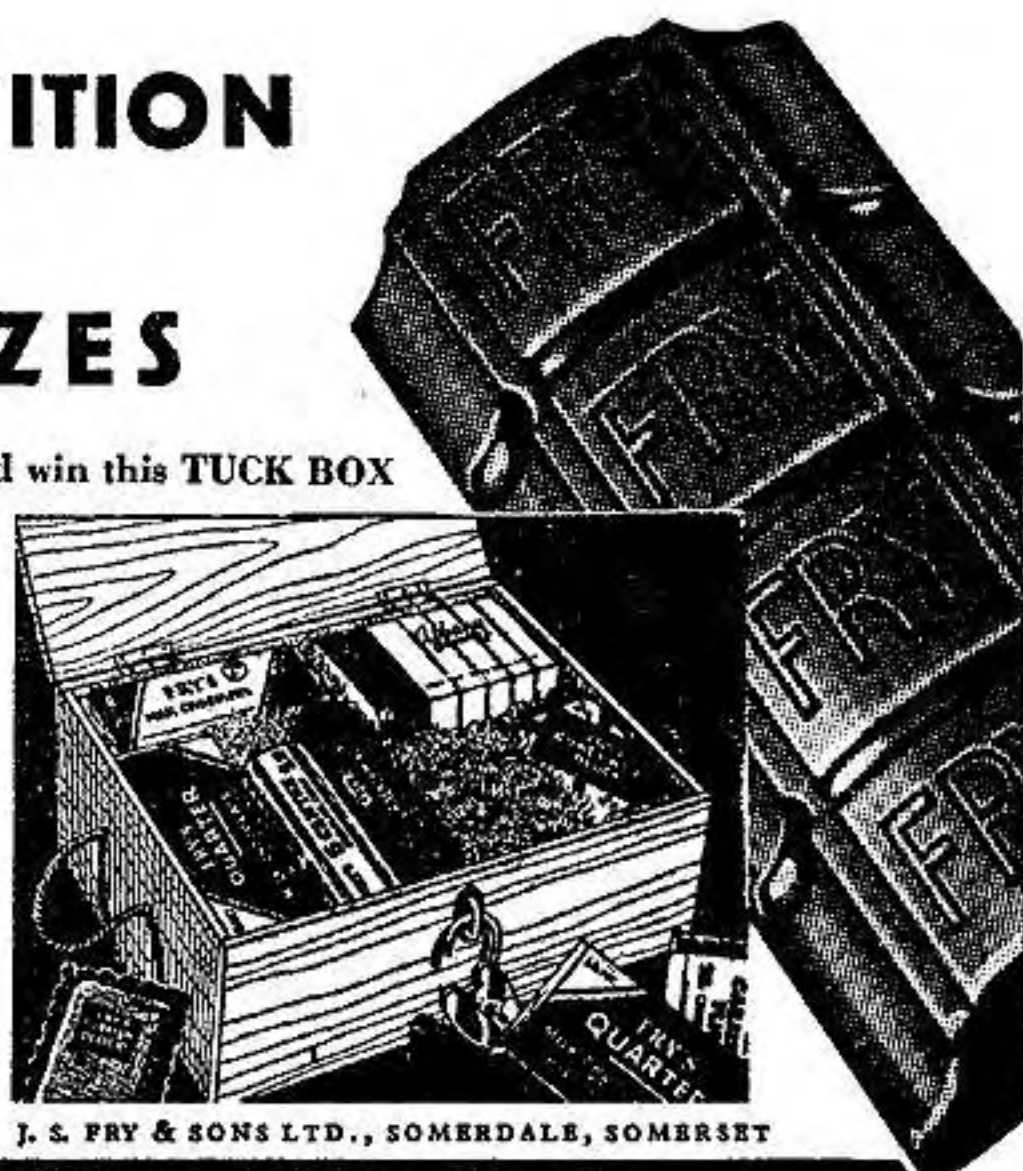
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"Lots of room along the train!" said Gadsby.

"I intend to enter this carriage!" "Sorry!" grinned Monson. He lent Pon a hand at holding the door, as the man outside gave the handle a savage twist. The door remained shut.

"I will call the guard—" "Oh, do!" said Pon. "I fancy we shall be off by then! I tell you there's plenty of room up the train."

Mr. Smedley compressed his lips. "Where is the boy who was in the carriage with you?" he snapped.

"Eh! What boy?" "There was another—I saw him as I passed! I think it was a Greyfriars boy—I came back to speak to him."

The Bounder, safe out of sight under the seat, hardly breathed. The man had seen only the back of his head, as he passed the carriage—he could hardly have seen more than that! Yet something familiar about him had evidently struck Mr. Smedley's sharp eyes—a proof that the Bounder, and what he might be doing, was in the Creeper and Crawler's mind!

"My dear man," drawled Ponsonby. "You're quite mistaken—we don't travel with Greyfriars blighters."

"There was another boy in the carriage!" said Mr. Smedley, between his teeth. "I will call the guard if you do not let go the door."

There was a shriek from the engine; a sound of slamming doors along the train. It came as an immense relief to the Bounder. He knew that there was a suspicion in his Form-master's mind—only a vague suspicion, certainly; but it would be verified fast enough if Smedley got into the carriage!

"Better hop along and look for a seat!" grinned Ponsonby. "Oh, good gad!" A sudden terrific wrench on the door-handle tore it out of his hand, and Mr. Smedley dragged the door wide open.

The Remove master barged in. The train was beginning to move, and he had no time to cut to waste. Ponsonby reached out as he stooped his head in entering and landed his fist with a crunching thump on the crown of his hat!

Crunch! "Urrrgh!" gasped Mr. Smedley. That hefty smite crushed the hat down over his ears. He staggered back and sat down on the platform.

Bump! "Oh!" "Oh gad!" gasped Monson. "Pon, old bean—oh gad!"

"He jolly well asked for it!" grinned Ponsonby. "I rather fancy he won't catch the train now!" He drew the carriage door shut with a slam.

Mr. Smedley sat up on the platform, clutching his hat from his ears. Three grinning faces stared back at him as he staggered to his feet. Ponsonby waved a hand in mocking farewell.

The carriage was already at a distance by the time Smedley was on his feet. But he made a jump for another carriage, fast as the train was moving now.

A porter grabbed him and pulled him back. "Too late, sir!"

Mr. Smedley, standing on the platform, with his damaged hat in his hand, stared after the disappearing train. That vague suspicion in his mind could not be verified now! The rage in his face rather startled the Highcliffians, as they stared back at him. But he was gone from sight in a few moments.

"All serene, Smithy!" chuckled Pon. The Bounder, rather breathless and dusty, crawled out from under the seat.

"I say, that jolly old beak of yours was in a fearful wax!"

The Bounder laughed. He glanced from the window; Lantham was disappearing behind the train. He was done with Smedley now—done with him and safe from him! But was he?

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Fed-Up!

TAP!
Snore!
Thump!
Snore!

Bang!
Snore!
"Dear me!" said Mr. Pickering. He opened the door of his pupil's room, and blinked in through his horn-rimmed glasses. Deep and resonant, the snore of William George Bunter rolled and echoed through the bungalow. With his eyes shut, and his mouth open, the fat Owl of the Remove was sleeping the sleep of the just.

Having blinked at him, the tutor-wallah crossed to the window and pulled back the blinds, letting in a flood of spring sunshine. It was ten o'clock in the morning.

Mr. Pickering approached the bedside and stood regarding the sleeping beauty through his horn-rimmed glasses.

Perhaps he had wondered a little what his holiday pupil was going to be like! Now he knew—and the knowledge did not seem to afford him a lot of satisfaction.

However, a middle-aged tutor-wallah, afflicted with rheumatism, none too well off in the world's goods, was not in a position to quarrel with his bread-and-butter. He was glad to get a resident pupil for the holidays; and he had to make the best of him.

He shook Bunter by the shoulder. Several shakes were required to awaken the Owl of the Remove. But his eyes opened at last.

"Beast!" murmured Bunter.

"My dear boy—" "Tain't rising-bell! Lemme alone!" "It is ten o'clock, Master Vernon-Smith," said Mr. Pickering mildly. He was a very mild-mannered man.

"Eh! What?" Bunter sat up and blinked at him, astonished. Then he remembered that his name was Vernon-Smith for the present, and grinned.

"Oh! All right!" he said. "No need to wake me up, though! I never get up early on holidays! Still, I'm ready for brekker."

"Breakfast," said Mr. Pickering, "has been ready a very long time." "I have brekker in bed at Bunter Court."

"At Bunter Court?" repeated Mr. Pickering.

"I—I—I mean—that's one of our places," said Bunter hastily. "One of my father's magnificent residences, you know. I dare say you know we've got dozens—in fact, scores."

"Oh!" said Mr. Pickering, blinking at him.

"Send in my brekker!" said Bunter. "I don't eat much in the morning—a couple of eggs—say three—a few rashers of bacon, and some kidneys—"

"I am afraid, Master Vernon-Smith, that you must not expect to find here the ease and affluence to which you have been accustomed," said Mr. Pickering. "If you would care to bathe before breakfast, the sea is quite near—"

"No, fear!" "The next room is the bath-room—" "Who's talking about bath-rooms?" This was not an interesting subject to

Bunter at all. "I'm talking about brekker."

"Breakfast will be laid in the dining-room!"

"Look here—" Mr. Pickering departed. Bunter blinked after his departing form.

"Beast!" he ejaculated. If Mr. Pickering heard that ejaculation as he departed, he affected not to do so. His financial position did not permit him to box the ears of a millionaire's son, as doubtless he longed to do.

Bunter turned out. Washing did not delay him long, it never did. He rolled into the little dining-room of the bungalow.

Bunter had had an egg for his tea the previous day. He had had cold mutton—and not much of it—for supper! He was ravenously hungry now.

Amelia—a tall, thin lady who was very deaf, and not remarkably good-tempered—brought in his breakfast from the kitchen adjoining.

Bunter blinked at an egg, a rasher of bacon, and a pile of bread-and-butter. Indignation kept him speechless for a moment or two. Then he roared:

"Call that brekker?"

"Eh?" said Amelia, putting her hand to her ear.

"Where's the kidneys?"

"Eh?" "I want six rashers—"

"Eh?" "Can't you hear?" yelled Bunter.

"Half-past ten, sir!" answered Amelia, apparently under the impression that the fat junior was asking what time it was!

"I didn't ask you the time!" roared Bunter.

"Eh?" "I want something to eat."

"Eh?" "Brekker!" shrieked Bunter.

"Did you speak, sir?"

"Oh crikey!" It was evident that Amelia was very deaf! Bristling with wrath and indignation, he sat down to breakfast; such as it was.

There was only enough for one fellow—which was not much use to Billy Bunter! Amelia retired and left him to it, and Bunter polished off that breakfast in record time. Fortunately, it took the keenest edge off his appetite.

Having finished, Bunter rolled out into the hall.

His fat mind was made up.

If Smithy thought that he was going to stand this sort of thing, Smithy was making the mistake of his life!

The door of Mr. Pickering's study stood open; and the tutor was sorting out books. He glanced out at Bunter, who was putting his coat on.

"We are a little late this morning," said Mr. Pickering, in his mild way, "but if you wish to go for a walk, Master Vernon-Smith—"

Bunter snorted!

That was all the reply he deigned to make.

Bunter was fed-up—fed-up to his fat chin! Smithy, no doubt, had had only a vague idea of what Seacliff Bungalow was like. He had told Bunter that he could run up bills at the local shops in his name—a fat lot of good when there wasn't any shops!

Bunter was going, and, like the guests in Macbeth, he stood not upon the order of his going, but went at once.

The tutor blinked after him as he rolled to the front door.

"Lunch is at one!" he called out.

Grunt!
Slam!

Bunter was gone!



The car vanished in the traffic, and Bunter stood on the edge of the pavement, blinking after it. "I say, what place is this?" he asked, turning to a policeman who was eyeing him rather curiously. "What place is it?" repeated the amazed constable. "Folkestone, of course!" Bunter almost staggered. "Oh lor!" he gurgled. "The rotters! Oh, the beasts!"

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

A Narrow Escape!

"BUNTER!"
 "Oh lor!"
 Billy Bunter jumped. He was about a mile from Seacliff Bungalow, following the road by which Smithy's car had brought him the previous day. He had turned his fat back on the bungalow for good! That was that! Pickering might think what he liked; Smithy might explain it all to his father as best he could—all that did not matter to Billy Bunter! What mattered was that he was not going to stop in a place where there was nothing—practically nothing—to eat! On the road he passed pedestrians, and did not particularly notice a tall young man coming towards him—till that tall young man stopped and addressed him by name. Then he blinked at the tall young man in startled amazement, mingled with consternation. It was Mr. Smedley! Once away from Greyfriars, Bunter had forgotten all about such worrying and troublesome things as beaks. Beaks were left behind when school was left behind. And here was his beak fixing him with his cold, hard eyes, just as if he was at Greyfriars School! "Oh! G-g-good-morning, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I—I'm in rather a hurry, sir—"
 "Stop!"
 "I—I've got to catch a train, sir—"
 "I have told you to stop."
 "Oh! All right, sir!" gasped Bunter. What on earth Smedley could be doing there was a mystery to Billy

Bunter. But he realised, of course, that it would never do for Smedley to learn of the trick he had been playing. He was glad that he was at a good distance from the place where he had used Vernon-Smith's name. Mr. Smedley, scanning his fat, red, confused face, probably wondered why he was so confused and alarmed. Certainly he had not the remotest suspicion of the facts. He had a suspicion—a very strong suspicion—that Vernon-Smith had not carried out his father's instructions, and had not gone to Mr. Pickering's place at all. He was going to find out. That was why Mr. Smedley was there—little as Bunter guessed it. "Are you staying in this neighbourhood for the holidays, Bunter?" asked Mr. Smedley.
 "Yes, sir! I—I mean, no, sir!" stammered Bunter. "I—I mean, not exactly! That is, I—I—I—"
 "Have you seen Vernon-Smith?"
 "Vernon-Smith, sir!" gasped Bunter. "Not—not since yesterday, sir. I—I saw him at—at Greyfriars, sir!"
 "I think I saw you leave the school with him, Bunter."
 "Did—did you, sir?" stammered Bunter. He felt that he might have guessed that one! The Creeper and Crawler saw everything!
 "You are not staying with him at this place?"
 "Oh! No, sir!"
 "Do you know where Seacliff Bungalow is?"
 "S-s-seacliff B-b-bungalow!" stammered Bunter.
 "Yes; I was told that it lies on this road," said Mr. Smedley impatiently. "Is it much farther on?"
 Bunter blinked at him. The Creeper

and Crawler was going to Seacliff Bungalow! Had he arrived an hour ago he would have found Billy Bunter there, under the name of Herbert Vernon-Smith! Billy Bunter's fat heart almost missed a beat as he realised what a narrow escape he had had! "Do you know where the place is?" snapped Mr. Smedley.
 "Never heard of it, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I mean, it's miles away! Ten miles at least! You—you could never walk it, sir!"
 "Have you been there, Bunter?"
 "Oh, no, sir! Never seen the place."
 "Have you seen Vernon-Smith there?"
 "Oh! No! I—I mean, yes!" gasped Bunter, remembering that if Mr. Smedley called at the bungalow, Mr. Pickering would certainly tell him that Vernon-Smith was there! "The—the fact is, sir—"
 "Well?" said Mr. Smedley, eyeing him grimly. He could see, of course, that Bunter was lying! Why the fat junior was lying, however, he could not see. But it strengthened his suspicions that the Bounder of Greyfriars was "up" to something. "The—the fact is, sir!" stammered Bunter, cudgelling his fat brains for some "facts" that would suit the circumstances. "The—the fact is, I—I passed the place, sir, and—and spoke to Smithy—"
 "Then he is there?"
 "Exactly, sir! I—I've got to catch my train—"
 "You saw Vernon-Smith at Seacliff Bungalow?" snapped Mr. Smedley. "What was he doing?"
 "Going for a walk, sir!" said Bunter, THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,365.

remembering that Mr. Pickering supposed that he had gone for a walk. "I—I say, sir, I—I shall miss my train—"

Mr. Smedley's eyes glinted at him. "If you have seen Vernon-Smith at Seacliff Bungalow, Bunter, why did you tell me that you had not seen him since yesterday?"

"I—I didn't—"

"What?"

"I—I mean—that—that that was only a—a figure of speech, sir!" gasped the hapless fabricator. "What—what I really meant, sir, was—that I had seen him, sir, and—and spoken to him—"

"You are not telling me the truth, Bunter!"

"Oh! Yes, sir! I—I always do, sir. I—I couldn't tell a lie, sir, like—like that American in the story, sir—"

Mr. Smedley had a walking-cane under his arm. He slipped it down into his hand. He swished it in the air—a proceeding that Billy Bunter viewed with deep alarm! Surely even this beast was not going to "whop" a fellow in the holidays!

But he was!

"Bend over, Bunter!" said Mr. Smedley.

"I—I say, sir," gasped Bunter. "It—it's hols, you know, sir! I—I say—"

"Bend over!" said Mr. Smedley, in a voice that made Bunter jump.

"Oh crikey!"

Billy Bunter bent over! Hols or not, there was no help for it! Smedley seemed annoyed about something; why, Bunter did not know! But he could see that the beast was annoyed!

Whack, whack!

"Yarough! Whoop!"

Mr. Smedley tucked his cane under his arm and walked on. Billy Bunter glared after him and shook his fat fist at his back.

"Beast!" he gasped. "Caning a fellow in the hols! I've a jolly good mind to chuck something at the beast! I've a jolly good mind—"

Mr. Smedley glanced over his shoulder and stared at Bunter, in the act of brandishing a fat fist at him. He made a stride back.

"Oh crikey!" spluttered Bunter.

Forgetting what he had a "jolly good mind" to do, the fat Owl of the Remove took to his heels and vanished up the road.

Knitting his brows, Mr. Smedley walked on, looking round him for the bungalow he was seeking. He was puzzled and annoyed and perplexed.

Billy Bunter's confused prevarications had strengthened his suspicions, but without giving them any definite shape. Was Vernon-Smith at the tutor's, or not? Bunter had said so, but he did not believe Bunter. On the other hand, why should Bunter have lied? He could not have been put up to it by the Bounder, as he certainly could have had no expectation of meeting Mr. Smedley that morning. The whole thing was a puzzle, of which the solution was to be found at the tutor's house—at least, so Mr. Smedley fancied!

He found Seacliff Bungalow at last. Amelia showed him into Mr. Pickering's study. He explained to that rather surprised gentleman that he was Herbert Vernon-Smith's Form-master, at Greyfriars School, and that, being at Folkestone for the day, it had occurred to him to walk out and see the boy.

"Ah! Quite so—quite so!" assented Mr. Pickering. "I am sorry that he has gone out for a walk. He was, of course, quite unaware—"

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Mr. Smedley was hardly able to conceal his disappointment.

He had had his journey for nothing! Vernon-Smith, obviously, was there, though not at the moment! Mr. Pickering's words really left no room for doubt on the subject.

It was a disappointed and extremely irritated man that walked back to Folkestone!

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Back at the Bungalow!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

Harry Wharton jumped. So did Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh. So did Bob Cherry! All three of them jumped at once.

"Bunter!" ejaculated Wharton.

"Bunter!" howled Bob.

"The esteemed and idiotic Bunter!" exclaimed the Nabob of Bhanipur.

Billy Bunter grinned cheerfully. He rolled out of the little station at Winford, a mile from Wharton Lodge, in Surrey, in the sunny spring afternoon.

It was quite a pleasure to Billy Bunter to catch sight of Harry Wharton & Co. as he came out of the station.

Judging by their looks, the pleasure was not shared by the Co.

They stared at Bunter. They had not expected to see that fat youth again till next term at Greyfriars. But here he was!

The three juniors were standing by a car in the High Street. The car had brought Wharton's uncle, the colonel, to the station, and he had gone in, to take his train. The car was at the disposal of the juniors for the afternoon, and they were going for a long spin in it. They were debating the route of that spin when Bunter happened.

"Lucky, dropping on you like this—what?" said Bunter. "I was going to take a taxi, but as you've got the car here—"

"The luckfulness is not terrific!" murmured Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

"Sorry I couldn't get along for lunch," said Bunter breezily. "But I had something on the train—that's all right. Still, I shall be ready for tea when we get in!"

"When we get in!" repeated Harry.

"Yes, old chap!"

Wharton gazed at him. Apparently, Billy Bunter had decided on Wharton Lodge, after all, for the Easter vac.

"Didn't you go to Folkestone, after all?" asked Bob Cherry. "Or have those magnificent friends of yours got fed-up already?"

"Oh, really, Cherry!" Bunter blinked

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round. "Nugent and Bull here?" he asked.

"They're at home at present," answered Wharton.

"Well, that's really all the better," remarked Bunter. "I never could stand that ruffian Bull—"

"What?"

"And Nugent's rather a milksop, isn't he?" said Bunter. "But if they're coming along later in the vac, I don't mind!"

"You—you don't mind?"

"No, old fellow! I always was an accommodating chap," said Bunter. "Are you going back to the lodge now?"

"We're going for a drive."

"Oh, all right—I don't mind! All right so long as we're not late for tea!" said Bunter cheerily.

He walked to the car and stepped in. Harry Wharton still gazed at him. Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh grinned, and Bob Cherry chuckled.

With all his nerve, there was a slightly uneasy blink behind Billy Bunter's big spectacles. He hoped to carry this off by sheer cheek, but he had a lingering doubt.

But now that he had shaken the dust of Seacliff Bungalow from his feet, it was really neck or nothing with Bunter. A fellow had to spend the holidays somewhere! It was neck or nothing—and Bunter had been plentifully endowed by Nature with "neck."

He sat down in the car, and hoped for the best.

"Well, my hat!" gasped Wharton. "I—I—"

Words failed him.

"Hop in!" said Bunter. "Let's get that drive, if we're going to have it before tea. Bit of a squeeze in this poky little car. Rather lucky that Nugent and Bull ain't here—what? I should have come over in the pater's Rolls, but, you see, I haven't been home. I was at Folkestone yesterday—I've come from there to-day. I wish you fellows could have been with me, really—I've had rather a gorgeous time. But a fellow gets tired of all that magnificence!" said Bunter, shaking his head. "It palls, you know!"

Wharton was still gazing at him.

"Dressing for dinner, you know—ten-course dinner—butler and footmen, and all that," said Bunter. "I dare say you fellows would enjoy it no end, but I'm too accustomed to it at Bunter Court. A fellow gets tired of it. I said to myself: 'Dash it all, I'd really prefer a few quiet days at Wharton's humble home!' My very words! So here I am, old chap!"

"Here you are!" agreed Wharton. "There's no doubt about that, at any rate. Have you really been to Folkestone?"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"I mean, is there really anybody there who would take you in?"

"My friends begged me to stay," said Bunter. "Sir Walter almost cried when I left."

"Oh crikey!" murmured Bob Cherry.

Harry Wharton appeared to make up his mind, after some deep thought. His comrades were watching him, wondering what he was going to do, half-expecting him to take Billy Bunter by his fat neck and hook him out of the car.

Instead of that, Wharton stepped to the driver, who was in his seat, and spoke to him in a low voice.

The chauffeur touched his cap.

"Yes, Master Harry!" he said.

"Hop in, you fellows!" said Wharton. "I've told the chauffeur where to drive."

"Right-ho!" said Bob cheerily.

(Continued on page 23.)

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. Deciding that Locke must be silenced once and for all, Tankerhead hires a dago convict to kill the detective. The plot fails, however, thanks to Drake. In order to find out how the crooks work their clever swindles, Locke poses as Jules Martinez, a wealthy Argentine bookmaker, and wagers big odds with the two conspirators against a horse named *Victory* winning the *Wexborough Stakes*.

(Now read on.)

The "Early Birds" I

THE golden, warming rays of a spring sun shed a gentle glow over the rolling expanse of Epsom Downs.

The dew released its hold upon the springy green turf, bushes and trees, to rise heavenwards in a swirling mist.

Morning had dawned in a blaze of splendour. Despite the early hour, activity reigned on those famous acres. Strings of racehorses, blanketed and led by bow-legged stable-boys, watched over zealously by trainers seated astride favourite hacks and muffled up in great-coats, walked with springy strides to their official exercise grounds.

Training for the day had commenced.

As the sleek, well-bred creatures were unblanketed they made a striking, unforgettable picture. And as, at the word of command from the trainer in charge, their diminutive jockeys mounted and forced their charges into a trot, thence into a gallop, they typified the poetry of motion. For there is nothing in the world to equal the beautiful sight of a thoroughbred racehorse striding out at full gallop.

Sir Tony Walforde, sportsman, racehorse-owner, and trainer, eyed his "string" of thoroughbreds with an appreciative, affectionate eye. He was a wealthy man, and could afford to indulge his passion for horseflesh and the exhilarating sport which has been labelled the sport of kings.

Walforde Towers housed a dozen or more fashionable racehorses, from the Grand National winner, *Desmond*—something of a veteran—to a couple of yearlings, which had been entered for the Derby. Sir Tony, an expert horseman himself, patronised both forms of

racing sport—flat racing, which is controlled by the famous Jockey Club, and "jumping," which is governed by the National Hunt. But whatever side of the sport the changing seasons made fashionable, Sir Tony was always to be seen on the spacious Downs superintending his four-legged charges in their exercises and training.

He murmured an affectionate greeting as his seven-year-old steeplechaser *Desmond* trotted by with its stony-faced stable-lad hunched in the saddle.

"Give him a pipe-opener, Judd!" added Sir Tony. "He looks a bit lazy this morning."

The stable-boy with the expressionless face nodded and clicked his heels rather vigorously into the velvety flanks of the chestnut. *Desmond* responded with an effort which all but unseated its rider, and broke into a gallop.

Sir Tony's face expressed a certain amount of anxiety, for in that quick breakaway he fancied that Judd had been taken unawares. That, as a matter of fact, was what the stony-faced stable-lad wished his employer to think.

Desmond's hoofs drummed the springy, dew-covered turf in a rattling gallop. In a few moments the muscled steeplechaser with the white blaze on its forehead was out of sight of Sir Tony. Alone on that wide expanse of misty downland, Judd changed his direction slightly, rounded a hillock, and dismounted. It was while the stable-lad appeared to be lengthening his stirrup leathers that a thick-set man, muffled to the ears in a big travelling coat, suddenly came into view from behind a stunted bush.

"Gosh, Judd," was his greeting. "I thought you were never coming! I'm blue with the cold!"

Julius Tankerhead, for he it was, looked decidedly blue. Early rising had never appealed to him; and early rising coupled with a two-miles' walk across the windswept Downs had put him in a vile temper.

The stable-lad, still fumbling awkwardly with the stirrup leathers, hardly looked at the newcomer. All he said, and he might have been saying it to himself, was:

"To-night. Eleven-thirty. Boss will be in town."

That message, brief as it was, brought a tinge of warm colour to Tankerhead's pallid cheeks.

"Good boy!" he exclaimed. "But not a word!"

The stable-lad remounted the chestnut, which was now pawing the ground impatiently, turned it with a deft movement of wrists and knees, and galloped back the way he had come.

Sir Tony Walforde looked relieved when the chestnut, sweating a trifle, for Judd had purposely galloped it at full stretch, drew alongside.

"Did he bolt with you, Judd?"

"A little way, sir," was the stable-lad's reply. "But *Desmond* an' me are old pals. I let him have his head a bit, sir. Hasn't done him any harm."

"Good fellow! Just walk him round for another ten minutes. Better put the blanket on him."

"Yes, sir!"

And while the remainder of the string finished their morning exercises, *Desmond* was walked up and down. Sir Tony himself dismounted, gave his hack into the keeping of a stable apprentice, and paced alongside his favourite horse, exchanging views with the stony-faced Judd.

"Funny thing, my lad," he said, "that *Desmond's* half-brother, *Victory*, should be such a washout, isn't it?"

The stable-lad shrugged his shoulders.

"It often happens that way with horseflesh, sir," he replied. "A matter of luck, you might say."

Sir Tony agreed.

"And do you know, Judd," he added, "I'm blessed if I would know which was which if the two horses were placed together." He did not see the half-suppressed start his stable-lad gave, for his blue-grey eyes were dwelling on the handsome head of the steeplechaser.

"It would be difficult, sir," admitted Judd, recovering himself. "They're both chestnuts, and they've both got a white blaze on their forehead. But that's where the likeness stops. Why, *Desmond* could give *Victory* half a mile start in a 'chase and beat him comfortably!"

Sir Tony laughed.

"You're a stout fellow, Judd. You think the world of *Desmond*, don't you? That's why I always let you ride him."

He glanced at his watch, plucked a silver whistle from his pocket, blew on it, and saw his string of horses immediately form up into a single line. After a quick, searching look at each

animal, Sir Tony gave the order for the thoroughbreds to be walked back to their stables, mounted his hack, and jogged along behind the string.

The Spy!

BEFORE he turned into the tree-lined drive which led to the stables, Sir Tony glanced across the Downs to the west. There, as usual at this time, he saw the half-brother of the steeplechaser Desmond at exercise, watched over by Henry Stafford—the "one horse owner-trainer" whose modest establishment, known as the Rookery, lay a couple of miles away.

"One thing about old Stafford," mused Sir Tony, as he jogged in at the end of the queue of racehorses, "he is an enthusiast. He really believes that Victory will finish up with a reputation as great as Desmond's." He laughed softly and patted his horse's neck. "Well, every man's entitled to his opinion. But though you can't tell the difference between the two horses when they stand together, I'll stake my reputation that Victory will finish up as a third-rate hunter."

It seemed almost that his unspoken thoughts were flashed by some telepathic means across the Downs, for at that precise moment grey-haired "Old Man Stafford"—as he was dubbed by his neighbours—leaned down from the saddle of his hunter and stroked the damp muzzle of his single racing charge, which, ironically enough, he had named Victory.

"Good boy!" he muttered. "One of these days, perhaps to-morrow, we'll make some of these smart neighbours of ours admit that they've made a mistake. It'll be your turn to win a big race yet!"

The stable-boy apprentice—he was barely fifteen—who had ridden Victory at exercise, and now sat hunched up in the saddle, looking ridiculously small, saw fit to add his opinion.

"He goes like a beauty, sir!" he exclaimed. "Like a beauty! In my opinion, sir, he's every bit as good a flyer as his half-brother, Desmond." He jerked a childish thumb in the direction of Sir Tony Walforde's establishment. "A bit of luck, sir—a bit of luck—and, who knows, perhaps he'll win the National one day."

This enthusiastic speech did not bring about the desired effect. The boy was new to the employ of Mr. Henry Stafford, and he did not know his employer's aversion to that much misused term "luck."

He saw his mistake, however, as Old Man Stafford turned a frown of disapproval upon him.

"Martin, my boy," he said severely, "that is a word for which I have the utmost contempt. Luck does not make a great racehorse. It is bred in the first place and knowledgeable training in the second, rounded off with good jockeyship. If you are to remain in my employ, please remember that 'luck' does not enter into our life at all."

"Yessir!" promptly replied the abashed stable-boy.

"Now blanket up Victory and walk him back," said Old Man Stafford. "And—Hallo! Who the devil are you, sir?"

The latter sentence was uttered truculently as a tall big-framed man, clad in plus-fours, appeared as if from nowhere and introduced himself.

"Good-morning, Mr. Trafford! My name is Villiers—Mervyn Villiers. Perhaps you have heard of me?"

Old Man Stafford might have been the owner of a string of fashionable racehorses whose performances, even at exercise, he wanted to keep "strictly dark," instead of a "one horse owner-trainer," judging by the look of suspicion he darted at Mr. Mervyn Villiers.

"Never heard of you!" he snapped back. "And what are you doing on my private gallop?"

Mervyn Villiers looked amused. "I am sorry if I have been guilty of trespass," he said. "But I simply had to stay and watch your horse Victory in action. Gosh, sir, he travels like a piece of well-oiled machinery!"

That extravagant piece of flattery melted Old Man Stafford's rather hard heart. Anyone who flattered the performances of Victory he regarded as a friend. Mervyn Villiers, of course, had first ascertained that fact.

"D'you know, Mr. Stafford," he said easily, "I'd like to own a horse like Victory."

Old Man Stafford beamed. Here was a man after his own heart.

"Yes; he'll be a world-beater one of these days, sir," he said oracularly. "I'll admit up to now he's only been placed in his races. But his time will come. For instance, he stands a good chance of winning to-morrow's race—the Wexborough Stakes."

Mervyn Villiers nodded gratefully as he received that piece of information.

"I suppose you wouldn't care to sell Victory, would you?" he asked casually.

Old Man Stafford blazed up.

"Sell him? Sell him?" he repeated. "Why, I'd sooner part with my right hand!"

"I'm sorry," hastily apologised Villiers. "My enthusiasm for the chestnut led me astray. Now I wonder, Mr. Stafford, if you would be good enough to let me have a look at your stables?" He paused. "You see, I'm thinking of starting up myself—as a one horse owner-trainer like yourself. Any tip you would care to give me—"

Old Man Stafford, who was something of a recluse, fell for the bait. He rather liked this pleasant-spoken man who recognised in Victory a steeplechaser of outstanding merit. Of course, he would be pleased to show Mr. Villiers over his modest establishment and to give him any information on the subject of training that he wanted.

In three or four minutes the crafty Villiers was talking to Old Man Stafford as if he had known him for years. He watched the stable-boy rub down and box Victory; he noted that the loft over the stable had been converted into living quarters. And he soon discovered that Martin, the apprentice, retired there every night sharp at eight-forty-five, having first seen to the night comforts of his four-footed charge. Old Man Stafford himself sought his couch every night in the region of ten o'clock.

"I believe in the old maxim, you know," he confided. "Early to bed, early to rise—what?"

Mervyn Villiers laughed, but he was making careful mental note of all these things. And when, exactly one

hour later, he voiced his farewells to the unsuspecting old man, he was in possession of the entire working of that small establishment housed at the Rookery.

Under Cover of Night!

MERVYN VILLIERS was whistling a gay tune as he sauntered into the vestibule of the hotel at Epsom where he had elected to stay. Almost the first person he saw was his confederate, Julius Tankerhead. The man was looking peaked and bleary-eyed.

"Caught a deuce of a cold, I believe!" he grumbled. "This early-morning jaunt across the Downs doesn't agree with me. My, but the wind was biting!"

"And the news?" asked Villiers impatiently.

"The news is O.K.!" snapped Julius Tankerhead. "We shall have a clear run to-night providing things go right at your end."

Villiers laughed, and explained all that had happened since he had run into Old Man Stafford.

"I tell you it's easy. The stable was built for the job, with the kid sleeping in the loft above. Gosh, Julius, we'll skin that fool Martinez for a cool hundred thousand, and no one will be a penny the wiser how it was done!"

He expected to see a smiling response in the face of his confederate, but at that moment Tankerhead's attention was drawn to the doorway of the hotel. Outside, a Daimler car had pulled up, and now, stepping from it, came no less a person than Jules Martinez and his youthful clerk.

Catching sight of Tankerhead's fixed gaze, Villiers turned slowly and then started violently. Next minute he had himself in hand. It was a greasy, over-friendly smile which he turned on the newcomers.

"Good-morning, Mr. Martinez! Jove! This is a surprise—a pleasant surprise!"

"A very pleasant surprise!" lied Tankerhead glibly. "But what brings you here so soon? Racing isn't until to-morrow—what?"

Jules Martinez, certain in the knowledge that neither of the precious scoundrels recognised him as Ferrers Locke, smiled courteously and bowed.

"I could not resist the opportunity of seeing your famous Epsom Downs, my friends," he replied smoothly, and with just a trace of an accent in his voice suggestive of a man from the Argentine, "so my clerk and I have decided to take a holiday—for to-day only," he added.

Both Villiers and Tankerhead cursed the unlooked-for intrusion of the "pigeon" they hoped to pluck. And as the day wore on and Mr. Jules Martinez seemed reluctant to go anywhere without their company they scathed with rage.

Outwardly, however, the clever scoundrels showed an overwhelming readiness and friendliness towards this newcomer to England. They showed him the famous Epsom Downs race-course, where, annually, the Blue Riband of the Turf, as the Derby is styled, is raced for in front of a wildly enthusiastic audience from all parts of the world. They walked with him

round Tattenham Corner, the vital turn in the course which has made history in the annals of the English Turf.

All the time, however, they wished him at the bottom of the sea. Evening came and merged into night, but their good-natured friend seemed loth to part with their company. But part with him, both Tankerhead and Villiers decided on the spot, they would have to if their scoundrelly plan, which concerned a visit both to the Rookery and Walforde Towers, was to be carried out.

They thanked their lucky stars that the keen-eyed youth, Martinez's clerk, had so far kept out of it. It was bad enough dealing with one unwanted individual, without the addition of another. Did they but know it, however, Jules Martinez's clerk, alias Jack Drake, was keeping an intent watch on Old Man Stafford's small and isolated establishment.

As the sun was blotted out in the blanket of night, Drake wandered nearer the dreary-looking place known as the Rookery, in order to get a better view of anything that transpired there, and climbed up an ancient oak-tree. Perched on one of its broad branches he waited until he felt like yawning his head off.

Had his beloved "guv'nor" made a mistake? He asked himself that question time and time again, as the hours went by, little knowing what was transpiring in the comfortable lounge back at the hotel.

The conspirators were getting uneasy—fidgety. Would this man Martinez never leave them? They, on their part, little knew that Ferrers Locke was reading their thoughts, that he knew of their anxiety to be rid of him. Thus every time the conspirators made a move to get rid of him, he laughingly protested that he had never met such genial company, and did not intend to spoil his holiday by going to bed early that night.

Whereupon Julius Tankerhead and Mervyn Villiers decided on strong measures.

It was imperative that they should attend to a certain "bit o' business" as soon after ten as was possible, without this leech-like fool from the Argentine hanging on their tail. They had tried to make him sleepy by giving him the choicest of wines the hotel cellar boasted. The effect was extremely disappointing. Jules Martinez simply refused to go to bed. Yet the arch-plotters were not beaten. When next Tankerhead poured out a glass of wine for Jules Martinez a few grains of powder were tipped into it. They dissolved almost instantaneously. All that was wanted now was the fool to drain his glass.

It seemed a tantalisingly long time before Jules Martinez obliged in that direction. The eyes of both the conspirators were turned away from him for but a few seconds, but when they returned to his genial face they saw him sitting well back in his chair, the glass empty.

A few moments later the man's head began to nod. Soon the sounds of deep breathing denoted that he was sleeping. Tankerhead winked at Villiers and the precious paid quietly withdrew.

Had either of the two conspirators returned to the lounge they would have received the shock of their lives. For there was Jules Martinez, alias Ferrers Locke, sitting bolt upright in his chair—very wide awake!

The sodden mould of the fern which stood on a pedestal close to his elbow told plainly enough where that glass of doped wine had been deposited, for Locke had spotted Tankerhead's villainy, cunningly as it had been carried out.

And as Tankerhead and Villiers donned their heavy coats and walked out on to the gravel drive, hats pulled well down over their foreheads, the curtains of the lounge were gently drawn aside and a face peered out—the face of the man whom they thought fast asleep.

Next moment the shadows swallowed up the conspirators.

It took Ferrers Locke about five seconds to don his own hat and overcoat. Then he was off in pursuit. He listened for some time obviously hoping to pick up the sound of footsteps, but no sounds drifted back through the cold night air.

For a moment Locke stood undecided. Then, remembering that Drake was keeping an alert watch on Old Man

Stafford's training establishment, he decided to start out for Sir Tony Walforde's place.

That move was a mistake, as things turned out, but even detectives make an occasional error, for, in relying upon Jack Drake, Locke had lost sight of the fact that the youngster's dreary, uneventful vigil might cause him to doze.

But dozing he was when two muffled-up figures entered the narrow approach of Old Man Stafford's training quarters—and snoring, too!

(Watch out for further thrilling chapters of this popular detective story in next week's issue of the MAGNET, chums!)

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.

DO you remember me giving you a list of the quaint foods which the Chinese eat? Well, here are some particulars of other curious dishes. Do you know that there are

PEOPLE WHO EAT EARTHWORMS

in the world? Worms are eaten in Japan, where they are actually believed to improve the tone and range of the voice! The Japanese also eat snakes, toads, turtles, sand frogs. Grasshoppers are eaten by many races of the world—Arabs, Hottentots, and certain Indians. White ants are also eaten by the Hottentots. Shark and whale flesh is considered a delicacy in many parts of the world. Locusts are eaten by African tribes, and were also eaten by American Indians. Some American Indians use a large moth as a food, and the caterpillars of the moth are dried and stored for winter use.

Here is the menu of a dinner that was given in Paris recently: Starting off with bird's-nest soup, the diners next tackled a Russian fungus, went on to a very rare eastern fish, and then had lizard flesh, followed by porcupine steaks. They finished up with stewed papaya—a melon-shaped fruit.

Fancy Billy Bunter getting through a meal like that—and then being told what he had eaten!

And would you believe that a curator at a London zoo has sampled nearly every kind of animal eatable there is—monkey, zebra, crocodile, ostrich, and others too numerous to mention?

PAUL TAYLOR, of Hove, asks me if I can tell him something about

DEVIL'S ISLAND,

the notorious penal settlement in French Guiana. The settlement itself is not very big—only 250 yards by 100 yards. The prisoners cultivate coconut palms, and bananas. They are allowed to sell the produce for their own benefit. It is very rare, indeed, that a man who is sent to Devil's Island ever returns to tell the tale. Out of 7,000 prisoners who were sent there in eight years, over four thousand died. A great number attempt to escape to the South American mainland, but most of these are recaptured. About a hundred and fifty prisoners, however, disappear throughout the year. Whether they reach the mainland and

escape, or whether they die at sea in the attempt, is not known.

It is at least ten days' sail in a small boat to the mainland, and the most general method of attempting escape is to build boats with wood that has been "serounged" during the building of new huts. For this reason the convicts are now mostly incarcerated in cabins built of granite.

JUST to finish up this little chat, here are a few

INTERESTING ITEMS

for you: Do you know—

That it is estimated that the average Englishman drinks 1,800 cups of tea in a year? But the average Italian only drinks one per year?

That the youngest age for getting an air pilot's certificate is seventeen? But that a girl of twelve has already been trained as a skilled pilot?

That there are over five million racing pigeons owned in this country? And that a prize pigeon may be worth anything up to £225?

That there have been 902 big wars since the year 500 B.C.? And that Franco has been involved in the most, totalling 185? Great Britain has been involved in 176 wars.

That the first tube station was built in London in 1890? And, although it has been closed for thirty-four years, it still exists?

And here is an extra-special item! Do you know:

The finest school story of Harry Wharton & Co. that Frank Richards has ever written is entitled:

"THE SCHOOLBOY TRIPPERS!"

And also that it will appear in the MAGNET next week! If you don't know, well, as the Americans say: "I'm telling you!" Buzz round to your newsagent straight away, chums. Tell him you don't want to miss a good thing, and to reserve a copy for you without fail.

A splendid long instalment of our popular sporting and detective serial, a rib-tickling "Greyfriars Herald" supplement, and the usual shorter features will complete the programme.

I'll have another chat with you next week, chums!

YOUR EDITOR.

THE BOUNDER'S BIG BLUFF!

(Continued from page 24.)

Bob Cherry and the Nabob of Bhanipur stepped into the car, and Wharton followed them in. Both of them were aware that Wharton's whispered words to the chauffeur had some hidden meaning. That, however, did not occur to William George Bunter.

The car started, and dashed away out of Winford.

It was a pleasant April afternoon, very enjoyable for a run in a car. As the juniors did not have to return to Wharton Lodge until supper-time they intended to cover a good deal of ground before they turned back. But, as it happened, they were going to cover a good deal more ground than had been originally planned.

The car ate up the miles, by hill and dale.

For an hour or so Billy Bunter was content with having "got away with it." He entertained the juniors with a description of the magnificent abode on the cliffs by Folkestone, which he had unaccountably abandoned in favour of Wharton's humble home. That magnificent description the chums of the Remove took the liberty of doubting; but there was no doubt that Bunter had been staying at Folkestone, that he had come from that town, and still less doubt that he was going back there—though he was, as yet, happily unaware of that circumstance!

"I say, you fellows, we shall be late for tea!" said Bunter at last.

It was all very well to "get away with it," but Bunter was not the fellow to forget a meal-time.

"We've got a cake in the car!" said Harry.

"Oh good! Where is it?"

The cake was produced. Bunter took possession of it.

"What are you fellows going to have?" he asked.

It seemed that the fellows were going to have nothing. They gazed at Bunter in silence as he gobbled the cake.

Having finished the cake, Bunter grunted, yawned, and settled back in his corner.

"I say, you fellows! Wake me up when we get in!" he grunted.

And Bunter closed his eyes behind his big spectacles, and his deep snore was added to the whirr of the car.

"Where are we going, old bean?" murmured Bob Cherry. "I seem to know this road."

"Folkestone," answered Harry.

"We're giving Bunter a lift back. We can't let him sacrifice all that magnificence on our account."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob.

Bunter's eyes opened behind his spectacles, and he blinked peevishly at the juniors.

"I say, you fellows, don't make a row when a fellow's taking forty winks!" he said. "This rotten old car's bad enough!"

Bunter closed his eyes again.

They remained closed while the car ate up the miles. Scenery did not appeal to Billy Bunter very much; but sleep came next to eating, in his fat estimation of the joys of life! He slept, he snored, and was contented! He was still snoring when the evening closed in; but he ceased to snore at last when a vigorous shake awakened him.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry. "Here we are, Bunter! Wake up, old fat man!"

"Urrgh! Don't yell at a fellow!" growled Bunter. He rubbed his eyes and set his spectacles straight on his fat little nose. "I say, you fellows, I hope supper will be ready! I'm jolly hungry!"

"Jump out!"

Bunter rolled out of the car. He blinked round him in surprise. He had supposed that the car had reached Wharton Lodge, after the drive. Instead of which, he found himself in a lighted street, with people passing, cars humming, and motors whirring.

"I say, you fellows!" He blinked round blankly, and then blinked back at the car. "I say, what place is this? What—"

Slam!

The door of the car slammed shut, and it moved on.

"I say, you fellows!" roared Bunter in alarm.

"Good-bye, Bunter!"

"What? I say—"

Bunter rushed after the car. But it vanished in the traffic; and he stood on the edge of the pavement, blinking after it.

"What the thump—" he gasped.

The car was gone. Bunter stood blinking. A policeman, standing at the corner, was eyeing him rather curiously. Bunter rolled up to the man in blue.

"I say, what place is this?" he asked.

The constable stared.

"What place is it?" he repeated.

"Folkestone, of course!"

Bunter almost staggered.

"Folkestone!" he gurgled. "Oh lor! Oh, the rotters! Oh crikey! Oh, the beasts! Oh jiminy!"

"Move on!" said the policeman, eyeing him suspiciously.

Bunter moved on.

He was back at Folkestone. And those beasts had gone off without him, leaving him there! Slowly, but surely,

it dawned on Bunter's fat brain that he had not "got away with it," as he had so happily supposed. The chums of the Remove had been going for a drive—and they had driven in the direction of Folkestone, in order to land him there—where he had come from! He was now free to go back to all the magnificent splendours he had described to them!

"Oh lor!" gasped Bunter.

He ran his hands through his pockets. There was nothing there! His financial resources had been exhausted by the railway journey that day.

"Oh crikey!" groaned Bunter.

There was one resource for Bunter—Seacliff Bungalow! Really, he was rather lucky to have that resource! But he did not feel lucky as he started to walk for that distant spot!

He walked and walked and walked! He was tired, he was hungry; and the miles seemed endless and unjointed.

He had left Seacliff Bungalow that morning, with the firm intention of never seeing the place again. Now he was longing to see it—yearning to see it—but it seemed to him ages and ages and ages before, at last, he reached the lonely bunaglow.

He had hardly strength enough left to bang on the door.

Mr. Pickering opened it.

"Dear me!" he said, blinking at the sagging fat junior. "I have been quite alarmed about you, Master Vernon-Smith! Did you lose your way?"

Bunter did not answer. He staggered in and collapsed on the nearest chair.

"You seem tired, Master Vernon-Smith!" said Mr. Pickering.

Groan!

"You must have lost your way—"

Groan!

"Did you wander very far?"

Groan!

"Dear me!" said Mr. Pickering; and as Bunter seemed bent on groaning, he left him to groan.

Harry Wharton & Co. enjoyed the run home in the balmy April evening. They were in rather late for supper, and they enjoyed the supper. But neither the drive nor the supper was so enjoyable as the absence of William George Bunter, who—much against his will—was still keeping his peculiar compact with the Bounder!

THE END.

(Look out for more lively fun and big thrills in the next yarn in this splendid series. It is entitled: "THE SCHOOL-BOY TRIPPERS!" and you'll enjoy every line of it. Take a tip from me and order your copy of MAGNET early. —ED.)

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The MAGNET Readers' Favourite—GEORGE GROSE.

SOMNOLENT SENIORS
would be grateful for hints on how to remain awake when their study leader is talking.—Write in confidence to P. & G., Box No. 105, GREYFRIARS HERALD.

FOR A NIMBLE SIXPENCE
I'll turn a gallon of water into ink by washing my face in it.—Apply G. TUBB, Third Form-room.

THE NEW Greyfriars Herald

EXTRA GOOD EDITION

April 14th, 1934. EDITED BY HARRY WHARTON

WOODEN STRUCTURE FOR SALE
Suitable for use as tool-shed, dog-kennel, rabbit-hutch or as hall to accommodate the crowds—ahem!—who will want to listen to Alonzo Todd's talk on "Vegetarianism" next Wednesday!—Apply "BROWN," Box No. 123, GREYFRIARS HERALD.

GREYFRIARS 100 YEARS AGO

While none admires the impetuosity of youth more than ourselves, we feel, at the same time, that there should be a limit to youth's impetuous activities. George Wharton, the new boy to whom we referred last week, performed a great act of valour when he helped Summerville to save the lives of a Princess and one of her ladies-in-waiting. Having done it and been ungrudgingly thanked, he should have retired into the obscurity befitting a new boy and a flag. But he has done nothing of the kind! Far from retiring into obscurity, he has started the college by a deed more suited to the worthy Don Quixote than an English Public school boy.

An eye-witness informs us that, immediately before performing his rash act, Wharton appeared to be in a perfectly calm mood. On walking into the Common-room and discovering "Bruiser" Lamme, of the Fourth, torturing a Second-Former, for reasons which are difficult to understand, he lost his temper completely. If Bruiser had been branding the boy with red-hot irons, or giving him one of his special varieties of Chinese torture, we could see a certain amount of reason in Wharton's truculence. As it happens, however, Bruiser was merely twisting the boy's arms with no more ferocity than is usual in the case of Middle-School boys passing an idle five minutes in a harmless and agreeable session of fag-baiting.

This being the case, we fail to understand why Wharton should have felt called upon to interfere. Interfere he did, however, and Bruiser Lamme suddenly found himself undergoing the unpleasant and unexpected experience of being sent flying across the room by one of the mightiest punches on the jaw ever delivered at Greyfriars, in or out of the ring! So surprised was Lamme at this amazing encroachment on the liberty of this individual by a raw new lad that even while he recovered his senses and stood up again he made no attempt to strike back!

We understand that Wharton, not content with delivering this tremendous blow, also called Bruiser Lamme a "cowardly bully" and other opprobrious names. In the circumstances it is hardly to be wondered at that swift disciplinary action has been taken. Wharton has been summoned before a committee of prefects, soundly thrashed with birches, and told that the next time he interferes in such time-honoured Greyfriars customs as arm-twisting, he will be taken before the Head.

For his own sake we hope that Wharton will heed the warning. (Wharton's ideas on bullying seem to have been in advance of his time!) What a contrast lies between the attitude of the man who wrote this article and the attitude of the average Greyfriars man to-day.—(ED.)

THE SPORT OF FAGS!
Expert instruction in tadpole-catching a Geo. Tubb's School of Tadpole Snafiers. Make the most of the spring, lads, by taking up this grand sport! Fees moderate! A good time guaranteed!—G. TUBB (Winner of the Junior Frog Lancier, Shield, 1933), Third Form-room.

FITZGERALD'S ROBOT BEAK

And Our Great Suggestion
Visitors to Fitzgerald's of a riot it rings an alarm bell in the Fifth Form passage during the last week or two have been intrigued by a weird and wonderful-looking mechanical man taking shape in one corner of the room. A hundred fellows have asked Fitz what the thump it is, and to all of them Fitz has merely replied: "Wait and see!" But now, to a "Greyfriars Herald" reporter, the bright-eyed senior from the Emerald Isle has given out the secret. It's a robot Form-master! According to its inventor, it's something rather special.

You only need to listen to Fitzgerald for five minutes to become a rabid robot fan. His beak, he maintains, is the beak of the future. The day will come when a flesh-and-blood schoolmaster will be as rare as a hansom cab in Piccadilly Circus.

Well, maybe you're right, Fitz. Probably the robot beak will come in time. When it does, we've got a really bright wheeze to put on the market. Our suggestion is that the job should be completed by giving the robot beak a class of robot schoolboys to teach. Think of the time and trouble that would save us!

BULLETIN
Dr. Pillsbury informs us from the sanatorium that Johnny Bull is as well as can be expected after the severe shock he received this week when Fisher T. Fish gave twopenny to a beggar.

WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT?
When W. G. Hunter told his story about expecting a postal order for the 379th time, in Sydney, No. 1 Bob Cherry suggested it would save trouble if Hunter had a gramophone record made of it! set?—as Potter and Greene well know!

GIANT KILLER'S WIN RECORD

Not a Blow Struck
One of the most sensational fights in living memory took place in the gym last week. The principals were Bolsover major and Oliver Kippis. A violent quarrel was the cause of the scrap. Bolsover major called Kippis a fudged idiot and Kippis called Bolsover major an idiotic fathead. So naturally there was no way out.

Proof Positive
Lord Maulverer woke up. He had fallen asleep in broad daylight. But now the shades of night were falling fast. With a weary yawn, he switched on the light. He uttered a sigh of infinite weariness as he saw that the study clock had stopped and remembered that he had left his handsome gold hunter in the dorm.

"Begod! I wonder what the time is!" he murmured. He opened the door of Study No. 12 and looked out into the Remove passage. From Study No. 11 next-door, he heard the chinking of coin and the hum of subdued conversation.

"Your deal, Stett!" "Have a smoke, old bean!" "Call up to your hands, you mon!" "Look here, I shall be on the rocks if I lose any more!" Maulverer retired into the study again and wound up the clock.

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upperment which would have lifted Kippis half-way up to the ceiling—if it had landed! Owing, however, to the fact that during the period in which Bolsover's fist was swinging round Kippis performed a double somersault and a handspiral that took him to the other side of the ring, the blow did not land. Bolsover's fist therefore travelled on—and it travelled on so fast that it upset

Remove, was prowling around the School House with a big suitcase, burgling studies during their tenants' absence. He helped himself with amazing liberality to a hundred-and-one useful objects discovered in the course of his explorations—raincoats, cricket bats, tennis rackets, fountain pens, and books, for instance. He took them all to his study and piled them up in a corner, neatly labelling every addition to the pile.

We remonstrated with him. "Look here, old bean! You know you've always been a burglar at heart, but you shouldn't be quite so crude about it as this, you know. We can just stand a Remove man making money out of bogus shares, dud businesses, and so on, but we're not going to stand a Remove man breaking into studies and helping himself like a giddy Bill Sikos. Chucks it!"

"I guess you got me all wrong," was Fisher T. Fish's reply. "I ain't a crook. No, sir—not me!" "Then why the thump are you going in for wholesale burglary?" snorted Fish. "I guess I'd scorn to do such a thing. Listen. All the owners of these articles are gonna get their property restored to them at the end of the week. I guess I'll let you into a big secret. It's just an advertisement idea—one of those big, brainy vertisin' ideas!"

SILENCE IN THE TUCKSHOP, PLEASE!
Mrs. Mumble locked out of her window before brekker yesterday and saw Lord Maulverer doing a sprint round the quad. Now she needs a quiet spell to recover from the shock!

Q. A. Field, eagerly anticipating the visit of the Australian cricketers this summer, "Squid" as an ex- as Dicky Nugent & Co. found when they tried to grab him in a tag rough-and-tumble! Hop it got clear in a tree!

NOT A BURGLAR

Fish Clears His Name
All last week Fisher T. Fish, of the School House with a big suitcase, burgling studies during their tenants' absence. He helped himself with amazing liberality to a hundred-and-one useful objects discovered in the course of his explorations—raincoats, cricket bats, tennis rackets, fountain pens, and books, for instance. He took them all to his study and piled them up in a corner, neatly labelling every addition to the pile.

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Doughnuts that are Different
You can't beat Mrs. Mumble's doughnuts, you fellow! Fresh in once a year—and what a flourish! Experts swear they can pick them out blindfold by their fishy smell. Guaranteed good bouncers—can be used for a game of tennis in an emergency! Drop into the tuckshop and try them. Half a dozen will burst you!

DICKY NUGENT'S WEEKLY WISDOM
Follows who wondered how George Tubb broke bounds so easily the other week will be interested to learn that he put on a young lady's coat and hat and was assumed to be Cora Queleh, a niece of the Remove master. As far as the beaks were concerned, it was a clear case of "miss" taken identity!

JUSTICE TO SCOTLAND, LADS!

We can't agree with the correspondent who tells us that Ogilvy has never given a tip to anybody since he came to Greyfriars. Only yesterday we saw him give a cheery tag the tip of his boot!

STRANGE, BUT TRUE!
Kippis is the last fellow in the world you can imagine going in for scrapping. Yet it's a daily occurrence to hear that he's "struck" a bright idea!

Are You A Kidnapper?
If you are, perhaps you'll kidnap Coker and bring him along to the Rag next Tuesday. Wibley is lecturing on "Realistic Acting in Thrillers" and needs a good example of a Perfect Scream!

GREYFRIARS FACTS WHILE YOU WAIT!
Ho, ho! Wan Lung's minor in the second is as slippery to grasp as an eel—as Dicky Nugent & Co. found when they tried to grab him in a tag rough-and-tumble! Hop it got clear in a tree!

THE SPORT OF FAGS!
Expert instruction in tadpole-catching a Geo. Tubb's School of Tadpole Snafiers. Make the most of the spring, lads, by taking up this grand sport! Fees moderate! A good time guaranteed!—G. TUBB (Winner of the Junior Frog Lancier, Shield, 1933), Third Form-room.