

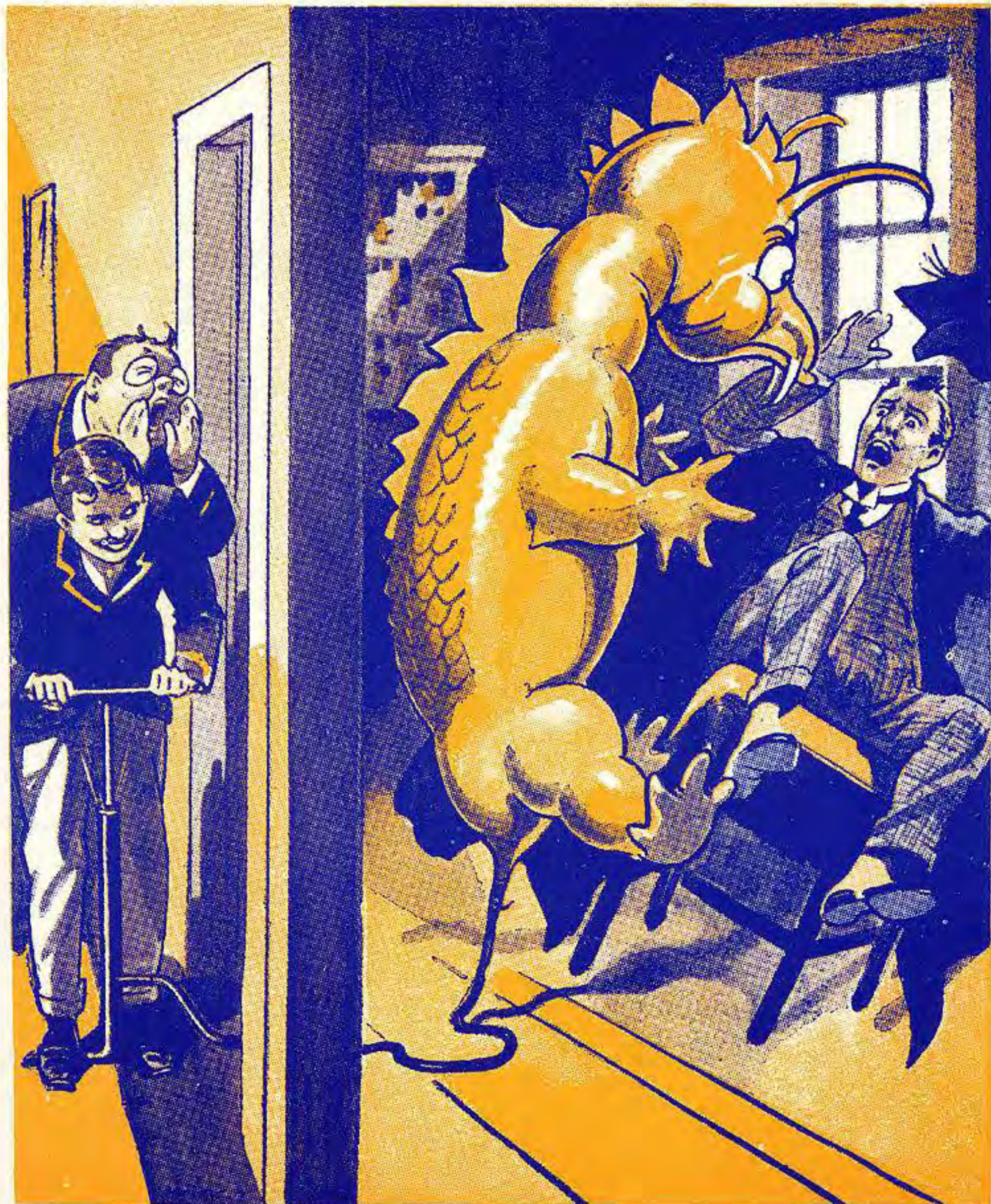
**"BUNTER, THE VENTRILOQUIST!"** An Amusing and Amazing Yarn of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars.

# The MAGNET 2<sup>D</sup>

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# BUNTER THE VENTRILOQUIST!

BY FRANK RICHARDS

## THE FIRST CHAPTER.

### The Wolf and the Lamb!

"Who's afraid of the big bad wolf—  
The big bad wolf—  
The big bad wolf—"

**B**OB CHERRY was singing. Bob's vocal efforts, perhaps, were not easily recognised as singing. Bob had a powerful voice. It travelled far and it travelled wide; it awoke every echo in the Remove passage at Greyfriars, and a good many other echoes. But when raised in song Bob's best friend would not have called it tuneful. Only for one reason were Bob's many friends ever glad to hear him sing—when he was singing he couldn't whistle.

Sitting astride of the banisters on the Remove landing, a rather precarious position over the well of the big staircase, Bob poured forth melody. From several studies along the passage voices were raised in protest. Bob roared on, regardless.

Harry Wharton, the captain of the Remove, looked out of the doorway of Study No. 1.

"Tea's ready, Bob!" he called out hastily.

Tea, as a matter of fact, was not quite ready in Study No. 1. Frank Nugent was poaching the eggs, Hurree Jamset Ram Singh was making the toast, and Johnny Bull was buttering the same as fast as it was made. Billy Bunter had opened a jar of jam, and, with his back to the other fellows, was helping himself to the contents with a tablespoon—which was Bunter's way of helping

fellows to get tea in the study. Tea was going to be ready in a few minutes. But Wharton, though generally as voracious as the celebrated Truthful James, stretched a point on this occasion. That spate of melody had to be interrupted.

But it was not interrupted. Bob roared on:

"Who's afraid of the big bad wolf—"

"Bob!" roared Wharton.

"Shut up!" came from the doorways of three or four studies.

Vernon-Smith, who was leaning on the Remove banisters, looking down, grinned. He did not seem to mind Bob's roar, though he was nearest to the danger zone. And Wharton, catching that grin on the Bouncer's face, realised that Bob was not simply letting off steam, and walked along to the landing to glance down and see what Smithy was looking at.

On the lower stairs was a rather tall and well-groomed figure—that of Mr. Smedley, the new master of the Remove.

Smedley was coming up.

His stealthy ways had earned the new master the nickname of the "Creeper and Crawler" in the Greyfriars Remove. He had a most unpleasant custom of moving about without a sound and catching fellows by surprise.

Harry Wharton understood and he laughed.

Bob, sitting on the banisters, had spotted the Creeper and Crawler coming up with his usual silent tread. He had not heard him; a fellow never heard Smedley coming. But Bob had spotted him, and burst into song for his benefit.

And the look on Smedley's face as he stared up showed that he guessed that he was the "big bad wolf" alluded to.

Bob Cherry paused for breath and winked at the captain of the Remove. Vernon-Smith chuckled. Then Bob's roar burst forth again:

"Who's afraid of the big bad wolf—  
The big bad wolf—  
The big bad wolf—"

The description really fitted. Smedley was big; he was, in the opinion of the Remove at least, bad; and he looked undoubtedly wolfish at the present moment. "Cherry!" he barked from below.

"Who's afraid of the big bad wolf—"

bawled Bob.

"Cherry, cease that noise instantly!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Is that somebody calling me?" exclaimed Bob, apparently becoming aware of his Form-master's proximity for the first time. "Did you fellows hear somebody call me?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Smedley came stamping up the stairs—no longer silent and stealthy. Evidently he was in a bad temper. Perhaps he did not like being likened unto a big bad wolf, and perhaps he was annoyed to learn that nobody was afraid of that particular big bad wolf. Anyhow, there was no doubt that he was in a fearfully bad temper.

He strode on to the Remove landing with brows knitted, and slid the cane that was under his arm down into his hand.



"Cherry, how dare you make that noise?"

"Did you hear me, sir?" asked Bob innocently—at which Smithy and Wharton nearly exploded. It would have been difficult for anyone at Greyfriars School not to have heard.

"Such an unseemly uproar——" snapped Mr. Smedley.

"I was only singing, sir," said Bob meekly. "We're allowed to sing in our own passage, sir. It's 'side' in the lower passages, but in our own passage, sir——"

"Mr. Quelch never objected to it, sir," said Vernon-Smith. Smithy was aware that the temporary master of the Remove did not like allusions to his predecessor in that post.

Mr. Smedley's eyes gleamed at him. "You may be silent, Vernon-Smith!" he rapped. "Cherry, I will not allow this uproar and this studied impertinence!"

"Impertinence, sir?" said Bob quite blankly. "Is it impertinent to sing in our own passage, sir?"

"Lots of fellows sing, sir," said Harry Wharton; "and that's quite a popular song, I believe. I dare say you heard it in the hols, sir."

"Silence, Wharton!"

Mr. Smedley gripped his cane hard. Evidently he was yearning to lay it on Bob Cherry. But he was rather at a loss. He was perfectly well aware that Bob had been calling him a big bad wolf, and telling him that he was not afraid of him. But he could hardly admit that he had taken the description unto himself. He had to have something better than that to "go upon" before he caned a fellow.

But it was a case of the "wolf and the lamb" over again—a big bad wolf and a lamb. It did not take Mr. Smedley long to find the pretext he wanted.

He could not cane Bob for singing in the Remove quarters, or for singing a song that was sung everywhere. But he could cane him for sitting on the banisters—which was dangerous, prohibited, and strictly against the rules.

"Cherry, how dare you sit astride of the banisters!" he demanded. "It might cause a most serious accident!"

A dozen fellows, drawn by Smedley's voice, were looking on now. Nugent and Johnny Bull and Hurree Singh were looking out of the doorway of Study No. 1; Redwing from Study No. 4, Peter Todd from Study No. 7, five or six other fellows along the passage. They knew that Smedley was going to cane Bob Cherry, and only wondered what excuse he was going to give. Now they knew.

"Oh!" said Bob. He realised that the Creeper and Crawler had "got" him. "It's really quite safe, sir——"

"Indeed! Then you think that Dr. Locke has laid down rules on the subject unnecessarily?" inquired Mr. Smedley.

"Oh, not exactly, sir! But——"

Mr. Smedley swished the cane.

"You will bend over, Cherry! Touch your toes!"

Bob gave one look, breathing hard. But Smedley had "got" him; he had been breaking a rule—a rule which was just and necessary, as Bob admitted, though he sometimes forgot to regard it. Slowly Bob bent over and touched his toes.

Swipe, swipe, swipe!

Bob wriggled.

Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, who was now away on the sick list, had had a rather heavy hand with a cane. But his hand was light as a feather compared with Smedley's. Smedley laid it on as if he was beating a carpet. Perhaps he desired to impress on Bob that

he had, after all, reason to be afraid of a "big bad wolf."

Swipe, swipe!

"Ow!" gasped Bob.

Swipe!

It was a full "six," and every one of them a swipe! Bob Cherry's ruddy face was quite pale when Smedley had finished.

The Creeper and Crawler tucked the cane under his arm again.

"Let that be a warning to you, Cherry!" he said grimly.

And Bob was well aware that it was a warning, not to avoid sitting on the banisters, but to entertain a wholesome fear of a "big bad wolf."

"Oh! Wow!"

Bob straightened up, wriggling. Mr. Smedley went down the Remove staircase, leaving Bob wriggling, Wharton looking grim and angry, and the Bouncer shrugging his shoulders.

"Ow!" said Bob. "Wow! Wooogh! Oh, scissors! Woooh!"

"Hurt, old chap?" asked Harry.

Bob looked at him.

"Oh! No!" he gasped. "I'm making these noises for fun—and wriggling for exercise. Fathead! Wow!"

Wharton smiled.

"Tea's ready! Come on!"

"Oh! Wow!"

Wharton led his suffering chum along to Study No. 1. Nugent pulled out the armchair for him—it was softer than the other chairs. Bob sat down—and jumped up again.

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**The Remove, to a man, are out to make their sneaking, spying, crawling Form-master "sit up"! And that's where William George Bunter comes in useful, for the fat and fatuous Bunter—believe it or not—is a skilful ventriloquist!**

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"I think I'll stand for a bit!" he remarked.

Sitting down, after that swiping six, was rather painful. Bob had to take his fodder, like a horse, standing up.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### Jam for Bunter!

"THE rotter!"

"The worm!"

"The reptile!"

"The terrific and preposterous tick!"

"Wow! Wow!"

Such were the remarks of the Famous Five of the Remove, over tea in Study No. 1! They made those remarks, and many more like them. Mr. Smedley's ears ought really to have been burning.

For they were referring, of course, to the Creeper and Crawler.

The Creeper and Crawler was rather a new experience for the Remove fellows. Mr. Quelch, their old "beak," had been rather a severe gentleman, but he had been just, and they respected him. Other beaks at Greyfriars School had their little ways and their little faults; but they were a decent crowd, on the whole, like most schoolmasters. Prout, master of the Fifth, was portly and pompous; Hacker was sharp and snappy; Capper was rather an ass; Twigg was fussy; Wiggins was absent-minded and dreamy; Mossoo was considered a real shriek. But they were all men a fellow could respect, while the Head was revered, and Lascelles, the

games-master, greatly admired. The trouble with Smedley was that a fellow couldn't respect him.

He was, in fact, the limit!

A man who could pass a door on tiptoe to catch what was said on the other side—what could a fellow think of him? And that was the sort of thing the Creeper and Crawler did.

"If the Head knew what sort of worm that had crawled in here Smedley would go out so fast that it would make his head swim!" growled Johnny Bull.

"It's queer!" said Harry Wharton. "I've heard that he came with jolly good recommendations from Leggett & Teggars, the firm who supply temporary beaks, and things. They've sent men here before, who were all right. In fact, Smedley's the first real worm we've ever struck."

"Man like that oughtn't to be a schoolmaster," said Frank Nugent. "It's all very well for a fathead like Bunter to spy and pry——"

"Oh, really, Nugent——"

"Bunter hasn't brains enough to know better!" agreed Wharton.

"Beast!"

"If he'd whopped me for sitting on the banisters, all right," said Bob Cherry, with a painful wriggle. "But Quelch wouldn't have given a man more than a couple for that—perhaps only lines! Six—and all swipes, from that beast! And it wasn't for sitting on the banisters—it was for singing——"

"Smedley's got no ear for music, old chap!" said Johnny Bull solemnly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Of course, he knew I was letting go at him," said Bob. "I was pulling his leg, of course! But you can't whop a man for that."

"The fact is," said Harry Wharton, "Smedley is down on this happy family. Last term he was down on Smithy, with a fearful down—but Smithy, after all, asked for a lot of it. Now he's down on us. Why? Because we came on him in the holidays, and there was some trouble. It was his own fault. Nobody asked him to come spying and prying in at Wharton Lodge while Smithy was staying there with us. Who ever heard of a beak shadowing a chap in the holidays, trying to land him in trouble? It's the giddy limit!"

"The term's hardly a week old, and we've all had whoppings, and I can hardly count the number of lines we've got on hand," said Nugent.

"The linefulness is truly terrific!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "There is no doubt that the esteemed Creeper and Crawler is terrifically infuriated."

"Blow him!" said Bob.

"Bother him!" agreed Nugent.

Tea in Study No. 1 that afternoon was a sort of indignation meeting. The Famous Five were feeling fed-up with Smedley! That feeling was more or less shared by all the Remove. It was rather a relief to the juniors to tell one another what they thought of Smedley, though they would have preferred, had it been feasible, to tell the Creeper and Crawler himself.

Only Billy Bunter was not taking part in the general slanging of Smedley. Bunter generally talked enough for two, if not three or four. Now he was devoting himself to the foodstuffs. But that was not the only reason why he was silent. Bunter had rather a worry on his fat mind.

While the other fellows were looking on at the little scene in the Remove passage Bunter had finished the jam! It was a new two-pound jar, intended for tea; but two pounds of jam, to a



fellow like Bunter, was a trifle light as air. Bunter liked jam.

But he was feeling rather worried about what might happen when the tea-party wanted jam. The fact that Bunter liked jam was—to Bunter—a sufficient reason for cleaning out the jar with a tablespoon. But he doubted whether the Famous Five would see it in that light. If they were going to be mean about it Bunter felt that it would be judicious to quit the study before the discovery was made. But that was impossible. The toast and eggs were not finished. Naturally, it did not occur to Bunter to leave a tea-table while anything remained uneaten.

"Where's the jam?" Nugent asked the question which the fat Owl of the Remove dreaded to hear. "Didn't you open the jar, Bunter?"

"Oh, yes—I mean no!" stammered Bunter. "I couldn't find it, old chap!"

"I saw you open it, you fat fraud!" growled Johnny Bull.

"I—I mean I opened it; but there wasn't any jam in it!" explained Bunter. "That's what I really meant to say. I say, you fellows, is anybody going to have that other egg? If not, I'll have it."

Bunter did not, like Brutus, pause for a reply. He considered it safer to annex the egg before anybody had time to reply.

"The jam jar was empty?" repeated Wharton, with a stare. "Why, you villain, it was a new jar I brought up from the shop."

"Well, the jar's in the cupboard!" said Bunter, gobbling the last egg rapidly. "You can look at it if you like. Hardly a smear of jam in it. I'd speak to Mrs. Mimble about it if I were you."

"You've wolfed all the jam?" roared Bob.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

Wharton stepped to the study cupboard and disinterred therefrom a jar, which, as Bunter stated, was undoubtedly empty. Lately it had contained strawberry jam. But the jam was gone from his gaze, like a beautiful dream.

Bunter rose hastily.

"I say, you fellows, sorry to leave you, but Mauly's expecting me. I don't think Mauleverer's had tea yet—"

Bunter rolled to the door. The last slice of toast and the last egg were gone now. So it was high time for Bunter to be gone, too.

But the fat junior had left it too late. Frank Nugent stepped to the door and put his back to it.

"Where's that jam?" he inquired.

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"Cough up that jam!"

"I—I say, I—I'm in rather a hurry, old chap!" said Bunter. "No larks, you know. I've got some lines to do for Wingate of the Sixth—"

"Where's that jam?"

"I—I mean, the Head wants to see me. Bad form to keep the Head waiting, you know. Let a fellow pass!"

"Where's that jam?"

"The wherfulness is terrific!" chuckled Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

"There's a scrape or two left in the jar," said Harry Wharton. "I'll shove it down the back of his neck—"

"Hear, hear!"

"Look here, you beast, if that is how you treat a fellow you've asked to tea in this study—" roared Bunter indignantly.

"My memory must be failing me," said the captain of the Remove. "I haven't the faintest recollection of asking you to tea in this study, fatty."

"Well, I came—" said Bunter.

"Oh, quite! And before you go,

you're going to have the rest of the jam! Hold his ears, you men!"

"Yaroooh!" roared Bunter.

Frank Nugent took one fat ear in a vice-like grip. Johnny Bull took the other. Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh pulled back the fat Owl's collar, ready for the application of jam.

Wharton, having found a jammy tablespoon, proceeded to scrape out the small amount of jam sticking to the interior of the jar. There was not much, for Bunter was thorough in such matters. Still, there was enough to make Bunter cringe with horror at the idea of having it down the back of his neck.

"I say, you fellows," howled Bunter—"I say, I'm in a hurry!"

"Won't keep you waiting long!" said Wharton, industriously scraping.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, I never had the jam!" howled Bunter. "I suppose you can take a fellow's word! The jar was empty when I opened it—and I never opened it, either! Besides, it was full when I left it in the cupboard!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"I—I don't know what's become of the jam!" wailed Bunter. "Perhaps Bull had it—"

"What!" roared Johnny.

"Ow! Leggo my ear! I—I mean, I—I think Smithy had it! I remember now he stepped into the study while you were watching Smedley!"

"Oh, you fat fibber! Smithy was on the landing with me!" exclaimed Wharton.

"W-a-was he? I—I didn't mean Smithy! I—I meant Toddy! I meant to say— Yaroooh! Keep off, you beast!"

A sticky tablespoon, nearly full of jam, approached the back of a fat neck. Bunter wriggled and writhed in horrid apprehension. But with his collar and both fat ears firmly held, there was no escape for Bunter. The way of the transgressor was hard—and sticky!

"Ready?" asked Wharton. "Don't wriggle like an eel, Bunter! I want to get it down your neck, not over your back hair!"

"Beast! I say, old chap—look here, you old fellow—I mean, you beast—keep off! I never had the jam! Besides, I'm going to buy you a new jar! I'm expecting a postal order—"

"We've heard that one!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yurrrggh!" gurgled Bunter, as a jammy spoon tickled his fat neck. "Keep off! I say, you fellows, you chuck it, and I'll tell you how to make Smedley sit up! I've got a wheeze, honest Injun!"

### THE THIRD CHAPTER.

#### A Little Ventriloquism!

HARRY WHARTON withdrew the jammy tablespoon.

As a matter of fact, he did not really intend to squeeze the sticky jam down Bunter's fat neck, richly as he deserved it. The Owl of the Remove, aware of his deserts, was unaware that his fat leg was being pulled as a punishment for his sins. A wink passed along the Famous Five, and the fat Owl was released; but Nugent still remained on guard at the door.

Bunter gasped with relief. Jam down the inside of his fat neck was grateful and comforting; but jam down the outside was horrid. Moreover, it meant that Bunter would have to wash—an extra and unnecessary wash! Bunter

disliked washing as much as he liked jam!

"Let's hear the wheeze!" said the captain of the Remove, the jam-spoon still in hand. "If it's a good one, we'll let you off. Otherwise—"

"The otherwisefulness will be terrific!" declared Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

Billy Bunter blinked round at them through his big spectacles.

"I say, you fellows, I've been thinking it out," he said.

"With what?" inquired Bob Cherry.

"Yah! I was going to tell you over tea, only I was thinking of that beastly jam! I knew you'd make a mean fuss about it! Not that I had it!"

"Get on with the wheeze!"

Wharton made a motion with the jammy tablespoon.

"Well, you fellows know what a wonderful ventriloquist I am!" said the Owl of the Remove.

"Oh, bother that! We don't want to hear about that! Get on with the wheeze, if there is one."

"That's it, you fathead!" said Bunter. "Old Quelch knew about it, and it was no use trying to pull his leg with it. Member that time I made a wasp buzz over his head in the Form-room, and, instead of looking for the wasp, he came over and gave me the pointer!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It was like you to make a wasp buzz in January!" agreed Wharton. "Quelch might have swallowed it in the summer."

"He couldn't have swallowed it, fat-head! There wasn't really a wasp; it was my wonderful ventriloquism!"

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Where on earth could Bunter have been when brains were handed round? He couldn't have been on the spot!"

"If you had as much brains in your head as I've got in my little finger, old chap, you'd be twice as clever as you are!" said Bunter disdainfully. "I fancy ventriloquism needs brains!"

"Only fancy!" said Bob. "If it did, you couldn't do it! Must be a gift."

"Yah! Look here, you fellows, if Cherry's going to jaw all the time, I can't tell you the wheeze! Mauly may have had his tea by this time—"

"Get on with it!"

"Well, that's it!" said Bunter. "I can make Smedley sit up with my wonderful ventriloquism! He doesn't know anything about it like Quelch did. He will never tumble. Of course, we have to fix it so that he doesn't spot me. That's important."

"Oh, fearfully!" said Johnny Bull.

"My idea is this—one of you fellows sneaks his study key—"

"H'm!"

"And locks him in his study—"

"H'm!"

"And then I talk to him through the door," said Bunter. "You know, I can imitate almost any voice with my wonderful ventriloquial gift. Not a commonplace voice like yours, Wharton, perhaps—"

"You fat ass!"

"I mean a voice with anything distinctive about it—like old Prout's boom or Hacker's bark or the Head's mumble—see? Well, outside Smedley's door, I talk in the Head's voice, and give him the sack!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"Call him names; tell him he's a sneak, and not fit to be a Greyfriars master, and all that!" said Bunter. "He'll think it's the Head speaking—see? Only you've got to be jolly careful to get the door locked first! That's awfully important."

"Ha, ha, ha!"



"Or if you prefer to lock the Head in his study—"

"Oh crikey!"

"Then I'd talk to the Head in Smedley's voice—insult him fearfully—see?" said Bunter cheerfully. "Then he will most likely give the brute the sack, and we shall be shut of him!"

"Ain't he a cough-drop?" gasped Bob Cherry.

The Famous Five gazed at Bunter.

There was no doubt that the fat Owl possessed the weird gift of ventriloquism. Often and often had he been kicked for ventriloquial tricks in the Remove passage. His great gift was far from valued there. It was possible that such a "wheeze" could have been brought off.

The Famous Five looked blankly at one another. They had no doubt that the Creeper and Crawler, stealthy as usual, was at hand, and that he had heard Johnny Bull allude to him by that unflattering name. Slowly Frank Nugent opened the study door.

"This means six!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"What the thump—" gasped Nugent. He stared into the passage. It was empty. "I—I say, Smedley's not here!"

"Not there!" ejaculated Wharton.

"No—nobody's here."

"But—but we heard him—"

"He, he, he!" came from Bunter. "I say, you fellows, do you believe that I

"Now, all kick together!" said Harry Wharton. "Wait a minute, Bunter, while we line up. All together—when I say three. One—two—"

Billy Bunter did not wait for "three." He squirmed out of the study doorway and fled for his fat life, leaving the Famous Five chortling.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Very Bright of Bunter!

**H**ERBERT VERNON SMITH stood in Study No. 4, in the Remove, carefully going through his pockets. Pocket after pocket was searched, and drawn blank.



As Fisher T. Fish bent over his account-book, Vernon-Smith picked up the inkpot and poured its contents over the American junior's head. "Whurrrrgh! Wake snakes!" roared Fishy. "What the great horned toad—yurrrgh! Why, you pesky mugwump—I'll make potato scrapings of you—gurrgh!"

But the chums of the Remove, while prepared to make Smedley "sit up" if they could, were certainly not prepared to take such drastic measures as this. There was a limit.

"Rather good—what?" asked Bunter. "I thought this out entirely by myself."

"You've got the sort of intellect to do it!" agreed Bob. "I think he'd better have the jam, after all!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"You fozzling ass!" said Johnny Bull. "You couldn't do it, and it would be a mean trick if you could! And you couldn't! You'd better be careful how you play tricks on the Creeper and Crawler!"

"Bull, how dare you use such an expression!" came a sharp, barking voice from the door. "Open this door at once!"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Johnny, spinning round to the door in utter dismay. It was Smedley's voice that came through—at all events, it seemed that it was.

can imitate Smedley's voice now? He, he, he!"

"Wha-a-t?" gasped Wharton blankly. Johnny Bull gave a roar.

"Bunter! Why, you fat, frabjous, fozzling fathead, it was you made me jump nearly out of my skin—"

"He, he, he!" cachinnated Bunter, apparently deriving entertainment from the fact that the startled Johnny had jumped nearly out of his skin.

Johnny was not amused, however. He made a grab at Bunter, and grasped him by the back of his fat neck.

Then Bunter ceased to be amused.

"Yaroooh!" he roared. "Leggo, you beast! You said I couldn't do it, and I jolly well showed you I could, and I say—whoooooop!"

Bump!

Billy Bunter sat on the floor with a concussion that shook the study. He roared as he established contact.

"Ow! Yow! Beasts! I jolly well won't pull Smedley's leg now, see? Rotters! Wow! Urrrrgh!"

Tom Redwing, his studymate, watched him, with a faintly amused smile. But the Bounder did not smile. Catching that smile on his chum's face, he frowned.

"Funny, ain't it?" he snapped. "Last term I had more money than Maul-everer, and now—look! Seven-and-six!"

"Lots of fellows in the Remove never have seven-and-six!" remarked Redwing. "I haven't myself."

"If you had I'd borrow it. It's sickenin'!" growled the Bounder. "The pater seems to mean business—he's keepin' me to ten bob a week."

"All the better for you, Smithy! What do you want more than seven-and-six for?" asked Tom. "Nothing you could mention to the Head!"

"Oh, don't be an ass!"

"It's you that's the ass, Smithy. You've told me that your father is going to disinherit you if you get sacked, as you jolly nearly were last term. You've



told me that he's picked out a nephew, Lucius Teggers, to adopt in your place. You've told me that he means it, every word. Even a reckless ass like you ought to have sense enough to keep straight, in the circumstances. Don't be a fool!"

The Bounder gave him an angry stare. That was unusually plain language from Tom Redwing.

"Any particular bizney of yours?" he sneered.

Tom coloured.

"I don't want to see you sacked, and kicked out of your home as well as out of your school!" he said quietly. "Your father's doing the best thing possible for you, in keeping you short of money. It was too much money that helped to make you into a young black-guard."

"If you're asking for a thick ear, Redwing—"

"Oh rats!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Get out!" roared the Bounder, as Billy Bunter's fat face and big spectacles looked in at the door.

The Bounder was in a savage temper—not an unusual thing of late days, since the fear of disinheritance by his father had been on his mind. The path of reform was doubtless good for Smithy's character, but it did not seem good for his temper.

"I say, old chap, don't be shirty, you know," urged Bunter. "I've come here as a friend. I know you're hard up, Smithy! I didn't hear what you were just saying to Redwing, of course—"

"You prying worm!" growled the Bounder, striding across the study and picking up a cricket stump, and then turning towards the Owl of the Remove. "I'll teach you not to listen at my door."

"Everybody knows you're hard up, old chap!" said Bunter cheerfully. "It's quite a joke in the Form. Skinner thinks your pater is in the bankruptcy court, and hasn't any money left—"

"Does he?" said the Bounder, between his teeth.

"But I know it's all right," said Bunter. "He's just growing mean, ain't he, Smithy? That's all. I've been there myself, you know. I was disappointed about a postal order only this morning. But I've come here, old chap, to tell you how to raise the wind."

The Bounder, stump in hand, stared at him. So did Tom Redwing. How to raise the wind, was a regular problem now for the once wealthy Bounder. It did not seem likely that the fat and fatuous Owl had any useful suggestion to make. But Smithy was willing to catch at a straw.

"What do you mean, you fat idiot?" he demanded.

"Well, old chap, look at it!" said Bunter. "You haven't any money, but your pater lets you run up as big a bill as you like, at the tuckshop. Ain't that so?"

"What about it, fathead?"

It was the fact. The horn of plenty had run dry; so far as hard cash was concerned. But the millionaire was not growing "mean," as Bunter expressed it. In all harmless ways, Smithy could still spend as much money as he liked. In matters of tuck, his study was as lavishly provided as ever. He was not allowed to handle the money; but he could run up any length of account with Mrs. Mimble for his father to pay. Mr. Vernon-Smith liked his son to keep up a wealthy appearance.

"Well, don't you see?" demanded Bunter. "Suppose you walked down to the school shop now, and ordered a

dozen cakes, and three dozen jam-tarts, and a dozen ginger-pop? You'd get them all right. I jolly well wish I could!"

The Bounder burst into a laugh. Such an indulgence, from Bunter's father to the fat Owl, would probably have caused Billy Bunter to burst. But in matters of tuck the Bounder was quite unlike Bunter. He liked to stand expensive spreads in his study; but he cared little for such things himself.

"Well, you go and give Mrs. Mimble an order—a big order!" said Bunter, his little round eyes glistening behind his big, round spectacles. "Have the things sent to your study, see? Then I buy them from you."

"What-a-t!" ejaculated the Bounder. "At the present moment," said Bunter hastily, "I'm rather short of money. But I'm expecting a postal order. I think I mentioned it."

"I think you did," said Tom Redwing, laughing. "I seem to have heard something of the kind."

"Well, see the idea?" asked Bunter, blinking at Vernon-Smith. "Order a couple of pounds' worth of tuck. Dash it all, make it five pounds' worth—your father won't mind. He likes you to swank!"

"You fat tick!"

"Then I hand you my postal order, when—when it comes," said Bunter. "I pay full price for everything—nothing mean about me, I hope."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Redwing.

"By gum!" The Bounder's eyes gleamed. "By gum!" That extraordinary method of raising the wind had certainly never occurred to the Bounder, though, as the son of a financier, he might have been expected to understand finance better than the fat and fatuous Owl of the Remove. Really it was quite a brain-wave of Bunter's. Even Billy Bunter's fat intellect could function effectively, when his fat nose scented tuck.

"Is it a go?" asked the Owl of the Remove eagerly. "I'm expecting that postal order by the first post in the morning. It's bound to come—it's from one of my titled relations, you know. And—"

"Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, Reddy—" grinned the Bounder. "Better not get any perishable goods," said Redwing, laughing. "They won't last till Bunter's postal order comes."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Bounder seemed in high good-humour now. Bunter's suggestion seemed to have banished his angry discontent, and raised his spirits wonderfully. Which was rather puzzling to Redwing; for although the Bounder could easily have carried out his part of the transaction, it was fairly certain that Bunter's part would not be carried out. Bunter, certainly, would have disposed of the tuck; but the arrival of his celebrated postal order was much less certain.

"Dashed if I don't!" said Vernon-Smith, and he walked out of the study, leaving Redwing perplexed.

Bunter rolled after him eagerly. "I say, Smithy, I'll help you do the shopping!" he gasped.

"You needn't!" snapped Smithy, over his shoulder.

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"Roll away, barrel!"

But Billy Bunter did not roll away. He rolled after the Bounder. Bunter had a personal interest in the purchases the Bounder was going to make—a deep personal interest. He was not yet aware of what was in Herbert Vernon-Smith's mind.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob

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Cherry from the doorway of the tuck-shop, in the corner behind the elms. "Come and have a ginger, Smithy."

The Famous Five, in flannels, had adjourned to the school shop for the refreshing ginger, after some practice on the cricket ground.

Smithy nodded to the cheery Bob, and went in. It was after class, and a good many fellows were in the school shop. The inner apartment was sacred to seniors, but the outer shop was crowded with juniors of all Forms. Vernon-Smith shoved a way to the counter, and Mrs. Mimble put on her best smile for her best customer. She neglected another customer, Skinner, who was trying to persuade her that a bad sixpence was a good one, in order to devote her attention to the millionaire's son.

"I want a few things for a spread, Mrs. Mimble," said the Bounder carelessly. "Look here! Make up a parcel of the best, and make it come to five pounds. I'll leave the details to you."

"Certainly, Master Vernon-Smith!" said Mrs. Mimble, beaming.

Even the lavish Bounder seldom gave a "shipping" order like this.

"I say, plenty of jam tarts, Mrs. Mimble," squeaked Bunter, "and some pots of jam—strawberry jam. Don't forget strawberry jam."

Mrs. Mimble passed by Bunter's fat squeak, like the idle wind which she regarded not. The Bounder lounged carelessly against the counter, while his parcel was bundled together. Few fellows could afford to give orders like this, and the Bounder rather liked doing it under a sea of eyes, more especially as he was known to be short of ready cash.

"Standing a feed to the whole school, Smithy?" asked Harry Wharton, with a smile.

"Not exactly."

"You'll have enough there to ask all the Remove," said Squiff.

"Look here, Mrs. Mimble, I jolly well tell you that this sixpence is a good one!" hooted Skinner.

"Please don't bother now, Master Skinner, with me so busy!" said Mrs. Mimble crossly.

Skinner grunted, and edged over to the Bounder. It amused Skinner to cut his little jokes about the Bounder's stony state, but that was not going to prevent him from sharing in the loaves and fishes.

"Some spread, Smithy," he remarked agreeably. "You're the fellow to make the money fly, and no mistake!"

"And my pater in the bankruptcy court, too," said the Bounder sarcastically.

And Skinner moved off again, realising that he, at least, was not going to participate in that feast of the gods.

Neither, however, did it seem that anyone else was going to participate. Smithy issued no invitations, though half the Remove were there. When Mrs. Mimble had his parcel ready—a rather hefty parcel—he took it and moved away from the counter. He walked out of the shop with it, many curious stares following him.

"Is Smithy going to feed to that extent on his own?" asked Hazeldene. "Is he growing to be a fat pig like Bunter?"

"Yah!" said Bunter, over a podgy shoulder, as he rolled after the heavy-laden Bounder.

"Taking it to his study like a dog taking a bone to his kennel!" sneered Skinner. "Smithy's getting stingy."

Headless of the comments in the school shop, Vernon-Smith walked back to the House with his big bundle. At his heels rolled Billy Bunter, his very spectacles gleaming with happy anticipation, and he smacked his lips as he rolled.

RHYMES OF THE REMOVE.

No. 15.



"Music hath charms to soothe a savage breast"—and so the Remove thought, until Johnny Bull took up cornet playing! Read what the Greyfriars rhymester has to say on the subject in the following snappy verses:

When Johnny blows his cornet,  
Old Inky shakes his fist!  
Bob Cherry cries: "That's torn it!"  
And begs him to desist!  
Frank Nugent hammers vainly  
Upon the study door,  
While Wharton tells him plainly  
We don't want any more!

Then Johnny ceases blowing  
To call us horrid names!  
His cheeks are red and glowing,  
His eyes seem full of flames!  
"Just put away that trumpet!"  
We beg, but all in vain.  
"If you don't like it, lump it!"  
He growls, and starts again!

Now Prout has heard the clamour;  
He knits his massive brow!  
Mossoo begins to stammer:  
"Pardieu! Vat is zis row?"  
Says Prout: "The noise you hear, sir,  
A dreadful message bears!  
Some ghastly crime, I fear, sir,  
Is taking place upstairs!"

They hear the cornet moaning,  
The knocking on the door!  
Says Prout: "The victim's groaning  
And weltering in gore!  
The vile assassin's knocking  
His brains out with a club!"  
Mossoo says: "Shocking, shocking!"  
And then begins to blub!

Says Prout: "I can determine  
Which course of action's best!  
I'll shoot him down like vermin,  
Exterminate the pest!  
No criminal shall trifle  
With me. It can't be done!  
I'll go and fetch my rifle,  
And then you'll see some fun!"

While Johnny strains his gullet  
With many lusty blows,  
There comes a BANG! A bullet  
Goes whistling past his nose!  
Then Johnny drops his cornet  
And streaks for safety's sake!  
A bullet, like a hornet,  
Goes buzzing in his wake!

Prout looks for signs of terror,  
For traces of a crime;  
He sees he's made an error,  
No blood is shed this time!  
A searching glance, but fleeting,  
He gives, then shuts the door.  
We hear his steps retreating,  
And all is peace once more!

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Where Does Bunter Come In?

FISHER T. FISH, the American junior, sat in his study, No. 14 in the Remove.

Fishy was busy with books and papers—not of the school variety. They were account books and account papers. The business man of the Remove was going over his accounts—an occupation in which he always found comfort. To possess money was Fishy's ideal of human happiness; to think about money the next best. Fishy's thoughts seldom ran on anything else. Which did not make him popular in the Remove.

But Fishy cared little for popularity. There was, so far as he knew, no cash value in popularity. So what was the good of it?

Fishy was feeling rather bucked. His ways of making money were many and various. One way was by lending small sums at interest among the fags. This was rather a dangerous game, as it meant a flogging if Fishy was spotted by the beaks. But of late, since Mr. Quelch had left for his health, Fishy had felt much more secure. Smedley never seemed to take any notice of him at all.

Fisher T. Fish, in fact, was the only fellow in the Remove who was glad to change Quelch for Smedley. He did not care how much the Creeper and Crawler crept and crawled, so long as he did not spot those little moneylending transactions.

Smedley was well known to be "down" on the Bounder, and to watch Smithy like a cat. Fishy cheerfully wished more power to his elbow. So long as the Creeper and Crawler was giving his special attention to the scapegrace of the school, he had less to bestow on the business man of the Lower Fourth.

As Fishy's accounts were showing a profit, there was naturally a grin of satisfaction on Fishy's lean, bony face. Deep in figures Fishy gave a sudden start, as his study door was bumped open.

He looked up irritably. His study-mates, Squiff and Johnny Bull, were out of the House, and Fishy wanted them to remain out while he was enjoying his accounts. Those two fellows were so far from admiring Fishy's astuteness that they often called him nasty names—such as "Shylock" and "Worm" and "Toad," and when they spotted his business papers they were even capable of shoving them into the study fire.

But it was neither Squiff nor Johnny that appeared in the doorway. It was Vernon-Smith with a big parcel in his hand.

"Aw! Wake snakes!" grunted Fisher T. Fish. He was relieved, but, at the same time, he did not want to be interrupted. "Whatcher want?"

"Oh, I've called on business!" said the Bounder, with a contempt he did not take the trouble to conceal.

Fishy never could understand why fellows despised his wonderful business gifts. From Fishy's point of view, making money was the beginning and the end of all things. What was there to despise in a fellow devoting himself to the great, indeed, the only, important thing in existence? Somehow, the Remove fellows did not seem to agree.

"Business," repeated Fishy dubiously. He was always ready to do business. He was ready to buy anything, from a cricket bat to a tattered Virgil at a tenth of its value. He was always



prepared to lend money at a rate of interest that would have made Shylock stare and gasp. But he was doubtful about the Bounder. Once upon a time he would have been delighted to welcome Herbert Vernon-Smith as a client. But he had heard all about the Bounder's recent hard-upness, and Fishy had no use for lame ducks.

He shook his bony head.

"Forget it, bo," he answered. "I sure ain't lending you anything. You couldn't pay. And mebbe you wouldn't, neither. You ain't the kind of guy I'd be in a hurry to trust. Forget it."

"You don't get me. Look at that."

The Bounder slammed his parcel on the table, and Fishy's account books danced.

"I say, Smithy"—Billy Bunter, puzzled and a little alarmed, blinked in at the doorway—"I say, wharrer you come to this study for?"

"Shut up!"

"Bring that parcel to my study, you ass!" exclaimed Bunter. "I'll carry it, if you like. What the dickens have you brought it to Fishy's study for? Look here, Smithy—Yooooop!"

The Bounder gave him a shove, and Billy Bunter sat down suddenly in the passage. The door of Study No. 14 slammed on him.

"Ow!" roared Bunter. "Wow!"

What Smithy was up to, Bunter could not fathom. He had watched the Bounder lay in that enormous stock of tuck. He had followed him up to the Remove passage with it. Then, quite to his surprise, Smithy had walked along to the end of the passage, and gone into Fisher T. Fish's study. What it meant Bunter could not guess; but it was dawning on his fat brain that the brilliant scheme he had propounded was not going to work out as he had anticipated.

Having slammed the door on the importunate Owl of the Remove, Herbert Vernon-Smith turned to Fishy again. He cut the string of the parcel, jerked it open, and released the contents, which rolled out on the study table. Fishy stared blankly at that ocean of tuck.

"This sure is the elephant's side-whiskers!" he ejaculated. "Say, what's this stunt, Smithy?"

"That's five pounds' worth of tuck," said Vernon-Smith. "I'm selling it to you at half-price. Two pound ten. You can sell it along the passage, and make a big profit on it."

"Waal, I swow!" ejaculated the astonished Fishy.

"I've no time to waste!" added the Bounder.

Fisher T. Fish eyed him and grinned. He realised that he was not the only business man in the Remove.

"I'll say you're cute, Smithy!" he remarked. "I'll sure say that! I'll tell a man! But you're making one leetle mistake! I'm open to buy that stuff! Yep! But I'd have to sell it under tuckshop prices, or why should the guys buy? See the point?"

Vernon Smith scowled at him. He had jumped at that extraordinary method of raising the wind; but he did not feel proud of it. It rather had a resemblance to Fishy's own cuteness and spryness, which was not pleasing. And haggling about money was not in the Bounder's line. It was one of the chief enjoyments of life to Fishy; but tastes differed.

"I guess I'll take your word that you coughed up five quids for that lot!" said Fisher T. Fish a creab y.

"But—"

"What will you give, Shylock?"

"Hard words break no bones, bo!" said Fishy. "Take it out in shooting off your mouth if you like! Where's the harm? I'll give you a pound."

"Oh crikey!" came a startled ejaculation outside the study.

It looked as if a fat ear was near the keyhole.

The Bounder breathed hard. But he would not haggle. He nodded curtly. Fisher T. Fish smiled genially. A fellow who disdained to haggle was exactly the fellow Fishy liked to meet.

A pound-note was extracted from Fishy's notecase, and passed across to the Bounder, who slipped it carelessly into his pocket. The transaction was concluded, and Fishy's grin grew wider. This purchase was of a much more saleable kind than tattered Latin grammars and dog-eared Virgils and pocket-knives with one blade missing! There was a ready sale for this sort of stuff up and down the Remove passage. Even at only a little under shop prices, it would go fast enough. Fisher T. Fish was feeling greatly elated. The scowl on the Bounder's face did not worry him!

Fishy never really enjoyed a bargain to the full extent unless it left the other fellow feeling sore!

The Bounder gave him a glare. Heedless of the glare, Fisher T. Fish bent over his account-book to make an entry of the transaction.

Vernon-Smith picked up the inkpot.

In the twinkling of an eye it was up-ended over the back of Fishy's bony, cute, transatlantic head.

There was a fearful yell from Fisher T. Fish, as the ink ran in a torrent down the back of his lean neck.

"Whurrrrgh! Wake snakes!" roared Fisher T. Fish. "What the great horned toad—Yurrrgh! What the Abraham Lincoln—Gurrrgh! Why, you pesky mugwump—you slabsided jay—you ornery geck—I'll sure make potato-scrappings of you! Gurrrrgh!"

Fishy leaped wildly to his feet, streaming ink. The Bounder turned to the door, jerked it open, and strode out of the study, leaving Fisher T. Fish yelling with rage.

There was another yell as the Bounder strode out—he had opened the door so suddenly that a fat junior outside had had no time to get back from the keyhole. Smithy strode into him—and Billy Bunter went rolling, with a roar!

The Bounder went down the passage, leaving him to roll and roar.

"Ow! Beast!" yelled Bunter. "I say, Smithy—Oh, you beast! Yah! Swindler! It was my idea, wasn't it, you rotter? Where do I come in, you beast?"

Bunter, apparently, came in nowhere!

He picked himself up, and, gasping with wrath and breathlessness, rolled after Smithy to his study. He glared into Study No. 4, with a glare that almost cracked his spectacles.

"Look here, Smithy!" he roared. "Look here, you spooting rotter, where do I come in, what?"

"You don't come in—you go out!" snapped the Bounder.

And Bunter went out, in quite a hurry, with a lunging boot to help him on his way.

In a state of speechless wrath, the fat Owl of the Remove departed. Even Fisher T. Fish, wrestling with ink in Study No. 14, was not quite so enraged and exasperated as the Owl

of the Remove at that unexpected outcome of his bright idea!

## THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

### Mr. Smedley Hears Something to His Advantage!

**M**R. SMEDLEY gave an angry grunt.

He was in his study, the study that had formerly been Mr. Quelch's, and the window was open on the quadrangle, in the sunny May afternoon. And through the open window came the sounds of merriment.

To judge by the roars of laughter in the quad, quite a number of Greyfriars fellows were thoroughly enjoying life.

"Ha, ha, ha!" came in a roar.

"Oh, my hat! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Sing it over again, Bunter!"

"This is a real funny one! Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter, apparently, was causing all this merriment. Fellows gathered round the Owl of the Remove, and shrieked and roared with hilarity.

Some masters might have been pleased to hear the sound of boyish laughter. But Mr. Smedley was not in a mood to be pleased.

The temporary master of the Remove, for his part, was not enjoying life!

Matters were not looking up for Mr. Lucius Teggers who was at Greyfriars School under the name of Eustace Smedley, unsuspected by all.

Mr. Teggers was accustomed to a busy City life, and did not enjoy school-mastering. He had been a master in a school once upon a time, and had been glad to get shut of it; that career had no attractions for him whatever.

But the game was worth the candle! If only he could catch the scapegrace of the school "out"! If only he could bring to light one of the rascally escapades in which, he was assured, Herbert Vernon-Smith indulged as unscrupulously though not so recklessly as before!

Then the millionaire's grim sentence of disinheritance would follow the Bounder's expulsion from Greyfriars. Lucius Teggers would be the adopted heir of the millionaire—and his part as Eustace Smedley would be played out and done with!

Little did the millionaire dream what had been the result of his dangling that golden bait before the eyes of a needy man!

"Creeping and crawling" had not served the Creeper and Crawler's turn. The Bounder, if he was still at the old game, was too cautious to be caught!

Would he ever catch him?"

With that problem occupying his thoughts, Mr. Smedley was not likely to enjoy the sound of boyish laughter.

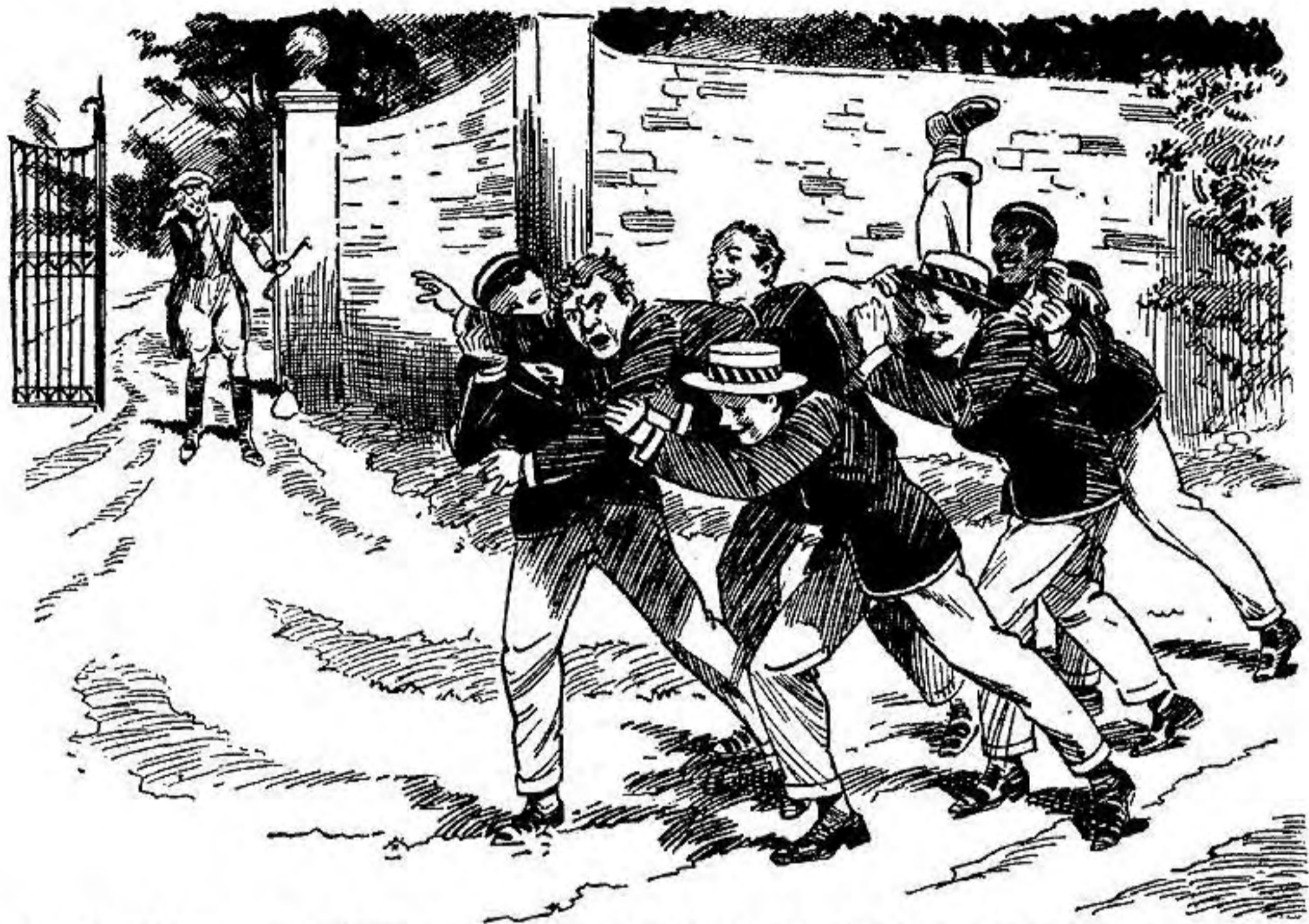
He grunted irritably, and rose to his feet, to slam his window shut. But as he stepped towards it, he paused to listen to the voices outside—stealthy eavesdropping was part of the man's nature. He was always in hope of catching something that would help him in his surreptitious campaign against his rival for a fortune.

"Ha, ha, ha!" came Bob Cherry's roar. "Ha, ha, ha! Poor old Bunter! And so the poor dog had none!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" roared Billy Bunter indignantly. "I'd jolly well thrash Smithy, only—only I disdain to soil my hands on the fellow!"





"You fools, let me go!" panted the enraged Bounder, as the Famous Five lifted him and carried him, struggling and wriggling like an eel, along the towpath. "I tell you those Highcliffe men are expecting me—I fixed it up to meet them!"

"Let them expect," said Bob Cherry. "Kim on!" Sir Hilton Popper stared as the strange procession passed his gate.

"You've soiled them on something!" remarked Johnny Bull. "Your face, too, and your neck!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Smedley did not slam his window shut. He stood, screened by the curtains, and listened. The mention of the name of "Smithy" was enough for him. All was grist that came to his mill in connection with Smithy!

"The awful beast, you know!" went on Bunter, his fat voice thrilling with indignation. "It was my idea—I thought it out entirely by myself! Smithy never has any money now, and so he can't go on the razzle as he wants to, and I thought it out for him, you know—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, shut up cackling!" hooted Bunter. "I call it a dirty trick! I suggested to him to get tuck on tick and sell it to me! Suited both parties, you know—I wanted the tuck and Smithy wanted the tin—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And I thought the beast was going to do it, and instead of handing me the tuck and taking my postal order for it—it's coming to-morrow—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Instead of that, as I expected, the brute went and sold it to Fishy, for ready money—"

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

"And when I asked him where I came in, he kicked me—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at?" shrieked Bunter. "It isn't funny! It's a swindle! Fat lot I'd have helped Smithy to raise the wind if I'd known what he was going to do! Pulling a fellow's leg, you know! I promised him my postal order as soon as it came—"

"The soonfulness would probably not be terrific, my esteemed, idiotic Bunter!" chuckled Hurreo Janset Ram Singh.

"I'm jolly glad that worm Fishy only gave him a pound! Serve him jolly well right! I say, you fellows, do stop cackling! What do you think of Smithy? Jevver hear of such a rotter?"

The outcome of Bunter's bright idea, so exasperating to the fat Owl himself, seemed to be a real shriek, in the opinion of the Removites. They roared with merriment.

"You ought to take it up, as captain of the Form, Wharton! You ought to make Smithy do the right thing! Spooing a fellow—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It was my idea all along, you know. I thought it out entirely by myself, and then that beast goes and sells the stuff to Fishy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You fellows ragged Smithy that time he put ink in the Head's hat! Well, this is worse than that! This is awfully unscrupulous! I say, you fellows, what about ragging the cad?"

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

Nobody but Bunter seemed to think that a ragging was due.

"I say, Bob, you give him a wallop- ing! I'll hold your jacket, old fellow! You could lick Smithy as easily as I could lick you—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"You could really, old chap! Will you, old fellow?" asked Bunter eagerly.

"I'll come and see fair play while you lick him!" suggested Bob.

"Beast!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, stop that silly cackling!" yelled Bunter, and he rolled wrathfully away,

leaving the merry Removites still cackling.

Mr. Smedley, in his study, was smiling, too. It was not a pleasant smile. So that young rascal, kept short of money by his father to keep him on his good behaviour, had been "raising the wind."

Not for any harmless schoolboy purpose—ten shillings a week pocket money was enough for a schoolboy to spend on harmless things.

The Bounder of Greyfriars had money in his pocket now! What was he going to do with it? Was it the Creeper and Crawler's chance at last?

## THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Carried!

"SPOT that jolly old eye?" murmured Bob Cherry.

It was the following day—a half-holiday at Greyfriars. Six juniors walked down to the gates in the afternoon, where Mr. Smedley stood in talk with Gosling at his lodge. Harry Wharton & Co. were going out for a long, long ramble that afternoon—up the river as far as Courtfield Bridge, then across the Sark, and back by way of the Black Pike.

Somewhat to their surprise, Herbert Vernon-Smith had offered to join up. The cheery Co. had no objection, and the half-dozen fellows walked out together—and Bob made his remark in a whisper, with a grin, as they passed the Creeper and Crawler.

Smedley had his back to them as he talked with the school porter; but all of the fellows were aware that he saw them. His eye glinted for a moment at the little party, though he gave no open

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sign of having noted them, or of taking any interest in their proceedings.

"Spot the watchful eye?" grinned Bob. "That's for your benefit, Smithy! Smedley's watching you this term, the same as last."

The Bounder laughed.

"Let him get on with it," he said carelessly. "Even Smedley won't fancy that I'm goin' on the razzle, I should think, in my present high-browed and improvin' company."

There was a faint sneer in the Bounder's voice, of which the Famous Five carefully took no notice. They were well aware that the path of reform was a thorny one for Vernon-Smith to tread, and they were willing to help him all they could along that difficult way.

It was certain that even Smedley, suspicious as he was, could hardly suspect the Famous Five of any intention of "blagging." Those cheery youths had their faults, but "pub-haunting" was certainly not one of them.

The juniors went out, leaving Mr. Smedley still in talk with the porter, though probably he lost interest in William Gosling's conversation after Smithy was gone. They had no doubt that he was there to keep an eye open for Herbert Vernon-Smith, probably with the intention of keeping him under observation if he went out alone.

As they came on the towpath, Redwing, who was standing up in a boat by the school raft, called to the Bounder:

"Coming, Smithy?"

"I'm walking with these fellows," answered Smithy, shaking his head.

"Look here! I wish you'd come!" said Tom, and, rather to the surprise of the Famous Five, he looked worried and angry. "It's a ripping day for a pull up the river."

"Wish you joy of it!" answered Smithy, and he turned up the bank, and walked on with the Co.

It was a little uncomfortable for the Co. Smithy, apparently, had turned down his own chum for them, and it was evident that Redwing was annoyed. That was unusual, as he was one of the best-tempered fellows in the Remove, and if Smithy preferred walking to rowing, there was nothing to get annoyed about. Plenty of fellows would be willing enough to join Redwing in the boat.

The Bounder lounged along the river-bank, with his hands in his pockets, every now and then glancing back.

"Thinking of the Creeper and Crawler?" asked Nugent, with a smile. "He won't bother about you this afternoon, Smithy, after seeing you come out hiking with us."

"So I imagined!" assented Smithy. "No sign of him, anyhow."

"Bother the man!" said Bob. "Let's think of something more agreeable! Rotten luck Quelch not coming back this term! Quelch would feel flattered if he knew how much we want him back at Greyfriars."

"The flatterfulness would be terrific!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

The juniors walked on along the green bank of the river, chatting as they went, though the Bounder said little. There was a slight cloud on his brow, as if he was thinking deeply and was not wholly satisfied with his thoughts. A mile or so along the Sark was the fence of the Three Fishers Inn, with a gate on the towpath. Vernon-Smith slackened pace as they reached it.

"You fellows mind if I chuck it?" he asked.

"Eh?"

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"Well, Reddy seemed rather keen on my company!" said the Bounder carelessly. "Makes no difference to you, I suppose?"

"Not at all!" said Bob.

"Well, you men get on, and I'll wait till Reddy comes along in the boat," said the Bounder, throwing himself down on the grassy bank.

Harry Wharton halted.

He did not want to be suspicious, but the thing was really a little too palpable. His brow darkened as he looked at the Bounder.

"Is that the truth, Vernon-Smith?" asked the captain of the Remove very quietly.

"What may you happen to mean, if you mean anythin'?" yawned Smithy.

"I mean this," said Harry, slowly and distinctly. "If you'd rather go with Redwing, it's your own affair, and

term he had a little money in his pocket, owing to his peculiar business transactions with Fisher T. Fish. Neither had he expected the captain of the Remove to spot his game so easily.

"That won't do, Smithy!" said Bob Cherry quietly. "If you want to go blagging, it's no bizney of ours; but you can't expect to drag decent fellows into it. Nobody asked you to start with us, and you can't make use of us to pull the wool over a beak's eyes."

The Bounder sneered.

"Can't I?" he said. "It seems to me that I've done it! Get on with your hike, and leave me alone!"

"That's admitting it!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Think I'm afraid to admit it?" said the Bounder, disdainfully. "If you want to know, I'm fed up and bored to death, and I've raised a quid from that stingy Shylock, Fishy—and I'm going to blow it. A couple of fellows I know will be at the Three Fishers this afternoon—Vavasour and Merton, of Highcliffe, if you want particulars—and I'm goin' to join them! And you can go hikin', or go and eat coke, just as you choose."

"That's why Reddy was rusty," said Bob. "He knew!"

"Well, now you know, too!" snapped the Bounder. He lifted himself out of the grass. "I put it civilly, and I was willin' to wait till you were out of sight! But if you want to see me hop over the fence, I've no objection."

Harry Wharton breathed hard and deep: To be used as a screen for the Bounder's blackguardism was a little too much.

"You're not hopping over that fence, Smithy," he said curtly.

"Who's going to stop me?" sneered the Bounder.

"I am!"

"Sneakin' to Smedley?" jeered Smithy. "Is creepin' and crawlin' catchin', like measles?"

"Never mind Smedley! The man's a cur, but he's got plenty of reason to watch you, at any rate, and I dare say he would be watching you this minute, if you hadn't fooled him—and us! Well, you're not getting away with it. You started on a ten mile hike, with us, and that's what you're going to have. You fellows agree?"

"Yes, rather!" said Johnny Bull emphatically. "We don't want your company, Smithy—but if you want to go to the Three Fishers, you can start without us."

"The ratherfulness is terrific."

"If you fancy you can dictate to me—" snapped Vernon-Smith savagely.

"I don't!" said Wharton coolly. "It's not fancy—it's fact! Take his other arm, Bob."

"What-ho!" grinned Bob.

The Bounder, in astonishment and rage, leaped back, as the two juniors grasped at him. He had made use of the Co., and whether they liked it, or lumped it, made little difference to the Bounder. But he had not expected this! What he did not expect, however, was what happened.

He leapt back, and ran for the fence on the towpath. After him went the Co. at a rush.

The Bounder reached the fence, and made a desperate jump. He caught the top, but the next moment several pairs of hands were on him, and he came back to the towpath, landing with a bump.

"Hands off!" he yelled furiously.

"Rats to you!" said Johnny Bull. Five pairs of hands dragged the

### MIDDLESEX SCORES!

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we shan't miss your company. But if you've come here to sneak into that den, the Three Fishers, it's a different matter. You're not going to make use of fellows like that."

"Harry!" exclaimed Frank Nugent, startled.

There was a grunt from Johnny Bull.

"Don't be an ass, Franky! Isn't it as plain as the nose on your face? Smithy's made use of us as a convoy, to get away from Smedley's eye. Now he's done with us!"

The Bounder, stretched in the grass, looked up at the Famous Five, colouring a little. To do him justice, he was more than half-ashamed of his miserable trickery. The kink of blackguardism in the Bounder's character was uppermost that afternoon. He felt that the path of reform would be a little more tolerable if he let himself go just once! And for the first time that



angry Bounder to his feet. His straw hat fell off, and dropped unregarded in the bushes along the fence. His collar jerked loose, and his tie streamed out. The Bounder was not the man to give in, if he could help it, even with such heavy odds against him. But, in the circumstances, he could not help it.

He struggled desperately, crimson with rage, panting for breath, and gasping out threats. But he was jammed on his feet, and his arms safely held.

"Walking it?" inquired Bob Cherry cheerily.

"No!" yelled the Bounder.

"Then you'll be carried."

"Oh, you rotters! Won't I pay you out for this!" panted the enraged Bounder. "You fools, let me go! I tell you those Highcliffe men are expectin' me—I fixed it up to meet them—"

"Let them expect," said Bob, "Kim on!"

And as the Bounder refused to walk, he was lifted and carried, struggling and wriggling like an eel. The Famous Five marched on, carrying him, his arms and legs wildly flying, along the towpath. At a little distance, they passed a gate of Popper Court, where an angular gentleman in shooting clothes stared at them through an eye-glass. It was Sir Hilton Popper, and he seemed surprised at the sight of five Greyfriars fellows carrying a sixth who kicked and wriggled and yelped.

"Put me down, you rotters!" panted Vernon-Smith. "I'll walk."

"The walkfulness is the proper caper, my esteemed and disgusting Smithy," chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

And the Bounder was dropped on his feet, Wharton and Bob Cherry linking arms with him as he walked! He went quietly till they were out of sight of Sir Hilton Popper, then he began to struggle again. But the grasp on his arms was like iron, and he struggled in vain. From sheer breathlessness, he gave it up at last, and crimson, panting, his hair blowing out in the wind, he walked on between Wharton and Bob—and people whom they passed on the towpath stared at him, probably thinking him the most ill-tempered-looking fellow they had ever seen! Certainly the Bounder was not enjoying that afternoon's hike and equally certain, the Famous Five did not enjoy his company. But they meant to have it, all the same, far from enjoyable as it was, and they had it, and that was that!

## THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

### Pay Up!

"WILL you let go?"

"No!"

The question was asked and answered on Courtfield Bridge. Beyond lay a country lane, for which the Famous Five headed, two of them still linking arms with the Bounder.

The crimson in Smithy's face had faded to a paleness of deadly fury. Seldom, or never, had the Bounder of Greyfriars been so deeply and savagely enraged. But his fury made no difference whatever to the chums of the Remove. Smithy had started on that hike with them, and he was going through it with them. He was welcome to start for a disreputable destination on any occasion he liked—if he started without them! That fact was going to be made clear to Smithy.

A lad was sitting on the stone parapet of the bridge, with a bike leaning

against it near him. The Greyfriars fellows knew him—it was Wickers, a fellow in the Courtfield team with whom the Remove played matches. Probably he was going home from school on his bike and had stopped to take a rest, or to admire the scenery. Anyhow, there he was, and he stared curiously at the Bounder's white, enraged face, and a faint grin came over his own.

"Smile Smithy, old bean!" murmured Bob Cherry. "That scowl of yours is making the public sit up and take notice."

The Bounder did not smile. He gave the cheery Bob a look of hate. The Famous Five gave Wickers a nod as they came along.

"What are you fellows up to?" asked the Courtfield School fellow.

"Hiking for the afternoon," said Harry Wharton, smiling.

"Smithy looks as if he's enjoying it," grinned Wickers.

"Oh, we're helping him along!" said Bob. "Smithy's rather petered out—in fact, he would have stopped a long distance back, if we hadn't given him a helping hand. We had to carry him, and he lost his hat!"

"You cheeky fool!" hissed the Bounder.

"Come on!" said Johnny Bull.

The juniors walked on with Smithy, leaving Wickers staring after them curiously. Vernon-Smith went quietly, so quietly that he gave his captors the impression that he was only anxious to get away from the Courtfield fellow's stare, and they were rather off their guard. As they reached the end of the bridge, Vernon-Smith gave a sudden unexpected wrench, tore himself loose, and spun round and ran back.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! After him!" roared Bob.

The Famous Five rushed back on the bridge, after the Bounder. Smithy, putting on a desperate spurt, reached the spot where William Wickers sat. He grabbed the bike, jerked it away from the parapet, and flung himself on it almost with the same movement. It shot down the slope of the bridge, Bob Cherry's grasp missing the Bounder by a few inches as it went.

Wickers jumped down from the parapet, with a roar of surprise and wrath.

"My bike!" he roared. "He's bagged my bike! You howling fathhead, bring back that bike."

"Well, of all the cheek!" gasped Bob.

Bagging a fellow's bike, under a fellow's nose, was rather the limit. But the Bounder was desperate. It was not that he cared so much for keeping his appointment with the Highcliffians at the Three Fishers, but he was not going to be overruled—if he could help it!

He shot away on the bike, getting his feet to the pedals as it slid down the slope. After him went the Famous Five in a bunch, and Wickers, gasping with wrath.

"My bike!" yelled Wickers. "You cheeky fathhead, gimme my bike! I've got to get home on that bike! Stop!"

Smithy was not likely to stop.

But it was a case of more haste and less speed. Anxious to get out of reach,

the Bounder whizzed wildly down the slope from the bridge, skidded in a deep rut, and went flying.

Before he knew what was happening, the bike crashed, and he was sprawling.

Smithy did not seem to be hurt. He leaped to his feet, bouncing up almost like an indiarubber ball, and jumped towards the fallen bike.

It clanked and clinked as he dragged it up. Evidently the bike was damaged, if Smithy was not.

He hurled himself on it, however, while six fellows rushed down on him from the bridge.

Had the bike been in good condition, Smithy would have escaped yet, though outstretched hands were almost touching him. But one pedal was badly twisted by the fall, and it jammed as the Bounder tried to drive it round. A moment more, and he was grasped and hooked off the bicycle, which went clattering again.

"Let go!" shrieked the Bounder, struggling.

"Get him!"

"The gotfulness is terrific!"

"Pin him!"

Wickers picked up his machine. His face was a study as he examined it. There was a twisted pedal, a snapped rod, and several other damages. That bike was seriously in need of repair.

"Well, this is the giddy limit!" said Wickers. "Look at that bike! I shall have to wheel it back to Courtfield to the bike shop. Look at it!"

"Hard cheese, old bean!" said Bob. "Keep quiet, Smithy! You're not getting away! Look what you've done to Wicky's bike!"

"Hang his bike—and hang him!"

"That won't wash!" said Wickers grimly. "I shall have to pay for these repairs, and I've no money to throw away. If I get it done for a quid I shall be lucky. That's up to you, Vernon-Smith."

"Go and eat coke!"

"Look after that wildcat, you men, while I look at the jigger," said Harry Wharton. "Awfully sorry for this, Wickers, old man! You shan't be the loser, so far as the money goes, you can take my word for that!"

Four of the Co. held the wriggling Bounder, while Wharton made a careful examination of the damaged machine. He knew quite enough about the matter to be able to calculate the cost of the necessary repairs at the shop in Courtfield.

"That will come to over a pound," he said quietly. "Make it a pound, Smithy, and Wickers will let us know if there's more to come."

"That's all right," agreed Wickers. "I shall have to pay on the nail. I'm

(Continued on next page.)

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not rolling in money, like you Greyfriars chaps."

"We're not exactly rolling in it!" grinned Bob Cherry. "I've got fourpence left over from the holidays."

"Well, Smithy's a millionaire," said Wickers. "He can pay. He's got to, anyhow; I can't ask my father for it."

"Pay up, Smithy!" said Wharton. "Go and eat coke!"

"The payfulness is the proper caper, my esteemed Smithy!" urged Hurree Janset Ram Singh gently. "Honesty is the cracked pitcher that goes longest to the well, as the English proverb remarks."

Vernon-Smith scowled savagely. In his former affluent circumstances he would have tossed over a pound-note, or two or three, to pay for the damage he had done, carelessly enough. Now he had only the pound he had raised with the assistance of Fisher T. Fish, and a half-crown or so over. It would not be of much use turning up at the Three Fishers—if he could get there—without any money in his pockets!

"Pay up!" grunted Johnny Bull. Instead of answering, the Bounder made a wrench to tear himself free. But the Co. were on their guard now, and he did not succeed.

"Are you paying, Smithy?" asked Harry Wharton.

"No!" yelled the Bounder.

"Bump him!"

"Hear, hear!"

Bump!

"Are you paying now?"

"No!"

Bump!

"Ow! Oh! Ooooh!" gasped the hapless Bounder.

"We'll keep this game up as long as you do, Smithy," said Bob Cherry cheerily. "We know you've got a pound on you—you got it from Fishy. Better pay your just debts than give it away to the blighters at the Three Fishers. Be just before you are generous, you know."

"Oh, you rotters! I'll pay him!" gasped the Bounder.

"Good man!" said Bob approvingly. "When you get over your little temper, old chap, you'll be glad that we were here to see that you did the right thing!"

Which was no doubt correct, though the Bounder, at the moment, was far from agreeing!

He handed over Fishy's pound-note to Wickers. Then, on an impulse of his better nature, he said:

"If that doesn't cover it, let me know."

"Right-ho!" said Wickers.

And he wheeled his clinking, clanking bike away across the common, towards Courtfield. Harry Wharton & Co. walked across the bridge again with the Bounder.

Smithy went more quietly now. His cash resources were gone, for one thing; and he was a little ashamed of himself, for another. Several miles were covered; and then Harry Wharton released his arm, and Bob followed suit.

"We turn homeward here," said the captain of the Remove. "We're no more keen on your company, Vernon-Smith, than you are on ours. You can take your own way back."

"And a good riddance to you!" grunted Johnny Bull. "A good riddance to bad rubbish!"

Without waiting for an answer from the sullen Bounder, the Famous Five walked on by the lower slopes of the Pike, leaving Vernon-Smith to his own devices. He stood staring after them

for a minute or so, scowling. Then, by a different route, he headed for Greyfriars.

By the time he got back to the tow-path on the Sark, it was rather too late to think of dropping in at the Three Fishers, unless he cut lock-up—which he could hardly venture to do. Moreover, as he had no money now, there was nothing doing at that delectable resort.

As he passed the place, however, he looked in the bushes by the fence for his lost hat. It was gone; apparently somebody passing had seen it, and picked it up. Still hatless, the Bounder tramped sullenly back to the school.

## THE NINTH CHAPTER.

### The Lost Hat!

WINGATE of the Sixth was standing in the gateway, chatting with Hilton of the Fifth, when Vernon-Smith came up.

Both the seniors glanced rather curiously at the Bounder—hatless, untidy, dusty, and tired, and sullen. Hilton, the dandy of the Fifth, smiled; Wingate frowned.

"Vernon-Smith!" rapped out the Sixth-Former.

Smithy glanced at him sullenly.

"Where's your hat?"

"I've lost it."

"You'll find it in the Head's study."

"Wha-a-at?" ejaculated the Bounder.

"You're to go there at once! Cut off!"

Vernon-Smith gave the captain of Greyfriars one amazed stare, and then tramped in. Skinner joined him in the quad.

"What's up?" he asked.

"Nothing, that I know of!" grunted Vernon-Smith.

"I fancy there's something you don't know of," grinned Skinner. "Smedley's been with the Head. Lost your hat?"

"Yes," grunted Smithy.

"I fancy Smedley found it, then. Bunter says he saw Smedley coming in with a straw in his hand. Were you wearing a straw?"

"Yes!"

"Where did you lose it?" grinned Skinner. "If Smedley picked it up out of bounds, you're for it, old bean."

The Bounder slouched on to the House without replying. Smedley, after all, had had a watchful eye open that afternoon, in spite of the Bounder's cunning move in going out with a bunch of fellows who were above suspicion. Wingate had startled him by telling him that his lost hat was in the Head's study; and he wondered now whether the captain of Greyfriars had been giving him a good-natured warning not to tell any lies there. Anyhow, he was on his guard now.

He went into the House, a good many glances following him. He could see that there was some rumour afloat that he was in trouble. Tom Redwing was waiting for him in the House, with a clouded face.

"Seen Wingate?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Then you know—"

"Oh, yes! I know Smedley found my hat, and was kind enough to bring it home for me!" said the Bounder, with a sarcastic grin. "Lucky we have our names written in our hats; he might not have known it was mine! Still, he would have guessed—from where he found it."

"Then you went—" faltered Tom, his heart sinking. "Oh, Smithy, how could you be such a fool? With that man watching you—"

"I thought I'd thrown dust in his eyes, by going out with a whole bunch of Good Little Georgies!" said the Bounder.

"He must have kept an eye on you, all the same."

"Looks like it."

"You've got to see the Head?"

"Yes. Mustn't keep the old bean waitin'—bad form! Besides, I must thank Smedley for fetchin' in my hat. It isn't every beak who'd take the trouble, is it?"

The Bounder walked on, with the sarcastic grin still on his face. He was beginning to feel amused. Redwing hurried after him.

"Smithy—" he panted.

"It's all right, fathead!" said Vernon-Smith. "The Creeper and Crawler hasn't got me this time. Have Wharton's crew come in yet?"

"I think not. I haven't seen them. But—"

"They went a longer way round, burstin' with pep, as usual! It's all right, Reddy. I'll come up to the study to tea, after I've bestowed the pleasure of my company on the Beak."

The Bounder lounged on to the headmaster's study, leaving Redwing in a state of surprise and uneasiness, but considerably relieved by his chum's confidence that it was "all right."

Judging by Dr. Locke's expression when Vernon-Smith entered his study, it was far from "all right."

The Head's brow was grim and stern. On the table before him lay a rather dusty straw hat.

The Bounder's eyes glimmered with sardonic amusement as he saw it. But for the fact that the Famous Five had taken such drastic measures with him he would have been fairly caught this time. But as the matter stood he had nothing to fear, and he knew it. What looked like overwhelming evidence against him would be blown away like cobwebs as soon as Harry Wharton & Co. came in.

"Vernon-Smith!" The Head's voice was deep. "That is your hat?"

"Is my name in it, sir?" asked the Bounder, meekly.

"It is."

"Then it is my hat, sir. So glad it's been found."

"What?"

"I should be sorry to put my father to the expense of paying for a new hat for nothing, sir," said Smithy, in the same meek tone.

Dr. Locke eyed him.

"Have you been out of bounds this afternoon, Vernon-Smith?"

"No, sir."

The Head's glance was grim and searching. Vernon-Smith bore it calmly. Dr. Locke rang the bell and sent Trotter to request Mr. Smedley to step to his study. Then he resumed his writing, while the Bounder stood and waited for the Form-master to arrive.

Mr. Smedley was not long in coming. He was expecting that summons as soon as Vernon-Smith turned up.

He entered with his usual quiet tread, his hard, sharp eyes for a moment glinting at the Bounder.

"The boy has returned, Mr. Smedley," said Dr. Locke. "He denies having been out of bounds."

"I fear that there is little reliance to be placed on the word of this boy of my Form, sir," answered Mr. Smedley.

"I am sorry to have to agree with you in that, sir," said the Head. "This boy's word is worth nothing. However, we—"





Grabbing Wickers' bike, Vernon-Smith flung himself into the saddle, and shot down the slope of the bridge. "Well, of all the cheek!" gasped Bob Cherry. Anxious to get out of reach, the Bounder whizzed wildly down the slope, skidded in a deep rut, and went flying!

"I am afraid that the matter is clear, sir," said Mr. Smedley. "I saw Vernon-Smith leave the school this afternoon, in company with a number of boys quite above suspicion, and, therefore, did not doubt that he was occupied in a harmless way on the half-holiday. I cannot help suspecting since that this was a piece of deliberate trickery."

"Oh, sir!" murmured the Bounder.

"He has returned alone, as I fully expected, after finding his hat on the towpath—"

The Bounder grinned involuntarily. He knew now that the Creeper and Crawler had suspected his trickery and followed on the towpath in the hope of spotting something. The discovery of the Bounder's hat, lying in the bushes under the Three Fishers fence, must have seemed to him to clinch the matter beyond doubt. What could he think, except that it had been dropped by a fellow hurriedly clambering over the fence into forbidden precincts?

Evidently that was what Smedley thought—or, rather, believed beyond the shadow of a doubt!

"This is not a laughing matter, Vernon-Smith," said the Head sternly as he caught the grin on the Bounder's face.

"Oh no, sir!" said Smithy meekly. "Not at all, sir! I'm very glad, sir, that Mr. Smedley followed me this afternoon, as I might have lost my hat otherwise."

"What? You did not follow Vernon-Smith, Mr. Smedley?" exclaimed the Head.

"Certainly not, sir!" Smedley's glance was bitter at Smith, for a second. "I was walking along the river, some considerable time after I had seen the boy, when I noticed a straw hat lying in the bushes by the towpath. As it had the Greyfriars colours, I picked it up, supposing that some boy belonging to

the school had lost it. As it was lying directly under the fence of that extremely disreputable place called the Three Fishers, sir, I could not help surmising that the owner had dropped it in climbing the fence, as he was not in sight."

"A very natural surmise, in the circumstances," commented the Head.

"I thought it probable that the boy had seen me in the distance, and, therefore, did not dare to return for the hat he had dropped," explained Mr. Smedley. "I looked in the hat for the owner's name, and found Vernon-Smith's. From that moment I had no doubt where he was, in view, sir, of his extremely dubious reputation in the school."

"Quite so," said the Head. "And you inferred that he had gone out with boys of blameless character in order to leave them afterwards, when he was out of sight of the school?"

"It seemed to me a certainty, sir! I fully expected him to come in alone—as, in fact, he has done."

"I didn't see you watching me when I came in, sir," said the Bounder, with meek impertinence.

The Creeper and Crawler coloured with anger.

"How dare you, Vernon-Smith?" exclaimed the Head, in a deep voice.

"I gave Wingate instructions to send you to me when you came back, with your companions, if any were with you. As you came to my study alone, Mr. Smedley knows that you came in alone." His voice took on a sterner note. "You deny again having been out of bounds?"

"Certainly, sir."

"Then how came your hat lying under that fence?"

"It fell off, sir."

"Are you telling me seriously, Vernon-Smith, that your hat fell off, and that you left it lying where it fell

and went on without it?" exclaimed the Head, in an ominous voice.

"Yes, sir. The fellows I was with were skylarking, and the straw blatched off in the tussle, and I never noticed it till some time afterwards. We were wrestling and tussling for quite a distance. No harm in that, sir."

"None—if true," said the Head, very dryly.

"It's true, sir," said the Bounder calmly.

"You admit having separated from your companions?"

"Not till we reached the Black Pike, sir, by way of Courtfield Bridge and the Pike Lane," answered Vernon-Smith. "They came home one way, I another. I walked straight back by the river, and have only just got in. If you know the distances, sir, you'll know that I've had no time this afternoon to call in anywhere, even for tea."

Dr Locke looked at him, hard. He did know the distances; and he knew that if the Bounder had been as far as the Black Pike his time that afternoon was fully accounted for. But had he?

"You walked as far as the Pike with Wharton and his friends?" he asked.

"Yes, sir."

"Will they bear out your statement?"

"Naturally, sir."

"H'm! What do you think of this, Mr. Smedley?"

Smedley's lip curled with contempt.

"I can only think, sir, that Vernon-Smith hopes to see the boys before you can question them and induce them to support a lying statement to save him from the consequences of his actions," he answered.

The Head pursed his lips. He knew Harry Wharton & Co. well enough, and how unlikely it was that they would

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## BUNTER THE VENTRILOQUIST!

(Continued from page 13.)

bear false witness. On the other hand, he knew that even extremely honourable fellows might feel driven to stretching a point to save a friend from the "sack." Certainly, he did not intend that they should be put to such a test.

"I will see the boys before Vernon-Smith has any opportunity of speaking to them, Mr. Smedley," he said. "You will remain here, Vernon-Smith. You may sit down while you wait."

"Thank you, sir!"

The Bounder sat down demurely on a chair in a corner.

"Let the boys be sent to me immediately they return, Mr. Smedley."

"Certainly, sir!"

Smedley left the study. Dr. Locke dipped his pen in the ink once more and resumed writing. But once or twice his glance was lifted, to fall on the Bounder and he could not help observing that Herbert Vernon-Smith was perfectly cool and collected, and did not look in the least like a fellow who had anything to fear.

And he wondered!

## THE TENTH CHAPTER.

### Not Guilty!

**M**R. SMEDLEY did not wonder. From the Head's study he walked out of the House and went down to the gates, to wait for the Famous Five to come in.

There was a lurking smile on the hard, cold face of the Creeper and Crawler; a glint of triumph in his eyes. Lucius Teggers, the Bounder's rival for a fortune, who was playing the part of Form-master at Greyfriars under the name of Eustace Smedley, considered that he had won his game at last. Several times he had failed; this time, he told himself, there could be no doubt. This time he had the shady young rascal in the hollow of his hand.

Not a doubt was in his mind.

The Bounder's trickery, in going out with a crowd of decent fellows, had not deluded him for a moment. Smithy was astute, but his astuteness, compared with the Creeper and Crawler's, was as moonlight unto sunlight, as water unto wine. What Smithy had regarded as a very deep move had been transparent as glass to the keen eyes of the Creeper and Crawler.

But he had hardly hoped for such luck as he had struck upon. Smithy had left his companions out of sight of the school; he had no doubt about that. But tracking him down was not an easy matter; and Smedley had scouted about the Three Fishers not at all certain of success, and then—a stroke of sheer good luck—he had spotted that hat lying in the bushes.

That finished it.

Billy Bunter's tale of woe, which had excited so much hilarity in the Remove the previous day, had apprised him that

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the Bounder had taken rather questionable measures for "raising the wind." He had felt absolutely certain that the young rascal was breaking out into blackguardism again that afternoon, with money in his pocket once more. Now he had what he regarded as indubitable proof.

He waited at the gates, glancing at the fellows as they came in, in twos or threes or little bunches. It was close on lock-up now, and the Famous Five would not be long.

Mr. Smedley was very anxious to see them, and to make sure that they did not give false testimony in favour of the Bounder.

His opinion of human nature was not very high. A bad man seldom has a high opinion of his fellow-men. From the Bounder's confidence in the headmaster's study, he suspected that Smithy might have already "fixed" it with the five to speak in his favour, if necessary. That the chums of the Remove would have repudiated any such suggestion with scorn, Smedley did not feel at all sure.

He waited impatiently.

Gosling had come out to close the gates when at last five rather dusty and tired fellows came trudging along to the school. The Famous Five had had a long, long hike, and, tough as they were, they had had enough. But, tired as they were, they put on speed as they saw Gosling at the gate, and trotted in, grinning.

"Beaten you, old bean!" said Bob cheerfully. "Another tick, and you'd have been able to shut us out and take our names! It's a hard life, isn't it, Gossy?"

"The hardness of the esteemed Gosling's life is terrific!" remarked Hurrce Jamset Ram Singh sympathetically.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Gosling grunted, and slammed the gate. Then the juniors became aware that their Form-master was on the spot.

"Oh, didn't see you, sir!" said Bob, capping the Creeper and Crawler.

"Follow me to my study!" said Mr. Smedley briefly.

"Oh, yes, sir!"

"What's up now?" whispered Nugent, as they followed the temporary master of the Remove into the House.

"Goodness knows!" answered Wharton, with a shrug of the shoulders. "The Creeper and Crawler's down on us since that trouble in the hols. I dare say he's thought of something."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's up, Bunter?" asked Bob Cherry.

Billy Bunter grinned.

"I fancy your game is!" he said. "Have you been blagging with Smithy?"

"What!" howled Johnny Bull.

"Well, Smithy's up before the Beak! Old Locke's still got him in his study, and I jolly well know you went out with him!" grinned Bunter. "If you've been out on the razzle with Smithy, you're jolly well copped, I fancy! And, I say—Whoop!"

Billy Bunter sat down suddenly. Mr. Smedley glanced round, frowning.

"Kindly cease that horseplay!" he snapped. "I have told you to follow me to my study!"

"We're coming, sir!"

And the Famous Five followed Smedley in, and down Masters' Passage, to the study that had been Mr. Quelch's.

In that study, Mr. Smedley fixed his eyes searchingly and suspiciously on five surprised faces.

"Vernon-Smith is now with the Head!" he rapped.

"Is he, sir?" said Wharton politely.

"It is known where he spent the afternoon," said Mr. Smedley. "But he has the audacity to tell Dr. Locke that you boys will make an untruthful statement in his favour."

Wharton raised his eyebrows, but his friends simply stared blankly at the master of the Remove.

"Smithy can hardly have told the Head that we should speak untruthfully in his favour, surely, sir?" said Harry.

"You know what I mean, Wharton."

"I'm afraid I don't, sir."

"Vernon-Smith has been out of bounds. That is proved. He is now with the headmaster. He has stated that you will bear witness that he walked with you to the Black Pike. That is what I mean."

"So he did, sir," said Harry.

Smedley breathed hard.

"I feared something of this kind," he said. "It shows that that boy is a danger to the school if he has induced boys of your good character to bear false witness on his behalf."

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry involuntarily.

Wharton's lip curled.

"We should not be likely to tell lies for anybody, sir!" he answered. "If Smithy hadn't walked to the Pike with us, we shouldn't say that he had!"

"No fear!" growled Johnny Bull.

"The no-fearfulness is preposterous, honoured sahib!" murmured the Nabob of Bhanipur. "Prevarication is the politeness of princes, as the English proverb remarks; but great is truth, and it must go longest to the well."

"Dr. Locke is aware, and I am aware, that Vernon-Smith was out of bounds this afternoon," said Mr. Smedley. "I may tell you that when he went out with you this afternoon, I suspected that he intended to leave you at a safe distance from the school. He did not, as he supposed, delude me."

"Whatever he may have intended, sir, he did not leave us," answered Wharton coolly.

That was the truth, and the captain of the Remove did not feel called upon to add details. Smithy had gone with the Co. unwillingly; but he had gone, and that was the point.

"That is false, Wharton!" snapped Mr. Smedley, his hard eyes glowing with anger. "I warn you not to venture to utter such a falsehood to your headmaster!"

"It is the truth, sir, and I shall certainly repeat it to Dr. Locke if he asks me," answered Harry.

Smedley bit his lips till they almost bled. He was certain—absolutely certain! Was he to be defeated because a set of young rascals were prepared to tell untruths in favour of his victim? That was how it looked to the Creeper and Crawler.

Yet he might have reflected that Dr. Locke was a schoolmaster of long experience and good judgment. Had these fellows been the lying young rascals Smedley now suspected them to be, the Head certainly would have placed no faith in them.

But the Creeper and Crawler made no such reflection. He was breathing hard with anger, as spiteful as a cat seeing a mouse escaping from its claws.

"I warn you—" he began again in a choking voice.

"You need not, sir," said Bob Cherry.

"We don't want warning not to tell lies. It's really not one of our ways."

Smedley compressed his lips.

"Follow me to the Head," he said at length, "and take care that you tell the truth to your headmaster!"

"We shall certainly tell him nothing else!" said Harry disdainfully.



And the Famous Five followed their Form-master to the Head's study.

"You fellows for it, too?" whispered Skinner, as they passed him. "What have you been up to?"

"Snuff!" answered Bob.

And, leaving Skinner staring, the juniors marched on behind Mr. Smedley.

He shepherded them into the Head's study. The Bounder rose from his chair as they came in, and closed his left eye at them, very nearly eliciting a chortle from Bob Cherry. Fortunately, Bob suppressed it in time. Fellows could not chortle in the majestic presence of their headmaster.

The Bounder had parted with the Famous Five that afternoon on the worst of terms, in a sullen and savage temper. Now he seemed quite merry and bright, and glad to see them.

Evidently something had happened to cause a very considerable change in his feelings. As a matter of fact, now that Smithy had had time to think, he was rejoicing that they had used those drastic measures with him, little as he had liked it at the time. Only that enforced "bike" with the Famous Five had saved him from his own disreputable folly, and the watchfulness of his enemy.

"Here are the boys, sir," said Mr. Smedley.

"Wharton!" The Head laid down his pen.

"Yes, sir."

"Vernon-Smith went out with you this afternoon. Did he, or did he not, remain in your company all the afternoon?"

"Until we reached the Black Pike, sir," said Harry. "We walked home different ways."

"Smithy seems to have got in first," said Frank Nugent. "We came round by Pegg. He can't have been in long, though."

"Quarter of an hour," said the Bounder blandly.

Dr. Locke looked relieved. Quite unlike Mr. Smedley, he was glad to find innocence in the place of guilt.

"I am very glad to hear you say so," he said kindly. "I regret that I cannot accept your word without proof, Vernon-Smith. But you are well aware that the fault is your own. But your statement is proved by the evidence of

(Continued on next page.)

THE FIRST OF A SERIES OF INTERESTING CRICKET TALKS!



Once again the services of "Umpire"—that clever authority on cricket—have been enlisted for the benefit of MAGNET readers who are interested in the grand summer game. If you desire any information on any subject connected with cricket, drop him a line and then wait for "Umpire's" reply in these columns. Address your letters to: "Umpire," c/o MAGNET, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

ALL SET FOR KING CRICKET!

HERE we are again, all ready for a new cricket season. The batsmen straining at the leash, as it were, ready and able, according to their own opinions, to knock the ball into the next parish—or the next parish but one. Bowlers rolling back their sleeves, preparatory to running to the wicket to deliver a snorter which will send the middle peg somersaulting through the air.

Your Editor has passed on to me the wholly pleasant task of talking to you about cricket every week during this season on which we are now all ready to start. Week by week I hope to be able to interest you in the game which so many of you play and which we all love. I hope to be able to tell you the cricket things you want to know; but, obviously, I can do this ever so much better, and with more satisfaction to myself, if you will tell me what you do want to know.

Write to me as often as you like. If anything happens in the cricket which you play and which you do not fully understand, remember I am here at your service, waiting to answer all your questions.

*If in any department of the game you are not quite satisfied with your progress; if you come across snags, write to me. With a hint here and there I hope to be able to help you to get more runs, take more wickets, make the catches with greater regularity. In a word, the "job" which the Editor has given to me is that of helping you to enjoy your cricket all the more.*

So far as big cricket is concerned it is going to be a great season. Within the last few days, for instance, we have welcomed the Australians. They are here for a purpose with which you are well acquainted: to get back those "Ashes."

Actually there aren't any "Ashes," but we have always referred to these struggles between England and Australia as fights for the "Ashes" since those long-ago days when somebody thought of an "in memorium" card when English cricket was buried in defeat and the "Ashes" presented to the Australians.

"BODY-LINE" BOWLING!

OF course, you know all about what happened in Australia in the winter before last. Our team, under the captaincy of D. R. Jardine, brought back the "Ashes" which the Australians had won on their previous visit to this country. That series of victories which England gained was all mixed up with much talk about body-line bowling—a phrase which the Australians invented to describe the methods of some of our fast bowlers.

It has been agreed between the two countries that fast leg-theory bowling—which is the correct title—shall not be employed during the season on which we are now starting. Hence I do not think any good purpose would be served by dealing further with this topic just now. Whether it be England v. Australia, or a game between some lads with the wickets marked on a brick wall, let one and all remember that the game is the thing: that this game introduced into our language a new phrase full of meaning. Anything which is mean, low-down, lacking in the true sporting spirit, is dubbed "not cricket." No finer compliment has ever been paid to any game, and those of us who think there is no game quite equal to it must be ever jealous of its reputation in the sporting sense.

Already a question has reached me which I can answer straight away. Are these Australians who have now arrived amateurs or professionals? The answer is that the Australians have always been

treated as amateurs, and that we shall continue to treat them as such.

*On top of that information I have to add, of course, that these Australian cricketers get paid for coming to this country to play cricket. The minimum reward for each Australian on the tour is six hundred pounds, plus all expenses. At the end of the tour there will be an additional distribution of what can be called bonus money, and the total reward is usually about one thousand pounds per player.*

MEN OF THE MOMENT!

WHAT sort of a party, in the cricket sense, do these Australians, to whom we now hold out the hand of welcome, make up? There are many players whom we know very well: who have been here before. There is the captain, M. W. Woodfull, who opens the innings of his side and who is a particularly difficult fellow to move. No hustle about him. A very good sportsman, too. A striking example of this was shown in Australia during the latter days of their last season "down under." J. H. Fingleton, a candidate for the tour who did not succeed in getting a place, was batting for New South Wales against Victoria. He had made 86 when he snicked a ball into the slips. The possible catch was not held, and Fingleton, thinking the incident closed, walked out of his ground to pat the pitch. While he was out the fielder threw the ball in and the wicket-keeper removed the bails, at the same time asking the umpire: "How's that?" The umpire had no alternative but to give the batsman out, and Fingleton went without a murmur.

*Skipper Woodfull, however, realising that Fingleton was out only according to the letter of the law and not the spirit of cricket, prevailed upon the batsman to come back and continue his innings.*

I want you to remember this incident, because it is the sort of thing which may crop up in your own games this season.

Don Bradman is with the party again: the man on whom all eyes will be focused. Will he repeat his remarkable batting triumphs of 1930? In that year it was Bradman, above all others, who made victories for Australia possible. Later, I will tell you some of the secrets of his success; give you some tips which he has passed on to me in conversation. And I will tell you later about the other Australians, too.

Meantime, don't forget what I asked at the beginning of these notes:

*to write to me about anything or everything connected with cricket. I am at your service.*

"UMPIRE."



these boys, which should be a lesson to you, in the value of truthfulness."

"Thank you, sir!" said the Bounder, with a glance out of the corner of his eye at Smedley. The Creeper and Crawler's face was almost pale with anger and chagrin.

"The matter closes, Mr. Smedley, very satisfactorily for all concerned," said Dr. Locke.

"Pray allow me to speak, sir!" Smedley's voice almost trembled with suppressed passion. "I do not believe the statement made by these boys."

Dr. Locke looked at him.

"Indeed, Mr. Smedley!" he said coldly.

"Indeed, sir. I feared, as I told you, that Vernon-Smith, if he saw them, might induce them to speak untruthfully in his favour. I can only conclude now that he had already made such an arrangement with them, in case of a discovery of his conduct this afternoon."

Dr. Locke's face grew stern.

"Mr. Smedley, you have not been with us long," he said. "Apparently not long enough to judge the characters of the boys in your Form. With your opinion of Vernon-Smith, I am unfortunately bound, from my own knowledge, to concur. But your opinion of these boys is utterly mistaken."

"Dr. Locke!"

"Wharton, you and your friends may leave my study. Your word is accepted without the slightest question," said the Head distinctly.

"Thank you, sir!"

The Famous Five went out, followed by the Bounder.

"Remain a few minutes, please, Mr. Smedley," said the Head icily.

The door closed on the juniors.

"My hat!" murmured Nugent, as they went down the passage. "Smedley's going to get a heart-to-heart talk. But I say, ain't the Head a jolly old brick?"

"What-ho!" grinned Bob.

In cheery spirits the chums of the Remove went up to their passage.

Billy Bunter met them on the landing with a surprised blink through his big spectacles.

"I say, you fellows, have you got off?" inquired the fat Owl. "I say, Smithy, ain't you going to be sacked?"

"Sorry; no," answered the Bounder politely; and he laughed and walked on to his study.

Redwing met him there.

"All serene?" he asked.

"Quite!"

"Blessed if I understand it, then!"

"I've been lucky."

After tea the Bounder looked into Study No. 1. The Famous Five were there. They eyed him curiously, wondering whether it was peace or war. They were cheerfully prepared for either.

"I was going to make each of you cheeky ticks put the gloves on with me in turn," said Vernon-Smith.

"Oh, do!" said Bob. "Begin with me."

The Bounder laughed.

"That's washed out," he said. "Smedley would have had me this time if you hadn't played the fool."

"You mean, if you had played the fool," grunted Johnny Bull.

"Just as you like. Anyhow, he would have had me—"

"And it would have served you right," said Harry Wharton. "The man's a worm! But you've proved that he's got a right to suspect you and watch you. And if you'd acted as he

believed, and as you intended, you'd have deserved all you got."

"Hear, hear!" grinned Bob.

"Thanks no end!" yawned the Bounder, and he strolled out of the study, laughing.

## THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

### Trouble for Smedley!

"**W**ARE beak!" murmured Skinner.

All the Remove knew that they had to be very wary that morning. There were signs of trouble to come in their Form-master's face.

In Mr. Quelch's time there had been such mornings. Human nature is imperfect; and even schoolmasters are only human. And to keep permanently patient with a class of average boys, a man needs to be rather superhuman.

Quelch had his crusty days when the Remove saw the danger signals, and walked warily. But Quelch was a just man, and never handed out any unjust punishment, though on east-windy days he was, so to speak, a little juster than on other days. Little faults that passed unnoticed on other occasions, would be visited with strict justice on Quelch's crusty days.

Smedley was quite different.

He was, on the whole, much less severe than Quelch, but he was not just. If he was good-tempered, fellows could slack unnoticed. Indeed, he was sometimes very careless with the Form work. If he was bad-tempered, somebody was bound to "get it," with or without a fault.

Any amount of just severity was not so bad as injustice. With Quelch a fellow knew where to have him, so to speak. With Smedley a fellow didn't. It was rather a gamble.

This particular morning Smedley was in an extremely bad temper. No doubt the events of the previous day caused it.

The Remove, naturally, had no idea that Mr. Smedley loathed schoolmastering, and had only taken on a troublesome task for ulterior motives.

Lucius Teggers' business at Greyfriars was not, as the headmaster supposed, to teach the Remove. It was to catch the Bounder out. Once he had done that and caused Smithy's disinheritance in his own favour he was done with schoolmastering, and would be glad from the bottom of his heart to have done with it.

In the meantime, Lucius Teggers was "Mr. Smedley," master of the Remove, with a Form-master's difficult duties to perform.

He was, by nature, quite unfit for a schoolmaster's work, which requires patience, kindness, and self-abnegation to a very great extent. There was little of any of those qualities in Mr. Lucius Teggers.

Dr. Locke, who was by no means the unobservant old fossil that Lucius considered him, was a little dissatisfied with his temporary master of the Remove. The man fell far short of what he had expected of a man with Mr. Smedley's excellent reputation. Still, it was only a temporary affair. Quelch was coming back some time that term.

Naturally it was not likely to occur to the Head that the junior partner in the firm of Leggett & Teggers had dispatched the real Smedley to Canada, and borrowed his name to come to Greyfriars in his place.

"I say, you fellows, Smedley looks ratty this morning!" whispered Billy

Bunter. "I say, I hope he won't put me on con."

Bunter, as often happened, had had no time for prep the previous evening. He had been busy sitting in the study armchair during prep.

It was rather unfortunate for Bunter that his whisper was of the "stage" variety, and liable to be heard by ears for which it was not intended.

Mr. Smedley looked up from his desk. "Did you speak, Bunter?" he asked.

"Oh lor'! I mean no, sir!" gasped Bunter, in alarm at having drawn the beak's attention upon himself. "Not a word, sir."

"I think I heard you, Bunter."

"Oh, no, sir! I never said you looked ratty, sir!" gasped the alarmed Owl. "Hazel knows, sir. He heard me."

"Step out before the Form, Bunter."

"Oh crikey!"

Swish, swish!

Billy Bunter rolled back to his place disinclined for further whispering. He wriggled painfully on his form.

Mr. Smedley's eye gleamed over the Remove. It rested particularly on Harry Wharton & Co.

Having a doubting and suspicious nature, Mr. Smedley suspected those cheery young gentlemen of having deceived him and the headmaster in their account of the proceedings on the half-holiday. The Head's "heart-to-heart" talk with him had made no difference to that.

"Cherry! You will construe!" he rapped.

Bob began on "con."

Bob Cherry was by no means a slacker like Bunter or Skinner; but he was not, on the other hand, a studious fellow like Mark Linley, neither did he find any pleasure in the classics like Wharton. His "con" was about the average for the Lower Fourth Form—from Bob's point of view, it was just a spot of work that had to be done. Certainly it was not brilliant; Bob's brilliance shone only on the playing-fields. It would have passed with Quelch; but there were plenty of faults for a man to find who wanted to find them.

Mr. Smedley stopped him, with a gesture.

"You have not prepared this lesson, Cherry," he snapped.

"Oh, yes, sir!" answered Bob. "I did my prep as usual last evening, sir."

"Unfortunately, you are not a boy on whose word I can rely," said Mr. Smedley.

Skinner winked at Snoop.

Bob flushed crimson.

He knew that it was the affair of Smithy that was in Smedley's mind. The Head's authority had settled that affair. But it still rankled with Smedley.

"Mr. Quelch would not have said that, sir!" said Bob quietly.

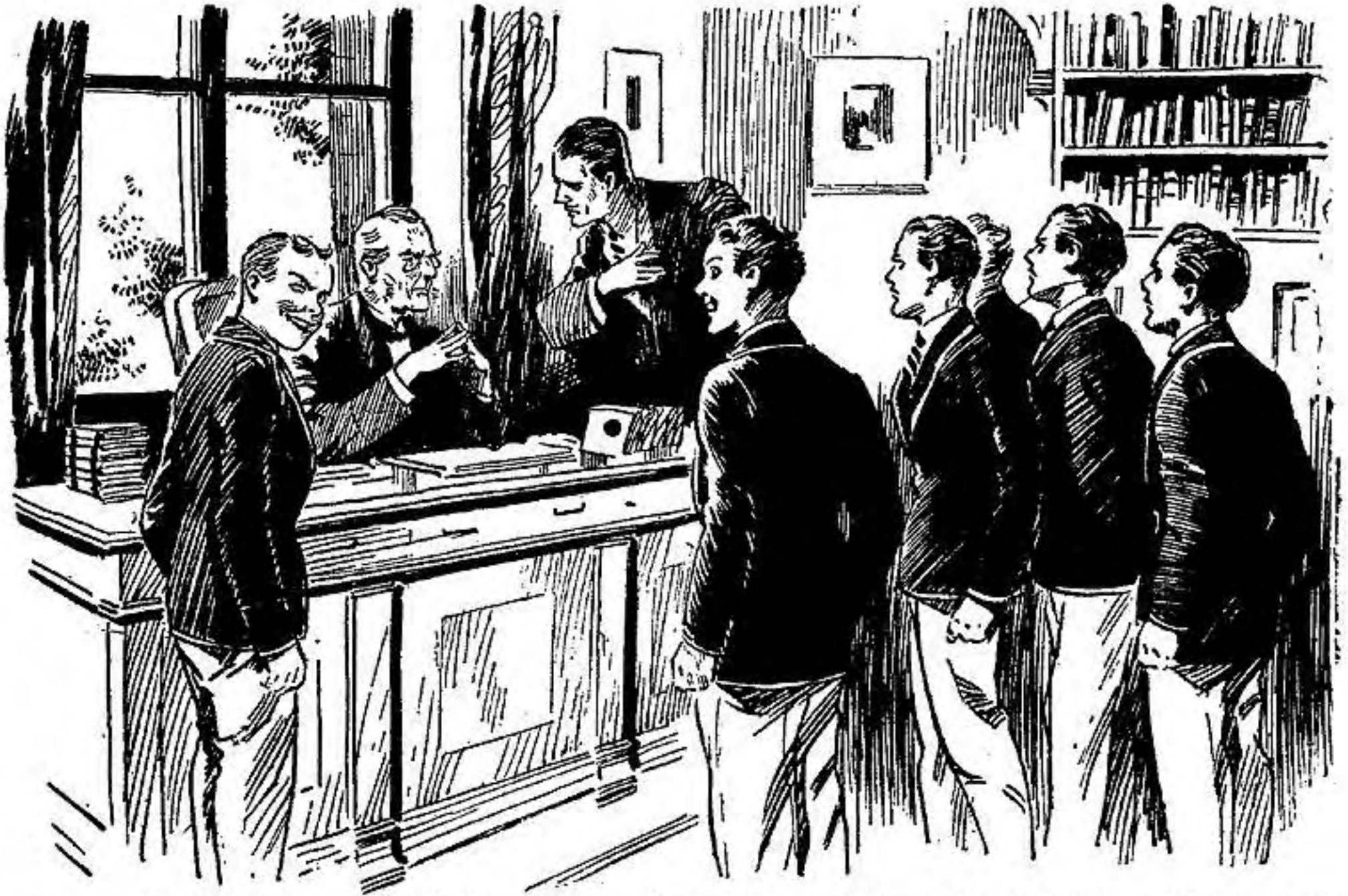
"I do not desire to hear your opinion on that point, Cherry. You may have imposed upon your former master, but you cannot impose on me. You will stay in after class to-day, and write out the whole section of the *Æneid* given you for preparation twelve times."

Bob breathed hard as he sat down.

"You will go on, Wharton!"

Wharton's "con" was good. Unlike most of the Form, Wharton really had a taste for the study of the Latin language. Virgil was as easy to him as Eutropius would have been to Bob. Even Smedley had no fault to find, and Wharton was soon told to sit down, and Nugent was put on. A single fault was rewarded with a hundred lines. Then came Johnny Bull's turn. There was an expression on Johnny Bull's face rather like that of a bulldog, as he stood





As the Famous Five entered the Head's study, Vernon-Smith rose from his chair and winked at them. "Wharton," said the Head, "Vernon-Smith has stated that he went out with you this afternoon. Did he, or did he not, remain in your company all the afternoon?" "Until we reached the Black Pike, sir!" said Wharton. Mr. Smedley's face turned almost pale with anger as he listened.

up to construe. He knew that Smedley was going to catch him out if he could, and that did not improve his translation. Mr. Smedley held up his hand.

"Your construe is disgraceful, Bull!" he rapped. "You have not prepared this lesson, like Cherry."

"I have prepared it, and so has Cherry!" answered Johnny Bull, in a deep, growling voice.

"I do not believe you, Bull."

"You do!" answered Johnny, in a still deeper voice.

"Wha-a-at?"

"Johnny!" breathed Wharton anxiously. Smedley was yearning for an excuse to use the cane, and Johnny was handing him one.

There was a stir of interest in the Remove. Trouble had threatened from the moment Mr. Smedley had entered the Form-room. Now it had come.

"What did you say, Bull?" gasped Mr. Smedley.

"You heard what I said!" answered Johnny stolidly. "You do believe me, and you jolly well know it."

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Vernon-Smith. Even the reckless Bounder would hardly have ventured to make that reply to Smedley.

"Bull! How dare you?" exclaimed Mr. Smedley.

"How dare you?" retorted Johnny.

The Co. looked at one another helplessly. Johnny, usually a very quiet and peaceful youth, seemed to be bent on hunting for trouble. But an imputation on his truthfulness roused Johnny's deepest ire. Johnny was truthfulness itself; sometimes, indeed, almost painfully so. He was not going to stand this, whopping or no whopping.

"Bull! Stand out before the class!" Mr. Smedley picked up Quelch's cane from Quelch's desk.

Johnny Bull tramped out.

"Bend over that chair!"

Johnny Bull stared at him, very like a bulldog undecided whether to bite or not. It was plain that he was considering, in his slow way, whether to obey the order or to refuse to do so. Quelch's orders, in that Form-room, were obeyed without question. But Smedley was not Quelch! For several long moments there was a pause.

Then Johnny decided, and bent over the chair.

Swish!

The cane came down with a terrific swipe! Johnny Bull gave a sharp yelp! He was tough; but a fellow would have had to be made of leather to take a cut like that in silence.

It was the first of "six." But the other five of the six were not to be delivered. Johnny Bull heaved up, and walked back to his place, with a set mouth.

Smedley stared after him blankly.

"Bull! How dare you! Come back at once! Do you hear me?"

"I'm not deaf!" answered Johnny, over his shoulder, and he went to his place and sat down.

"Oh crikey!" breathed Skinner. There was a buzz in the Remove. This was rank rebellion!

"Come back at once, Bull!" roared Mr. Smedley.

Johnny Bull sat tight.

"I've had enough!" he answered distinctly. "You're not going to whop me like that again, sir! You can take me to the Head if you like, and I'll ask him whether fellows are to be called liars in class. But you're not going to cane me any more."

Smedley's eyes glittered at him. He made a stride towards the Remove, as if with the intention of yanking the rebel out with his own hands. But he checked himself.

"Bull! Obey me at once, or I shall report you to your headmaster for a flogging!" he said thickly.

"Report away!" said Johnny Bull.

Mr. Smedley, breathing hard, laid down the cane.

"You will go on, Vernon-Smith!" he snapped.

The rest of that lesson was rather like a nightmare to the Remove. But it ended at last, and they had Monsieur Charpentier, and French, in second lesson, which was a relief. Then they went out in break. During break, the Famous Five expected Johnny Bull to be called in to the Head. But the call did not come.

"It's all right, you men!" the Bounder told them. "The Creeper and Crawler doesn't want Bull talking to the Beak. He's a worm; but he's wary."

And it seemed that the Bounder was right; for the matter was dropped. In third school, Mr. Smedley took no notice of Johnny Bull at all; which was a relief to all the Co. But the incident had not improved his temper, and lines fell as thick as leaves in Vallombrosa, during that lesson, and the cane came into prominence several times.

"It's getting too jolly thick!" Bob Cherry declared, when the Remove came out again. "Don't I wish Quelch was back!"

"The thickfulness is terrific," agreed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, "and the backfulness of the esteemed Quelch would be a ridiculous boon and blessing."

All the fellows agreed heartily that they wished that Quelch was back. And some agreed that the Creeper and Crawler ought to be made to sit up, in his turn, for making so many fellows sit up! The Bounder was keenest on it, and for once the Famous Five were in



full agreement with the scapegrace of the school. But "how" was the difficulty—and it was Harold Skinner who nit upon a brain-wave of sorts.

In Skinner's possession was a large carnival novelty, which took the form of a "monster," made of pliable coloured rubber. When blown up with air the monster took on a truly horrifying shape—a cross between the famous Loch Ness monster and a prehistoric animal. It had a huge body and head, large, staring eyes, horns, and long curved fangs.

Seen suddenly, it would give the most iron-nerved individual a shock, despite the fact that it was made entirely of rubber and filled with air.

Now, as Skinner pumped it up to its capacity, he chuckled. Snoop and Stott, his studymates, eyed the monster in amazement.

"What's the big idea?" asked Snoop. Skinner chuckled.

"The big idea, my infants, is to make that rotter, Smedley, sit up. When he suddenly sees this in his study he'll get a number one shock, what?"

Snoop and Stott grinned.

"How are you going to work it?" Skinner closed one eye.

"Easy," he remarked. "Old Smedley takes a nap round about now. One of us is going to sneak into his study—"

Snoop and Stott looked alarmed.

"Count me out!" said Snoop.

"And me!" added Stott. "Catch me walking into Smedley's study—even if he were asleep!"

Skinner's lip curled.

"You miserable funks! I'll do the blessed job myself, then."

Snoop and Stott at once looked relieved.

They watched their studymate as he disconnected the valve of the monster and let the air out, and wondered mightily when Skinner fished in the cupboard and brought out a length of rubber tubing. Then, armed with the monster, the motor-pump, and the length of tubing, Skinner trod warily down to Masters' Passage. En route he encountered Bunter.

"I say, old fellow—"

"Ssh!" hissed Skinner cautiously.

"It's a rag on Smedley."

William George Bunter was interested at once.

"I say, Skinner, if it's a rag—I'll help!"

And, somewhat to Billy Bunter's amazement, his offer was accepted. In a whisper Harold Skinner explained his idea. The outcome of it was that, having ascertained through the keyhole of Smedley's study that the Crawler was asleep, Skinner softly opened the door and entered the study.

Keeping one eye on the sleeping Form-master, he carefully placed the monster on the carpet, paid out the long length of tubing, and passed it under the door. That done, he noiselessly withdrew the key from the inside of the door and transferred it to the outside. And transferred himself to the outside at the same time.

In the passage Billy Bunter was already connecting the rubber tubing to the pump.

"Easy!" whispered Skinner, locking the study door. "Look here, Bunter, you watch through the keyhole, and tell me when the thing is fully inflated."

"He, he, he!" chuckled Bunter. Peeping through keyholes was no new experience to him. And while he kept a view of the room and of Mr. Smedley, who was breathing deeply, Harold Skinner worked energetically with the pump. Gradually the monster took shape.

"Steady, old chap!" whispered Bunter at last. "Steady, or it'll burst!"

Skinner unfastened the tubing from the pump, plugged it with a wedge of cork, and grinned.

"Now wake the brute up, Bunter," he whispered.

Tap!

Billy Bunter tapped on the door of Smedley's study.

Tap, tap!

"Mr. Smedley!" The voice was remarkably like that of Dr. Locke, as Bunter brought his ventriloquial powers into play. "Kindly open the door, please."

From within there was the sound of a hurried movement, as Smedley woke up.

"Oh, ah! Certainly, Dr. Locke—"

The voice trailed off into a gasp of horror. "Ooooooh! Ah! Help!"

For Mr. Smedley's waking eyes had suddenly caught sight of the monstrosity which stood before him, looking amazingly lifelike. In his astonishment, not unmixed with terror, Mr. Smedley fell out of his chair.

Bump!

"Yaroooh! Help! Ow! Help!"

Skinner and Bunter, enjoying the joke, decided to go while the going was good. In a moment or so Mr. Smedley would realise that the monster was simply a rubber toy. Already his cries were beginning to attract attention.

"Hop it!" breathed Skinner.

But William George Bunter was already "hopping" it.

Meanwhile, Mr. Prout was hastening towards Smedley's study. He heard the sounds of confusion inside, and banged on the door for admittance. Naturally, the locked door did not open. And it was not until Prout saw the key on the outside of the door that he thought of turning it.

By that time quite a number of masters had arrived on the scene. And with them Wingate and Gwynne of the Sixth. The sight that met their gaze when Prout threw open the door was one they were not likely to forget for many a day. Mr. Smedley, pale and terrified, was still sprawling on the floor, staring with goggling eyes at the monster.

The rubber toy, however, did not deceive Wingate. He at once spotted the length of tubing which ran from the tail of the thing. So did the assembled masters, whereupon a hearty laugh went up from all sides.

It took a few minutes still to convince the startled Smedley that the monster was thoroughly harmless, and by that time his feelings were too deep for words. He promised the culprits—when he discovered who they were—something extra special in the way of lickings. But, needless to say, he did not discover them. The Remove, who enjoyed the joke, saw to that.

And the success of Skinner's "rag" prompted Vernon-Smith to think of another, even better. For Bunter was a born ventriloquist—and Smedley did not know it. The Bounder was going to make use of Bunter's strange gift; and once again Bunter was agreeable to oblige in the matter—at a price!

## THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

### Bunter's the Man!

"AND jam?" said Billy Bunter. "Three kinds of jam!"

said Vernon-Smith. "And a cake—"

"Half a dozen cakes!"

"What about tarts?" asked Bunter cautiously.

"All you can eat!"

"Smithy, old man," said the Owl of the Remove affectionately. "I always liked you! You're a splendid chap, Smithy!"

The Bounder grinned. With only threepence in cash in his pockets, his credit at the school shop was unlimited. Tea in the Bounder's study was a bribe that William George Bunter could not possibly resist.

Besides, Bunter was rather keen himself. He had been caned by Smedley, and he had more lines on hand than he could count. And the idea of showing off his wonderful powers as a ventriloquist strongly appealed to Bunter. The Famous Five had not seemed to think much of the idea; but Smithy evidently thought a lot of it. The desire to show

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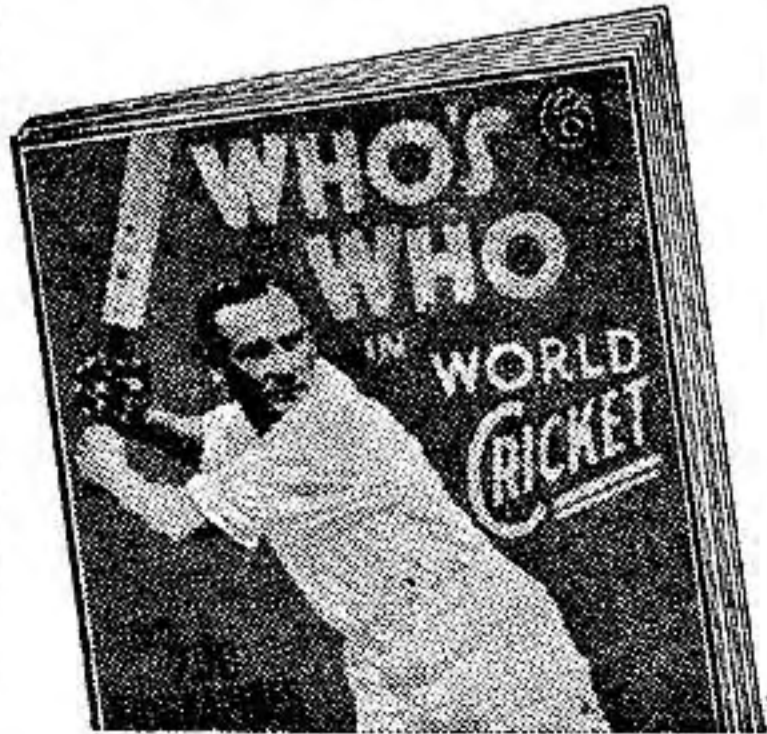
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off, to make Smedley squirm, and, above all, to tea in Smithy's study, screwed up Billy Bunter's courage to the sticking-point.

And where was the danger? Smedley knew nothing about his ventriloquism. Where there was no danger, Bunter was as bold as a lion!

"I'll do it, Smithy!" he said. "Not because you've asked me to tea, but out of pure friendship, you know. I say, though, what about cream-puffs?"

"All you can find room for."

"Did you mention doughnuts?"

"Dozens of doughnuts!"

Bunter beamed.

This was worth even a licking, if it came to that! And it wouldn't!

Billy Bunter's fat face wore a cheery fat grin when the Remove gathered for class that afternoon. Plenty of fellows were looking less cheery than usual, in anticipation of more trouble with the Creeper and Crawler. So Bunter's beaming face rather excited attention.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Enjoying life, old fat bean?" asked Bob Cherry, greeting him with a cheery smack on a fat shoulder.

"Ow!" gasped Bunter. "Don't break my back, you silly idiot! I say, you fellows, it's all right—Smedley's going to sit up this afternoon!"

"Don't you play the goat, fathead!" said Peter Todd. "What have you got in your silly head now?"

"Oh, really, Toddy——"

"Bunter's the man!" grinned the Bounder. "Bunter's going to work the giddy oracle!"

"What-ho!" said Bunter complacently.

"Fools rush in where angels fear to go longest to the well, as the English proverb remarks!" observed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"You watch me in class!" said Bunter. "I'm the man to do it! Not one of you fellows can make Smedley sit up! You watch me! Who's afraid of Smedley, I'd like to know!"

"Shut up, ass!" whispered Hazeldene, as he spotted the rather tall figure of Mr. Smedley coming up to the Form-room door.

"Rats!" retorted Bunter. "I can tell you that I'm jolly well not afraid of Smedley, if you are! Who's Smedley, I'd like to know! Who——"

"Bunter!"

"Oh lor'!" gasped Bunter, as the hard, sharp voice fell on his ears, and he blinked round in dismay at Mr. Smedley. "Oh crikey! I—I say, sir, I—I wasn't saying— Oh jiminy!"

Mr. Smedley opened the Form-room door, with a grim face. The Remove marched in, and Smedley's first proceeding was to pick up the cane from the high desk and direct Bunter to bend over a chair.

Whack!

"Yaroooooh!" roared Bunter.

Billy Bunter limped to his place. His eyes glittered behind his big spectacles as he sat down. But it was some time before the Remove ventriloquist got to work. That whack from Smedley's cane seemed to have deprived him of some of his fat confidence.

The Bounder gave him several looks and a scowl or two. Bunter remembered that tea in Study No. 4 depended on his performance that afternoon. And his fat courage was screwed up to the sticking-point at last.

The Remove were deep in geography when a little fat cough was heard—familiar to the ears of the Removites. It was Bunter's preliminary to his wonderful ventriloquism! Bunter was going to begin!

Then suddenly, from nowhere in particular, came a sing-song voice:

"Who's afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?"

Mr. Smedley fairly jumped.

Since Bob Cherry had been caned for sitting on the Remove banisters nobody had ventured to sing that popular song in Smedley's hearing. Certainly no one at any time would have dreamed of singing it in the Form-room during class. It made the Form jump as well as the Form-master.

Mr. Smedley stared round, as amazed as angry.

"Who was that?" he exclaimed.

There was no answer to the question. Hardly a fellow knew who it was, as a matter of fact. Bunter, who could do nothing else, could do ventriloquism. Mr. Smedley picked up his ever-ready cane.

"Who uttered those ridiculous words?" he demanded. "Was it you, Cherry?"

"No, sir!"

"Was it you, Vernon-Smith?"

"No, sir!"

"If this insolence is repeated——" began Mr. Smedley, breathing hard.

He was interrupted.

"Who's afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?" came an unrecognisable voice.

"Oh, my hat!" breathed Bob Cherry.

"Is that Bunter?"

"Shush!" murmured Harry Wharton.

The fellows were guessing now that the Remove ventriloquist was at work; but such a guess was not likely to occur to Mr. Smedley. He stared over the Form in angry amazement, trying in vain to "place" the speaker.

Generally he was very sharp in spotting an offender. Now he completely failed. He simply could not spot who had uttered those words.

"You are laughing, Cherry!" he rapped suddenly.

"W-w-was I, sir?" gasped Bob.

"Take fifty lines!"

"Who's afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?" came a shrill inquiry from a different direction.

Mr. Smedley spun round. It seemed to him that the voice came from behind him. If there was some extraneous person in the Form-room that would account for his being unable to spot the joker!

"Who—who-what——"

Nobody met his staring eyes as he turned his back on the Form.

"Ha, ha, ha!" came a yell. The Remove were beginning to enjoy this game! Mr. Smedley spun back again. He glared.

"How dare you laugh? The whole Form will take a hundred lines! Two hundred lines!" he hooted.

"Who's afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?" came a howl; and again Mr. Smedley could have sworn that it came from behind him. Again he spun round, red with wrath.

Seizing his cane, he strode towards the high desk—the only spot where an extraneous person could have hidden in cover. Somebody was there—he was sure that somebody was there! Lifting the cane, ready to whack, he strode round the master's high desk, and—stared into vacant space! Nobody was there!

The expression on Mr. Smedley's face was too much for the Remove. Lines or no lines, they could not help it, and they roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" shouted Mr. Smedley furiously.

There was silence! And through the silence came a voice, inquiring:

"Who's afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?"

## THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

### The Mysterious Voice!

**M**R. SMEDLEY breathed hard and deep.

It was not one of the Removites who was ragging—he was sure of that. He was sure that the voice came from the other end of the room—not where the Form sat. At that end of the room was a large wall cupboard, in which an easel and rolled maps, and bottles of ink, and such things, were kept. It dawned on Mr. Smedley that there was some unknown person in the Form-room, hiding in the cupboard. There seemed to be really no other explanation, unless the Remove Form Room was haunted!

Taking a business-like grip on his cane, Smedley strode across to the cupboard, his eyes glittering. Whoever was there was going to get it hot and strong. As all the fellows were supposed to be in their Form-rooms at that time, it was difficult to guess who it might be! But Smedley cared little who it was, so long as he got at him with the cane! That was the important and urgent thing!

"He, he, he!" cachinnated Billy Bunter.

Bunter was enjoying this! So were all the fellows! It looked as if they were going to have an entertaining afternoon.

They watched Smedley as if fascinated, as he approached the cupboard and grasped the door-handle to wrench it open.

But the door did not open! It was locked, and the key was gone! Smedley's eyes gleamed as he made that discovery.

Whoever was in the cupboard had put the key on the inside, and locked himself in! Smedley could hardly doubt that—not being aware that there was a fat ventriloquist at work! He could not be expected to guess that Smithy had locked that cupboard door, and that the key was now in Smithy's pocket!

He crashed the cane on the panels.

"You young rascal!" he hooted. "Unlock the door and come out at once! Do you hear me?"

Billy Bunter gave a little fat cough—unnoticed by Smedley, though not by the Form. Even knowing their fat ventriloquist as they did, the Remove fellows could almost have sworn that the answer to Smedley came from the interior of the locked cupboard.

"Yah! Shan't! Go and eat coke, Smedley!"

"What?" roared the temporary master of the Remove.

"Coke!"

"You young rascal——"

"You old rascal!" came the voice from the cupboard.

"Boy!" shrieked Mr. Smedley.

"Man!" came the cheery answer.

"You shall be taken to the headmaster for a flogging!" roared Smedley.

"Rats to you!"

"What—what—what did you say?"

"Rats to you, pie-face!"

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

Billy Bunter, safe in his ventriloquism, was coming out strong! He had often wanted to talk like that to Smedley! Now he was doing it—ventriloquially! The voice from the cupboard sounded nothing at all like Bunter's. It was rather like the gruff bark of Horace Coker of the Fifth Form—a rather unique voice, not difficult to imitate. It did not resemble Bunter's natural fat squeak in the least!

"Creeper and Crawler!" came the barking voice. "Yah! Who creeps and crawls and listens to fellows? Sneak!"

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"Oh, my hat!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"He, he, he!"

"Draw it mild, you fat ass!" whispered Peter Todd.

Bunter grinned serenely! He was not going to draw it mild, when it was perfectly safe to keep on! Not Bunter!

"Come out of that cupboard!" roared Mr. Smedley, smiting the panels again with his cane. And the Removites, knowing that there was nobody in the cupboard, chortled spasmodically.

"Rats! Rot! Shut up, Smedley!" came the cheery answer, "Look here, we're fed up with you at Greyfriars! Go back to Leggett & Teggors, and tell them to send a decent man!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" roared the Remove master, with a glare over his shoulder at the almost hysterical Remove. "I will cane the next boy who dares to laugh!" He smote the cupboard door again. "Come out at once! Otherwise, I will force the door and give you the thrashing of your life when I lay hands on you."

"You can't thrash a Fifth Form man!" barked the voice from the cupboard. "And you jolly well know it, Smedley!"

"Oh crikey!" murmured Smithy. Bunter was carrying out his instructions to the very letter! It was sheer joy to the Bounder, who had planned all this.

"A Fifth Form boy!" gasped Mr. Smedley. "How dare you, a senior boy, hide in a cupboard in a junior Form-room?"

"Who's afraid of you?" inquired the voice from the cupboard. "Who's afraid of a Big Bad Wolf?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Smedley took an iron grip on the doorhandle and wrenched, and wrenched, and wrenched with all his strength. He strove to wrench the door open in spite of the fact that it was locked. He did not succeed; but he succeeded in wrenching off the handle.

It came off so suddenly that Mr. Smedley staggered back and sat down on the Form-room floor with a heavy bump, the doorhandle in his hand.

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

"Oh crumbs! This is too rich!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"The richness is truly terrific!" chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Smedley scrambled to his feet almost foaming. He roared at the non-existent occupant of the cupboard.

"Will you come out, you young scoundrel?"

"Bow-wow!"

"You shall be expelled for this!"

"Silly fathead!"

"Wha-a-at!" gasped Mr. Smedley.

"What did you say?"

"Getting deaf, Smedley? I said silly fathead!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Smedley made a stride towards his Form with a glare that made the merriment suddenly cease. Never a good-tempered man, he was getting positively dangerous now. He really seemed on the verge of running amuck in the Remove, hitting out right and left with the cane.

"Another sound from you—" he panted.

"Who's afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?" came—or seemed to come—from the locked cupboard. "Yah! Go back to Leggett & Teggors and tell them you don't give satisfaction! Tell them we don't want a creeper and crawler."

Under Smedley's furious glare and brandished cane the Removites tried hard not to laugh. But it was really hard work.

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Having glared at them as if he could have bitten them, Smedley strode to the door. He hurled it open and strode out into the Form-room passage. The juniors could guess where he had gone. Under the impression that it was a Fifth Former in his wall-cupboard, he had gone to fetch the Fifth Form-master to root him out.

The Remove fairly howled.

"He's gone for Prout!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows! Ain't I making him sit up?" chuckled Billy Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess this is the bee's knee!" chortled Fisher T. Fish. "I'll say this is the rhinoceros' side-whiskers!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Smedley being out of the room, the Removites fairly let their hilarity go, and they roared, and roared; the sound of their merriment reaching fellows in other Form-rooms and causing them to wonder what on earth was happening in the Remove!

## THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

### Nobody I

MR. PROUT, the master of the Fifth, frowned at the sight of Smedley.

The portly Prout did not like that young man; indeed, in

This Snappy  
GREYFRIARS LIMERICK  
wins a handsome  
POCKET WALLET  
for: L. Zeidman, of 47, Hurst-  
wood Road, Golders Green,  
N.W.11.

Bolsover was a regular tough,  
And his manners were awfully  
rough.  
But Cherry soon floored him,  
And quickly assured him  
That most of his rough stuff was  
bluff!

Now you have a shot at winning  
one of these useful prizes, chum!

Common-room he had alluded to him several times as the "Puppy." Prout was busy with the Fifth and an oration of Cicero's when Smedley opened the door and barged in, his face red with anger, and his eyes glittering.

"Sir!" boomed Prout. "What—" "Mr. Prout! A boy of your Form—"

"What? What?" boomed Prout. "If you have any complaint to make, sir, concerning a boy of my Form, this is neither the time nor the place, sir! You may speak to me on the subject, sir, in my study after class."

"The boy is in my Form-room at the present moment, sir!" roared Mr. Smedley, "and I insist upon your removing him instantly."

"What?" gasped Prout.

The Fifth Form stared at Smedley! Smedley, naturally, did not know how many fellows there were in the Fifth Form; so even if he had counted those present he would not have known that there was none missing. But Mr. Prout, of course, knew.

"What do you mean, Mr. Smedley?"

snorted Prout. "No boy of my Form—"

"I tell you, sir—"

"And I tell you, sir—"

"The young scoundrel—"

"Are you alluding, sir, to any boy of my Form, sir, by that very offensive epithet?" demanded Prout belligerently.

"I am, sir!" hooted Smedley. "I am alluding to the Fifth Form boy who has locked himself in the cupboard in my Form-room, sir, and insulted me. And if you do not remove him instantly, sir, I will call in the headmaster."

Potter of the Fifth winked at Greene.

"Mad!" he murmured.

"Quite!" agreed Greene.

"What does the bargee mean?" inquired Coker, in quite a loud voice. "There can't be any Fifth Form man in his room as we're all here."

"Mr. Prout—"

"Mr. Smedley—"

"Will you come at once, sir— instantly, sir— instantly—"

"No, sir!" boomed Prout. "I will do nothing of the kind, sir! No boy of my Form can possibly be in your Form-room, sir, as all are present here! And I request you, sir, to leave this Form-room, where you are interrupting work, sir, which is taken more seriously in this Form, I think, than in yours, sir."

Mr. Smedley gasped. He realised that the voice from the cupboard in the Remove-room must have been pulling his leg.

"Are all your boys here?" he stuttered.

"Where do you suppose they would be, sir?" demanded Mr. Prout. "Have you no common sense, sir?"

Mr. Smedley did not answer that question. He whisked out of the Fifth Form Room, and the door shut after him with a slam. The Fifth Formers grinned, and Mr. Prout snorted.

"Ha, ha, ha!" came in a roar from the Remove-room. Mr. Smedley strode back to that room, white with fury.

The laughter ceased as he re-entered. He glared at the Form in search of a victim, but only grave and composed faces met his eye. He crossed to the wall-cupboard again.

There was a crash as he smote on the panels with his cane. It almost cracked the cane.

"Is that the Big Bad Wolf again?" came an inquiring voice from the cupboard. "Who's afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?"

"If you do not open that door instantly, you young scoundrel, I will force it!" said Mr. Smedley in tones of concentrated rage.

"Go ahead, old bean!" came the answer.

"Has any boy in this Form a tool-chest?" Mr. Smedley turned to the Remove.

"Oh, yes, sir! I have!" answered Bob Cherry.

"Fetch it here at once."

"Oh, certainly, sir!"

Bob left the Form-room, closing one eye at his friends as he went. The Removites suppressed their feelings with difficulty as they wondered what would happen when Smedley forced the door and found no one within!

In a state of happy anticipation, they waited for Bob to return. He was not long gone. Bob was as interested as the rest to see what would happen. He came in with his tool-chest and laid it on the master's desk.

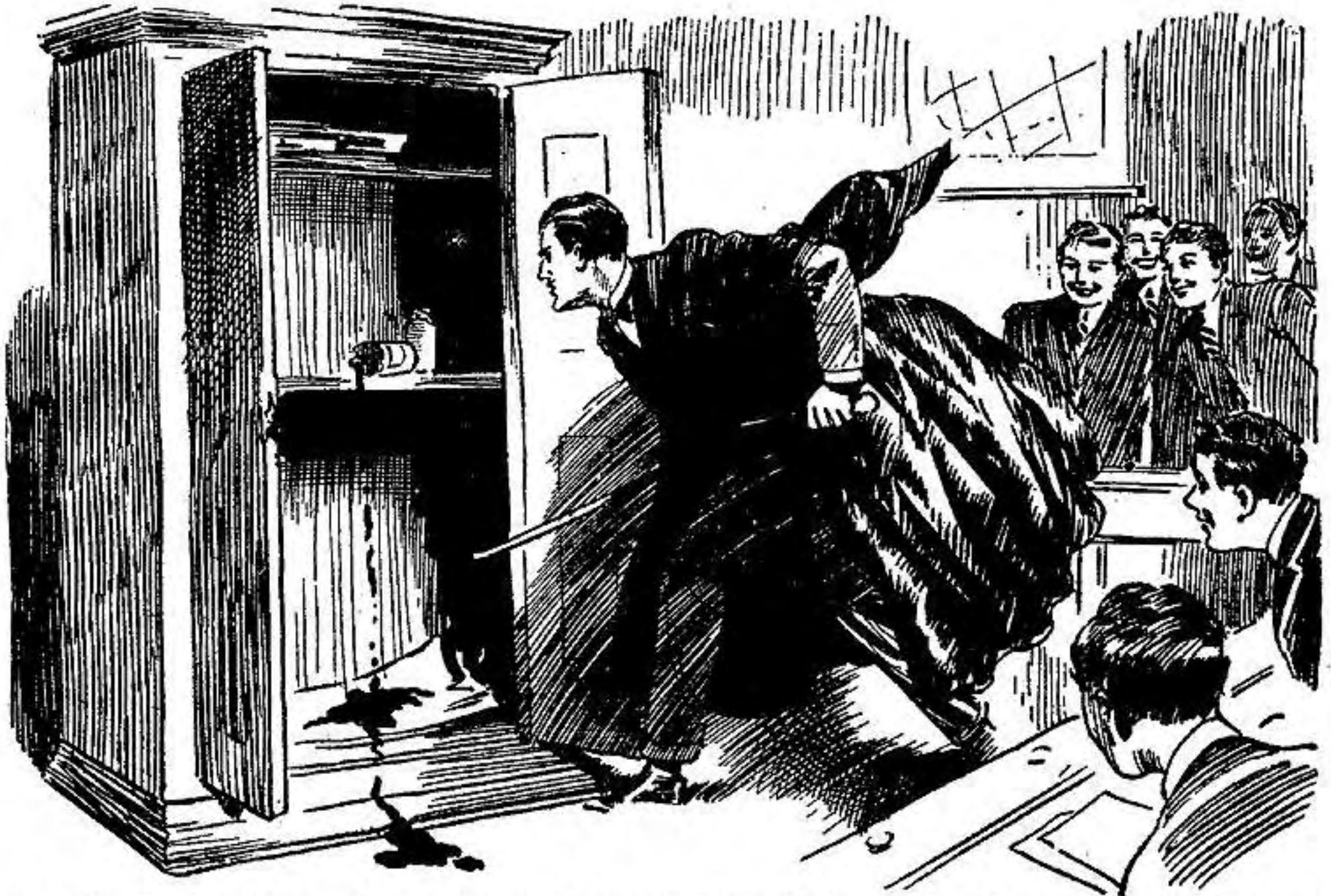
"You know how to use these tools, Cherry?"

"Oh, yes, sir, I'm a pretty good carpenter."

"Get that door open."

"Pleased, sir!" said Bob.





As another horrifying groan came from the locked cupboard, Mr. Smedley inserted the chisel again. A powerful wrench and the cupboard door flew open. Mr. Smedley glared and stared, but there was no sign of any fellow, injured or uninjured, in the cupboard. All the Form-master could see was a map and a bottle of ink which had toppled over!

Bob was always pleased to handle his tools, and still more pleased to make a shindy! He took a hammer and a chisel, and started on the door! There was plenty of energy about Bob Cherry's carpentry, though skill was perhaps a little lacking.

Bang! Crash! Smash! Bang!  
"Do not smash the door to fragments, you stupid boy!" hooted Smedley.

"Well, you have to break something, to get a locked door open, sir!" said Bob apologetically.

Bang! Crash! Crash! Crack! Bang! The din rang far beyond the Form-room! The door began to split in several places. Perhaps Bob was putting a little extra vim into it, for the fun of the thing.

"Stop that at once!" shrieked Mr. Smedley. "Give me the tools! Go to your place! Take five hundred lines."

"Oh, my hat!"  
Bob went to his place, and Smedley took hammer and chisel. He began to gash out the lock. The juniors watched him spellbound. It was an extraordinary happening in a Form-room in lesson-time! Still, it was difficult to say what else a Form-master could do, if there really was a fellow locked in the Form-room cupboard, ragging him during class! Evidently such a fellow had to be got out!

Under a bang of the hammer, the chisel went right through the wood. The Bounder whispered to Billy Bunter, who grinned and nodded. Immediately an agonised shriek came, or seemed to come, from the cupboard.

"Ooooooh! I'm killed! Ooooooh!"  
Mr. Smedley started back. It had not occurred to him that the chisel, driven deep in, might hit the unknown person in the cupboard. But that fearful howl seemed to indicate that it had!

Smedley wrenched it out, with some difficulty, for it had gone quite through.

Groan!  
It was a horrifying groan from the locked cupboard. It sounded as if somebody was badly hurt.

"You young rascal!" panted Mr. Smedley. "If—if you are injured, it is entirely your own fault—entirely! Unlock the door."

Groan!  
Mr. Smedley, with the hammer in one hand, the chisel in the other, stood gazing at the shattered door. He was alarmed and uneasy. Not that he cared much whether the fellow was hurt. But there were the consequences to consider.

"Will you open that door?"  
Groan!

Breathing deep, Mr. Smedley inserted the chisel again, but much more carefully this time. A powerful wrench, and the damaged lock gave, and the cupboard door flew open. Dropping the tools, Mr. Smedley grasped his cane. Unless the fellow was very much injured, he was going to get that cane.

"Now come out!" he hooted.  
Groan!

Mr. Smedley strode to the wide, deep cupboard. Up and down and round about it he glared, with amazed eyes. There was no sign there of any fellow, injured or uninjured. It was difficult for the Creeper and Crawler to believe his eyes. But he had to! Except for a rolled map, and a bottle of ink which had toppled over, the cupboard was empty!

He stepped back again.  
"Who's afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?" came a sing-song voice, not from the cupboard this time, but apparently from the Form-room door.

The exasperated master strode across the room, and hurled the Form-room

door wide open. He glared into an empty passage.

"Ha, ha, ha!"  
Mr. Smedley gazed at his Form, with gleaming eyes. He realised that he had been tricked, somehow, though he did not know how. But he could see that the Remove were enjoying the entertainment, if he was not.

"This is—is—is some trickery!" hissed the Creeper and Crawler. "Someone is hidden—!" He stared about him. Where was that someone hidden?

"Who's afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?" came a howl, apparently from under his feet, so suddenly that he jumped. He glared at the solid-looking floor of the Form-room.

"Wharton!" he rapped.  
"Oh! Yes, sir!" gasped the captain of the Remove.

"Is there a cellar under this room?"  
"I—I believe so, sir!"

"Then this miserable trickster is no doubt there! I shall leave you in charge for a few minutes, Wharton, while I look for him."

"Oh, my hat! I—I mean very well, sir."

Smedley strode out of the Form-room. And when he was gone, on a rather hopless quest in the extensive, ancient cellars, an irresistible roar from the Remove awoke most of the echoes of Greyfriars.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Asthmatic!

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH coughed.

It was about the tenth time that he had coughed.

Mr Smedley's eyes gleamed at him. Nobody was feeling happy, in the Remove room, just then. The

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Removites had been enjoying their afternoon. But after the feast came the reckoning.

Smedley had found nobody in the cellars. He doubted whether, if anybody had been in the cellars, that person could have made his voice heard in the Form-room above. He was puzzled, perplexed, angry, and quite at a loss to account for the mysterious voice in the Form-room.

He returned in a state of white heat. Billy Bunter was prepared to carry on. But Smedley's first remark was to the effect that, as so much time had been wasted, the Remove would be detained for an hour after class. He added that, in the event of any further waste of time, the detention would be lengthened in proportion.

Which looked as if Smedley suspected that the mysterious voice could have been accounted for, in the Remove, somehow!

So there were no more mysterious voices in the Remove room!—And now, when all the rest of the school were out, the hapless Remove still sat at their desks, grinding. Smedley stayed with them. Probably he knew exactly how much grinding the Remove would have done, if left to themselves!

And then Smithy began to cough. It was not a loud cough, or a hefty cough, but one of those little hacking coughs. Every time he did it, the Form-master's eye turned on him. But really it was difficult for even an angry and unjust man to find fault with a fellow for coughing. Fellows did not, as a rule, cough if they could help it.

But at the tenth or eleventh cough, Smedley began to bark. He noted several grins among the Removites, and he more than suspected that Smithy was doing it just to irritate him:

"Vernon-Smith!" he barked.

"Yes, sir!"

"If you repeat that noise, I shall punish you."

"What noise, sir?"

"You were affecting a cough, Vernon-Smith."

"Oh, sir; sorry, sir," said the Bounder meekly. "I can't help coughing a little, sir, when I've got a touch of asthma."

"Asthma!" hooted Mr. Smedley.

If Smithy had asthma, it had come on very suddenly! If Mr. Smedley had had a very trusting nature—which he had not, by any means—he would still have doubted that statement.

"How dare you say such a thing, Vernon-Smith!" he rapped. "If you repeat that absurd noise—"

"Urrrrrgh!" coughed the Bounder, interrupting him.

"Upon my word!" Mr. Smedley gripped his cane, and strode among the desks. "Stand up, Vernon-Smith! Now bend over the form!"

Whack, whack, whack!

"Whoop! Urrgh! Gurrgh! Ow! Gurrgh!"

Vernon-Smith yelled, roared, and coughed at the same time; it was quite a painful mixture. He leaned over his desk, in a paroxysm of coughing, wheezing, and gurgling.

Mr. Smedley eyed him wolfishly; indeed, like a Big Bad Wolf! He was certain, or almost certain, that the young rascal was pulling his leg. At the same time, it was possible that the east winds of May had given even a healthy schoolboy a touch of asthma—possible, if not probable!

Smedley was well aware of what the Head would have thought, had that gentleman known that a master caned a boy instead of sending him to the

House-dame when he coughed in the Form-room!

He longed and yearned to lay the cane round the Bounder with all the force of his arm. But he realised that he had better not!

"You may sit down, Vernon-Smith!" he said curtly, and went back to his desk.

The Bounder sat down, coughing. This time he coughed unreprieved. Tom Redwing gave him a rather anxious look. It sounded so genuine that Tom was rather alarmed. He was relieved, however, when Smithy closed his left eye at him.

Cough, cough, cough!

It was a constant interruption of the silence, and extremely irritating to a Form-master who believed that it was only a trick. Smedley was strongly tempted to give the Bounder some more of the cane.

"Vernon-Smith!" snorted Mr. Smedley at last.

"Urrgh! Yes, sir! Urrgh!"

"You may go and get something for your cough."

"Thank you, sir."

The Bounder left the Form-room.

He did not, however, proceed to the matron's room. He wanted something for that cough; but nothing in a bottle! He proceeded to Masters' Studies, and tapped respectfully on Mr. Capper's door.

A wheezing sound from within that study told that Mr. Capper had a touch of his asthma, whether Smithy had or not! Capper had reached a time of life when the east wind was very trying.

"What is it, Vernon-Smith?" asked Mr. Capper, surprised by a visit from a boy not in his Form.

Vernon-Smith coughed.

"If you please, sir, I've got a touch of asthma—it runs in my family, sir, and the east wind has brought it on. Mr. Smedley sent me out of the Form-room to get something for it."

"Indeed! Had you not better go to Mrs. Kebble, Vernon-Smith?"

"I've tried those things, sir, and they do me no good," said the Bounder artlessly. "I've heard some of the fellows say, sir, that you have a wonderful remedy for it. I know it's rather a cheek to bother you, sir, but if you would be so very kind—"

Mr. Capper beamed. He was a kind and good-natured gentleman, under whose easy rule the Upper Fourth enjoyed life. It was almost too easy to pull Capper's leg.

"My dear boy, certainly!" he exclaimed. "I have found very great relief from Dr. Didlum's Asthma Cigarettes. Hand me that box!"

Smithy handed him the box.

Mr. Capper selected from it two of the asthma cigarettes, and handed them to the grateful youth.

"Smoke these slowly, just as if they were ordinary cigarettes," he said. "You are, of course, unaccustomed to smoking, but you will soon find it quite simple. Smoke one now, and the other later, say, in an hour."

"You're awfully kind, sir," said the Bounder.

"Not at all," said Mr. Capper benevolently. "In your case it can scarcely be chronic, and a couple of these Didlum cigarettes may work a complete cure. Here is a match."

There was no help for it! The Bounder was not so unaccustomed as Mr. Capper supposed, to smoking ordinary cigarettes. But certainly he did not want to smoke a medical cigarette from end to end. But it had to be—and he did it under Mr. Capper's

benevolent eye. It was not nice! In fact, it was very nasty!

Smithy grimaced. But he got through.

"Do you feel beneficial effects?" inquired Mr. Capper.

"Oh, yes, sir! It—it's nearly gone."

"Good—very good! Smoke the other in about an hour's time," said Mr. Capper.

"I don't know how to thank you, sir."

"Not at all, my dear boy, not at all!"

And Mr. Capper dismissed the Bounder, and gave his attention to his own asthma—which really needed more attention than Smithy's did.

With the second cigarette in his pocket, Vernon-Smith returned to the Remove room. Mr. Smedley eyed him as he came in. But there was no more coughing from the Bounder, and the weary detention came to an end at last, and the Remove were dismissed.

## THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

### Merely Medical!

"I SAY, you fellows!" yelled Billy Bunter.

"What's up, fathead?"

"Smithy—he's asking for it!" gasped Bunter. "I say, he's mad, you know! Smoking—"

"Silly ass!" said Bob Cherry. "But there's nothing new in Smithy playing the silly ox, is there?"

"Right in front of Smedley's window—" gasped Bunter.

"What?" yelled the Famous Five.

"And the Creeper and Crawler's watching him—I saw him—"

"Great pip!"

"I went to look for Smithy, to ask him about tea!" gasped Bunter. "And there he was—lighting a cigarette—a dozen fellows staring at him—"

"Well, the silly chump is asking for it this time, and no mistake!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"The askfulness is terrific!"

"Here comes Smedley!" murmured Harry Wharton.

Mr. Smedley was striding out of the House, with a grim brow. Evidently he had seen what Bunter had seen from his study window.

Harry Wharton cut off at a run, followed by his chums. He could hardly believe his eyes as he saw the Bounder.

Leaning against an elm, in full sight of the Form-master's study window, was Herbert Vernon-Smith—with a couple of dozen startled fellows staring at him blankly. There was a cigarette in his mouth, from which a spiral of blue smoke was curling.

Wharton gazed at him.

"Smithy! Are you mad?" he gasped.

"Eh! What's the matter?" drawled the Bounder, raising his eyebrows.

"Smedley's coming. He's spotted you!"

"Let him come! Who's afraid of a Big Bad Wolf?" yawned Smithy.

The crowd divided, as the Remove master came striding up. There was an almost gloating look in the Creeper and Crawler's eyes. He had got his man at last! From sheer impudent recklessness, the scapegrace of the school had played fairly into his hands!

To the further amazement of the juniors, Smithy did not even remove the cigarette from his mouth, as Smedley strode up. He smoked on regardless. Well known as the Bounder

(Continued on page 28.)



# The MAN BEHIND the SCENES!



Starring **FERRERS LOCKE**, detective, and his clever boy assistant, **JACK DRAKE**.

BY **HEDLEY SCOTT**

## HOW THE STORY STARTED.

**MERVYN VILLIERS** and **JULIUS TANKERHEAD**, two clever criminals have been pulling off big coups in connection with sporting events. In order to find out how these crooks work their clever swindles, **FERRERS LOCKE** detective, poses as Jules Martinez, a wealthy Argentine bookmaker. He accepts a big wager from the two schemers, and wins £10,000. Rather than pay, the two villains, together with Morris, a manservant, decide by drawing cards who shall "bump off" Martinez. The fatal card falls to Morris, who rents an office in an assumed name directly opposite and level with Martinez's offices—his object being to fire a machine gun at his victim through an open window. The plot fails, however, for Locke, unknown to Morris, swaps the live cartridges for blanks. Meanwhile, Inspector Pycroft steps in to arrest Morris. "Come on," says Locke, "Let's be in at the death!"

(Now Read On.)

## Paying the Price!

**FERRERS LOCKE** said the words very lightheartedly, little dreaming of what was taking place in the offices rented by the man Morris. For even while the detective and his assistant were traversing the stairs to the pavement below, Inspector Pycroft was entering the private office of the would-be assassin, a loaded gun in his hand.

He almost collided with Morris, who, still disguised in his black wig and horn-rimmed spectacles, was hurrying out.

"What do you want?" demanded Morris. "Who are you?"

For answer, Inspector Pycroft covered him with his gun and, with his other hand, tugged into view a pair of shining handcuffs.

"You, my little murderer," he replied. "Caught in the act, what? I'm Inspector Pycroft, of Scotland Yard, if you want to know."

One glazed look of terror the would-be assassin gave the grim-faced inspector. This was the last thing he had expected, to be caught red-handed. But Morris was always prepared for emergency. There would be no Old Bailey trial and a sentence of hanging for him. Suddenly he pressed his right hand to his face, and his mouth closed over a peculiar shaped signet ring. In a flash, Pycroft started forward, guessing the man's intention a split second too late. For that signet ring contained

poison of a particularly deadly character.

Morris, a wolfish grin on his already blanching features, sagged at the knees. His lips purpled and then faded to a ghastly grey, his eyes twitched.

"You'll never hang me!" he croaked the words with difficulty. "Never—"

His eyes glazed and opened afresh this time in some wonderment, for behind Pycroft now came half a dozen men in uniform—a sergeant at their head.

"Where have you come from? What do you want?" demanded Pycroft officiously.

"We received a telephone call from someone unknown just now," explained the sergeant, "saying that a man was going to shoot Jules Martinez from this window at four o'clock or thereabouts." He caught sight of the dying man and the machine-gun propped up by the window. "What's happened, sir?"

"What's happened is that little rat tried to kill a man opposite and has now taken his own life. We can do nothing for him," added Pycroft with a shake of his head. "He's taken poison."

Seconds before Ferrers Locke and Drake arrived on the scene Morris had paid the price of his lawlessness in full.

"The poor devil," said Locke simply. "He was just a tool in the hands of stronger men. He obviously thought that he had killed me. Rather than face a trial for murder he chose his own way out." He shrugged. "But there's something here I don't quite fasten on to yet."

"You mean the mystery caller who informed the sergeant of what was going to take place here," grunted Inspector Pycroft. "Oh, he's one of the usual sort, you bet. Knew the inside business of the whole scheme and double-crossed his pal."

"Yes, you're right," murmured Locke. "Devilish cunning. I see it all now," he added in a whisper to Drake. "Villiers and Tankerhead were trying to kill two birds with one stone."

"The fiends!" growled Drake. "What about rounding them up now, guv'nor?"

Locke shook his head slowly. "I've still no proof," he replied. "Because Villiers' manservant chooses to rent an office in an assumed name

and tries to kill me, I've no evidence that he was carrying out the instructions of his employers. They—Villiers and Tankerhead—would most stoutly proclaim their ignorance of the whole affair. Very likely say they had always suspected him of leading a double life."

"Um!" grunted Drake. "But I'm not quite satisfied about one thing, guv'nor. If, as you say, they double-crossed Morris and informed the police, weren't they running the risk of being dragged into the bizney when Morris began to squeal?"

"That's what puzzled me at first, young 'un," replied the detective. "But I think I can supply even the answer to that problem. Let's look at it this way. Morris has worked for Villiers for years. Villiers knows his every mood, reactions, and so forth. Probably Morris had been heard to say, as these fellows will, that he would never stand in the dock. He'd sooner take poison than be hauled up for trial. Another thing, this poor devil Morris was a loyal villain; likely as not he wouldn't squeal on the man to whom he thought he owed everything. Events will prove, I think, my theory to be right."

"But I say, guv'nor," exclaimed Jack excitedly, "can't we bluff Villiers and Tankerhead into thinking that Morris is alive—that he's talked—"

"Too late, I fancy," said Locke. "We are dealing with clever rogues. I wouldn't mind wagering you that both of them know at this moment just exactly what's happened to Morris. There are always ways and means. For instance, they may be keeping a watch on the place; they may have seen you and I cross the street; they may have seen Morris carried out on the stretcher."

And in all that Ferrers Locke was correct. Villiers himself had seen the man to whom he owed ten thousand pounds, the man whom he thought to be a lifeless heap on the floor of his office, cross the street to the opposite offices, accompanied by his clerk—very much alive!

He had seen, too, his confederate Morris carried out to the waiting ambulance, and knew, even as he had anticipated, that Morris had taken his own life rather than submit to capture. But what he did not know yet was how



Jules Martinez had escaped the trap so carefully laid for him.

It was a very agitated Tankerhead who put him wise on that score when they met at an agreed upon rendezvous.

"I phoned to the station," he panted. "Spoke to the same sergeant who took my first message. Morris snuffed out without saying a word. Thought he'd killed Martinez."

"I guessed as much," snarled Villiers. "But how is it that Martinez has escaped?"

"I've got that, too!" gasped Tankerhead. "The cartridges were blanks—a newspaper-crime reporter got on to that end of the story. But how Morris came to mix up blanks with live cartridges beats me!"

"He didn't mix them up," said Villiers hoarsely. "Somebody else did that unknown to him. Can't you see that, you fool?"

He wiped beads of perspiration from his brow.

"I tell you I don't like it," he added. "There's someone balking us at every step. It's almost uncanny!"

Tankerhead licked his dry lips. Like his confederate he was losing his nerve.

"I say," he exclaimed suddenly, "hadn't you better get on to Martinez again? Look fishy, if you don't. Remember we were supposed to be wagering on that accursed electric sign. He told us to hold on—while he stood at the window."

Villiers nodded. "You're right, Julius. For the look of things I'll phone him up."

Inside five minutes the scoundrel was in telephonic communication with the man for whose sudden end he had so carefully schemed.

"Hallo, Martinez! We were cut off. Heard a crash and then the phone went dead. Did you settle that wager for us?"

He winked nervously at Tankerhead as he waited for a reply.

"Sure I settled it," came Ferrers Locke's answer. "But you were both wrong. The electric sign flashes eight advertisements a minute. By the way, the police have just taken off a would-be killer from the offices directly opposite mine. They seem to think his name is Morris—"

"What—what! Morris?" exclaimed Villiers, with well-feigned amazement.

"Yes. Haven't you got a manservant by that name, Mr. Villiers?"

An angry snort echoed over the wires.

"I did have until a few days ago," said Mervyn Villiers. "Had to sack him."

With that Villiers closed the conversation and rang off.

"Julius," he snarled, "we shall have to go slow; and we shall have to pay up that cheque for ten thousand, curse it! I promised to let Martinez have it to-morrow."

Tankerhead nodded gloomily. Then his face creased into a villainous expression.

"Well, we've got rid of Morris, anyway!" he said, with a burst of satisfaction. "I was getting afraid of him."

"We've done more than that," replied Villiers, who was more heartless than his confederate. "We've made exactly five thousand pounds."

Tankerhead stared at him blankly.

"What do you mean?"

"Simply that I know where Morris hid his savings—the money we paid him," he replied.

"He never trusted banks; he preferred a loose floorboard in his bed-room. I

know for a fact he's got something like five thousand pounds stowed away there. Come on, let's get home!"

And, sure enough, when the precious pair reached home they found the ill-fated manservant's hidden hoard of banknotes, and callously divided them.

### An Awkward Situation!

"A HI Good-morning, Mr. Martinez!"

Mervyn Villiers' flabby face expressed a great show of geniality as he entered the rather sumptuous offices of the Pall Mall bookmaker, early the next afternoon.

Jules Martinez, alias Ferrers Locke, was equally hypocritical in the smile he turned on his visitor by way of reply.

"I have come to settle our little account, Mr. Martinez," explained Mervyn Villiers, doffing his shiny top hat and slowly plucking off his lavender coloured gloves. "I believe in paying my just dues, what? Next time—you never know, sir—you may have the pleasure of paying me, eh?"

He chuckled throatily, what time he fumbled in his jacket pocket and withdrew a cheque book. With a great flourish he made out a cheque payable to Jules Martinez for the sum of ten thousand pounds. Yet his mean, vengeful heart loathed the idea of parting with that small fortune, despite the outward and visible sign of sportsmanship which accompanied the settlement of the debt.

But Mervyn Villiers was as cunning as a reptile. Overnight, he had worked out a great scheme with his confederate which, if it succeeded, was to see that cheque for ten thousand pounds, payable to Jules Martinez, suddenly become changed to a cheque worth four or five times that amount made payable to Mervyn Villiers!

Obviously, Mervyn Villiers had plenty of time to spare, for once having paid over the cheque he accepted a choice cigar from Jules Martinez, and sat back in a comfortable chair, which he pulled to the window, completely at his ease.

For three quarters of an hour he sat thus, what time Jules Martinez, some few feet away, gave the clicking tape machine at his elbow a casual glance from time to time.

"By the way, Mr. Martinez," said Mervyn Villiers, with a careless eye on the clock. "I suppose you know the big race of the afternoon, in South Africa—they're two hours in advance of our time in South Africa—is being run round about now?"

Jules Martinez, alias Ferrers Locke, smiled.

"As a matter of fact," he remarked with a slight foreign accent, "the result is just coming up on the tape now."

Mervyn Villiers held up his hand.

"By jingo!" he exclaimed. "And I nearly missed my bet! Now don't tell me the result, for I've a fancy to wager on that race. Am I too late?"

Jules Martinez gave his client a shrewd look. As Villiers had been in the office for quite three quarters of an hour, he could not possibly know the result of the race. For the clicking tape machine had only just that moment announced it to the detective. There could be no catch in this, Ferrers Locke told himself, albeit, he instinctively felt suspicious.

"Of course you're not too late," he said at length. "What's your fancy?"

Mervyn Villiers, facing the window, appeared to consider.

"Well, frankly," he said, "there are only three horses in it, in my opinion"—he never took his eyes from the window—"supposing I wager ten thousand pounds on one of them. Is it too much for you, Mr. Martinez?"

Jules Martinez smiled expansively.

"As I have said before, Mr. Villiers, no wager is too big or too small for Jules Martinez. That's how bookmakers accumulate a fortune. I will accept your wager, sir. Name your horse!"

Still Mervyn Villiers seemed to deliberate. His foxy eyes, however, were peering through the window of the bookmaker's office to the stream of moving traffic below.

Amongst that stream of traffic was the sight of a stationary saloon car, pulled up outside a jeweller's shop. And standing up in the car was his confederate Julius Tankerhead. With an almost imperceptible movement of his hand, Julius Tankerhead chalked three distinct marks on the black roofing of the car.

These three chalk marks Mervyn Villiers saw at once. He suddenly swivelled in his chair and smiled genially at Jules Martinez.

"Excuse me taking so much time, sir," he apologised, "but a wager of this sort demands a certain amount of deliberation. Now let me see, I'll have my ten thousand pounds on Ralph Rackstraw"—he saw the bookmaker wince—"he should be in the betting at five or six to one."

Ferrers Locke nodded, but he felt a tremor run through him. For the tape machine still clicking at his elbow giving the big news of the hour from all parts of the world stated clearly enough that the horse Villiers had backed had actually won the big South African race at the generous odds of six to one.

Despite that initial blow to his pocket and his vanity, the disguised detective made the best of a bad job.

"Allow me, Mr. Villiers, to say that the wager is on," he smiled, "and also to congratulate you in the same breath upon—"

"What do you mean?" asked Villiers, with well-feigned surprise.

"Simply this—your horse, Ralph Rackstraw, has won," replied the detective. "And the starting price is six to one. Congratulations, my dear sir. It seems that I must return your cheque to you at once—plus one of my own, what?"

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Villiers piously. "What luck!"

Ferrers Locke glanced at the tape machine again.

"Terrible Tantalus, the favourite, at even money, was second," he informed his caller and had a horrible feeling that he had been done—and done brown.

"Bless my soul!" ejaculated Mervyn Villiers, for the second time. "This must be my lucky day, indeed. Now, let me see, how much have I won? Sixty thousand pounds, minus the ten thousand I already owed you, leaves me a handsome profit of fifty thousand pounds."

"Just one minute," broke in Ferrers Locke, and the ominous note in his voice was like a cold douche being swamped over Villiers back. "Just one moment. The tape"—he was carefully checking the spinning length of printed paper as it left the machine—"now says that there is an objection."

Villiers' face blanched



"An objection, did you say?" he croaked. "An objection?"

Jules Martinez nodded, and did not fail to see the swift glance his caller suddenly directed out of the window. Casually, he strolled towards that window himself and stood gazing down into the busy stream of life below.

"We shall have to wait a bit for the revised decision," he threw back over his shoulder. "The stewards of the

South African Jockey Club are holding an inquiry into the running of the race. Look at the tape yourself, sir."

Mervyn Villiers crawled out of his chair and looked at the tape as invited. It was true. By means of wireless and the tape machine, the result of the big South African race had come through within a few minutes of the race being run all those thousands of miles away, showing Ralph Rackstraw to be the

winner. The next message on the printed tape declared that an objection had been laid against Ralph Rackstraw and that the objection was being inquired into by the governing stewards.

(Will the result of the inquiry save Ferrers Locke's bacon, or will the rascally Villiers win a fortune? The answer will be supplied in next week's gripping chapters of this popular detective story.)

## 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.

### YOUR EDITOR CALLING OVERSEAS READERS!

THERE are so many indications coming to hand that the fame of the MAGNET is rapidly spreading throughout Australia, New Zealand and South Africa that I take this opportunity of welcoming overseas readers who may, perhaps, be looking at a copy of the MAGNET for the first time. For their benefit let me hasten to add that this number of the MAGNET is typical of all that have left the printing presses during the many years this famous school story paper has been published. The MAGNET is designed to appeal to the healthy, manly boy and to offer him real entertainment value every week of the year. There are, doubtless, many overseas readers of this May 12th issue of MAGNET who are meeting William George Bunter and Harry Wharton & Co. for the first time, and they may be wondering why they never took the trouble to make their acquaintance before. Well, it's a fault that can be remedied, for these delightful schoolboy characters definitely appear in every issue of the MAGNET. New readers, then, will be well advised to place a standing order with their news-agent for a copy of MAGNET. Believe me, they will never regret it.

A little while ago I published a letter from a prefect who upheld the fagging system. This week he is going to be taken to task—and by a girl reader!

### LOOK OUT, PREFECT!

Here's a nasty one for you! This is what my girl reader says: "I don't see why one boy should have to clear up after another. If a senior is capable of minding other people's business, as prefects generally do, they ought to be capable of looking after themselves!" She wants to know if "Prefect" really believes that a boy would not have any self-respect and intelligence if he did not fag, and asks: "What about the prefects? Where does their own self-respect come in?"

Well, fags, what do you think about it yourselves? My own opinion is that no boy likes fagging—as long as he is a fag. But what a change there is in his ideas when he becomes a prefect! It would be interesting to hear from a fag who stands up for fagging—and a senior who does not!

Some time ago a Chelmsford reader asked me where he could obtain

### BACK ISSUES OF THE MAGNET.

Up to a certain time, back numbers can be obtained from the Back Number Department, Bear Alley, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, but very often a certain number is "out of print." However, two readers have written to me to

tell me that they will be pleased to help my Chelmsford chum to obtain the issues he requires. Harry Hammell, of 44, King Street, Birtley, County Durham, has copies of the MAGNET over a year old, and Miss Julie Adams, of Courtlands, Park Road, Banstead, Surrey, has also a collection of back numbers. If B. R. S., of Chelmsford, cares to write to them, he will probably find that they can help him out.

### RECKONING TIME!

A keen MAGNET reader asks me how the Romans reckoned time, for, as he points out, they did not set down dates like 55 B.C.—the year Julius Caesar started his British campaign. Rome reckoned its time from the year when the city was founded, which was 753 years before the start of the Christian Era. In the same way Ancient Greece reckoned by the Greek games, the Olympiads, which took place every four years from a time 776 years prior to the Christian Era. From the earliest dawn of history nations adopted the triple division of time—days, months and years.

From F. Barneveld, of Walthamstow, comes some further interesting information concerning

### BEZOAR STONES!

This, he tells me, is the correct name for the "Snake Stones" which I mentioned some time ago in my chat, and which you will remember are used to extract the poison from a snake bite. He tells me that they are to be found inside goats, monkeys, snakes and toads, and are blackish in colour, with the exception of those found in goats. The latter are dark green or olive in colour.

When a person is bitten by a snake the wound should be lanced sideways, and the stone applied to it within twenty-four hours of the bite. The stone will drop off after it has drawn the poison from the wound. When the stone is placed in milk after use, the poison comes to the top of the milk in the form of a greenish foam.

Well, if ever I find myself in a snake-infested country, I shall certainly follow the advice of the several readers who have written to me on the subject, and do my utmost to get a couple of bezoar stones to carry around with me!

TAKE a tip, chums, from a Lowestoft reader, who hands along this advice:

### DON'T GET TATTOOED!

He tells me that he had some designs tattooed on his arm a year ago, and now wants to get rid of them. Well, it's a much harder job to get rid of tattoo marks than to get them. As tattoo marks are underneath the skin, nothing will

remove them unless it gets under the skin also. An expert surgeon might be able to do something by grafting new skin, but this would be a very expensive operation indeed.

Some professional tattooists claim to be able to remove tattoo marks, but the principal manner of doing so is to endeavour to tattoo a natural colour that will cover the original designs. Naturally, the success of such an experiment depends upon the elaborateness, or otherwise, of the original design. My reader had better consult a fully qualified medical man, who will inform him if it is possible to get rid of his own particular "branding."

From a Dublin reader comes a request for information regarding

### THE ART OF "MAKE-UP."

He can obtain from any theatrical supplier a list of grease-paints and make-up material, and most of these lists give details of the particular colours to be used to achieve certain effects. If he writes to Messrs. Samuel French, 26, Southampton Street, London, W.C.2, mentioning the MAGNET, they will be pleased to send him a list of make-up requirements.

Stage-lighting has a great deal to do with effective make-up. If the lighting is normal only a small quantity of make-up is required, and it should not be applied too thickly. If the lighting is very strong, a "heavier" make-up is needed. When making-up for the films, the type of film which is being used in the camera must be considered, for a make-up which will be suitable for ordinary orthochromatic film will not be the same when panchromatic film is used.

There are, however, a number of books on the subject which can be obtained through ordinary booksellers, or from theatrical suppliers. But a successful make-up depends entirely upon the person who does it. It is by no means easy to become an expert "make-up man"—which is why the film companies pay such good salaries to the experts whom they employ.

I HAVE received another bunch of letters from readers this week, making various suggestions for the type of stories they prefer. I have made a list of all these suggestions and will do my utmost to carry them out in the near future.

Many of these I have handed on to Mr. Frank Richards, whose latest Greyfriars yarn, entitled:

### "SAVING A SCAPEGRACE!"

will appear next week. Many readers have certain favourite characters of whom they always like to read, and I can assure them that they will hear more of these characters before long. Every reader has his or her favourite group of characters, so Frank Richards does his best to introduce those who appeal to the majority. Don't think for a moment that he is neglecting the lesser lights. You'll learn all about how these are going in future stories.

There will be the usual other features in next week's issue—a fine instalment of our serial, a "Greyfriars Herald" supplement, and, of course, my little chat.

So au revoir until next week, chums.

YOUR EDITOR.



**BUNTER, THE VENTRILOQUIST!***(Continued from page 24.)*

was for his nerve and recklessness, this was really the limit!

"Vernon-Smith!" barked Mr. Smedley. "You are smoking—here, in the open quadrangle—"

"Yes, sir."

"Follow me to your headmaster at once!"

"May I finish smoking this cigarette first, sir?"

"What? What? Take it from your mouth at once, Vernon-Smith, you young rascal! Bring it with you."

"Oh, very well, sir!"

With the smoking cigarette between finger and thumb, the Bounder followed Mr. Smedley into the House. The Greyfriars fellows were left in a buzz.

"This means the sack for Smithy!" said Skinner, with a whistle. "Does he want to be sacked?"

"Looks like it."

"The lookfulness is terrific."

"I say, you fellows, I believe he wanted Smedley to see him," squeaked Billy Bunter. "Right in front of his window, you know, and he never lighted up till he saw Smedley look out. I say, it's pretty thick if he gets sacked before we've had tea—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The man must be mad!" said Bob. "Just mad! With the Creeper and Crawler watching him like a cat, he asks for it like this—"

"The silly ass!"

"Well, Smedley's got him this time."

"The gotfulness is preposterous."

Meanwhile, Vernon-Smith had followed Mr. Smedley to the Head. Once or twice Smedley glanced round, to assure himself that the delinquent had not thrown away the half-smoked cigarette. But Smithy had no such intention. That proof of delinquency was still in his hand as he followed his Form-master into the Head's study.

"What is it, Mr. Smedley?" There was a faintly sharp note in Dr. Locke's voice. Then, as his glance fell on the half-smoked cigarette in Smithy's hand he started. "What—what—"

"I found this boy, sir, smoking in the open quadrangle, under the eyes of a crowd of other boys," said Mr. Smedley. "I have brought him to you, sir—"

"Vernon-Smith!"

"Yes, sir!" said the Bounder meekly.

"You were smoking that cigarette?"

"Yes, sir."

"In the quadrangle?"

"Yes, sir."

"Bless my soul!" gasped the Head.

The Bounder's coolness seemed to take his breath away.

The Creeper and Crawler's eyes glinted.

"Vernon-Smith!" said the Head, in a deep voice. "You are well aware of the terms on which you were allowed to remain at Greyfriars, after your recent sentence of expulsion. You will now pack your box—"

"Have I done any harm, sir?"

"Wha-a-t?"

"I'm sorry, sir, if I have," said the Bounder, in the same meek tone. "But I thought I had to do as Mr. Smedley told me—"

"Do you dare to imply that your Form-master told you to smoke a cigarette, Vernon-Smith? Are you in your senses?"

"He told me to go and get something for my asthma, sir—"

"A-asthma!" stuttered the Head.

"Yes, sir; I've a touch of asthma to-day—the east wind, sir! Mr. Smedley very kindly told me to leave the Form-room and get something for it."

"That is correct," said Mr. Smedley, staring at the Bounder. "But if this impudent boy pretends that he was smoking a cigarette for asthma—"

"Mr. Capper recommended it, sir," murmured the Bounder.

"Mr. Capper?" gasped the Head.

"Yes, sir, and he very kindly gave me two asthma cigarettes."

"Asthma cigarettes!"

"Yes, sir, and I smoked one in his presence, and the other—Mr. Capper said in an hour's time—and—"

Dr. Locke looked fixedly at the Bounder of Greyfriars for a moment. Then he stretched out his hand.

"Give me that cigarette, Vernon-Smith!"

Smithy handed it over.

The expression that came over the Head's face as he examined it was quite extraordinary. On a close inspection, of course, it was evident that there was nothing of the nature of tobacco about that cigarette. The Head sniffed at it. He stared at it. Neither sniffing nor staring could possibly turn it into tobacco, however. He breathed hard.

"Mr. Smedley, this is a medical cigarette. I remember that Mr. Capper uses them for his asthma. Vernon-Smith, you should not have smoked this in public—such an act was liable to give rise to—to misapprehension. However, there is certainly no harm done. You may leave my study."

And the Bounder left the Head's study grinning.

"Sacked?"

"Flogged?"

"Whopped?"

"Or what?"

The Bounder raised his eyebrows at questions rained on him.

"Sacked—flogged—whopped?" he repeated. "Why? No harm in a fellow with asthma smoking a medical cigarette for it, especially when it was given him by a Form-master."

"What?" yelled the juniors.

"Capper gave it to me—"

"Capper?"

"Though I think, from the way Smedley acted, that he must have fancied that it was a real cigarette," added the Bounder.

The Removites stared at him for a moment. Then they understood, and there was a roar.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, is Smithy sacked? I say, what about that spread in the study if he's sacked—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter's fears were soon relieved. Nobody was going to be sacked, and there was a tremendous spread in Smithy's study. The Bounder—quite cured of his sudden attack of asthma, though probably not by Mr. Capper's medical cigarettes—presided at the festive board, and the Remove ventriloquist parked amazing quantities of good things. But the study was crammed with other guests, as full as it would hold; with an overflow meeting in the Remove passage outside. It was a great and glorious spread, in celebration of a score over the Creeper and Crawler.

THE END.

*(Now look out for next Saturday's MAGNET and another first-rate yarn of Harry Wharton & Co. and the Bounder of Greyfriars, entitled: "SAVING A SCAPEGRACE!" You'll vote it the real goods, chums!)*

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## NUGENT LECTURES ON DRAWING

### With Indiscreet Illustrations

Frank Nugent's lecture on "How to Draw" drew a rare crowd to the Reg on Thursday evening. Although Franky had succeeded to some extent in hiding his light under a bushel, most chaps have known for some time that he was pretty good at black-and-white work. There was, consequently, a great deal of curiosity to know the secrets of his clever cartoons.

The lecture was not exactly the success which you might have anticipated. Don't ask us why. From our own point of view Franky's explanation of his methods was engrossingly interesting.

The lecturer began by telling us how to draw pictures of men and women. Nobody seemed to object to this part of the lecture. It was when Franky got on to cartoon work that the audience began to show signs of restiveness.

"In cartoon work," he explained, "you take the first thing that strikes you about a person—the thing that stands out a mile, so to speak. Now, in drawing Peter Todd, for instance, you would first notice a nose—"

It was at this point that the first objection arose. Peter Todd, for reasons we are unable to fathom, stood up and yelled: "Look here, you cheeky ass—"

## DREAMS—AND REALITY

### Inquiry Produces Strange Stories

Wingate's lecture last week was clear. Dick Rake dreamed that he was caught in a terrific thunderstorm. He might have found it hard to connect that with his awakening, which was in the form of a room, had not someone afterwards called attention to the fact that Mr. Quelch was yelling "Rake, how dare you!" at him in a voice of thunder!

Potter, of the Fifth, couldn't understand why he should have dreamed about a hair-raising ride as a pillion-passenger on Coker's motor-bike after falling asleep under the trees in the quad. But he soon understood when we pointed out that Mimble was mowing the lawn. The rattle of the grass-cutter formed an unmistakable link with the sound of Coker's machine.

The best one we've collected to date is Dicky Nugent's. Dicky dreamed that he plunged into a tropical sea to rescue a sailor who was being attacked by a shark. Just as the shark opened its huge mouth to swallow Dicky he woke up—and found that Gatty and Myers were at the Form-room fire toasting herrings!

Sometimes, of course, the connection is not quite so clear. See if you can beat that!

### WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT?

W. G. Bunter says if they would abolish the "leg before" rule at cricket he would become a great batsman. With two such legs as Bunter's hiding the wicket, we can quite believe it!

## GREYFRIARS 100 YEARS AGO

Is the day coming when Greyfriars will be continually covered by a blanket of fog? Is the cheerful sunlight which at present permeates the old college to be swept away and replaced by a Stygian darkness blacker than the blackest night? Is the pure air we have breathed in the past to give place to foul, noxious fumes that will choke the scholars of our ancient foundation? These questions, dear reader, are not the product of a disordered imagination. They are asked in deadly earnest. For to-day, in the year of grace 1834, we are faced with a deadly and which threatens our very existence. **THE RAILWAY IS TO BE BROUGHT WITHIN FIVE MILES OF GREYFRIARS!**

The announcement came to us like a bolt from the blue. It produced instant consternation in all quarters of the college. Many of us, of course, have seen a railway. A few misguided youths among us, inspired by a wish to attain cheap notoriety, have even travelled on a "railway train." But nobody in his wildest nightmare imagined that the villains who are polluting England with their iron tracks would have the impudence to bring their hideous invention so near as Courtfield town!

Yet the plot has already been hatched. The vandals are already at work buying land on which to run their smoke-belching monstrosities. So, unless prompt action is taken, a sooty pall will blot out the green fields and pleasant woods in which we have roamed in the past, and the Greyfriars we know will vanish!

What is to be done? Only swift and decisive action can save us. Men of Greyfriars! We call on you to arise in your wrath and thunder out a protest which will arouse the whole countryside! We need hardly tell you that the authorities are wholeheartedly with us. Dr. Goodsmo and the Board of Governors have already held a meeting to discuss the situation, and have addressed a strongly worded letter to the Prime Minister. Let us support them with enthusiasm, convinced, as we are, of the justice of our cause!

Intelligent people realise full well that the cult of the steam engine and the railway trouble but a modern craze which will soon pass. See to it, then, ye scholars, that this passing fad leaves our college and neighbourhood undefiled!

(The merchant who was that little lot would certainly have a blue fit if he came back and saw what his "passing fad" has become to-day!—E.B.)

## FOLK DANCING

### Temple's Highbrow May Show

Spring has bitten Temple few more pairs of "Quites!" rather badly this year. He and Temple was satisfied. Always has had vague longings. All you need do to convince us to assist in reviving the Folk Temple that you're a genuine Dance and that kind of stuff, intellectual is to say the least, and the coming of the merry "Quites!" at intervals!

Naturally, we all turned them right out and turned those longings into action! Temple's explanations of his new hobby were avfully interesting—if you're interested in the kind of explanation Temple gives! In "The Folk Dance," he told a "Greyfriars Herald" representative, eyeing him with a lofty and disdainful eye, "Takes one back into the mists of remote antiquity. In its rhythmic movement we see embodied the tenets of strange primitive religions and superstitious observances. You follow what I mean?"

"Oh, quite," "Greyfriars Herald" man, doing his best to render it in the appropriate Fourth Form manner. "It follows that the revival of the folk dance is a sine qua non to the understanding of the primitive cultural forces." Temple went on. "I hope all this is quite clear to you?"

The "Greyfriars Herald" man managed to blurt out a half strangling each other, there was very little over which one could enthuse. It may be awfully highbrow, but we're hanged if we get the hang of it!

Bob: "Which are the two most important letters in the alphabet?"  
Bill: "Dunno!"  
Bob: "'O' and 'N'—because we cannot get 'on' without them!"

## "REEL" HEAD MISSING

### So Real Head Obligated

Wibley's super-film, "The World of Youth," is going ahead like a house on fire now. It seems marvellous that the masterpiece which has so long been in Wib's brain should at last be transferring itself to celluloid—but it is so!

Thanks to the assistance of the two technicians loaned by Mr. Lloyd, the great film magnate, the work of actually filming the production has gone through without a hitch. As for the acting, well, Wib has seen to that, and Wib, as you know, could make a school desk act if he chose, let alone a schoolboy! Bolsover provided the only snag worth mentioning this week. When Bolsover was given the part of Dr. Wiseman, the Head of Wibley's film school, he was awfully pleased about it. But his pleasure oozed away very quickly when he learned that Dr. Wiseman appeared in only one scene, and had but two lines to speak. He rushed into Wib's study, looking fearfully peeved.

"Look here, you pie-faced goof!" he roared, grabbing Wibley by the collar. "When I accepted that part, I thought I should be one of the leading characters in the piece. Now it seems that I'm nothing more than a blessed super!"

"You, a leading character! My hat! Do you think I'm potty? You can't act for nuts, and the only reason I'm giving you the part of Dr. Wiseman is because you're the tallest fellow in the Form. Go and get into your props!"

This frank explanation might have been expected to calm Bolsover down. But it didn't! For some reason Bolsover became extremely annoyed, and after rolling Wib all round the study marched out, declaring that he'd rather have a bit of cricket practice than act in a football film.

Wib created this threat with scant respect. He'd heard fellows talk like that before, and then turn up on location just the same. But Bolsover was a fellow of his word. That afternoon, when the time came to "shoot" the scene where the headmaster appeared, Bolsover was missing!

It was an idea such as no other junior would have entertained. But the moment it struck Wib he rushed off, without even waiting to explain matters to the rest of the company!

## DICKY NUGENT'S WEEKLY WISDOM

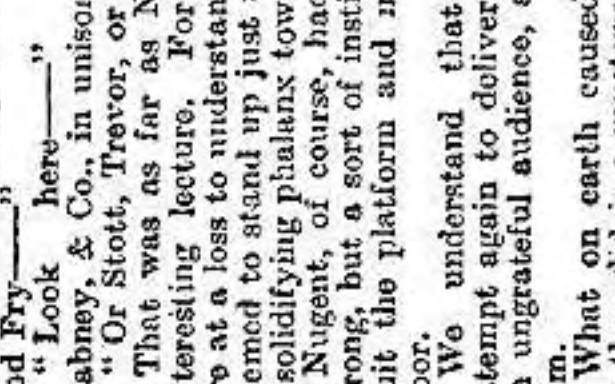
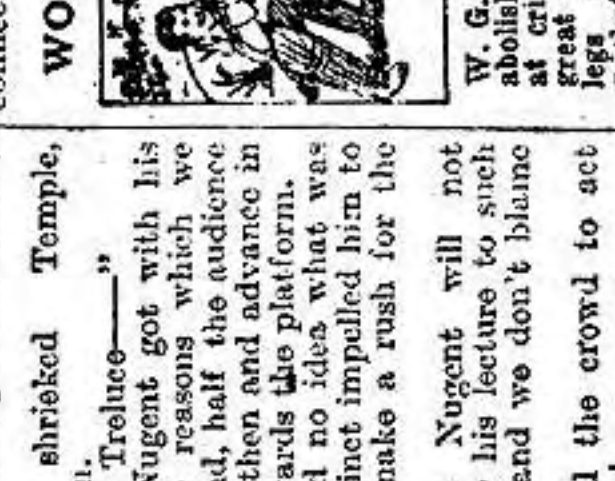
Gatty is spinning a yarn about a chap whose sense of taste was so weak that he didn't notice any difference when he ate a chocolate filled with mustard and vinegar and pepper. My idea is that this story ought to be taken with a grain of salt!

## WHOLL STOP STUDIES?

I want a change, anyway. Hilary and I used to hit it together all right—but she's bought a new porthole, Hitting It Together doesn't fit at all well!—O. KIPPS, Study No. 5, Remove.

## BARGAINS FOR OLD BOYS

Ventriologist's Double at Bottle of Sunburn Lotion, Iron Grey False Moustache, Large Red Wax Ears, and Old School Tie. Old Boys! This marvellous outfit and do yourselves justice on Sports Day! The lot complete, 2/6 post free.—OLD BOYS' STUDIES, Study No. 11.



Get ready to shout, you film fans!  
As we go to press we learn that the last scenes in "The World of Youth" have now been "shot." Within a few days it is hoped that the completed film will be ready for presentation.  
W. G. Bunter has promised Hurree Singh the best bowler faithfully to settle all his debts in the junior XI. He is frequently asked to send down some of his Smith cynically remarks that it bewildering deliveries for Winton. He does there ought to be a salute of sixteen guns!  
Mountaineering appeals strongly to George Blundell, the captain of the Fifth. During the last year Blundell scaled several peaks with Bland in the French Alps. W. G. Bunter says if they would abolish the "leg before" rule at cricket he would become a great batsman. With two such legs as Bunter's hiding the wicket, we can quite believe it!  
Wan Lung is interested in gliding, and manufactured a "glider," which he tried out on Little Side. He made his first landing on Loder—with disastrous results to Loder.