

**"THE BOUNDER'S SACRIFICE!"** Extra-Special School Story of Harry Wharton & Co. of Greyfriars

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

No. 1,371. Vol. XLV.

EVERY SATURDAY.

Week Ending May 26th, 1934.







# The Bounder's Sacrifice!

BY FRANK RICHARDS.

## THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Floury!

**"NOM d'un chien!"** yelled Monsieur Charpentier. A dozen Greyfriars fellows heard that yell.

A dozen fellows, therefore, were startled.

Like most French masters, Monsieur Charpentier had his trials. Life was not all roses to the dapper little gentleman who strove—largely in vain—to drive his beautiful language into unreceptive heads.

Often and often had Mossoo been heard to ejaculate "Ciel!" or "Mon Dieu!"

But this was the limit!

It was beyond the limit!

"Name of a dog," in English, was not fearfully expressive. It did not sound awfully shocking. Rather it provoked a smile.

But in French it was quite a different matter. No nice Frenchman would think of expressing his feelings by calling on the name of a dog! Rough and rude "Froggies" might. But not nice ones. It was an expression that was not used in the best circles.

So when Monsieur Charpentier uttered those startling words at the top of his voice it was clear unto all hearers that something of a very surprising and disagreeable nature had happened to Mossoo!

It had!

A moment before the French master had been sitting at his study table, perusing a letter from his native land. The study window was wide open, letting in the spring breeze and the sunshine of May.

Unfortunately, it had let in something else much less agreeable. Something had whizzed in suddenly at that open window. Mossoo did not see it coming,

so swiftly did it come. He did not know that it was on its way till it landed. Then he knew.

It was a paper bag of flour! And it landed upside-down on the top of the French master's head, as he bent over his letter.

Flour inundated Monsieur Charpentier.

Hence his fearful yell.

He leaped to his feet, streaming flour. He spluttered. He gasped. He gurgled. He roared.

"Nom d'un nom d'un chien!"

This was worse than before! "Name of a dog" is expressive in French! But "name of a name of a dog" was really awful! Obviously, Monsieur Charpentier had forgotten himself! But a hapless gentleman with flour in his eyes and nose and hair and ears, might, perhaps, be excused for forgetting everything but the flour!

There was a sound of rapid running feet in the quad. Whoever had hurled that bag of flour in at the study window was losing no time in departing for parts unknown. But Mossoo had no eyes for that unknown person, no ears to hear him. Eyes and ears were thick with flour. Whoever it was, he vanished unseen. Mossoo wrestled with flour.

In Masters' Passage, outside the study, a dozen fellows who heard Mossoo's frantic yells looked at one another. They were all Remove fellows, and they all had written papers in their hands. There had been a French class in the Remove that afternoon. Mossoo had been less patient than usual. The result was an extraordinary crop of impositions.

Harry Wharton & Co. were all there. Billy Bunter was there. Other fellows were there. Some of them had been ragging in the French class. Some hadn't! But they all had lines. When

Mossoo got excited in class his wrath, like the rain and the hail, fell alike on the just and the unjust! Bob Cherry had stamped on the floor. Harry Wharton had sought to restrain his happy exuberance. Both had got lines!

Quite an army of Removites were marching on the French master's study, with hundreds of lines from that great poem the "Henriade" ready to show up. But they stopped in sheer amazement.

"That's Mossoo!" ejaculated Harry Wharton.

"Sort of sounds like him!" agreed Bob Cherry.

"What on earth——" exclaimed Frank Nugent.

"Something's happened——"

"The happenfulness must have been terrific!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Listen!" breathed Johnny Bull.

Strange, wild sounds came from the study. Nothing more was heard of the name of a dog! Only the first moment of horror could have drawn that expression from so polite a gentleman as Monsieur Charpentier. He was still going strong—but not quite so strong.

"Urrgh! Mon Dieu! Vat is zat? Urrgh! Quelque coquin—urrgh! Ciel! La farine! De la farine! Urrrgh!"

"Farine means flour!" said Nugent. "What the thump is he doing with flour in his study?"

"Goodness knows!"

"I say, you fellows, I saw Smithy with a bag of flour!" squeaked Billy Bunter.

"I say——"

"Isn't Smithy here?" asked Wharton, glancing round. "He had lines, like the rest of us."

"Not here!" said Bob, with a grin. The Bounder of Greyfriars was not among the army of fellows with lines. Really he ought to have been, for he



had been the worst ragger in the French class, and had bagged twice as many lines as the rest.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up, Bunter."

"But I say, I saw Smithy—"

"Keep it dark if you did! We'd better see what's happened to Mossoo," said Harry Wharton, and he knocked on the French master's door. Whatever had happened, it was time for the juniors to take in their lines. And they were undoubtedly curious to ascertain the cause of that sudden and amazing explosion of yells, gurgles, and choking gasps in Monsieur Charpentier's study. Wharton opened the door.

"Our lines, sir!" he said. "We—why—what— Oh, my only hat!" He gazed at the French master dumb-founded.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Oh crumbs!" gurgled Peter Todd.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was an amazing spectacle! Floury from head to foot, Mossoo stood gasping and gurgling and guggling, with a bag of flour perched like a top-hat on his head. He looked like a hill of flour. There was little of him to be seen, except flour. He was of the flour, floury!

"Mossoo!" gasped Wharton.

"Ciel! I am smozzered viz la farine—flour! Regardez! Smozzered!" gurgled Monsieur Charpentier, removing the bag of flour from his head. "Who shall do zis? Is it you, Wharton?"

Harry Wharton jumped.

"Oh, no! No, fear, sir! We heard you from the passage—"

"He, he, he!" squeaked Billy Bunter, blinking in through his big spectacles. "Oh crikey! Flour! He, he, he!"

Mossoo dabbed flour from his eyes, and glared. Usually good-tempered, he had been rather cross that day. Now he was crosser! He was fearfully cross.

"You, Buntair!" he panted. "It vas you, Buntair!"

"Oh lor'! No!" gasped Bunter in alarm. "No jolly fear, sir!"

"Vy for you laff, zen?" howled Mossoo.

"Because you look so funny in all that flour, sir—I—I—I mean, you—you don't look funny at all—"

"Regardez! Look at me!" shrieked Monsieur Charpentier. "Somevun do zis because I give him lines! Somevun zrow zat bag of flour in at ze vindow! Ciel! Vat vun of you garcons do zis vicked zing?"

"Nobody here, sir," said Bob Cherry. "We were all in the passage coming to the study when we heard—"

Monsieur Charpentier rushed to the open window, scattering clouds of flour as he went. Some of the juniors sneezed. The atmosphere of the study was thick with flour. The French master glared from the window. In the distance the tall figure of Mr. Smedley, the master of the Remove, was to be seen. Nobody else was in sight at the moment. The delinquent had vanished whole minutes ago.

The floury Frenchman turned from the window. He breathed wrath and flour. Wrath intensified at the sight of a crowd of grinning faces in his study. There was, so far as Henri Adolphe Charpentier could see, nothing to grin at! He glared at the Removites almost ferociously, and they controlled their merriment.

"Our lines, sir!" said Bob, laying his impot on the table, and backing to the door. Bob felt that he had to get away and laugh, or explode.

"Allez-vous-en!" spluttered the French master. "Go away viz you,

toute de suite! Bon Dieu! Go away! I cane ze garcon'zat laff!"

The juniors dropped their impots on the table, and backed out of the study. They were all anxious to go. They could not chortle in the presence of the floury Frenchman. And they badly wanted to chortle. They suppressed their feelings as they retreated down the passage. But when they reached the corner they could contain themselves no longer. And there was a roar.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Which merry sound, penetrating to the floury French master in his study, did not seem to afford him any comfort.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### Not for Bunter!

**B**UMP!

Smithy was running hard. Herbert Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, had

reason for hurrying. Not only did he want to get quickly out of sight from Masters' windows, but he had two or three powdery traces of flour on his clothes, of which he wished to get rid as soon as possible.

Cutting along to the nearest corner of the building, Smithy shot round that corner, and was out of sight from Mossoo's window almost in a twinkling. And George Wingate, of the Sixth Form, strolling along from the Sixth Form green, with his hands in the pockets of his flannel bags, turning over in his

**They call Vernon-Smith the Bounder, but he's not all bad, for at the risk of expulsion Vernon-Smith comes to the rescue of a Greyfriars master who is sorely up against it!**

mind the problem of the probable cost of certain necessary new nets, reached the corner of the path from one direction as Smithy turned it from the other.

Nobody was really to blame for the collision. It was just one of those unfortunate things that do happen sometimes.

Wingate, taken quite by surprise, let out a yell and sat down. The Bounder, reeling from the shock, staggered against the wall—yet even in that dizzy moment he contrived to keep round the corner, out of view if a floury face looked out of Monsieur Charpentier's window!

"What the dooce—" gasped the captain of Greyfriars, sitting on the gravel and staring at the junior, while he gasped for breath.

"Sorry, Wingate!" panted the Bounder.

"You clumsy young rascal!"

"I—I didn't see you—"

"Were you running with your eyes shut?" gasped Wingate. "What the thump do you mean by barging round a corner like a runaway horse?"

He staggered up. Vernon-Smith pulled himself together. Wingate was captain of the school and head prefect; it was no light matter to barge him headlong over and send him spinning. But a much more serious matter was on Smithy's mind—the flouring of Mossoo! He started to run again.

Wingate promptly grabbed him by the collar.

"Hold on, you young sweep! Where's the hurry?"

"I—I— A chap's waitin' for me!"

"Let him wait! I've a jolly good mind to walk you to my study and give

you six of the best!" growled Wingate. "Barging a Sixth Form man over! My hat!"

"I'm awfully sorry, Wingate!" said the Bounder meekly.

It was not like the most reckless fellow at Greyfriars School to be meek. Even to high-and-mighty prefects of the Sixth Form, Smithy was very often lacking in respect. But the scapegrace of the school had his reasons now. He was feverishly anxious to get clear.

His meekness disarmed the Greyfriars captain, always good-natured. He released the Bounder's collar.

"Well, don't do it again!" he rapped. "You've made my bags all dusty, you young ass, and I'm just going down to Courtfield. Is that flour, or what? What the dooce have you been doing with flour?"

Vernon-Smith shut his teeth hard. It was rather difficult to handle stuff like flour without retaining a few traces. That would not have mattered but for this unfortunate collision. Now it mattered a lot. The last thing Smithy desired to have noticed about him just then was flour!

But there it was! His hands were powdery white, there were specks of flour on his jacket, and some of them had been transferred to Wingate. The Sixth Form man took out a handkerchief to brush them off.

"What have you been up to?" he snapped.

"A—a fellow clucked some flour over me for a lark!" stammered the Bounder.

"Silly sort of lark!" grunted Wingate. "Well, cut off, and don't barge any more Sixth Form men over. You may get whopped next time."

The great man of the Sixth went on his way. Very soon he dismissed the incident from his mind as he walked down to the gates, once more meditating on the subject of cricket nets. But it was not easy for Herbert Vernon-Smith to dismiss it.

He reached a secluded spot, behind the elms at the end of the Sixth Form green, where he carefully brushed away every speck and trace of flour. No other eye was going to detect those signs of guilt on him. But even as he was so engaged he knew how useless it was.

Wingate had gone down to Courtfield. He would be back before call-over. And when he heard of what had happened to the French master, he was quite certain to guess why the Bounder had been charging round that corner with traces of flour on him!

Nothing could have been more unlucky for the Bounder, already in his headmaster's black books, and on the worst of terms with his Form-master; and liable to terrific trouble at home if he landed in serious trouble at school.

His face was set when he went back to the House at last. In the quadrangle he passed Mr. Smedley, the new master of the Remove. Smedley appeared to take no notice of him; but the Bounder noted that the "Creeper and Crawler's" eyes were on him in a sidelong way. He wondered whether the Remove beak had heard of the flour, and suspected him! The jape was so utterly reckless that suspicion was very likely to fall on Vernon-Smith, even without any evidence. Few fellows at Greyfriars had the nerve to buzz a bag of flour at a master's head—even a French master's.

Smedley did not speak, however, and the Bounder went into the House. A group of fellows inside were grinning and chatting—Hobson and Hoskins of the Shell, Temple, Dabney & Co. of the Fourth, and some of the Remove.



Hobson of the Shell hailed the Bounder as he passed.

"Heard, Smithy?"

"Heard what?" asked Vernon-Smith carelessly.

"Some bargee had floured Froggy!" chuckled Hobson. "Buzzed a bag of flour at him through his study window."

"You don't say so!"

"I jolly well do! Lots of fellows have seen him! He's gone to the Head to complain—white as a ghost!"

"I saw him!" chuckled Skinner. "He was floury, and using flowery language!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You know anythin' about it, Smithy?" grinned Temple of the Fourth.

The Bounder stared at him.

"First I've heard!" he answered.

"How should I know anythin' about it, ass?"

"Where were you when it happened?" grinned Temple.

"Find out!" snapped Vernon-Smith. And he scowled and tramped up the stairs, leaving the juniors laughing.

There was another group of fellows on the Remove landing. They all looked at Vernon-Smith as he came up. His lip curved in a sneer. He knew what was in their minds.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Smithy!" said Bob Cherry. "Been out of gates, Smithy?"

"Anywhere near Mossoo's study window?" grinned Squiff.

"No!"

"All the better for you if you haven't!" grunted Johnny Bull. "Bunter says he saw you with a bag of flour."

Vernon-Smith started.

"That's all right, Smithy—even Bunter won't sneak," said Harry Wharton. "But you must have been a frightful ass to do it!"

"Who says I did it?" snarled the Bounder.

"Oh, if you didn't, all right!" The captain of the Remove shrugged his shoulders. "Perhaps there was another fellow larking with a bag of flour. Sounds probable."

Tom Redwing was in the group of Removites on the landing, and his face was overcast. But he did not speak to Smithy. The Bounder had quarrelled with his chum—as he quarrelled with everyone, sooner or later. Redwing had, at long last, taken him at his word, and left him to go his own wilful way, to hunt for all the trouble he wanted. The trouble had not been long in accruing!

"Hobson says Mossoo has gone to the Head!" said Vernon-Smith. "Anybody know the result?"

"Anybody can guess, I think," answered Harry. "The fellow who chucked that bag of flour at Mossoo will be sacked if he's caught. Especially if he's a fellow who's already got the beaks' backs up."

Vernon-Smith gritted his teeth and tramped up the passage to Study No. 4. He tramped into his study, and banged the door shut behind him.

It was tea-time in the Remove. Since his "row" with Redwing, the latter never came to the study to tea; and the Bounder rather missed him, though nothing would have induced him to admit it. Generally he asked Skinner, or Snoop, or some other fellow to tea, not caring for a meal in solitude. On the present occasion he did not want company.

But though he did not want it, he was going to have it. A fat junior, sprawling in the study armchair, blinked at him through a pair of big spectacles as he entered. Becoming

aware of Billy Bunter's presence in the study, the Bounder gave him a look. In his present mood the Bounder's study was about as safe a place for the fat and fatuous Owl of the Remove as a lion's den. Bunter was rather in the position of Daniel of old. For once, however, it seemed that William George Bunter dared to be a Daniel. Undismayed by the Bounder's angry glare, he nodded coolly, and grinned a fat grin.

"Waiting for you to come in, old chap!" said Bunter breezily.

The Bounder stepped to a corner of the study, where a cricket bat stood.

"If you're not gone in two ticks——" he muttered.

"I'm staying to tea, old chap!"

"Are you?" said the Bounder grimly, as he picked up the bat.

"That is, if you ask me, of course," said Bunter calmly. "I say, Smithy, what did you do with that bag of flour? He, he, he!"

Vernon-Smith, stepping across to the armchair, with the bat in his hands, stopped dead.

"That what?" he repeated.

"He, he, he!" Bunter gave him a fat wink. "I'm not going to say anything, old fellow! I'm no sneak, I hope! Serve old Froggy right, if you ask me—giving a chap lines for nothing! All the same, you'd get sacked if the Head knew! Of course, I'm not going to tell him! He, he, he!"

"You fat rotter!" breathed Vernon-Smith.

"Oh, really, Smithy——"

Herbert Vernon-Smith made another stride towards the fat Owl of the Remove. He was powerfully tempted to handle the bat. Billy Bunter's fat grin faded away, and he blinked uneasily. The Bounder could not afford to quarrel with him, in the circumstances; but well he knew Smithy's reckless temper. It was one of Smithy's ways to act recklessly first and reflect on the disadvantages afterwards.

"I say, Smithy, chuck it!" exclaimed the Owl of the Remove. "I'm keeping it dark, old chap! Rely on me! Smedley would be jolly glad to hear of this! He's always trying to catch you out! He, he, he! I'm not going to tell Smedley, old bean! I say, what are we going to have for tea?"

The Bounder's grasp on the cane handle of the bat was almost convulsive.

"I say, Smithy, suppose Smedley had come along while you were heaving that bag of flour through Mossoo's window! He was in the quad somewhere! I say, he would like to hear about this! Not that I'm going to tell him! I wouldn't! Not about a pal like you, Smithy!"

"You spying fat scoundrel!"

"If you're going to call a fellow names, Vernon-Smith, I can jolly well say—— Whoop! Yooop! Yarooop!"

Bunter bounded out of the armchair and roared as the Bounder made a fierce lunge with the bat, his angry temper getting the better of his discretion.

"Take that, you podgy rotter! And that!"

Another lunge, and the Owl of the Remove leaped for the door.

"Beast!" he roared. "Yah! Oh crikey! Keep off! I ain't going to tell Smedley, you beast! Yaroooooop!"

Bunter got the door open, and bounded out. Another lunge of the bat caught him as he bounded, and he yelled frantically as he disappeared. There was tea in the Bounder's study soon afterwards, but not for Bunter.

## THE THIRD CHAPTER.

### Who Did It?

**H**ARRY WHARTON & CO. were at tea in Study No. 1 in the Remove.

All the Famous Five of Greyfriars had rather serious faces. They had chuckled over the floury state of Monsieur Charpentier—from the point of view of the onlooker, the episode had been rather funny. But it had its serious side—a very serious side—and that side was now, so to speak, uppermost.

Mossoo, floury and furious, had gone to the Head; and all the fellows knew what the Head would think of a member of his staff in such a state! It was certain that the comic side of the affair would be entirely lost on the Head! He was not likely to consider it funny in the very least. Since then Mr. Smedley, the master of the Remove, had been sent for to go to the headmaster's study.

Every minute now the Removites expected to hear that their Form-master was taking the matter up for strict investigation. And if the culprit's name came out the result was going to be awfully serious. Nobody wanted an expulsion in the Remove. But it was very doubtful whether Dr. Locke would let the guilty party off with a flogging.

"It's the sack if they get him!" remarked Bob Cherry, as he cracked his second egg. "You see, beaks don't look at these things as we do! Beaks have their own way of looking at things. The Head will call this an attack on a master—sort of assault and battery."

"Well, so it is!" said Johnny Bull.

"Well, yes, in a way!" admitted Bob. "The fact is, it was rather thick! Old Mossoo has been a bit of a tartar to-day, but smothering a man with flour is rather too much of a joke."

"The jokefulness was altogether too terrific!" agreed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "There is an esteemed and ridiculous limit."

"Smithy must have been potty!" said Nugent. "I suppose it was Smithy!"

"Not much doubt about that," said Harry Wharton. "I fancy Smithy's the only man at Greyfriars who would do such a thing. The fact is, it was a bit of hooliganism. Funny, if you like, but there's a limit, as Inky says. Smithy does things that are not done."

"And the beaks know it as well as we do!" remarked Bob. "I'll bet that Smedley goes for Smithy first thing."

"Well, he'd do that, anyhow, being down on Smithy, as he is," said Frank. "Smedley's been on Smithy's track ever since he came here in Quelch's place. But if Quelch was here he would think of Smithy at once! In fact, anybody would!"

"Still, they've got no proof!" said Harry. "That's one comfort! We don't want that ass Smithy sacked!"

"Smedley does!" said Frank. "He will be after this like a dog after a bone! Smithy used to say that Quelch would have been glad to see him bunked; but there's no doubt whatever that Smedley would."

"Well, he's asked for it!" grunted Johnny Bull. "He was ragging in the French class more than any other chap! Most of us got lines. Well, why can't Smithy take what's coming to him like any other chap? Mossoo was a bit of a blighter to-day, but it's all in the day's work—and as a rule he's a good little ass, and goes easy!"

Harry Wharton nodded. All the fellows in the French class that afternoon had been rather "shirty" about it. They were so accustomed to



good temper and unfailing patience from Monsieur Charpentier that bad temper and irritation on his part came as a surprise—and not a pleasant one! The Bouncer, however, was the only fellow who had sought to “get his own back” on the French master.

“The fact is, I fancy there’s something amiss with Mossoo,” said Harry. “He’s got something worrying him. When a man’s huffy, you never know what may be the reason—may have some family trouble or other. And he’s a good little ass as a rule. Smithy might have stood it like the rest of us.”

“I say, you fellows—”

best pal, just because the chap prevented him from breaking bounds after lights-out the other night! Now he’s rowed with me! I’ve a jolly good mind—”

“Where do you keep it?” asked Bob.

“Eh? Where do I keep what?”

“That jolly good mind! I never knew you had a mind at all.”

“Oh, don’t be a funny idiot! As the matter stands, I’ve missed tea in my own study, waiting for Smithy in Study No. 4. If you fellows like I’ll tea with you here.”

“We don’t!” said five voices in unison.

come up any minute, and a fellow never hears him coming. He—”

The captain of the Remove broke off sharply as the study door opened, without a knock, and Mr. Smedley stepped in.

“Oh crikey!” gasped Bunter.

The juniors rose to their feet with set faces. They had to treat their temporary Form-master with respect. But it was not in their power to feel any respect for him. One of the most irritating things about Smedley was that he never knocked at a door before entering. Mr. Quelch had always done so. Smedley had his reasons; he liked



Wharton entered Monsieur Charpentier's study and the army of Removites followed him. “Our lines, sir!” said Wharton. “We—why—what—oh, my only hat!” He gazed at the French master, dumbfounded. Floury from head to foot, Mossoo stood gasping and gurgling, with a bag of flour perched like a top-hat on his head. “Ciel!” he panted. “Who shall do zis? Is it you, Wharton?”

A fat face looked in at the door of Study No. 1.

“Oh, buzz off, Bunter!”

“I say, I’ve got a pain!” said Bunter. “That beast Smithy went for me with a cricket bat! Crashed it right on me! Might have knocked my brains out, for all he cared, the ruffian.”

“Couldn’t be done!” said Bob Cherry.

“Might have crashed on my head—”

“No brains there, old fat man!”

“Beast! I believe I’ve got several ribs broken!” hooted Bunter. “I’ve a jolly good mind to go to Smedley about it! And I was only telling the brute that I wasn’t going to say anything about seeing him with a bag of flour, you know, and asking him what there was for tea—”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at! I can tell you I’m fed-up with Smithy’s temper!” grunted Bunter. “He’s too jolly fond of rowing with chaps! He’s rowed with Redwing, his

“He, he, he!” cachinnated Billy Bunter, taking that unanimous reply as a joke. “Well, make room for a chap! I say, you fellows, it was Smithy all right—I saw him—”

“You see too much, Bunter,” said the captain of the Remove, “and the less you say about it the better. Smedley will be on the trail soon, and if you say a single word about seeing Smithy with a bag of flour you’ll get the ragging of your life.”

“The ragfulness will be terrific, my esteemed fat Bunter.”

“Of course, I’m not going to sneak,” said Bunter. “I say, got any more eggs about? I can hardly do with three. Leave some of that cake for me. I’m not going to tell the Creeper and Crawler about Smithy, of course. Still, banging a fellow with a cricket bat is rather thick. It would serve Smithy jolly well right if I told Smedley—”

“Dry up, fathead!” snapped Wharton. “The Creeper and Crawler may

to catch inadvertent words from the fellows in his Form. Wharton had little doubt that Smedley had heard himself referred to as the Creeper and Crawler as he opened the door. If so, it was a tip to him that listeners never hear any good of themselves.

“Wharton!” rapped the Form-master.

“Yes, sir!”

“You are aware, of course, of the outrageous occurrence in Monsieur Charpentier’s study?”

“Yes, sir!”

“There appears to be no doubt that the outrage was perpetrated by a Remove boy, after what I hear happened in the French class this afternoon,” said Mr. Smedley. “Some boy punished by Monsieur Charpentier has done this. Dr. Locke has, therefore, placed the matter in my hands. I understand, Wharton, that a number of boys were taking their lines to the French



master at the time of the occurrence—you among them."

"That is so, sir."

"Those boys, of course, are eliminated," said Mr. Smedley. "They were in the House, and, therefore, cannot have been near the window on the quadrangle. Kindly give me a list of the boys who were with you at that time, Wharton."

It was impossible to refuse, and Wharton took pencil and paper and made a list of a dozen names. The juniors stood in silence while Mr. Smedley read it out:

"Wharton, Nugent, Cherry, Bull, Hurree Singh, Bunter, Todd, Kipps, Russell, Ogilvy, Brown, Hazeldene." Smedley's eyes glinted. "These are not all the boys that received lines, however. I understand that a great many impositions were given out by the French master this afternoon."

"Some of the fellows hadn't done their lines in time, sir."

"Were they in their studies writing them?"

"Some of them, sir."

"But some were not?"

"Very likely, sir."

"Give me the name of any boy you know not to have been in his study."

Wharton looked the Remove master in the face.

"I never took any notice, sir, whether any fellow was in his study or not. I'm afraid I can't help you there."

"I require a plain answer, Wharton. This reckless act is in accordance with the reckless character of a certain boy in my Form. Where was Vernon-Smith at the time?"

"I can't say, sir."

"Answer me, yes or no, Wharton!"

Do you know where Vernon-Smith was?"

Wharton was able to form a pretty accurate guess of where Smithy was at the time of the "outrage." But guessing was not knowledge. Certainly he did not know.

"No," he answered.

Mr. Smedley gave him a look, and left the study. Billy Bunter breathed more freely when he was gone. He had been dreading a question from the Remove master. But he was in no danger. Knowing that Bunter was one of the juniors at the door of the French master, it did not occur to Smedley that the fat Owl knew anything of the matter. Bunter did not want to "sneak," especially as he knew what the result would be at the hands of the Removites afterwards.

"I say, you fellows, he's after Smithy!" gasped the fat Owl, when the door was shut again. "He jolly well knows it was Smithy, you know. I say, if he knew that I'd seen Smithy with a bag of flour—"

"Shut up, fathead!"

"I fancy he's going to nail Smithy," said Bunter. "It will be the sack for the Bounder this time. Well, I can't say I'm sorry—banging a fellow with a cricket bat, you know, when a fellow was only being pally. I say, is there any more cake?"

Bunter was left to deal with the cake on his own, the chums of the Remove going out into the passage to join the gathering crowd of Removites there. Mr. Smedley had gone to Study No. 4 to see the Bounder. Everybody knew why, and the general opinion was rather in agreement with Bunter's—that it was the "sack" for Smithy this time.

## THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

### No Evidence!

**H**ERBERT VERNON-SMITH scowled from the window of his study into the bright May sunshine in the quadrangle.

The Bounder was in his blackest mood.

He had played the "giddy ox" once more in his usual reckless way; and though he was not sorry for what he had done, he was extremely uneasy about the probable consequences.

All the Remove suspected, or rather knew, that he had "floured" Mossoo. That did not matter; nobody in the Lower Fourth would give him away. Even Bunter wouldn't, though Smithy realised that he might have been a little more discreet with Bunter in the circumstances. But it was his way to follow his headstrong temper first, and reflect afterwards.

It was the thought of Wingate of the Sixth that troubled him. The captain of Greyfriars was in Courtfield, but when he came back—

It was Wingate's duty as a prefect to discover a culprit. If he knew that the Bounder had pitched that bag of flour at Mossoo, he had to report what he knew. And could he fail to know, when he learned what had happened? There was little doubt.

"Fool!" said the Bounder, addressing himself.

It was all Mossoo's fault, of course. The little beast had cut up unexpectedly rusty in class. Lines had fallen like leaves in Vallombrosa; and Smithy's knuckles had been rapped with a pointer. Certainly he had asked for it, and more. That did not alter the fact that fellows were accustomed to "rag" in the French class, and to get off scot-free. Mossoo's outbreak of unexpected fierceness had been a surprise, and a most exasperating one, as if a poodle had suddenly turned into a ramping wolfhound. Smithy was not going to have his knuckles rapped without getting his own back, if he could help it.

Well, he had got his own back. He was not sorry for that. If only he hadn't run into Wingate getting away!

He turned from the window, and threw himself into a chair at the table. On the table lay a diamond pin. Only the wealthy and showy Bounder had such an article of jewellery in the Remove. Lord Mauleverer, who was rich beyond the dreams of avarice, never thought of wearing diamonds. Smithy's tastes were different.

Since he had been in his father's black books the Bounder had been kept rigidly short of money. But he had a good many valuable things, and in the Easter holidays he had gone so far as to sell off some of them to "raise the wind" for a holiday with Pon & Co., of Highcliffe. Having taken that step once, Smithy had taken it again since, and now he was thinking of taking it for a third time—hence his examination of the diamond pin.

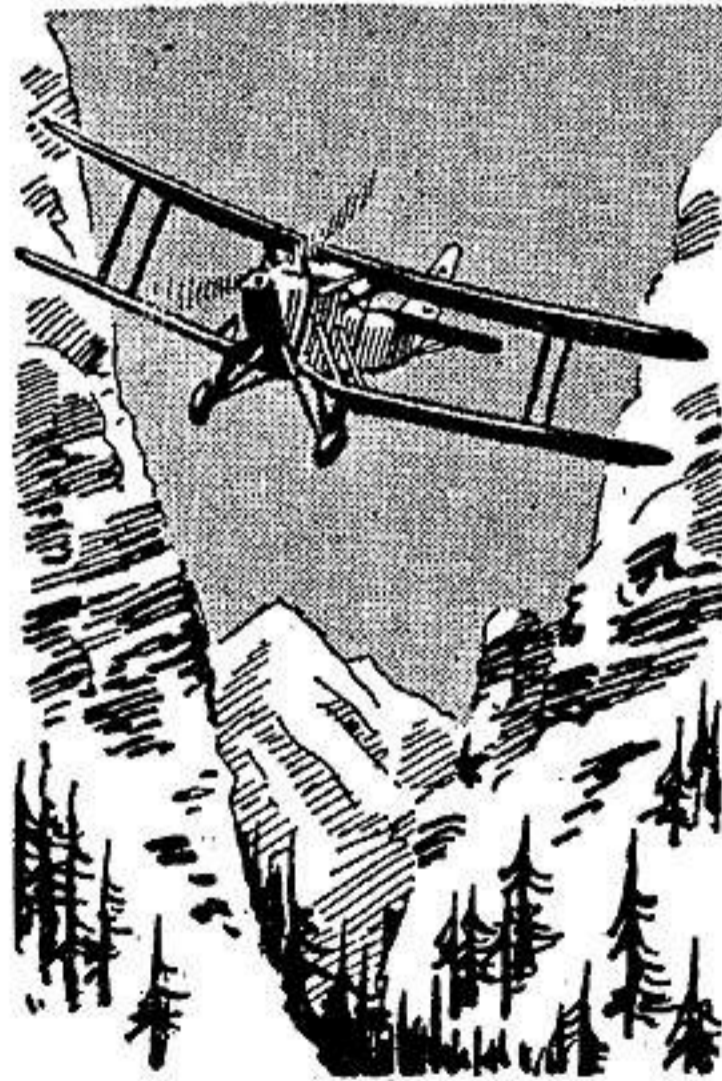
His father, whose indulgence had once been almost without limit, had paid a large sum for that diamond, simply because Smithy fancied it. What it was worth, and what it would fetch, probably differed widely; but Smithy had no doubt that Mr. Lazarus, at Courtfield, would give him fifty pounds for it if he would consent to buy it at all.

Mr. Vernon-Smith intended the shortness of cash to keep his son to the path of reform. No doubt it helped to that end. At the same time it irked the Bounder, and added to the restless dissatisfaction and discontent that

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devoured him. Fed-up to the back teeth with playing what he was pleased to call "Good Little Georgie," the Bounder was on the verge of another outbreak. Money was wanted for that purpose, and he wondered and doubted whether he dared part with that diamond.

Mr. Lazarus might decline to make such a deal with a schoolboy. But in Smithy's peculiar circle of acquaintances outside the school, there were several men who would have been glad enough to secure it at a lower price than an honest tradesman would have given. Smithy cared little about that; but if his father discovered that it was gone, he would want to know, and that might mean bad trouble.

Now, however, as he turned the blazing jewel over in his hands, Smithy was thinking less of his intended escapade than of the danger that had fallen on him through his reckless vengeance on Mossou. It was not much use making plans if he was going to be turned out of Greyfriars for what the beaks might choose to call an assault on a member of the staff.

Black and bitter thoughts were in his wayward mind; a black and bitter look on his face. It had been a term of trouble to him—mostly of his own making. Now it looked like coming to a crash! If Wingate guessed—

The door opened, without a knock. Mr. Smedley stepped in, and the Bounder started and stared at him with bitter, inimical eyes. The man was his enemy. Why, he did not know. It was not like the grim condemnation he had had from Mr. Quelch. It seemed more like a personal feud. He set his lips with angry annoyance, as he saw Smedley's sharp, hard eyes flash at once to the glittering diamond in his fingers.

"Vernon-Smith!"  
"Yes," said the Bounder sullenly. "Mr. Quelch used to knock at a fellow's door, sir, before comin' in."

"I do not want any impertinence from you, Vernon-Smith! I have reason to believe that it was you that flung a missile at the head of the French master this afternoon."

The Bounder smiled sarcastically. Until Wingate came back from Court-field nobody could know anything against the Bounder, whatever they might suspect. Smedley could have no "reason to believe" anything of the kind. He was trying to catch the suspected fellow tripping. Smithy was not easily to be caught.

"Indeed, sir!" he drawled.  
"It was you, Vernon-Smith!"  
"I, sir?" repeated the Bounder, with an air of surprise. "Oh, no, sir! I never heard of it till a Shell man told me!"

On the point of telling lies to the beaks the Bounder had few scruples. With Smedley he had none at all.

"You deny it, Vernon-Smith?"  
"Oh, certainly, sir!"  
"Where were you at the time?"  
"I can hardly say, sir, as I don't quite know when it happened," said the Bounder coolly.

Mr. Smedley set his lips. He had nothing to go upon, except suspicion, and a desire to "land" the scapegrace of the school. And, from his experience of the Bounder, he knew that it was not easy to catch him tripping. But he was going to do his best to land this on Vernon-Smith. In his own mind there was, at least, no doubt on the subject.

"The assault on the French master took place at half-past five, Vernon-Smith. Where were you at that time?"  
The Bounder appeared to reflect.

## RHYMES OF THE REMOVE.

No. 17.—Legal Aid.



Our Greyfriars Rhymester gives us a clever character study in verse of Peter Todd, the "legal man" of the Remove.

Peter is learned in the lore of the law,  
Or hopes to be so, by-and-by;  
He still wants some practice at wagging  
his jaw  
And getting a glint in his eye!  
He isn't yet ready to talk to a jury  
With gestures of passion and accents of  
fury,  
And wake up the Judge from his sleep!  
And so he reads volumes of mighty  
out-sizes  
On Torts and Malfesance and Laws of  
Demises!  
Ye gods! Doesn't that make you weep?

To keep up his interest—and for a joke—  
He's made out some laws for the Form;  
And now, when a fellow is bankrupt and  
broke,  
His creditors meet in the dorm!  
With Peter presiding, as Public Receiver,  
They call for the victim, a fellow named  
Trevor,  
And collar what cash he has found!  
They settle the job in a businesslike  
manner,  
Debts, fourteen and threepence, with  
assets, a tanner!  
He pays eightpence-ha'penny per  
pound!

The fags in their duties have Peter  
Todd's aid,  
He's made out a nice set of rules  
On "Laws of Acceptance Affecting the  
Trade  
Of Fagging in all Public Schools!"  
While working, no fag may indulge in a  
whistle  
Or else he is open to instant dismissal,  
Or "six," as the prefect may choose!  
No senior fellow, though ratty or  
"shirty,"  
May wallop his fag (under Sub-section  
Thirty),  
Unless he wants gum in his shoes!

Old Peter is anxious that schools should  
adopt  
The laws which he hopes soon to pass;  
He'd make out a case for a fellow who's  
copped  
Breaking bounds, or asleep during  
class!  
His "Act Giving Penalties for the  
Prevention  
Of Masters Awarding Illegal Detention"  
Would make the beaks careful, you bet!  
Unluckily, though, they refuse to  
acknowledge  
His right to make rules for the masters  
at college,  
And so Peter's plans are upset.

But Peter, of course, has Removites'  
support,  
For when Quelch roars: "You're a  
fool!"  
They'd like to bring actions against him  
at court  
And get him turfed out of the school,  
Or if they were merciful in their decision,  
They'd give him six months in the  
second division  
And fine him a dormitory feed!  
And Peter is keen, and would fly like an  
eagle  
To found his Scholastic Establishment  
Legal,  
So Quelch, you'd better take heed!!!

"I could hardly say to a minute, sir," he answered. "But I was in the gym at a quarter-past five, and I think I left it after about half an hour."

"Was anyone with you?"  
"More than a dozen fellows there, sir," said the Bounder calmly. "Bol-sover major and Dupont of my Form, I remember—Stewart of the Shell, and some Fifth Form men—Coker, Potter, and Greene—"

Mr. Smedley stopped him with a gesture. Nobody in the gym was likely to have noticed just when the Bounder left; and nobody, if he had noticed, was likely to give information to land a fellow for the "sack." The Bounder could prove that he had been in the gym, roughly, about the time in question; but to prove that he had left that spot in time to fling the bag of flour in at Mossou's window at half-past five was likely to be a difficult task for the Creeper and Crawler.

It was bitterly irritating to Smedley to remember that he had been in the quad, a distance from the spot. Had he only been within sight of Masters' Windows at the time! Still, if he had been, the "outrage" would not have occurred. Smithy was not quite so reckless as that.

Already Smedley had been asking questions, up and down and round about, but he had found no one who had seen the fellow with the flour-bag at the study window, or seen him running away afterwards—and he must have run.

The master of the Remove stood looking at Vernon-Smith in silence, with a glint in his eyes, not failing to note the sarcastic expression on Smithy's face. He was at a loss, and Smithy knew it. It dawned on him that the impudent young rascal was enjoying his discomfiture.

"I shall make further inquiries, Vernon-Smith!" he said at last.

"Yes, sir. I'm sure I hope you'll find the man, sir!" said the Bounder calmly. "It was a shocking thing for any fellow to do, wasn't it, sir?"

"The perpetrator, when found, will be expelled from Greyfriars, Vernon-Smith!" said Mr. Smedley, with bitter emphasis. "Dr. Locke has so informed me, and it only remains for me to report the name to him."

The Bounder winced—he could not help it. But he would not let the dismay in his heart show in his face.

"I'm sure the fellow deserves it, sir," he said meekly.

Mr. Smedley, with a defeated look, turned to the door. He was not going to get anything out of Vernon-Smith, that was clear. He left the study, and went down the passage to the stairs through a crowd of Remove fellows, who stood aside to let him pass. As he disappeared across the landing Bob Cherry winked at his friends. The black look on the Creeper and Crawler's face showed that he had not got his man.

"He hasn't nailed Smithy!" muttered Tom Redwing. "I—I suppose there isn't much doubt—"

"Precious little," said Harry Wharton. "But they've got to prove a thing right up to the hilt before they sack a man. Looks to me as if Smithy's going to keep clear."

And Redwing nodded, with a lighter heart, since he had seen Smedley go, alone, and with that black look on his hard face. He was no longer the Bounder's friend; but he seemed to be a good deal concerned about him, all the same.



## THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

## A Friend in Need!

**W**INGATE of the Sixth strolled in at the gates of Greyfriars School just as Gosling was coming down to close them.

He gave the old porter a cheery nod and walked on, glancing at a Remove junior as he passed him. Herbert Vernon-Smith of the Remove was loitering aimlessly about near the gates, with his hands in his pockets. The Greyfriars captain did not notice him specially; he had almost forgotten the incident of the afternoon. But the Bounder's eyes followed him as he walked towards the House, and he loitered in the same direction.

It was in Smithy's mind to make an appeal to Wingate; but he did not do so. Possibly the prefect had forgotten the occurrence—possibly he would not guess how the matter stood—there was a chance! In that case, it would not be judicious to remind him. And, good-natured as he was, Wingate was a whale on duty. Personal offences he could forgive and forget, with an easy kindness of heart that seemed altogether too easy-going to many other prefects of the Sixth. But if it was his duty to report a fellow, that was quite a different matter; and such an act as an attack on a master was not a thing he could fail to report, if he knew of it.

The Bounder, as he hung behind him on his way to the House, wondered dismally what the next few minutes were going to mean to him. His whole future depended on that. It was nothing less that he had risked by his unthinking and reckless action.

He saw Wingate meet his chum, Gwynne of the Sixth, and walk on to the House with him. He saw him give a start at something Gwynne said to him. What had Gwynne told him?

The Bounder could guess, for the Greyfriars captain glanced round, and his eyes fixed on Vernon-Smith.

Smithy's heart sank.

Wingate had learned already of the flour transaction. And he knew that Vernon-Smith was the guilty party. That one glance told as much.

Wingate and Gwynne went into the House. Vernon-Smith followed them in with dragging footsteps.

The game was up! Smedley, on his trail ever since he had taken Mr. Quelch's place as Remove master, had failed to catch him out. Now he had caught himself out! He had only himself to thank.

The two Sixth Form men parted in the House, Gwynne going to the Sixth Form studies, Wingate into Masters' Passage. Smithy, well aware of his destination there, ran after him. He touched the captain of Greyfriars on the arm, and Wingate glanced round at him.

"What do you want, Vernon-Smith?" he rapped.

"You're going to Mossoo?" panted Smithy.

"Yes."

"To tell him—"

"To report to him that a cheeky young scoundrel was running round the corner with flour on his clothes, just after what happened at his study window!" said Wingate sternly. "You'd better get ready to see the Head!"

"It's the sack!" muttered the Bounder huskily.

"Didn't you know that?"

There was no answer that the Bounder could make. He had known it perfectly

well, only he had hoped that he would not be found out.

In silence he watched Wingate go to the French master's study, tap at the door, and enter.

The door closed.

Vernon-Smith dragged himself away. His face was so pale, as he went up to the Remove passage that a number of fellows glanced at him curiously. In that passage Tom Redwing looked at him, and made a movement towards him—but the Bounder passed on without a sign, went into his study, and slammed the door. Skinner and Snoop, in the doorway of Study No. 11, exchanged a grin.

"Spot his chivvy, Snoopy?" murmured Skinner.

"What-ho!" grinned Snoop.

"They've nailed him!"

"He looked like it!"

"Well, if the man doesn't want to be bunked, why does he keep on asking for it?" argued Skinner. "A man who keeps on and on and on, is bound to get what he asks for sooner or later. What?"

"He's had a long run of luck!" remarked Snoop.

"Bound to break, sooner or later. Dash it all, what did he want to mop that flour over Froggy for? Can't Smithy stand a beak's tantrums, as well as the rest of us? Too jolly high and mighty!" said Skinner.

Careless of the comments of the Remove fellows, Herbert Vernon-Smith paced his study rather like a wild animal in a cage.

The game was up. That was the thought that hammered in his mind. What Smedley had failed to do he had done himself, in sheer unreflecting arrogance and ill-temper. What a fool he had been! Mossoo knew by this time who had floured him—and the Head had told Smedley that the offender would be expelled! What a fool—

The study door opened, and Tom Redwing came in, shutting the door after him. Vernon-Smith came to a stop, in his restless pacing, and fixed bitter eyes on him.

"What do you want? Can't you leave a fellow alone?" he snarled. "You've kept pretty clear of this study for a week—can't you keep clear now?"

Redwing looked at him steadily.

"You're found out, Smithy," he said quietly. "I could see that in your face as you passed me—so could other fellows, I think."

"No bizney of yours."

"None!" assented Redwing. "We're not friends now, and I'm as fed up with you, Smithy, as you can be with me. All the same, I'm going to give you a tip."

"Keep it!"

"Mossoo's been crusty the last day or two, and especially to-day!" went on Redwing, unheeding. "I fancy something's worrying him—bad news from home, perhaps. But—"

"Oh, he's hard up!" sneered the Bounder contemptuously. "His relations in France sponge on him, and I dare say he's been told in Common-room that it's time he had a new coat!"

"I was going to say—"

"You can save your breath."

"For your own sake, Smithy, listen! Mossoo's been crusty, as I said; but he's the best-natured man in the school—if you go to him, and do your best, there's a chance, at least, that he may go easy. It rests with him—the way he puts it to the Head—"

The Bounder gave a mocking, savage laugh.

"Likely! I'm to eat humble pie—and get nothin' for it! If you want to know, Wingate's spotted me and gone to him to report me. He will jump at the chance of getting me up before the Beak."

"You can't wonder at that what you did was a rotten, ruffianly, disrespectful trick. You jolly well deserve to be sacked for it, and you know it! But if Mossoo knew what you'd get from your father afterwards, I think he might give you a chance. That's what I came to say—and that's all."

With that, and without waiting for a reply, Tom Redwing left the study. The Bounder stood quite still.

Was there a chance? No master at Greyfriars could possibly have forgiven such an offence. But if any master could, or would, it was the kind-hearted little Frenchman. Was there a chance? Eating humble pie, humbling himself to a beak, was not in the Bounder's line. But—he thought of his father's cold, stern face if he arrived home, sacked from the school. Anything was better than facing that. Was there a chance?

If there was, he had no time to lose. Yet he hesitated long before he left the study and went downstairs again. But he went at last. Prout, the master of the Fifth, was standing at the corner of Masters' Studies, talking to Mr. Capper, as he came along. Prout, as usual, was booming.

"Unprecedented — unparalleled!" boomed Prout. "A reckless, ruffianly assault upon a colleague, Capper—unheard-of! Who can have done this?"

Vernon-Smith could guess the topic under discussion. Quietly he passed the two masters and went on to Monsieur Charpentier's study. He tapped at the door and opened it.

The French master was there alone; Wingate was gone. Monsieur Charpentier had cleaned up the flour, and was his usual clean and neat and dapper self again. But the expression on his face as he saw Vernon-Smith, showed that his anger at the occurrence, so far from having diminished, had improved like wine with keeping. He started to his feet as the Bounder came in, his eyes almost flaming.

"Smeet!" he ejaculated. "C'est vous! It was you zat zrow zat farine—zat flour—ovair my head! Mais oui! Je le sais! Maintenant, now you come viz me to ze headmaster!"

"If you please, sir—"

"Pas un mot! Venez!" snorted Monsieur Charpentier, and he strode towards the Bounder and dropped a hand on his shoulder. "Rascal! Coquin! Venez avec moi—come viz me—toute de suite."

Smithy had closed the door after entering. Monsieur Charpentier jerked him towards it with one hand, and reached for the door-handle with the other. The Bounder panted.

"For mercy's sake, sir, listen to me! Let me speak."

"On en a assez! Venez!"

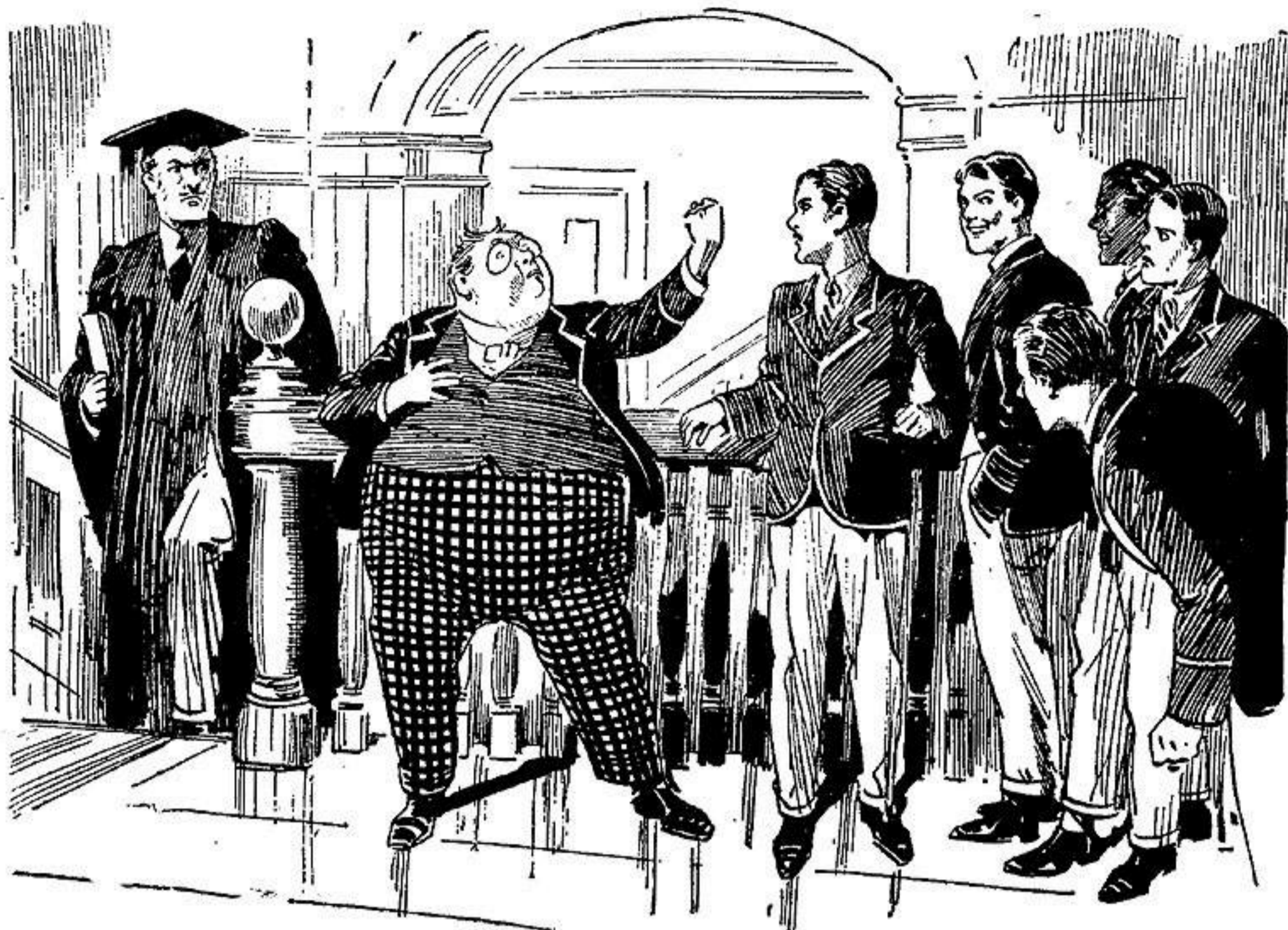
"Let me speak, sir! You can take me to the Head any time you like!"

Monsieur Charpentier paused. He released the Bounder's shoulder, and gave a shrug.

"Parlez, si vous voulez!" he said. "Speak if you so please, Smeet! But it make no difference. I take you to ze Head! But if you have somezing to say, say him! J'ecoute—I listen!"

The Bounder drew a deep, deep breath. There was no chance—none! But he would not give up his last hope.





"If Mossoo funks going for Smithy, it's pretty safe to rag the little beast!" said Bunter. "And I can jolly well tell you that if I get a whopping for not doing my impot, I shall rag him worse than Smithy did! I'll—"  
 "Bunter!" said a smooth, quiet voice. Mr. Smedley, the "Creeper and Crawler," was coming stealthily up the stairs.

## THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Luck!

**M**ONSIEUR CHARPENTIER sat down again.

His brows were knitted, and his eyes glinted under them. His mouth, under his little black moustache, was set in a hard line. He was going to give the wretched scapegrace a hearing; but it was not going to make any difference. That was very clearly indicated by his grim and bitter look. The Bounder knew it—Redwing was a fool to send him there. But he still hoped against hope.

"I own up, sir!" he said, in a low voice. "I—I suppose it's no use sayin' that I'm sorry—"

Monsieur Charpentier's lip curled.

"You are sorry because you are found out, n'est-ce-pas?" he asked. "Ozzervise, you would not be sorry, Smeet."

The Bounder coloured. It was true enough.

"If zat is all—"

"It's not all, sir! If you take me to the Head I shall be sacked," said Vernon-Smith desperately. "But that's not all! You may know, sir, that I came very near being expelled last term—"

"Mais oui!"

"My father was very wild with me, sir. He threatened to disinherit me if I should get expelled, after the Head gave me another chance to stay on."

"Zat is not my affair, Smeet."

"I want to tell you, sir! My father's in earnest about it. He's picked out a relation—a cousin of mine named Lucius Teggers, whom I've never seen, to adopt in my place, if I should be expelled. You've heard the name, sir—he's junior partner in Leggett & Teggers; the agency that sends out

tutors—Mr. Smedley was sent here from Leggett & Teggers!"

Monsieur Charpentier gesticulated.

"All zis is no affair of mine, Smeet!"

"I know, sir. I'm making an appeal to you!" muttered the Bounder. "You may think I deserve to be expelled for what I've done. But do you think that I deserve to be turned out by my father and ruined for life? If I go home from here expelled, my father will not even let me enter the house—he will send me away. He will have no more of me! He's said so—and he's as hard as a rock. That's what you will be sending me to, sir."

Monsieur Charpentier looked at him. The white tenseness in the Bounder's face showed how deeply in earnest he was. Every word he uttered was the truth, and the French master could see that easily enough. Monsieur Charpentier shifted uncomfortably in his seat.

"It is before zat you should zink of all zis, Smeet!" said the French master at length.

"I know, sir. But—if I'm sacked from here, I'm done for—not only at school, but at home. I've no right to ask you to let me off—but I'm asking you, because it's my only chance. It's not only the sack—I could stand that—but—"

The Bounder's voice trailed off. What was the use of it? All this, as the French master had pointed out, was not his affair.

But the misery in the hapless scapegrace's face touched the kind heart of the French gentleman.

He was deeply, bitterly angry and incensed. So far as the sack was concerned, he would not have taken pity on the reckless young rascal. But what

the Bounder would be going home to, was a more serious matter. For a long minute, there was silence.

"Zis is not right!" said Monsieur Charpentier, at last. "You zrow ze farine ovaire me—you make of me vun heap of flour—you go to attack me—zen you say, punish me not, it is too much! It is before, zat you should zink of all zis! Mais—mais—but—"

"A flogging, sir—I can stand it—anything—"

"If I take you to ze Head, Smeet, you are expel!" said Monsieur Charpentier. "I take you, or I take you not! And you smozzer me—"

He rose from the chair. There was indecision in his face. Smithy stood silent.

"Allons!" said Monsieur Charpentier, at last, making up his mind with a very evident effort. "Say no more! Assez! I do nozzing—I let you off—I try to forgive you, zough you are bad boy, ze baddest boy in zis school. I vill hold ze mout' and say nozzings."

Vernon-Smith looked at him. He felt almost giddy for a moment! Indeed, he could hardly believe his ears!

"Oh, sir!" he gasped, at last.

"Assez!" said Monsieur Charpentier. "No more! I forgive you, and zat is zis, as you say. I say nozzings—ze affair he is ovaire and done viz!"

He waved his hand to the door.

"Allez-vous-en!" he said.

Vernon-Smith moved to the door. He stopped there, and turned.

"I shan't forget this, sir!" he muttered.

Monsieur Charpentier shrugged his shoulders.

"I zink zat you forget, soon enoff!"



he answered. "You are one bad boy, Smeety! Nevair have I seen one badder! But I say nozzing, and I ask ze good Yingate to say nozzings! C'est tout! You go."

The Bounder went.

Almost like a fellow in a dream, he walked down the passage. Prout was still booming at the corner, Capper a more or less patient listener. As he turned out of the passage, Smithy passed his own Form-master. Smedley's eyes fixed on him, and the Bounder smiled. If only Smedley knew!

But all was safe now! It was Mossoo's affair, and if Mossoo chose to wash it out, that was that! Herbert Vernon-Smith went back to the Remove passage like a fellow walking on air.

He passed Redwing on the Remove landing. Tom's clouded face brightened as he saw him. He could read the Bounder's expression aright.

"Thanks!" said Smithy, as he passed him. And he went on, whistling, to his study.

He had escaped—by the skin of his teeth, as it were! Mossoo was a good little ass! He had let the young rascal off, without expecting even a ray of gratitude from the hardened Bounder.

But in that, Mossoo had hardly done Smithy justice. There was, for once, something very like gratitude in the Bounder's hard heart.

He resolved that at all events, there should be no more ragging in the French class that term, so far as he was concerned. Perhaps it was doubtful how long that resolve would last! And he sat down at his study table to write the lines that were due to the French master—overdue. And seldom or never had a French imposition, in the Remove, been written with such care.

When the first sense of relief had worn off, however, and that dreaded peril of the sack receded into the background, a feeling of discontent mingled with the Bounder's satisfaction.

If there was one thing that Smithy loathed it was eating humble pie; and he had done that, in full measure, in making his appeal to the French master. If there was another thing that he loathed, it was being under an obligation to anyone. Now he was under a deep, unending obligation to the French master—the man who had held his fate in the hollow of his hand, and spared him. To repay that obligation seemed impossible, eager as he would have been to square the account. He could behave himself in the French class—cease to rag and play practical jokes on Froggy—but that would not set the balance right. He had asked a favour, and received it, and it was irksome to the arrogant Bounder to think of it.

So when his lines from the Henriade were written out, with all the accents put in carefully, it was not in a happy mood that Smithy went down to Mossoo's study again.

His escape from the sack, from disinheritance by an angry father, counted before everything it was true, but he was dissatisfied and discontented.

He tapped lightly at Monsieur Charpentier's door and opened it.

As he looked in he did not see the French master, and supposed for a moment that Mossoo had stepped out of the study, leaving the light burning.

The next moment he saw the little French gentleman.

Monsieur Charpentier was sitting in his armchair his back partly turned towards the door, and evidently he had not seen it open, or heard the tap.

A letter was in his hand, which he had

been reading, and the Bounder's quick eyes noted that there were traces of flour on the letter. No doubt Mossoo had been reading it at the time of the outrage.

But what made Vernon-Smith stop dead, staring, was the fact that a tear was trickling down Mossoo's nose!

He stared blankly.

Monsieur Charpentier did not stir. He was deep in troubled thought, and did not see the junior standing at the door, or know that he was there. As Smithy stood, hardly knowing what to do, the French master murmured to himself:

"Mon Dieu! Helas, le pauvre petit Henri! Helas!"

The tear, trickling off the end of his nose, dropped on the letter in his hand! Still he did not look round.

Vernon-Smith stepped back quietly, and, as quietly, drew the door shut. With a tact he did not always display, the Bounder decided to come along later with his lines. Obviously it would hurt and humiliate poor Mossoo to know that a junior had seen him in that state of distress.

There was a thoughtful expression on Vernon-Smith's face, as he went quietly away, his lines still in his hand. And there was shame in his heart. He hardly needed telling now why Monsieur Charpentier had been so crusty and irritable that day. He had had some bad news from home in that letter, and it had upset his rather sensitive nervous system. And it was while he was reading that bad news, whatever it was, over again, that the hot-headed and revengeful Bounder had pitched that bag of flour at him through his study window in the afternoon. The Bounder's face flushed as he realised it. For once, the Bounder of Greyfriars was thoroughly ashamed of himself—which did not make him feel comfortable, but which was probably very good for him!

## THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

### Smedley's Way!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

"Done your lines, Bunter?"

"Eh! No!"

"Go and do them!" suggested Harry Wharton.

"Rats! I say, you fellows——"

"Give us a rest!"

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"We're talking cricket," grunted Johnny Bull. "Shut up!"

"You're always talking some rot!" said Bunter. "I say, you fellows, this is rather more important than cricket."

It was the following day and the Famous Five of the Remove were leaning in a row on the banisters of the Remove landing, discussing the approaching cricket fixture with St. Jim's. Five pairs of eyes glared at Bunter. In the opinion of the chums of the Remove, there was nothing in the universe, just then, more important than cricket—especially Remove matches.

"You benighted ass!" said Bob Cherry.

"You terrific fathead!" said Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

"You blithering owl!" said Frank Nugent.

"Oh, really, you fellows——"

"Shut up Bunter!" said the captain of the Remove. "Look here, you men, from what I hear, Tom Merry and his team are going great guns——"

"Will you chuck that silly gabble and listen to a fellow?" exclaimed Bunter impatiently. "Blow cricket! Bless Tom Merry! Bother cricket! For goodness'

sake shut up a minute and listen! I say, I haven't done the lines Mossoo gave me yesterday, and the little beast has doubled them. You know, I took in fifty yesterday when we all went to the study—and what do you think? The rotten little brute makes out that he gave me two hundred."

"So he did!"

"Well, I don't care whether he did or not! He never does remember a fellow's lines," said Bunter hotly. "What's he beginning it now for, I'd like to know? Ill-tempered little beast! Skinner says he's shirty because his relations in France are dunning him for money——"

"I'll kick Skinner next time I see him."

"Well, it's pretty well known that most of his salary goes home," said Bunter. "That's why he wears that frowsy old coat. And look at his boots!"

"I think I'd better kick you, as well as Skinner."

"Oh, don't play the goat!" said Bunter irritably. "As the matter stands, the cheeky little beast makes out that I ought to have done another hundred and fifty lines of that putrid Henriade yesterday, and he's doubled them, and that lands me with three hundred lines—in French, mind you! Of course, a fellow can't do them."

"Then a fellow will get licked, and serve a fellow jolly well right!" said Bob Cherry. "And now give your chin a rest, and us, too!"

"Well, if I'm reported to Smedley and whopped, I'll make the little beast sit up for it!" said Bunter darkly. "Smithy's got quite clear, after mopping that bag of flour over his napper. He's jolly well afraid to go for him, that's what it amounts to."

"He doesn't know Smithy did it, if Smithy did," said Wharton.

"He jolly well does," retorted Bunter, "because I heard Wingate speaking to Smithy about it this morning."

"What's Wingate got to do with it?"

"He found Smithy out somehow, and reported him to Mossoo. He told Smithy he expected him to be sacked for it, and that if he had any decency he would be grateful to Mossoo for letting him off."

"My only hat!" The Famous Five forgot even cricket for a moment in their interest and surprise at this news.

"Mean to say, Mossoo knows it was Smithy, and hasn't taken him to the Head?" exclaimed Bob.

"Just that," answered Bunter; "and it can only mean that he funks it! He's afraid of being ragged worse than ever if he got a fellow bunked—see?"

"Fathead!" said Harry Wharton. "If he got a fellow bunked for ragging, there wouldn't be much more ragging for a jolly long time, I fancy. Blessed if I know why he's let Smithy off. Must be the kindest-hearted beak that ever beaked!"

"He's a good little ass!" said Bob. "Dash it all, I should think even Smithy would be decent to him, after this!"

"Oh, rot!" said Bunter. "I expect it was funk. Well, if he's afraid of going for Smithy, it's pretty safe to rag the little beast! And I can jolly well tell you that if I get a whopping for not doing my impot I shall jolly well rag him worse than Smithy did. I'll——"

"Bunter!" said a smooth quiet voice.

The juniors spun round, to see Mr. Smedley, the master of the Remove, step from the stairs to the landing.

They gave him grim looks. Not one of them had heard him



coming up the Remove staircase. The Creeper and Crawler was seldom heard.

That, coming stealthily up the stairs, he had overheard all that the juniors were saying on the landing was certain. Only too well they knew the ways of the Creeper and Crawler.

He took no notice of the Famous Five. His eyes were on Billy Bunter, who was goggling at him in alarm.

"Oh, yes, sir!" gasped Bunter. "Monsieur Charpentier has reported to me that you have not written your lines, Bunter."

"Oh, the beast!" gasped Bunter. "What?"

"I—I—I mean I—I'm just going to do them, sir. I—I was just telling these chaps that—that I'm just going to wire in like—like anything!" groaned Bunter. "I—I'm rather keen on lines, sir, especially in French! I—I'll go and do them now, sir!"

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

"Oh heavens!" Mr. Smedley went down the stairs again, followed by the hapless fat Owl. Harry Wharton & Co. looked at one another.

"The sneaking rotter!" murmured Bob.

"Listening again!" grunted Johnny Bull. "My hat! I wish the Head would catch him at it some day! He would soon be sent back to Leggett & Teggers!"

"He couldn't send for Bunter—had to come up after him on tiptoe!" said Frank Nugent. "He likes an excuse for barging in, and catching what fellows may be saying. I say, he must have heard all that Bunter was saying about Smithy!"

"Must have," agreed Harry Wharton. "Luckily, that won't hurt Smithy now, as Mossoo's let him off. It rests with Mossoo, not Smedley."

Mr. Smedley, as he went down to his study, was thinking that he had a good deal of luck! His creeping and crawling methods seemed to have paid, at last! He had learned that Smithy was guilty of the flour-bag outrage, though, at the same time, that the French master had unaccountably let him off punishment for the same. That, however, was not going to rest where it was. Mr. Smedley was in a state of satisfaction as he went into his study—a feeling not at all shared by Bunter, as he followed him in.

The temporary master of the Remove picked up a cane from the table.

"Bend over that chair, Bunter!"

"I—I say, sir——" groaned Bunter.

"Do not keep me waiting!"

"Oh heavens!"

Bunter bent over the chair. To his surprise, he received only a flick. But a flick was enough to draw a fearful yell from Billy Bunter.

"Yaroooh!"

"You may go," said Mr. Smedley, throwing down the cane. "Shut the door after you, Bunter—go at once!"

Bunter rolled out of the study, wriggling, but wondering at his good luck. Smedley had a heavy hand with a cane when he was in a bad temper, which was often. Apparently, he was in a good temper now, and Bunter had got off very cheaply.

In point of fact, Mr. Smedley did not care two straws whether Bunter had done his lines for the French master or not, and was only anxious to be rid of him while he reflected on what he had just discovered and laid his plans accordingly. Lucius Teggers—alias

Smedley—was at Greyfriars School to see Herbert Vernon-Smith sacked, if he could.

In flouring the French master the previous day, Smithy had asked for the "sack" that Lucius was so keen to see him receive—and all would have been well, but for the action of the French master in letting him off. Smedley, as he paced his study, with his brows wrinkled, was thinking the matter out—thinking hard. Monsieur Charpentier, who had so inexplicably let the matter drop, had to be made to take it up again and push it to its rigorous conclusion. And the only question was how—the question that Mr. Smedley was now thinking out with cold and ruthless determination.

OUR JOKE EDITOR

CHUCKLED,

now it's your turn to laugh at the following storyette which has earned for: R. H. Cowell, of 9, Colville Road, Leytonstone, E.11, one of this week's

USEFUL POCKET KNIVES!



First Burglar: "If I can pick this lock, we can lay our hands on tenthousand pounds!"

Second Burglar: "That's good! But just go easy with the blade of my penknife!"

Look lively with your efforts, chums. You raise the laugh, and I'll supply the prize!

All efforts to be sent to: "Limericks and Jokes" Editor, c/o MAGNET, 5, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.4 (Comp.).

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Skinner in a Fix!

"WHAT'S that game?" asked Snoop.

"New sort of gymnastics?" asked Stott.

Harold Skinner, of the Remove, scowled at his friends.

He was wriggling weirdly as he joined them in the quadrangle. It was not a game, and it was not gymnastics. Skinner had been "whopped."

"The little beast!" said Skinner.

"Which and who?" asked Snoop.

"That little blighter Mossoo! He's reported to Smedley all the fellows who haven't done their lines! I've had six!"

And Skinner wriggled painfully.

Skinner had not been so lucky as Bunter. He had come first! Smedley had given Skinner his "six" before

going up to the Remove to call Bunter. He had laid them on with his usual vim.

"The rotten little brute!" said Skinner. "He never reports a chap for a whopping! Starting a new stunt, it seems. Smedley's whopped me and gone looking for Bunter. And from what I've heard, the little beast let Smithy off, after finding out that it was Smithy that floured him. Bunter thinks he funks getting a man bunked for ragging, and it jolly well looks like it. Well, he's going to get some more."

"Don't you try chucking flour-bags in at his window!" grinned Snoop. "You mayn't be so lucky as Smithy if he spots you."

"He ain't in his study now," said Stott. "I passed him under the elms a little while ago talking to himself and waving his paws about. I fancy old Froggy's got something on his mind."

"Not in his study!" repeated Skinner.

"Sure?"

"Quite! I say, where are you going?"

"Oh, nowhere in particular!"

Skinner went into the House again, leaving Snoop and Stott grinning. They could guess where Skinner was going, after ascertaining so particularly that Mossoo was not in his study.

Harold Skinner was feeling sore and savage. And having already heard what Bunter had to tell on the subject, he rather shared the fat Owl's belief that Mossoo funk'd getting a man sacked for ragging. That seemed to Skinner, as it did to Bunter, the only explanation of Mossoo's forgiveness of the fellow who had floured him. It was a rather encouraging belief, to a fellow who was bent on "getting his own back" for a whopping! Still, Skinner was very cautious.

He strolled with a careless air towards Masters' Studies. As he entered the passage he met Billy Bunter coming away from Mr. Smedley's study.

"Licked?" asked Skinner.

"Just a flick," answered the Owl of the Remove. "I thought it was going to be swipes, and it was just a little flick. I say, that beast Smedley seems to be in a good temper for once. I wonder why?"

"He wasn't when he whopped me, a quarter of an hour ago!" growled Skinner.

He wriggled painfully.

"He, he, he!" came from Bunter.

Having got off so cheaply himself, the fat Owl seemed to find something entertaining in Skinner's painful wriggle.

Skinner refrained from kicking him; he did not want any beaks to look out of their studies. Bunter went on his way, grinning, and Skinner walked on rather quickly towards the French master's study.

He tapped, and opened the door.

Had Mossoo come in, Skinner was prepared to explain that he had come to say that he was very sorry he had not done his lines. But Mossoo was not there, and Skinner slipped quickly in and closed the door after him.

Keeping screened by the curtains at the window, he looked out into the quad, bright in the May sunshine. In the distance, walking under the elms, was a little, dapper figure, moving with irregular jerks. It was Mossoo—at a safe distance!

Skinner felt he had plenty of time.

He proceeded to make the best use of it.

His first proceeding was to take the inkpot from the table and pour its contents into the table drawer over the



papers therein. This seemed to Skinner quite a good beginning.

It was only the first step—and he intended to take a good many more similar steps! As it happened, however, he did not. For as he replaced the empty inkpot on the table, there was a tap at the study door on the outside. Skinner jumped.

Mossoo was far enough away. But some other beak, evidently, was coming to see Mossoo in his study! That was an occurrence that even the astute Skinner could not have guarded against.

Skinner was quick on the uptake. He was a fellow that always had his wits about him. Even as the tap sounded at the door, he ducked under the study table and vanished.

A moment later the door opened. "Monsieur Charpentier!" It was Mr. Smedley's voice.

Skinner was thankful that he had ducked out of sight. Hardly twenty minutes ago Smedley had whopped him with a heavy hand. Skinner did not want any more.

As the French master was not present, he expected the man to go. One glance should have shown Smedley that Mossoo was not there.

He heard an impatient exclamation. Smedley, seeing that the French master was not present, seemed annoyed.

For a moment or two the Remove master stood in the doorway. Then he came into the study.

Skinner hardly breathed. Smedley crossed to the window, which was open on the quad. He looked out, and Skinner heard him call to a fellow in the quad.

"Coker!"  
"Eh—what?"  
Coker of the Fifth Form stared round as his name was called from a master's study window.

"Do you know whether Monsieur Charpentier is in the quadrangle, Coker?"

"Oh, yes! I saw him a few minutes ago, sir."

"Please tell him that I should be glad to speak to him when he comes in."

Coker of the Fifth stared at Mr. Smedley. As he said afterwards to Potter and Greene, he wondered where the blighter got the nerve from to send a Fifth Form man on messages like a dashed fag in the dashed Second or the dashed Third. Having stared and grunted, Coker of the Fifth stalked away across the quad to carry that message.

Mr. Smedley, perhaps ignorant of the fact that he had offended the dignity of Horace Coker of the Fifth Form, or perhaps careless of it, continued to stand at the window for some minutes. Then he turned round, and stepped towards an armchair and sat down.

Skinner, under the table, could have groaned with dismay. The brute was evidently going to wait there till Froggy came in. That did not matter, so long as he did not discover Skinner. But if he happened to drop anything and stoop for it, he would infallibly perceive the junior crouching under the study table. If he stooped to stir the fire, and happened to glance round—

Fortunately for Skinner, Mr. Smedley did not. He remained in blissful ignorance that a member of his Form was in the room with him.

It was only about five minutes before Monsieur Charpentier's quick, jerky steps were heard coming up the passage to the study.

The dapper little gentleman came in, and Mr. Smedley rose to his feet at

once. He looked rather curiously at Mossoo's face, clouded with trouble. Poor Mossoo was no adept at concealing his feelings. Whatever was on his mind was generally "writ large" on his face. Now there was trouble on his mind, and it was reflected in his speaking countenance.

Fellows of Skinner's kidney made a good many jokes about the French master's poverty, and his old coat, and the fact that it was hardly a secret that most of his cash went across the Channel to support a rather large family of nephews and nieces. They saw something comic in the little gentleman pinching and economising to provide for the needs of others.

Even in Masters' Common-room comments on Mossoo were not always favourable. Members of Dr. Locke's staff were paid good salaries. Prout, the master of the Fifth, had asked Capper, the Fourth Form beak, whether the man really fancied that that coat would last him another term. Capper agreed that certain appearances were expected in certain positions.

Mr. Smedley had not been long at Greyfriars, but he had heard all the cackle of the Common-room. As he looked at the little French gentleman's worried face, he wondered contemptuously for a moment whether it was hard-upness that was worrying him.

Mossoo, always polite, bowed to him with his dancing-master grace.

"I regret tat I vas not viz me ven you come to see me," he said, closing the door. "Please to sit down, monsieur."

Mr. Smedley sat down again, and the French master took another chair. He sat down, hardly a yard from the wretched Skinner.

"I have called to speak to you, sir, about the ruffianly outrage that occurred in this study yesterday," said Mr. Smedley. "A boy of my Form—"

"Mais oui, but zat is all right!" said Monsieur Charpentier. "He is ovair and done viz."

"I fear, sir, that, as the boy's Form-master, I cannot agree to that," said Mr. Smedley. "From what I learn"—he did not state how he had learned it—"from what I learn, sir, the boy who threw the bag of flour over you was Vernon-Smith."

"Vrai!" said Monsieur Charpentier. "But zat is all right! He have come to me; he say he is sorry, and he is let on."

"Let on?" repeated Mr. Smedley, puzzled for a moment. "Oh, you mean that he is let off?"

"C'est comme ca! Oui! Zat is all finish!"

"May I ask, Monsieur Charpentier, why you decided to pardon a boy who was guilty of so shocking an outrage?"

The French master paused before replying.

"I have ze reason," he said at last. "He is one verree bad boy, ze baddest of all ze boys in zis ecole! But I forgive him, because if he vat you call expel, he shall be in verree bad trouble chez son pere—viz his fazzer."

Mr. Smedley's eyes glittered. For the same reason that he desired to see the Bounder sacked, Mossoo had pardoned him!

"I can hardly consent to this, Monsieur Charpentier," he said. "As the boy's Form-master, I desire to see justice done. A boy of my Form has committed an act for which he deserves to be expelled from Greyfriars. I desire the matter to be placed before the headmaster for judgment."

"Je comprends—I understand you, sir. But I have tell ze boy zat he is

pardon, and zat is zis," said Mossoo, no doubt meaning that that was that. "Ze affair, he is finish."

Smedley compressed his lips.

"I have my duty to do, sir, as master of the Remove," he said. "I am bound to place this matter before Dr. Locke, and I shall expect you, sir, to leave it in his hands for decision."

"Non, non!"

"I have a right to insist, sir."  
"Pas du tout!" Monsieur Charpentier was a gentle creature, but he had plenty of spirit, and there was a domineering tone in Smedley's voice that he did not like at all. "I have said zat he is finish! Am I not ze partay zat is injure? Sans doute! I go not to ze Head!"

"You can scarcely avoid doing so, sir, if I report the matter, and Dr. Locke calls upon you to state the facts."

Mossoo's face set.

"Monsieur Smedley, I regret to displease you," he said. "But if I go to ze Head, I say zat I have pardon zat boy, and zat I have told him zat it is all finish! And I zink, sir, zat ze Head leave it at zat."

There was silence in the study. Mr. Smedley was feeling like a cat seeing a mouse escape. He knew that what Monsieur Charpentier stated was perfectly correct. Dr. Locke would have expelled Vernon-Smith for what he had done, without the slightest hesitation, had the matter come before him in the ordinary way. But if Monsieur Charpentier informed him that he had pardoned the boy for his conduct, the Head would naturally regard the matter as being at an end. He would be surprised—he might even be suspicious—if Mr. Smedley showed a keen determination to bring about an expulsion for an offence forgiven by the injured party. Certainly it was not possible to get the Bounder expelled for that "outrage" without the concurrence of the French master.

Mr. Smedley sat silent, savage, defeated. Monsieur Charpentier glanced at the door—as a hint that it was time for his visitor to go. And Skinner, under the study table, longed for both of them to go.

## THE NINTH CHAPTER.

### Mossoo is Insulted!

**M**R. SMEDLEY did not go. He sat with a knitted brow breathing hard. He was defeated; but there was too much at stake for Lucius Teggers to admit defeat if he could help it.

There was little of the milk of human kindness in his composition. He could not understand a man forgiving an offence, which he bitterly resented, simply because the alternative was an excessively severe punishment for the offender.

But there it was; and he had to make the best of it. Monsieur Charpentier might be a fool, an ass, a soft-hearted mooning old idiot, in Smedley's opinion. But there it was! He had to deal with the fact, and the fact was that Mossoo was not going to send Vernon-Smith home to face his father's wrath.

"Zat is all finish!" repeated Monsieur Charpentier, and again he glanced at the door.

"Possibly," said Mr. Smedley, in his smoothest tone, clearing the frown from his brow, "we can arrange this matter amicably, sir."

"Je ne comprends pas."

Mr. Smedley coughed. He was not a man of delicacy; but he realised that he





"Go!" said Monsieur Charpentier. "Allez-vous-en! Speak not to me again—I despise you, sair! I zink you one peeg!" Mr. Smedley clenched his hands and made a stride at the little Frenchman, towering over him. With a snort of scorn, Mossoo snapped his fingers in Smedley's face. Skinner, under the table, longed for both masters to leave.

was going to tread on delicate ground now.

"Let us speak of something else, sir," he said. "I have been sorry to observe that you seem somewhat depressed in spirits of late. I trust that you have received no bad news from your native country?"

"Helas!" said Monsieur Charpentier, falling into the trap at once. "But zat is too true! Zat is verree kind of you, Monsieur Smedley! Le pauvre petit Henri—ze poor little Henri—he is malade—vat you call, cel—"

"Eel?" repeated Mr. Smedley blankly. "Oh, ill!"

"Zat is so—eel—verree, verree eel!" said Mossoo. "Zat pauvre leetle Henri, mon neveu—la pauvre bon garçon!"

Mr. Smedley assured him of his sympathy.

That was enough for the effusive Mossoo—more than enough! All he wanted was a listener!

It was Mossoo's happy custom to wear his heart upon his sleeve! He would confide his most intimate affairs to anybody.

Members of the Common-room had to dodge and elude Mossoo's confidences.

They did not always succeed; and so they could not help knowing all about little Henri, and little Albert, and little Charlot, and little Henriette, and little Marie, and little Lucette.

Every beak at Greyfriars had seen all their photographs, not once, but many times.

Of late, Mossoo's worried looks had caused the other beaks to dodge his confidences more warily than ever. They did not want to listen to a tale of woe!

So Smedley's kind sympathy had the effect on Mossoo of the opening of the floodgates.

For a steady ten minutes Mossoo

talked almost without pausing for breath.

Smedley in the armchair, and Skinner under the table, learned that his nephew Henri had long been ill; an expensive illness that had sapped Mossoo's resources to breaking-point.

Now Mossoo had received a letter informing him that only an expensive nursing-home in the south of France could save little Henri.

Not less than five thousand francs was the sum required. And not only were Mossoo's resources exhausted, but an advance of salary obtained from the headmaster was exhausted, too.

Mossoo was in that sad state known as "stony." He could hardly "touch" the Head for another advance. He was "au desespoir"—in despair!

No wonder Smithy had seen that tear trickling down poor Mossoo's nose!

Mr. Smedley listened, with a sympathetic face, though without the slightest throb of sympathy in his heart.

His own opinion was that Mossoo was an old fool, who was being sponged on by a gang of poor relations.

But he made a rapid mental calculation that five thousand francs was rather under forty pounds.

It was worth forty pounds, or ten times that sum, or a hundred times that sum, to get Herbert Vernon-Smith sacked from Greyfriars.

The sack for Smithy would be followed by the adoption of Lucius Teggers as the heir of Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith! That meant millions!

Mr. Smedley thought that he saw his way clear now. He had guessed correctly the cause of the French master's troubled looks. He had learned how the matter stood! He had only to turn that matter to his own use, to serve his own ends.

"But, my dear sir," said Mr. Smedley, "in these circumstances, surely a loan from a friend—"

Mossoo made gestures.

"How can I ask? Helas, no, pas possible! In Angleterre I have no friend zat vill, vat you call, cough up, five zousand francs! Non!"

"I should be very happy to place that sum at your disposal, Monsieur Charpentier. It would be a pleasure to me."

Monsieur Charpentier stared at him. He had not seen very much of the new member of the staff; and what he had seen he had not liked.

Of all the beaks at Greyfriars, Mr. Smedley was about the last he would have expected to make a generous offer like this.

He was dumbfounded.

"Mais—mais—but—" he gasped at last. "You mean not zis, mon ami."

"I mean it, every word, sir!" said Mr. Smedley. "I should be only too happy to oblige you with such a loan."

"Mon Dieu! But—but it vill be long time—verree long time—avant—before zat I can pay him."

"That is immaterial."

"You lend me five zousand francs, and you wait long, long time for to pay!" gasped Monsieur Charpentier. He seemed unable to believe it; and Skinner, under the table, was still less able to do so. Skinner was wondering dizzily what the Creeper and Crawler's game was.

"Certainly!"

"Oh, sair!" Monsieur Charpentier jumped up, almost weeping with emotion. "Oh, sair! Zat is too good! Zat is too generous! Jamais, nevair can I zink of zis! Ah, pour cela, non, non!"

(Continued on page 16.)

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## The Bounder's Sacrifice!

(Continued from page 13.)

"My dear fellow, it is quite all right," said Mr. Smedley. "I will lend you the sum with pleasure—I insist upon it!"

"Sair, since you are so generous, so bon, j'accepte! Zat I embrace you so, generous one!" gasped Mossoo.

Mr. Smedley did not want to be embraced by the effusive French gentleman. He rose hastily from the chair and moved round the table.

"My dear sir, I assure you it will be a pleasure," he said. "I have the bank-notes in my study and will fetch them now."

"Oh, sair!" gasped Monsieur Charpentier. His eyes, wet with tears, danced. He could scarcely believe that his troubles had ended in this easy way. As a matter of fact, they hadn't!

"One little matter," said Mr. Smedley casually. "I am sure that you would be willing to oblige me, Monsieur Charpentier—"

"Anyzing, sair! Ma vie—my life is—"

"In the matter of Vernon-Smith—"

"Zat affair he is finish, mon ami."

"I have very strict views in matters of discipline, Monsieur Charpentier. I cannot overlook Vernon-Smith's offence as you have done. I desire the matter to be laid before the Head—by you."

Monsieur Charpentier looked at him, and the effusive joy and gladness died out of his face. He began to understand. A wave of crimson came into his sallow cheeks.

"Monsieur!" he gasped faintly. "I am sure that you will oblige me in this, Monsieur Charpentier," said Mr. Smedley smoothly.

"Sair," said Monsieur Charpentier, "zat matter is close! I give zat boy Smeat my vord, sair! Ze vord of a Frenchman, sir! You ask me not to smash zat vord?"

"I ask you to place Vernon-Smith's conduct before the Head, and leave him to be judged by his headmaster."

"Zat I cannot do. Jamais! Nevair!"

"Really, Monsieur Charpentier, you will realise that one good turn deserves another," said Mr. Smedley.

"Sair," said Monsieur Charpentier quietly, "let us comprehend one anozer. You offair to lend me five zousand francs. Zat offair has nozing to do viz ze garcon Smeat."

"It has everything to do with it, monsieur," answered Mr. Smedley coldly. "I will oblige you with pleasure if you will oblige me."

The red deepened in Mossoo's sallow face. Skinner, under the table, held his breath. He knew the Creeper and Crawler's game now.

"Sair!" Monsieur Charpentier's voice trembled. "Sair, I touch not zat money! I am insult! Gardez zat money, sair! You are one rascal, sair!"

Mr. Smedley started. Monsieur Charpentier pointed to the door with a shaking finger.

"Allez-vous-en!" he said. "Go

Leave zis study! I zink zat you offair to help me in my trouble, and vat do I learn? Zat vat you offair is one bribe! Mon Dieu! If you vas not one coquin, one scoundrel, sair, you understand zat you insult me! Go! Peeg! Cochon! Keep zat money! Go away, and enter not my presence any more times! Pah! I despise you, sair!"

The French master's voice trembled with anger and scorn.

Mr. Smedley stared at him. It had hardly occurred to his hard, cold, sordid mind that the Frenchman, sorely in need of money as he was, would feel insulted at the suggestion of such a compact. His belief was that Mossoo had told his tale in the hope of "touching" him for a loan, and that he would jump at the chance. That outburst of angry scorn and contempt surprised him as much as it enraged him.

"Go!" repeated Monsieur Charpentier. "Allez-vous-en! Speak not to me again! I despise you, sair! I zink you one peeg!"

Mr. Smedley clenched his hands. He had failed—hopelessly failed. His bitter temper rose, and he made a stride at the little Frenchman, towering over him. He was powerfully tempted to give Mossoo the thrashing of his life. So far from being intimidated by the tall man who towered over him, Mossoo stood up to him like an excited turkey-cock. With a snort of scorn, he snapped his fingers in Smedley's face.

"Zat for you!" he exclaimed shrilly. "Go, je vous commande, ozzervise I hit you viz ze foot!"

Mr. Smedley realised that it would not do. He had his position at Greyfriars to think of. He restrained his rage, strode to the door, hurled it open, and stamped out without another word.

"Mon Dieu!" gasped Mossoo. "Mon Dieu! Le coquin! Cochon! Peeg!"

For several minutes Monsieur Charpentier whisked about the study like an excited fowl, muttering and gesticulating; then, to Skinner's immense relief, he whisked out, and his jorky footsteps died away down the passage. Skinner crawled out from under the table, and, after a cautious peep out of the doorway, took his own departure hurriedly.

## THE TENTH CHAPTER.

### Up to Smithy!

**H**ARRY WHARTON clapped his hands, dropping his bat for that purpose. A dozen Remove fellows shouted.

"Bravo, Smithy!"

"Oh, well caught!"

It is not every batsman who claps his hands and beams with delight at seeing himself caught. But Harry Wharton had reason. He was a good bat, and he could have sworn that no man in the field could have touched the ball he had just sent whizzing. How the Bounder had got it he hardly knew. But he had got it, and he held it up, grinning. And the captain of the Remove beamed on him.

It was only practice; but the Remove men were getting into form for the match with St. Jim's, and it was clear that Vernon-Smith was in great shape. He seemed as good in the field as with either the willow or the leather—and he was, as Wharton joyfully realised, a rod in pickle for Tom Merry & Co. when they came over.

"Good man, Smithy!" shouted Wharton. "Oh, good man!"

"Well caught, old bean!" chirruped Bob Cherry.

"The catchfulness was terrific, my esteemed and ridiculous Smithy!" beamed Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

The Bounder grinned cheerfully. He deserved the applause he received, and it was like wine to him. He was keen on cricket, but he loved the limelight more than the game.

A good many fellows had gathered round to watch the Bounder; he was almost always worth watching on the cricket ground. Skinner came down from the House and joined the juniors looking on. There was a rather sarcastic grin on Skinner's face. He wondered what Smithy and the fellows who were cheering him would have thought had they known what he could have told them. Smithy had been in danger the day before, but the danger was over; he had dismissed it from his mind. He was quite unaware that while he was at games practice that afternoon the danger had recurred, and only the sense of honour of a man he had treated badly and disrespectfully had stood between him and the "long jump."

Skinner was going to give the Bounder the tip, all the more because it was near tea-time and he was more than willing to tea in Smithy's lavish study. But he had to wait till the practice was over. Harry Wharton & Co. forgot the existence of fellows like Skinner when games were on, and at the present moment, at least, Smithy was at one with the Co.

When at length the fellows came in, Smithy walked back to the House with the Famous Five, on the best of terms with them, his face bright and cheery, and did not notice that Skinner followed them in. They went up to the Remove passage together, and Skinner heard the Bounder ask them to tea, and the little crowd headed for Study No. 4 in the Remove. Skinner followed on, in vain, trying to catch the Bounder's eye.

Looking into the study from the doorway, Skinner caught that eye at last, but did not read a welcome in it. When Smithy had the cricketing fellows in his study he did not want Skinner.

"Want anythin'?" asked the Bounder rather pointedly.

Skinner shrugged his shoulders. "Oh, nothing!" he answered. "I was goin' to tell you somethin' about Smedley, but I dare say it would only bore you." And he stepped back into the passage.

"Hold on!" said the Bounder hastily. He glanced at the Famous Five. "You men mind if Skinner teas here?"

"Why should we?" said Harry, with a smile.

"Come in, Skinner."

It was not, perhaps, the most pressing and urgent of invitations, but it was near enough for Skinner. He came in cheerfully enough.

Over tea, cricket and the coming St. Jim's match were the topics. The Bounder eyed Skinner several times, but he was in no hurry—quite content to devote himself to the excellent fare. In a lull of the cricket "jaw," however, Smithy put it directly.

"What's that about Smedley, Skinner?"

"He's got his knife into you, Smithy," grinned Skinner.

"That's no news."

"I mean he's not stickin' at trifles," said Skinner. "I could hardly believe my ears. I don't know what sort of a bargee Leggett & Teggars have sent us this time. If the Head knew the kind of rat he was he would be kicked out so quick it would make his head swim."

"What's the latest?" asked Harry Wharton, politely dropping the topic that interested him very much for one that interested him very little.

Skinner told his story. The Bounder listened to it rather in



bitter anger than surprise. Why Smedley was so savagely and pertinaciously on his trail he did not know, but he knew that the fact was indubitable. Whether it was because Smithy was a shady character, or for some other reason unknown, there was no doubt whatever that Smedley wanted to see him sacked.

But Harry Wharton & Co. were not only surprised, but rather dubious. They agreed that Smedley was a worm; but this was rather over the limit even for a worm.

"If that's true, the man's a howling cad!" said Harry. "He must be a fool, too, to think that Mossoo would do anything of the kind. He's not a man to break his word to a chap."

"If!" said Skinner, with a scowl.

"Well, it's rather steep," said the cap-

tain of the Remove; "and—and you draw the longbow at times, you know, Skinner."

"The drawfulness of the esteemed longbow is occasionally terrific, my esteemed Skinner," remarked the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"Well, it's true," granted Skinner. "And I've told you to put you on your guard, Smithy. That man will get you sacked if he can—and he won't stick at much. He was ready to lend Mossoo forty pounds if he would have played up. And I can tell you Mossoo wants the money! That's what's been the matter with the little brute lately."

"Poor old Mossoo!" said Bob Cherry. "If he's as pushed for money as all that, he's a good little sportsman to turn Smedley down. You ought to kick your-

self for mopping that flour over him, Smithy!"

"Think I don't feel like that?" growled the Bounder. "I'd have kicked myself a dozen times if that would have done any good. Look here, Skinner, you're sure you've got it right?"

"I heard every word under the table."

"I mean about the money."

"Five thousand francs was what he said. That would be about forty pounds in English money."

"Dashed if I see where Smedley was getting it from," said Nugent. "It's not a small sum for a man to hand over."

"And just to see Smithy sacked!" said Johnny Bull. "It sounds awfully steep! Why should he be so keen on that?"

(Continued on next page.)



## The UMPIRE SAYS

Readers who want any knotty cricket problems solved should write, without delay, to "UMPIRE," c/o The MAGNET, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. The more difficult the problem the better our cricket expert likes it.

### A CHAT WITH ALAN FAIRFAX!

THE other day I had an interesting chat with Alan Fairfax, whom you may remember as a player in the Australian Test team which visited this country in 1930. He is now "domiciled" in London, and, although an Australian, is now busy teaching young English players how to play cricket—and possibly coaching boys who may one day help us to beat the Australians.

During the past winter Fairfax had under his special care a young Sussex fast bowler named Jack Nye, and he has hopes that this player may turn out to be as fast—and as accurate—as Harold Larwood. Nye was brought up on a farm, and he used to amuse himself from time to time bowling with turnips. That is an indication of the size of his hands. And here I might add that many of the best bowlers have been particularly well equipped in the hands direction. For example, if you chance to meet Maurice Tate at any time, and he grips you by the hand—well you will probably be in doubt, for a moment, as to whether you are ever likely to get your hand back!

All that, however, is by the way. How I do ramble off when I start on what should be a straight road. Now let me get back to the talk with Alan Fairfax. I asked him whether he thought that, for Test winning purposes, the home team or the touring party had the best chance of winning, other things being equal, of course.

Fairfax had no doubt whatever on the point. "I always think," he said, "that a touring team going on to the field to play in a Test match have a twelfth man. You see they have been together for weeks and weeks: have played together as a team. They know every whim of their captain, and their captain, in proportion, also knows every whim of his players: knows what they can do and what they can't do. In addition, as the touring party is limited in numbers there can't be the same chopping and changing of the team as there is likely to be in a side playing in its own country."

*I think the records show that this Australian cricketer is right in his views: that a touring party has certain advantages over the team playing at home. It has frequently happened that the visiting side has won the "Ashes," because they have been better, not as individuals, but as a team. And while we don't talk so much about team spirit and team play in cricket as in football, I think they are just as important in the summer game.*

### THE MAKE-UP OF A TEST TEAM!

LET us hope, in due course, that the England selectors will not change and chop the team about so much this season as they have often done in the past. I don't think they will, because Sir Stanley Jackson, Mr. Percy Perrin, and Mr. T. A. Higson, who represent the M.C.C. as the Selection Committee, are level-headed men.

Sir Stanley Jackson was a great all-round player in the days when he played for Yorkshire, and he captained England on many occasions. As a skipper he had what he himself calls one great quality: that of winning the toss. In one spell he beat Joe Darling, then captain of Australia, seven times in succession in the toss of the coin. No wonder Darling got tired of calling wrong, and eventually persuaded Sir Stanley to let him toss the coin. It is the privilege of the home captain to toss up, of course, but it didn't matter to Sir Stanley Jackson whether he himself tossed up or whether his opponent tossed up. By the way, just one little coincidence I may mention about the days when the Hon. F. S. Jackson (as he then was) and Darling were captains of England and Australia respectively. Their birthdays were the same.

We are all team-builders in these days, of course, and although nobody would suggest that choosing an England side is an easy task, we are all ready to undertake it. But I am afraid that all the amateur selectors do not think as much about the details of the make-up of a team as they should do.

*There must be different types of batsmen and different types of bowlers, while in addition the fielding side of the team should not be overlooked. Actually, we have overlooked this side more than once in the past, and I have known captains of English Test teams who have been at their wits' end to know which of their men to put in the long field, for instance.*

We can talk some more about the make-up of a Test team next week. Meantime, I must turn to my correspondence and answer one or two questions which I think will be of general interest.

### IS YOUR REPLY HERE?

FIRST, in reply to "Wondering," of Doncaster, I have to say that the snick rule, in reference to leg before wicket, only applies even in this season, to inter-county matches. You know what this reference to the snicked ball means, don't you? The batsman is playing at a straight ball. He just touches it on to his legs, but does not turn it sufficiently to prevent it from hitting the wicket if his legs had not been there.

*In ordinary cricket the mere playing of the ball by the bat means that the batsman cannot be out leg before wicket to that ball. In county cricket he can be out in that way.*

Now a boundary query. In a recent match played in a Sussex village, according to a MAGNET reader who comes from Haywards Heath, a batsman made a stroke towards the boundary. As it happened, the boundary was a long way off, but it had been agreed that only four runs should count if the ball went over. Before the ball reached the boundary, however, and while a fielder was chasing it, the batsmen had completed five runs. The ball then went over the boundary, and the umpire allowed only four runs. That umpire was wrong.

*The rules plainly state that if more runs are made before a ball reaches the boundary than is allowed for the boundary then the number of runs actually completed should be counted.*

It is just as well that this point should be brought home to all umpires. I saw an instance in a county match at the Oval last season when batsmen ran five before the ball reached the boundary, and the umpire only signalled four.

"UMPIRE."

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"You don't need telling he's been keen on it!" grunted the Bounder. "He's shown that plain enough before."

"Well, yes; but not to that extent. Quelch, when he was here, seemed to have an idea that it would improve Greyfriars if you left. But what Skinner's told us is a dirty mean trick—not the thing a man would do from a sense of duty. Why should he have a personal grudge against you?"

"What's the good of askin' me?" snapped the Bounder. "I know he has, and that's that! By gad, if Mossoo had fallen for it— But the man's a rotten cad, and doesn't understand a decent man. And Mossoo's decent all through, with all his funny ways."

"Hear, hear!" said the tea-party, in agreement with that.

When tea in Study No. 4 was over, the Famous Five went down the passage; they went in a very doubtful frame of mind as to the exact accuracy of Skinner's strange tale. But the Bounder, left alone in his study, had no doubts. Why the man was so keen to get him sacked was a mystery; for it never crossed his mind to suspect that the junior partner in the firm of Leggett & Teggers had borrowed a tutor's name to come to Greyfriars, to "dish" his rival for a millionaire's millions!

But he believed every word Skinner had related. It fitted in with what he knew already—Mossoo's distress, and the tear trickling down his nose, and his muttered words about "le pauvre petit Henri." It was true enough, and the Bounder knew it. After a time, his thoughts passed from Smedley and his enmity, to Mossoo and his need. He moved about his study, thinking.

Mossoo had placed him under an obligation that irked him. In bitter need of money, he had refused a loan that would have washed out his difficulties, rather than break his word to the boy who had disrespectfully used him. He was not only, as the fellows often said, a "good little ass." He was a real sportsman. And it came into the Bounder's mind that, had things been as they once had been, had he been able to draw upon his father for all the

money he wanted, he would have weighed in and solved the French master's problem for him.

A term ago he could have asked his father even for such a sum as forty pounds, without risk of refusal. And he would have been glad of the chance to make it "quits."

But matters were very different now. He was kept rigidly short of money to keep him out of mischief.

His father was grimly determined to disinherit him if he was expelled. But he was doing his best to keep him from getting expelled—and the best way was to keep him short of cash!

Last term, even forty pounds was not a large sum to the wealthy Bounder. This term, he seldom had as much as forty pence.

He went to his desk, unlocked a drawer, and looked at the glittering diamond pin within.

His brow was dark. Already he had fixed it up with a man who would buy that pin. He was to receive forty pounds for it—less than half its value.

On that sum the Bounder had promised himself a glorious plunge. With three or four choice spirits, he was going off in a car on a half-holiday, to visit the races, at a safe distance from Greyfriars—far from possible discovery even by the watchful Creeper and Crawler. Now, however, there were other thoughts in his mind.

To wipe out that obligation that weighed on him—to stand by the man who had stood by him—that attracted him. But to give up that glorious plunge—to which he had looked forward ever since the beginning of the term, that was too much of a wrench! He had made up his quarrel with Pon & Co., of Highcliffe School, and asked them to join him—and they were coming! How was he to tell them that it was all off? They would think that he had taken a scare, and funked it!

He jammed the drawer shut, and locked it again, still undecided. He swung out of the study at last, undecided, troubled, his better nature at war with his worse. He was scowling

as he went down the passage. Billy Bunter blinked at him on the landing.

"I say, Smithy! I say, old chap, I was expecting a postal order this afternoon, and— Yaroooooh!"

Having kicked Bunter, the Bounder tramped on, leaving the Owl of the Remove roaring with wrath and indignation. Bunter, certainly, had done nothing specially deserving of a kicking; but it was a relief to kick somebody!

## THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

### Between Good and Evil!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!" bawled Bob Cherry. "Smithy?"

Mr. Smedley looked out of his study window. It was the following day—Wednesday and a half-holiday. After dinner, Herbert Vernon-Smith was heading for the school gates, when Bob's stentorian voice hailed him.

The Bounder glanced round irritably. It was not easy for him to slip out of the school, even on a half-holiday, without the Creeper and Crawler's eye falling on him. And he particularly wanted to slip out quietly that afternoon, as he had the diamond pin in his pocket, and was going to see the man who was to buy it.

What he was going to do with the money when he received it the Bounder had not yet decided. Whether it was going to see him through one glorious plunge into blackguardism, or whether it was going to help a lame dog over a stile, Smithy would not have said himself. Anyhow, he was going to sell the diamond; and that transaction had to be kept dark.

"What the thump are you yelling at a man for?" demanded the Bounder angrily. "What the dickens do you want?"

"Keep its ickle temper!" said Bob cheerily. "What about games practice? Forgotten that, Smithy?"

"Blow games practice!"

"My dear man, we shan't beat St. Jim's when they come along by blowing games practice!" said Bob.

"Oh rats!"

Vernon-Smith tramped on to the gates, and went out, leaving Bob staring after him. Bob was rather inclined to walk after the Bounder and jam his head on the gate as he went—for his cheek. However, he refrained, and went to join the other fellows going down to cricket.

Mr. Smedley, at his study window, followed Vernon-Smith with his eyes till the scapegrace of the school disappeared.

His expression was not pleasant. He had had the young rascal in the hollow of his hand, if only Monsieur Charpentier had played up! That was all over now. Once more his intended victim had escaped him.

Yet he knew that, all the time, the young rascal was asking for the "sack" in one way or another. Where was he gone now, for instance? He was keen on games—keen to play a big part in the big fixture with St. Jim's—yet he had cleared off, cutting games practice on a half-holiday!

It was useless to shadow him—he was too wary to be shadowed to a questionable destination. The Creeper and Crawler had tried that more than once. But it was bitter for him to reflect that, that very afternoon, the young blackguard was kicking over the traces, asking for the sack, and could not be spotted.

Mr. Smedley scowled at the pigeons in the quadrangle.

★ Frank Richards writes every week in "The Ranger"

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"Tra-la-la-la!" sang Mossoo, in a rather wheezy voice, as he danced round the table in exuberant joy. "Tra-la-la! La-la!" The door opened suddenly, and Harry Wharton looked in. "If you please, sir—" he began. The words died on his lips, at the sight of the dapper little gentleman tripping the light fantastic toe.

He wanted to get his task done and go. He was fed-up with the Greyfriars Remove. But fortune refused to smile on him.

He left Masters' Studies at last, and, with his soft and silent tread, went up to the Remove passage. On a sunny half-holiday, the junior studies were deserted. Study No. 4, he knew, must be vacant, for he had watched Vernon-Smith go out, and seen Redwing go down to the cricket ground. And Study No. 4 was the only study in the Remove in which Mr. Smedley had any interest.

Many times had the Creeper and Crawler surreptitiously visited that study, in the hope of making some discovery. He was not aware that several fellows had spotted him doing so, and that the Bounder knew, and was excessively careful never to have anything in the room that a Form-master's eyes might not see.

But one thing that the Bounder did not know was that Smedley had a bunch of keys, which would unlock every lock in the study. Not that Smithy would have cared, as he had no secrets in that room to keep.

Inside Study No. 4 the Creeper and Crawler closed the door, and for the umpteenth time looked about the study, and, as usual, failed to discern anything that was of use to him in his peculiar business at Greyfriars.

Several drawers in the Bounder's desk were locked, and he unlocked them, one after another, and looked in.

He gave a sudden start as he peered into an empty drawer.

It was the little drawer in which Smithy was accustomed to keep that valuable diamond pin. Six or seven times, at least, Smedley had seen it there. Now it was not there. Smithy

had not gone out wearing it—even the dressy Bounder only wore that magnificent pin on special occasions. Smedley had seen him in the quad, speaking to Bob Cherry, and he certainly would have noted the flash of the diamond in the Bounder's tie, in the bright sunshine, had he been sporting it.

Mr. Smedley closed that drawer and re-locked it, and left the study.

His brow was very thoughtful when he went down the stairs.

He already suspected—or, rather, knew, that the Bounder, kept short of money by his father, had "raised the wind" by disposing of trinkets. Had he sold that diamond pin? If so, why? There was but one answer to that question. It was to raise funds for a shady escapade. In point of fact, Smedley had expected, every time he spied into the study, to find that that diamond pin was gone! Now it was gone!

He smiled grimly.

Was that Vernon-Smith's business that afternoon that prevented him from turning up at games practice?

It seemed probable enough.

With a more cheerful expression on his face Mr. Smedley strolled down to Little Side, where he was seldom seen. He took no interest in Form games. Indeed, he took little interest in the Remove at all. Now, however, he gave the schoolboy cricketers a look-in. Wingate of the Sixth was on the junior ground, giving them some coaching. Vernon-Smith was not there. He had not come in yet. Apparently he was making an afternoon of it out of gates. Which was all to the good, from Mr. Smedley's extremely peculiar point of view. He remained for some time on Little Side, to see whether Vernon-Smith turned up. But the Bounder did not come, and he went back to his study at last, with

hardly a doubt left in his mind as to how matters stood.

He would have been surprised, and probably far from gratified, had he known how and where Herbert Vernon-Smith was occupied in those very moments.

Smithy, no longer with a diamond pin in his pocket, but with eight five-pound notes in its place, had walked into Courtfield, to the post office there.

Standing on the steps of the post office, leaning against a stone pillar of the doorway, Smithy was thinking it out.

How long he stood there, with a knitted brow, the Bounder did not know.

There was a struggle in his mind.

The blackguardly kink in his nature was strongly uppermost. He longed for that "plunge" that he had promised himself so long, and that was to make up for weeks of "toeing the line." The risk involved gave it rather an added flavour. Pon & Co. would think that he had funked, and that was bitterly annoying. He risked more than they did, but was much less likely to funk. It was fixed for Saturday, and he longed for it.

Yet it was in his mind that but for the kindness of the "good little ass," poor Mossoo, he would not be here at all now, planning a shady escapade with the nuts of Highcliffe. He would be sacked and done for—expelled from school, disinherited by his father! Mossoo, sorely in want of the very sum that he had in his pockets, had refused scornfully to break his word to the junior he had pardoned. Smithy knew that it was up to him, that if he spent that money in thriftless rascality, leaving an obligation unpaid, he would be a rotter, even in his own eyes.

But he hesitated long.

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A Lower boy couldn't offer money to a master—that was impossible. If he was fool enough to do so he would be angrily refused. Smithy tried to convince himself with that argument, though he knew all the time that he had come to the post-office knowing that if the money was sent it had to be sent anonymously, by post.

He moved at last.

The struggle in his mind was long and the result doubtful for a time. But there was good, as well as evil, in the Bounder—more good than evil, in point of fact. When his mind, at last, was made up it was his better nature that had the upper hand. He sneered at himself, but he went into the post office and asked for a registered envelope.

Five minutes later he came out of the post office with a few shillings and a few coppers in his pocket, and a scowl on his face.

It was done now—and could not be undone! Saturday's shady excursion was washed out, and the disappointment was bitter. A good deed did not have a soothing effect on the Bounder's temper. He walked back to Greyfriars in the worst temper of his life.

And a watchful man, who saw him come in, after tea-time, said to himself that if ever a young rascal looked as if he had been backing losers, Herbert Vernon-Smith did!

## THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

### Mossoo's Wonderful Windfall!

“**O**N en a assez!” Trotter, the page, on his way to Monsieur Charpentier's study in the morning, jumped as he heard that angry squeak from within.

Trotter, whose acquaintance with the beautiful French language was limited, supposed that Mossoo was swearing!

“Lor’!” said Trotter.

“Voilà! Mon Dieu! L'encre dans le tiroir!” went on the angry squeal. “Je dis, on en a assez!”

Monsieur Charpentier had just discovered the ink that Skinner had streamed into his table drawer before the rather exciting interview with Mr. Smedley.

It was morning break at Greyfriars, and third school, after break, included a French class, and Mossoo had gone to that drawer for some papers. Then he made the unhappy discovery that the contents of the drawer were smothered with ink. Already he had missed the ink from his inkpot, and wondered what had become of it. Now he knew.

Mossoo really was not swearing, as Trotter uncharitably supposed. He was only saying, in his own language, that he had had enough of it—that he was, in fact, fed up.

With the affair of “ze little Henri” weighing so heavily on his mind, poor Mossoo really was not in a state to be ragged. His nervous system, never very steady, was on the jump.

Trotter coughed as he tapped at the door. He had a registered letter for the French master, which he had signed for, so he had to go to the study. The excited voice within died away at the sound of the tap.

“Entrez!” rapped the French master.

Trotter knew that that meant “come in.” So in he went. Monsieur Charpentier, standing by the table, was staring into the open drawer with red wrath in his sallow face. Trotter, out of the corner of his eye, spotted the inky state of the papers and suppressed a grin.

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“Registered letter, sir!” he said, placing it on the table.

“Une lettre recommandée! Merci bien! Fermez la porte,” said Monsieur Charpentier. “Zat is, zank you and close ze door.”

Trotter left him staring at the registered letter. Mossoo had had no expectation of receiving a registered letter. And this one was of rather unusual aspect, inasmuch as the address was in “printed” characters, instead of ordinary handwriting.

He slit the envelope with a paper knife and drew out a wad of contents, in a state of wonder.

The next moment he forgot all about the ink in the drawer.

“Mon Dieu!” gasped the French master.

There was a single sheet of paper within, with a single line written on it, in “print” letters, giving no clue to the writer. That line ran:

“From a Friend.”

Enfolded in that sheet were eight banknotes for five pounds each.

Monsieur Charpentier gazed at those banknotes as if he could hardly believe his eyes—as indeed he hardly could.

Eight five-pound notes—forty pounds!

Make use of your spare moments:

Try and win one of our

USEFUL POCKET WALLETS!

A snappy Greyfriars Limerick like the following—and the trick's done!

One day Squiff walked into the gym,

And saw Bunter trying to slim.

Said Squiff: “What's the use

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A fat gorging glutton like him?”

The above winning effort was sent in by: J. S. Dean, of 35, Riverside, Abbey Estate, Cambridge.

Five thousand francs! He wondered dizzily if he was dreaming.

In a mazed and bemused state, he crumpled the notes in his fingers, counting them. Five thousand francs! From a “Friend”! Who had done this? Exactly the sum he needed to see “le pauvre petit Henri” through his trouble. It seemed like a miracle to Mossoo!

For full five minutes the little French gentleman stood there, with the banknotes in his hand and dumb amazement in his face.

The impossible had happened! It was wildly impossible for some unknown friend to send him exactly the sum he needed. And it had happened! There is was!

“Who—why—” Monsieur Charpentier examined the brief note. The “print” letters gave no clue. Obviously, the sender did not desire to be known.

A sudden misgiving seized him that the letter had been delivered to the wrong address. He grabbed the envelope and examined it.

But the name and address—his own—were plain enough. There was no mistake about that!

“C'est épatant!” murmured Monsieur Charpentier. “Épatant! Je ne comprends pas! Mon Dieu!”

Who had done this act of extraordinary kindness? Some friend who desired to avoid his thanks! But who could have known that he was in need of precisely that sum? Only Mr. Smedley knew that—he had told him! Smedley might have mentioned the matter—perhaps it had reached the Head somehow. Dr. Locke had a kind heart, and he was aware that Mossoo was distressed—had he not given him a generous advance on his salary already? The Head had done this—delicately, anonymously, to avoid placing the French gentleman under the weight of a heavy obligation!

That seemed the only possible explanation to Monsieur Charpentier.

As he realised what this meant to him, Mossoo's face brightened and brightened till it was like the rising sun.

He counted the notes, and counted them again. Forty pounds—five thousand francs! At the bank in Courtfield he could change those English banknotes into French banknotes, and dispatch them by registered post to his sister in France, to be expended for the benefit of the “little Henri.” Monsieur Charpentier pirouetted round the study table.

Had anyone looked into the study just then, he would certainly have supposed that the French master had taken leave of his senses. A middle-aged gentleman with a pointed beard capering round the study table was rather an extraordinary sight.

A bell rang; break was over. In Class-room No. 10 the Remove gathered for the French class. But the French master did not arrive.

Monsieur Charpentier had forgotten all about French classes! He had forgotten about everything, but this amazing stroke of good fortune. He had one regret, that the “Friend” who had sent him that amazing gift was not present to be embraced. Mossoo longed to embrace him and kiss him on both cheeks.

“Tra-la-la-la!” sang Mossoo, in a rather wheezy voice as he pirouetted. “Tral-la-la! La-la!”

There was a tap at the door. He did not hear it or heed it. He danced round the table in exuberant joy.

The door opened, and Harry Wharton looked in.

“If you please, sir—” began Harry. He stopped dead.

As head boy of the Remove, he had come to remind the French master of the class he seemed to have forgotten. But the words died on his lips at the sight of the dapper little gentleman dancing round his study table! He stared blankly. Mossoo was an excitable little man, and had excitable ways, but this was really extraordinary.

Catching sight of the junior's astounded face at the door, Monsieur Charpentier ceased suddenly to trip the light fantastic too! He coloured, and came to a halt.

“Ah! Le bon Wharton!” he said. “C'est vous! Vat is it zat you vant? Allez maintenant—go away now—some ozzer time, mon garçon—”

“But, sir—” gasped Harry.

“Some ozzer time!” Monsieur Charpentier waved him away. “Now I have mooch to zink of! Run away, mon garçon.”

Wharton could only go. He went, in a state of utter astonishment. Monsieur Charpentier forgot his existence the next moment.

However, he did not continue to dance! Time was precious! He rushed for his coat and hat and whisked out of the House! Forgetful of classes, forgetful of everything, he whisked out of gates, and trotted down the road to



Courtfield. All lesser matters vanished from his mind until he had dispatched five thousand francs by registered post to France.

**THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.**

**While the Cat's Away!**

**H**ARRY WHARTON walked back to the French class-room amazed.

Sounds of revelry greeted him as he arrived there. As their master had not turned up, the Remove fellows, naturally, were improving the shining hour.

As the captain of the Remove entered, Bob Cherry and five or six other fellows were playing leap-frog. Billy Bunter was sucking a chunk of toffee, which he had been lucky enough to find in Russell's study in "break." Kipps was balancing a ruler and an inkpot on his chin. Lord Mauleverer was dozing. Skinner and Snoop and Stott were bending their heads over a racing paper that Skinner had produced from under his waistcoat. Bolsover major and six or seven fellows were pelting one another with school books. It was not what the most easy-going master would have called an orderly class.

These various activities ceased as the door opened—but were resumed when the juniors saw that it was only Wharton.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Isn't Froggy coming?" called out Bob Cherry.

"Seems not!" answered Harry.

"Good luck!" said Skinner.

"The goodfulness of the esteemed luck is terrific."

"But why isn't he coming?" asked Mark Linley. "Mossoo never forgets a class. What's the matter with him?"

Wharton shook his head.

"I give that up, unless he's gone off his rocker," he answered. "He was dancing round his table when I went to his study."

"Great pip!"

"Something happened to buck the little ass?" asked Vernon-Smith, with a curious glance at the captain of the Remove.

"I suppose so! May have got some good news," said Harry. "I hope so! But it's jolly queer."

"I say, you fellows, there was a registered letter for Mossoo this morning," squeaked Billy Bunter. "I saw Trotter taking it in."

"The little blighter may have been raising the wind," said Skinner. "Perhaps he'll buy a new coat now."

"Oh, shut up, Skinner!"

"Well, it's time he had a new one! He dyes the seams of his coat, as well as his beard!" said Skinner. "I've wondered if he uses the same dye for both."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, if he isn't coming, we may as well keep on with this game," said Bob Cherry. "I like leap-frog better than French."

"Hear, hear!"

"Better not make too much row," said Tom Redwing. "We don't want Smedley barging in."

"Lot Smedley cares what we do!" said Skinner. "He never takes it out of a chap unless he's in a rotten temper—and then he takes it out of the nearest chap! If the Head knew the kind of slacking rotter he was he wouldn't send to Leggett & Teggers for a man again."

"I say, you fellows, Smedley went to the Head in break!" said Billy Bunter. "I saw him going to the old bean's study. I dare say he's still there, jaw-

ing—you know what two beaks are like when they begin to jaw."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Monsieur Charpentier failed to appear; and danger from Smedley seemed rather remote. And the Remove were full of beans that bright May morning. So it was not surprising that a considerable uproar was soon going on in Class-room No. 10.

Of all the Remove, in fact, only three fellows kept their places; Billy Bunter, because he had not yet finished his toffee; Lord Mauleverer, because he was too lazy to move; and Vernon-Smith, because he did not want to give the Creeper and Crawler a chance at him, if Smedley did happen to look in. Neither was the Bounder in a mood for ragging.

He was in a mood of savage discontent. The path of reform had few attractions for the scapegrace of the school. He trod it only because it was the path of safety.

He guessed—what no other fellow guessed—why Mossoo had been in such exuberant spirits after receiving that registered letter. He was glad of that. But he was thinking of what he had planned for Saturday in company with the choice spirits at Highcliffe. The more he thought of it, the more savagely discontented he felt.

Smithy sat with a clouded and scowling face, while the rest of the Remove enjoyed their unexpected exemption from French.

The fun was soon fast and furious.

Cricket was going on now. With a rolled-up duster for a ball, and a shovel for a bat, and the master's desk for a wicket, it was entertaining, if it was not exactly cricket. Fielding that ball provided lots of fun. Fellows fell over one another among the desks, amid shouts and yells. At times the game looked more like Rugby football than cricket. And there was no doubt that there was plenty of noise! On that point there was no shadow of doubt.

The Remove were going very strong, when the door opened and a majestic figure appeared. There was a startled squeak from Billy Bunter.

"I say, you fellows! It's the Head!"

"The Head!"

"Oh crikey!"

The uproar ceased as if by magic. Dusty and flustered, fellows stared in dismay at their headmaster.

With a stern brow, Dr. Locke advanced into the room.

"Wharton!" he rapped.

"Oh, yes, sir!" gasped Harry.

"Who is in charge of this class?"

"Monsieur Charpentier, sir."

"Where is he?"

"I—I don't know, sir."

The Head pursed his lips.

"Has not Monsieur Charpentier been here?"

"No, sir, not yet."

"Apparently," said the Head, "Monsieur Char-

pentier has forgotten! That is no excuse for this uproar. Every boy out of his place will take a hundred lines, Mr. Smedley!"

"Sir!" The tall figure of Mr. Smedley stepped in.

"Perhaps you will kindly take charge of your Form, Mr. Smedley, until Monsieur Charpentier arrives."

"Certainly, sir!"

"Vernon-Smith!" Dr. Locke's eyes rested on the Bounder. "Please follow me to my study."

The Bounder started.

"I've done nothing, sir!" he answered sullenly. "Every fellow here can tell you that I have not been out of my place."

"No doubt, Vernon-Smith. I had already observed that you were not taking part in this riot. But you will follow me to my study at once."

The Bounder, setting his lips, followed the headmaster from the class-room. Smedley had been with the Head—and now he was called to the headmaster's study—why? What new move had his enemy made? He glanced at Smedley as he left the class-room, and caught the Creeper and Crawler's eyes fixed on him with a strange glint in them.

In Class-room No. 10, there was no more uproar. Wharton was sent to call the French master, but he returned to report that Monsieur Charpentier was not in his study, and could not be found. So Mr. Smedley had to remain with the Remove in Mossoo's inexplicable absence. Mossoo, though nobody but the Bounder guessed it, had business at the bank that morning, and was not likely to return yet.

**THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.**

**Smithy's Silence!**

**D**R. LOCKE sat in his study, drumming on the table before him with his slim, white fingers.

The Bounder stood before him, sullen, hard-faced, resentful. No head-

*(Continued on next page.)*



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master could have formed a favourable opinion of him, on his looks. For a long minute, the Head of Greyfriars had been silent, scanning the face before him, and evidently himself in a troubled mood. The scapegrace of the school had given him more trouble than any other fellow at Greyfriars, and since Mr. Smedley's advent, there had been more trouble than in Quelch's time. Any master might have been down on a fellow like Smithy, but the Head was wondering whether Mr. Smedley was allowing some personal dislike to influence him a little.

"Vernon-Smith!" said the Head, at last breaking the silence. "I regret having to question you, but the blame is your own, as you know very well. If you are pursuing the disreputable courses for which, last term, I came very near to expelling you from the school—" He paused.

To his surprise, the scapegrace's face brightened. Smithy had been wondering, savagely, whether the Head had got wind of the flour-bag episode after all. He had looked on that affair as over and done with, but the Creeper and Crawler might have raked it up again somehow. The Head's words came as a relief to him.

"Since that time," resumed the Head, puzzled by the junior's look, "your father has carefully followed my advice that you should not be provided with more money than other boys in your Form. If you have found some surreptitious way of raising money, Vernon-Smith, I can only take it as a proof that you have not abandoned your bad ways. No schoolboy needs large sums of money for honourable purposes."

"Every fellow in the Remove knows that I'm hard up, sir!" said Vernon-Smith.

"I understand that you have, or had, in your possession, a number of valuable trinkets. Are these still in your possession?"

"I sold some of them in the Easter holidays, sir, when I had a trip to France! I went with Wharton and his friends!" added Vernon-Smith.

"With that," said the Head, "I have nothing to do. Have you sold anything of the kind since the new term at school, to raise money for any escapade against the rules of the school?"

The Bounder breathed hard.

"No, sir!"

"I trust that that statement is the truth, Vernon-Smith. I am informed that you have in your possession a very valuable diamond pin. Had I been aware of it before, I should not have allowed any Lower boy to have such an article while at school. I think it would be better, Vernon-Smith, for this valuable stone to be sent home to your father—if it is still in your possession."

The Bounder did not speak.

His heart was like lead.

He had answered truthfully enough that he had not sold any trinket to raise money for an escapade. He had sold that diamond to repay his obligation to the French master—to help poor Mossou in his bitter need. But he had sold it! Certainly it was no longer in his possession.

"From the description given to me, Vernon-Smith, I understand that the diamond is worth a large sum. Certainly you cannot be allowed to keep it at school. But your Form-master, Mr. Smedley, has reason, as he tells me, to believe that you have parted with it—since the new term. Is that the case?"

The Bounder stood dumb.

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So that was it!

He remembered the glance the Creeper and Crawler had given the diamond pin that day in the study! But how did he know that the diamond was gone, when it was generally kept in a locked drawer?

"Answer me, Vernon-Smith."

"I—I—" The Bounder faltered. "I—I don't see why Mr. Smedley should think I've sold it. I hardly ever wear it."

"That is no answer to my question. Answer me directly—is that diamond pin still in your possession?"

"No!" muttered the Bounder, driven to it.

"You have disposed of it?"

"Yes."

"For what sum?"

"Forty pounds."

Dr. Locke raised his eyebrows.

"Very well, Vernon-Smith," he said, "you may place the money on my table. It will be returned to your father. You will explain to me for what purpose you raised such an extraordinary sum of money—though I fear that I can have little doubt."

The Bounder did not stir.

"You hear me, Vernon-Smith!" rapped the Head. "Place the money on the table this instant."

"I—I haven't got it, sir."

Dr. Locke's face set hard.

"You have parted with such a sum as forty pounds, Vernon-Smith?"

"Yes, sir."

"How much have you left?"

"None."

The headmaster's face was like iron now. Mr. Smedley's belief was that Smithy had sold the pin on Wednesday afternoon, spent the half-holiday in some dubious resort, and lost the money there. That was what it looked like, from what the Creeper and Crawler's keen eyes had observed. Indeed, that had been the Bounder's original intention, and Smedley had read him aright, so far as that went.

But the headmaster had been very unwilling to share that belief. Now he was forced to it.

"Did you, as your Form-master supposes, sell the pin yesterday, Vernon-Smith?" Dr. Locke's voice was cold and hard.

"Yes, sir!"

"Did you bring the proceeds back to the school with you?"

"No, sir."

"You lost the money?"

"I did not lose it."

"You parted with it, while you were out of the gates on a half-holiday?"

"Yes."

"You will hardly expect me to believe, Vernon-Smith, that you, a Lower Fourth boy, spent such a sum as forty pounds in a single afternoon, for any purpose you would dare confess to your headmaster?"

"I've done nothing wrong," muttered the Bounder.

"I trust not!" said the Head grimly. "If you have been guilty of some act of unthinking extravagance, I shall be relieved to hear that it is nothing worse. Did you make some thoughtless purchase?"

"No!"

"What did you do with the money?"

Vernon-Smith did not answer.

He could not answer.

What he had done he had done anonymously, to save the feelings, the dignity, of the French master who would never have dreamed of accepting aid from a schoolboy. He could not cover Monsieur Charpentier with shame and humiliation as with a garment. Mossou

had asked nothing of him. He would have refused an offer of help, with indignation, from a boy. Not knowing that it had come from a schoolboy, he had used it. Smithy guessed, if nobody else did, what sudden business had called the French master away that morning, and caused him to forget his class. If Smithy let his action become known, he could not claim to have a rag of decency left.

Unscrupulous, blackguardly, reckless, headstrong the Bounder might be. But there were some things that were not done and this was one of them. He could not do this! He could not tell his headmaster what he had done with the money.

"I am waiting, Vernon-Smith!" said Dr. Locke, in an ominous voice.

"I've done no harm, sir!" stammered the Bounder at last. "I—I can tell you what I've done, if you'll let me tell you without mentioning names."

"You will give me the fullest, frankest explanation, Vernon-Smith, or you will be sent away from Greyfriars this afternoon!" said the Head coldly. "If you have any explanation to give, give it."

"I—I—I—"

"I am waiting!" repeated the Head grimly.

"I—I—I gave the money away!" stammered the Bounder at last.

Dr. Locke looked at him.

"Do you expect me to believe that extraordinary statement, Vernon-Smith?" he asked coldly and contemptuously.

"It's true!"

"I shall give you every chance!" said the Head. "If your statement is true, it can be substantiated. To whom did you give the money?"

"A man in distress."

"His name?"

No answer.

"And why?"

"He—he had treated me decently, and—and I found out that he was in a fix for money, and—and I did it!" muttered the Bounder. He knew, while he was speaking, how utterly incredible it sounded.

"If, by some chance, you have performed a generous action, Vernon-Smith, you have only to make it clear. Your statement is incredible, as you must know. Who was the man to whom you allege that you gave the money?"

"I can't mention his name."

"Why not?"

"Because—because—he never knew I sent it, and—and—oh, sir, you can see why I can't tell you! How could I tell anyone?"

Dr. Locke rose from his chair.

"You, Vernon-Smith, the boy with the worst reputation in the school, the boy I should have expelled for bad conduct, but from a mistaken sense of lenity—you ask me to believe that you have acted with quixotic generosity, and are deterred from telling me the facts by a delicate sense of honour? I fear, Vernon-Smith, that you are asking me to believe too much."

He knitted his brows grimly.

"For the last time, Vernon-Smith, if you have anything to say in your defence, say it."

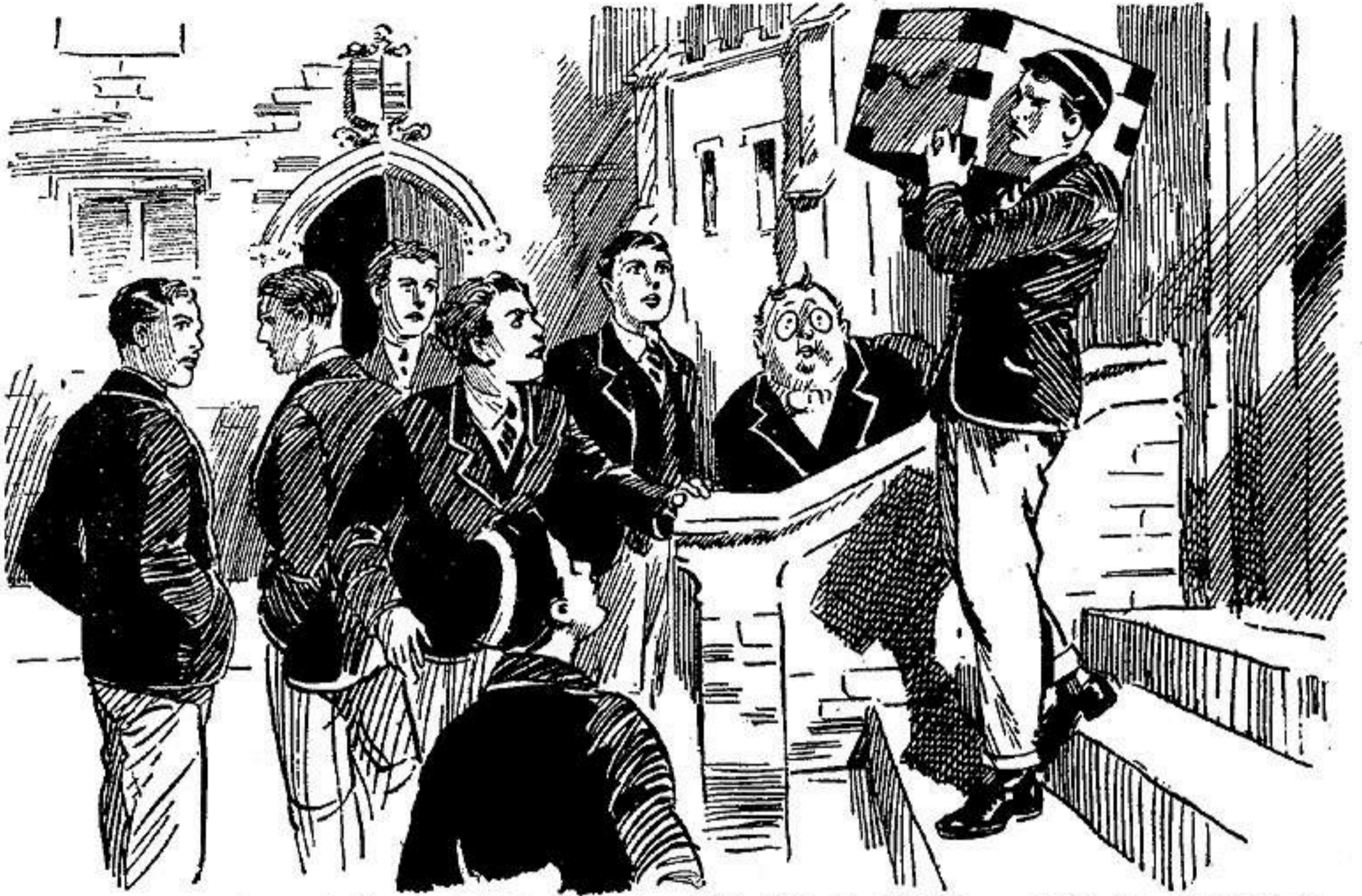
"I've said all I can, sir!" muttered the Bounder.

"Very well. Leave my study. You need not return to the French class—you may go to the dormitory and pack your box."

The Bounder went slowly to the door. His face was white and set. At the door he turned to meet the cold, steady look of his headmaster.

Sacked! Why should he be sacked,





"I say, you fellows, I fancy Smithy's sacked!" said Bunter. "You blithering idiot!" roared Redwing. "Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry, as the Bounder appeared in the doorway of the House, carrying his box on his shoulder. "Smithy!" said Wharton. "You don't mean to say you're sacked?" "Yes," answered the Bounder.

to spare the feelings, the precious dignity of that little ass, Mossoo? Why? He opened his lips.

But he closed them again. He knew that he could not speak without shame—shame in his own eyes. What he had done he had done of his own accord. He had to stand by it. The Bounder of Greyfriars had pluck.

"Have you anything more to say, Vernon-Smith?"

There was an instant's pause.

"No, sir!" said the Bounder quietly.

"Then go!"

And Herbert Vernon-Smith went.

## THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

### Mysterious!

"I SAY, you fellows, where's Smithy?"

"Echo answers where!" said Bob Cherry. And Hurree Jamset Ram Singh remarked that the wherefulness was terrific.

Vernon-Smith had not come back to Class-room No. 10. The Removes were dismissed now, and he was not seen in the quad.

"Mysterious disappearances are quite the fashion this morning," remarked Bob. "First Mossoo, then Smithy! Now you disappear, Bunter—you couldn't do a more popular thing."

"Yah!" said Bunter, with his usual elegance.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, here comes jolly old Mossoo!" exclaimed Bob, as a dapper little figure came in at the gates.

"Jolly, and no mistake!" said Harry Wharton laughing. "He looks as if he's walking on air."

"Frightfully bucked!" remarked Nugent.

"He won't feel so bucked when the Head talks to him about cutting that class this morning!" grinned Skinner.

"Mossoo's going to get a Royal and Imperial jaw from the jolly old beak."

The juniors eyed Monsieur Charpentier rather curiously, as he came up to the House. Something evidently had happened to change the little gentleman's mood. Of late, he had been despondent, gloomy, pessimistic, and crusty—in fact, extremely sharp-tempered. Now all was changed. He walked with an elastic step, so elastic that he seemed to have some difficulty in restraining himself from pirouetting across the quad, as Wharton had seen him pirouetting in his study. His face wore the kindest and sweetest of smiles, and he was even heard to hum a tune as he passed the group of Removes.

Whatever had been Mossoo's trouble it was plain that it was over now. The juniors capped him as he passed, smiling, and Mossoo gave them a smile that extended almost from one of his ears to the other. Obviously he was a happy man that morning.

"Vat a nice day, mes garçons!" he said, or rather chirruped. "Zese English vezzers are verree good."

That was the climax! Mossoo's opinion of the British weather was well known. If he thought the weather good, it showed that he was in a fearfully bucked state.

Quite pleased to see the effusive little gentleman so happy, the chums of the Remove watched him, with smiling faces as he trotted to the House. But his brightness was a little dashed as he met Mr. Smedley in the doorway.

"The Head desires to see you, Monsieur Charpentier," said Mr. Smedley coldly. "He desires to know why you did not attend your class this morning, and left the boys to riot."

Monsieur Charpentier jumped.

In his happy state of elation he had forgotten all about that class. It was a pleasure to Smedley to remind him,

"Mon Dieu! J'oublie tout cela!" ejaculated Mossoo in dismay. "Zat is one verree large fault. A fault of the most enormous. Je vais expliquer—I go to explain to ze Head! Is ze Head angry, Monsieur Smedley?"

"I believe he was very much annoyed, as he was called to your class-room, sir, and found the boys rioting there," said Smedley.

"Mon Dieu!"

The little Frenchman whisked into the House, leaving Mr. Smedley feeling that he had repaid him a little for the expressions he had used at their last interview in the French master's study.

But Smedley himself was in rather a good humour now. There was almost a smile on his hard, cold face, as he walked out into the quadrangle.

He knew the result of the Bounder's interview with his headmaster. That afternoon Herbert Vernon-Smith was going.

Lucius Teggars had won his game, and ere long he would be going, too! As he walked in the quad he was thinking of Mr. Vernon-Smith's millions, and he found the thought pleasant.

"Something's bucked the Creeper and Crawler," said Bob Cherry, glancing after him. "I say, what's become of Smithy?"

Harry Wharton whistled.

"Has he scored over Smithy? What can that silly ass have done now? Here, Redwing, where's Smithy?"

Tom Redwing shook his head.

"No good asking me," he said. "I'm afraid something's up. You fellows know what the Head wanted him for?"

"Haven't the foggiest."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Bunter knows, of course," said Bob. "Bunter knows everything. Cough it up, Bunter! If anything's happened



on the other side of a keyhole you know all about it! Give it a name."

"Beast! I say, you fellows, I fancy Smithy's sacked," said Bunter. "He hasn't been seen since he went to the Head! I say, you'll be jolly glad, Redwing, I suppose, as you've rowed with him—"

"You blithering idiot!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, here he comes!" roared Bob, as the Bounder appeared in the doorway of the House, carrying his box on his shoulder.

There was rather a rush of the Removites towards him. Some of them noticed that his face was a little pale; but he was quite cool and composed. The Bounder was not the man to show the white feather.

"Where on earth have you been, old chap?" asked Bob. "We were beginning to think something had happened to you."

"I've been packing my box."

"Eh, why?"

"Head's orders!"

"Smithy!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "You don't mean—"

The Bounder laughed.

"I do!"

"Banked?" breathed Frank Nugent.

"Yes."

"What have you done?"

"Helped a lame dog over a stile."

"Don't be an ass!" said Bob uneasily.

"Too late for that advice!" said the Bounder coolly. "You should have given me that tip before I did it. Sorry if you'll miss me in the St. Jim's match, Wharton—I dare say Bunter will play!"

"Certainly," said Bunter. "Mind I shall have to go in first, Wharton, if I play. Otherwise, I shall decline."

"Shut up, you howling ass! Look here, Smithy, what's really happened?"

"The sack!"

"But why?" yelled Bob Cherry.

"I've told you!"

The Bounder, with his hands in his pockets, walked away, whistling, leaving the Removites staring after him blankly

## THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

### A Puzzled Pair!

"**B**LESS my soul!" ejaculated Dr. Locke.

He fairly jumped.

The Head of Greyfriars was sitting in his study, in a rather pensive mood. "Sacking" a fellow was no pleasant task for any headmaster. It was less pleasant in Smithy's case, because he knew what awaited the hapless scapegrace at home.

But the time for leniency had gone by. It was for that very reason, his father's threat of disinheritance, that he had allowed the Bounder to stay on last term. He had hoped that the boy would amend; that the warning would be enough for him. He had been told, plainly enough, that his next transgression would be his last. Now he had transgressed again, and his headmaster was left no choice in the matter.

Deep in thought, the Head hardly heard a tap at his door. The door shot open, and an excitable little gentleman shot into the study.

Monsieur Charpentier had run down the passage to that study, after Smedley had spoken to him. He arrived breathless. He seemed all arms and legs as he shot in, gesticulating wildly.

"My dear Monsieur Charpentier—"

said Dr. Locke, a little severely.

"Mille pardons, monsieur!" gasped the French master. "I ask you ze zousand pardons! Zis morning I forget

ze class—c'est une grande faute—a fault of greatest size, sair! I ask you feefty zousand pardons!"

"One will be sufficient, sir!" said the Head. "Really—"

"Mais vous savez—you know—you comprehend, isn't it?" gasped Monsieur Charpentier. "Now it is all right—vat you call in English, bit of all right—viz ze leetle Henri!"

"Eh?"

"Vous comprenez—you understand, sair, you zat have ze so kind heart, you shall comprehend zat ven it is bit of all right, I am excite—I am to dance viz joy—I am off, as you say in English, ze onion!"

Dr. Locke blinked at him.

"I forgot zat class!" said Monsieur Charpentier, waving both hands. "I forget everyzing, except your so great kindness, sair!"

"I—I do not quite—"

"Viz zat money, I rush—I fly—I buzz—a la banque—I lose not ze one moment, to go to ze bank, n'est-ce pas? I capture ze post."

"You went out to capture the post?" asked Dr. Locke, gazing at the little gentleman. "Oh, quite! I—I see."

"I capture him," said Monsieur Charpentier. "I go to ze banque pour echanger—to change, to altor, as you say, ze English billets into ze French billets! N'est-ce pas? I fly to ze bank! From ze bank I fly to ze post! Voila! It is done! Oh, sair, zat I embrace you!"

Dr. Locke backed swiftly.

"My dear sir—" he gasped.

"You zat have ze so great goodness of heart!" trilled Mossos. "You zat help ze bandy-leg dog ovair ze stile! Oh, sair!"

"I—I hardly understand—"

"I kiss you ze hand, sair!" said Monsieur Charpentier. "Ze leetle Henri, he vill go vell—now zat zere is five zousand francs! Oh, sair, how can I zank you enoff? Nevair, nevair can zere be enoff zanks!"

"But what have I done?" exclaimed the bewildered headmaster. "I do not understand you in the least, Monsieur Charpentier. For what are you thanking me?"

"Oh, sair, for zat vich you have done in ze so great kindness of your heart! You save ze life of ze petit Henri! I kiss you ze hand—"

"Please do nothing of the sort! And kindly explain your meaning, sir!" said the Head, rather testily. "I am quite unaware—"

"You did not vish me to speak of him, sair? Zat is vy you send him in a letter, je comprends! Mais, but, sair, my heart is so full—le coeur tout plein—I overflow viz gratitude, sair—I must tell you I know zat you are ze kind friend—I must zank you— Oh, sair, ven zat I open zat lettair, and see ze money, I say to myself, who shall do zis zing? And I zink, it is ze bon docteur—ou personne! C'était vous, sair. It is you zat do zis so great kindness zat I nevair dare to ask!"

Dr. Locke felt as if his head was turning round.

"Of what money are you speaking?" he gasped.

"Ze five zousand francs—ze forty English pound zat you send me in zo lettre—"

"I have done nothing of the kind."

"Comment!"

"Had I been aware, Monsieur

.....

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Charpentier, that you were in distress for money, I should certainly have offered my assistance. But I understood that the recent advance of salary—"

"You did not send him?" gasped Monsieur Charpentier.

"Certainly not!"

"Mon Dieu! Zen who send him?"

"If you have received such a sum as forty pounds by post, Monsieur Charpentier, surely you know the name of the sender?"

"Du tout! Je n'en sais rien! I know nozzings! Look!" From his pocket the French master jerked the sheet that had come with the bank-notes. "Voyez, sair."

Dr. Locke adjusted his pince-nez, and glanced at the brief message in print letters: "From a Friend."

"I know not ze hand, sair! I know not ze name! I know nozzings!" said Monsieur Charpentier. "I say to myself, somevun shall learn of zis my trouble, and send me help—and zere is no vun but you, sair, zat I can zink of! Vat? If it is not you, I know nozzings!"

He waved his hand in bewildered gesticulations.

"Certainly it was not I!" said Dr. Locke.

"Zen I am tout-a-fait mystify."

An extraordinary expression was coming over Dr. Locke's face. The thought that was rising in his mind was extraordinary—incredible! Yet the coincidence was too striking to be ignored.

"Monsieur Charpentier! You say you received a letter containing forty pounds—"

"Zis morning, sair!"

"From an anonymous person—from someone you do not know?"

"Je n'en sais rien—I know nozzings."

"What was the postmark on the letter?"

"La ville—ze town, Courtfield, pres d'ici."

"Bless my soul!"

"Somevun zat know my trouble send him!" said Monsieur Charpentier. "It is not zat Smedley—j'en suis sur! Somevun hear him talk perhaps—"

Dr. Locke pursed his lips.

"To refer to another matter, Monsieur Charpentier, have you had occasion, of late, to show any special kindness to Vernon-Smith, of the Remove?"

"Smeat! Mai oui! But I razzer not speak of him, sair!" said Monsieur Charpentier. "He give one great offence, sair, but I forgive him for zat, and zat affair he is all ovair, sair."

Dr. Locke was plunged deep in thought.

Was it possible? Could it be possible that the scapegrace of the school, the hardest case at Greyfriars, grateful for an act of kindness, had done this? Was it barely possible that was the reason of his silence? The sum of money was the same—and what the Bounder had said in that study without mentioning names, tallied with what Mossos had said. Was it possible?

Monsieur Charpentier was got rid of at last, and the Head sat down to think. It was getting near his luncheon hour; but he was not thinking of lunch.

Ten minutes later Dr. Locke ordered his car, and—recklessly regardless of lunch—drove away from the school.

He was bound for Courtfield Post Office—to inquire whether a Greyfriars boy had posted a registered letter there the previous afternoon, and whether that Greyfriars boy answered to the description of Herbert Vernon-Smith!

(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 wagers from the two crooks who, in spite of their cunning, lose large sums of money. Realising eventually that Ferrers Locke has been bluffing them, the two schemers kidnap JACK DRAKE, whom they imprison in the cellar of an old country cottage. After fixing one end of a length of flex to the under side of the cellar flap and the other end to a pin of a bomb on the cellar floor the two villains depart with the intention of letting Locke know where his assistant is. Meanwhile, Locke has been called to Scotland Yard on a false errand.  
(Now Read On.)

## A Narrow Squeak!

INSPECTOR PYECROFT was indignant. The Scotland Yard detective was an extremely busy man, and it now seemed that his time was being wasted.

Before him, equally indignant, was Ferrers Locke.

"Well, you dummy," said Locke, "what's the idea? Why have you sent for me?"

The C.I.D. man snorted.

"For the umpteenth time, let me tell you I don't know what you're talking about. I never phoned you, Locke."

Ferrers Locke knitted his brows.

"Why, your man Harvey got through on the phone to me in your name, asking me to come over to see you right away."

Inspector Pycroft rose to his feet.

"Well, we'll soon settle that, Locke. For a start, I have no man named Harvey. Jenkins is my chief clerk. The message was a fake."

Ferrers Locke had few remaining doubts about that now. But he knew the inspector's tendency to absent-mindedness. Still, as there was no "man" answering to the name of Harvey at Scotland Yard, it was abundantly clear that the message which had lured Locke away from his office was a bogus one.

"Well, I'm sorry, Pycroft," said Locke, reaching for his hat—"sorry to have wasted your time and my own. Guess I'll be getting back."

A smile flooded his worried face as he reached for his hat and bade the C.I.D. man farewell. In a few moments he

was back at the Pall Mall offices of Jules Martinez.

He found the premises locked—a surprising circumstance, for he had left Jack Drake there. An unhappy thought was already beginning to take shape in the detective's mind. He had been lured away from that office by someone—someone unknown. And now Jack Drake, apparently, had disappeared.

"Where the thump has he gone?" Locke muttered, after keying himself in. "He might have left a message."

He sat down in the big armchair and waited. One hour went by and still Drake did not put in an appearance; two hours—and then Locke was worried as well as anxious. He had a foreboding that something untoward had happened.

Locking up the office, he strolled across to the garage and asked for the Rolls.

The garage man looked at him in some surprise.

"But your clerk took it out a couple of hours ago, sir!" he exclaimed.

"What?" Locke was rather taken aback. "Where has he gone—did he say?"

The garage man shook his head.

"No, sir; just took the car out in the usual way."

The detective's lips set in a grim line.

"Thanks!" He turned on his heel and walked slowly back to his office.

"Now, where the dooce has that young idiot gone off to?" he mused.

"He's taken out the Rolls, he's been gone over two hours, and he's left no message as to where he's cleared off to. Jove! I'll give him a talking to when he does return." He lapsed into silence.

But with the passing of the hours, and still no sign or word from Jack Drake, the detective began to feel really alarmed.

"Is that you, Pycroft?" He was through on the telephone to his old friend, explaining matters. "You might get your sleuth-hounds to keep an eye open for my car. The Rolls, yes; you know the registration number. Good! Let me know if any news comes to hand. So-long!"

He rang off—little dreaming that the plotters who were behind this inexplicable disappearance of Drake and the Rolls had very thoughtfully changed the

registration plates of the car at the first opportunity.

At this very moment Messrs. Villiers and Tankerhead were returning to London via a roundabout course, well pleased with their villainous work.

Villiers, at the wheel of the car, was giving the engine full throttle. By his side sat Tankerhead, chattering and taking up more of his companion's attention than was either good or safe for fast travelling.

Villiers took a bend in the road at a good fifty miles an hour; and as he rounded it he saw, to his horror, a stationary car right in front of his path. Worse still, coming towards him from the opposite direction was a charabanc.

Tankerhead cried out a warning. Villiers, with glaring, fear-filled eyes, gave the engine still more power in a wild, suicidal effort to clear the stationary car and cut in between it and the oncoming charabanc.

The driver of the big charabanc saw his peril, too, in that terrifying moment. Yet he could do nothing. He was on the correct side of the road, travelling at about twenty-five miles an hour. Fortunately, he had no passengers. He did the only thing possible—he slipped his gears into neutral and waited for the inevitable crash.

It came with an ear-splitting, terrifying rumble of sound, not unlike the bursting of a shell. The Rolls hit the bonnet of the charabanc head-on.

The bonnet of the Rolls crumpled; the whole coachwork became telescoped into a splintering, straining wreck. Villiers and Tankerhead felt themselves pitched out of their seats as if hurled headlong by catapults, to reach earth several yards away from the crash with all the breath knocked out of their bodies. The driver of the charabanc collapsed, with a shower of glass bursting round him, and the driving column of the charabanc pressed hard into his ribs.

Next second both charabanc and private car were ablaze, as the petrol ignited.

Not a soul showed on that deserted road for quite five minutes, and in that five minutes the Rolls, burning fiercely, dissolved into an almost unrecognisable wreck. The charabanc, too, was fairly ablaze, and it was certain that both cars



would never survive that head-on encounter to run on the roads again.

The injured driver of the charabanc had managed to fall clear of his wrecked driving seat; and now, crawling on hands and knees to a safe distance from the flames, he relapsed into unconsciousness.

What had happened to the occupants of the Rolls he hadn't the faintest idea. In fact, he was never able to say whether there were two, three, or four occupants. All he had seen in that split second of the crash was the face of the driver.

An ambulance arrived and took the injured driver of the charabanc away to the nearest hospital about twenty minutes later. Many yards away from where he had been found Messrs. Villiers and Tankerhead lay unconscious and hidden from view in the thick fern and bracken.

As a matter of actual fact, they did not come to for two hours after the blazing wreckage of the two cars had been deluged with water and carted off by a breakdown gang. And it was generally supposed by the policeman who took notes of the crash that they had perished in the blazing car. He reported as much to his chief, but the absence of plate numbers—for the registration plates had been melted in the awful inferno—made the Chief Constable's task a difficult one in trying to establish the identity of the driver of the Rolls and any possible passengers who had been with him.

In the meantime, Villiers and Tankerhead had come to, and, helping each other dazedly, managed to crawl across country away from the crash. Bad as their plight was—for both suffered from the after effects of concussion, to say nothing of several bruises and minor cuts—they had no desire to show themselves in public.

By easy stages the two villains managed to put at least five miles between themselves and the crash before they called a halt. Now, bathing their cuts by the side of a stream, they began to think out their plan of campaign.

"Mervyn," said Julius weakly, "that was a narrow squeak!"

Villiers, who was made of sterner stuff than his confederate, nodded.

"It was all that, Julius. But we were lucky—blamed lucky."

They had been lucky indeed to escape with their lives. Had they not been thrown clear it was an odds-on certainty that they would have perished in the blaze.

Now their obvious plan was to get back to their homes in London and prepare an alibi. They knew that sooner or later investigation in more capable hands than that of the village constable who had reported the crash, would reveal that the driver or occupants of the Rolls had not perished in the blaze.

Bathing their numerous cuts they rested awhile by the stream and then prevailed upon a passing lorry driver to give them a lift to town. He remarked upon their appearance, and was told, with a glibness that convinced him, that they had been set upon by a gang of racecourse toughs who had beaten them up, and stolen their money.

"What are you, mates, when you're at home?" asked the kindly lorry driver, remembering that he had just passed a racecourse at which there had been a meeting that day. "Book-makers?"

"You've guessed it," growled Villiers; and received an encouraging wink from Tankerhead. "But we're going out of the business. This is the second time we've been set upon by a race-gang. The game's not worth it."

"I'll say it isn't," sympathised the lorry driver unsuspectingly. "Where do you want me to drop you? I'm going as far as Limchouse."

"That'll suit us," answered Villiers; and sat back in the shadows in silence as the lorry rumbled noisily along the road to London.

Dusk had fallen deeply over the metropolis when the lorry eventually reached town.

"This spot will do us," said Villiers. "Give us your address, an' we'll send you on something for being such a good sort."

The driver made some demur, but the conspirators prevailed upon him to give them his address, whereupon he was assured. "Johnson and his partner, Mason," would be happy to send him a certain sum of money—upon the one consideration that he kept his mouth shut about the "beating up" they had received.

"Okay with me, mister!" replied the lorry driver. "I know 'ow to keep my mouth shut. Thank you, sir! Good-night to you!"

Villiers and Tankerhead got down from the lorry and melted away into the shadows. Half an hour later they arrived at the former's house, having walked the distance, and keyed themselves in. A bath and a change of clothing refreshed them considerably. With scarcely a thought for the driver of the wrecked charabanc they turned in for the night, with the comforting reflection that they had covered their tracks well.

Next morning the two precious scoundrels booked passages in a plane to France, Villiers first inditing a letter on a rough, dirty sheet of paper in sprawling illiterate capitals, addressed to Ferrers Locke at his Pall Mall offices. The message ran:

"Yore boy Drake is a prisoner in Ivey Cottidge, Witley Common."

It was a clever fraud, and it appeared cleverer still when the artful Villiers took a cab to the East End docks, and posted it from there.

Exactly one hour later an aeroplane rose up from Croydon Aerodrome on its journey to France. Aboard the plane were Villiers and Tankerhead, and their intention was to return to England the day they read—as they felt they were certain to read—of the mysterious blowing up of a certain cottage on Witley Common, and the death of Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake.

"Mervyn," Julius Tankerhead confided to his accomplice, "you're a clever dog. I'll take my hat off to you. When that stiff, Locke, is out of the way we'll give the world something to talk about—what? We'll rake in a fortune every week of the year!"

Villiers smiled. Beneath that smile his devilish mind was working evilly. Tankerhead, his fellow conspirator, was becoming irksome; he knew too much. Already safe from one "sticky" jam, the villainous partner was turning his thoughts to getting rid of Tankerhead. No glimmer of this, however, showed in the expansive smile he turned on Tankerhead.

For the moment they were fifty-fifty partners, each with secrets to keep. Later, however—

Villiers' smile deepened. Later would do.

### An Anonymous Letter!

FERRERS LOCKE stood beside the wreckage of the Rolls and the charabanc. A troubled look rested on his intelligent face.

Despite the burnt up registration plates which, under careful inspection, had revealed a blurred sequence of numbers entirely different from his own registration numbers, the detective instinctively felt that this ruin of a car was his.

He roved round it hunting for some definite proof, at the same time fearful of finding it, for it would probably mean that Jack Drake had been driving the car at the time, and had perished.

"Where were the remains of the driver, or occupants of the car taken, officer?" he asked a rather weary station sergeant, a few minutes later.

The station sergeant scratched his head.

"There were no remains, sir," he said, in a fashion which showed his own bewilderment on that point. "Burnt up, I suppose. The car was blazing for a long time, you know."

Locke's brows came together sharply.

"But that's ridiculous," he answered. "There would be some indication somewhere. Charred bones, scraps of clothing—hundred and one signs."

"That's exactly what I thought myself, sir," replied the sergeant. "But the constable who had charge of the case said there was nothing to go upon—just nothing."

The look of scorn Ferrers Locke turned on the sergeant nearly withered him.

"I repeat that that's ridiculous, officer. Even in the fiercest of fires human bones would not disappear as to leave no trace at all. There's something decidedly queer about this case."

"You're telling me!" growled the sergeant. "Guess I've worried myself to death about the blame business!"

Ferrers Locke left the village station and hurried back to the wayside garage where the ruined cars had been dumped. He was glad now that Pycroft had put him "on" to this mysterious head-on crash in which a Rolls and a charabanc had been involved. But it was amazing that there were no signs of the driver of the Rolls. Even if he had perished in the blaze there would of a certainty be some remains that might lead to his identification.

Locke did not let the grass grow under his feet. He was soon inquiring at the infirmary where the injured charabanc driver had been taken, and asking permission to see the man for a moment or so.

The doctor in charge refused that permission, however.

"He's dying, sir," was his grave reply. "His hours are numbered. Besides, there are already two plain-clothes men sitting by his bedside, ready to record anything he has to say—that is if he ever comes to, which I very much doubt."

And Ferrers Locke had to be satisfied with that. The doctor was most emphatic, and his ruling was justified, as events turned out, for the injured



charabanc driver never completely recovered consciousness.

"A set-back at every turn," muttered Locke. "I feel sure that the Rolls was mine. But—"

He returned to town heavy-eyed and weary. In the letter-box of Jules Martinez he found a dirty, smudged envelope, addressed to Ferrers Locke.

With hands that trembled slightly he slit the envelope and read the amazing contents.

"Now what the dooce does this mean?" he asked himself angrily. "Posted in the East End. Written by an illiterate somebody who doesn't even sign his name. The plot thickens."

He studied that dingy scrap of paper with its alarming message for quite five minutes. Under the magnifying-glass it revealed finger-prints without the inevitable whorls by which individuals can be identified, which suggested at once that the anonymous writer had worn gloves of some sort.

"That's queer," muttered Locke. "The writer is illiterate, yet he wears gloves. There's no sign of a real finger-print anywhere on this paper, which tells me that the writer made certain of not being traced. Yet this illiterate somebody who uses the cheapest of paper, is dirtily untidy in his writing, manages to afford the best quality ink it is possible to obtain.

That latter discovery set Ferrers Locke a fresh problem. The ink was undoubtedly of fine quality, which complicated matters. For the poverty-stricken writer, as he obviously intended to represent himself, would hardly possess ink of that sort if things were genuine. That he appeared to be unaccustomed to writing letters was indicated by his sprawling jumble of capital letters and bad spelling. Yet he used the finest ink it was possible to procure.

"That doesn't deceive me," muttered the detective, "neither does the East End postal marking on the envelope. But it's worth looking into for all that, if only from the fact that the writer knows Jules Martinez and Ferrers Locke to be one and the same man."

The obvious thing to do was to journey down to this Ivy Cottage, situated on Witley Common, and make an investigation. But Locke decided to go warily. The message now, to his case-hardened way of looking at life, suggested a probable trap.

An automatic bulged in the detective's pocket when, having seen his fast sports car refuelled, he took the Portsmouth road, and was soon speeding along it at fifty miles an hour.

En route he stopped at the spot where the Rolls and the charabanc had come into collision, although it meant taking him many miles out of his way. But the halt on the roadside produced a result, for the keen-eyed detective was soon locating the spot where two heavy bodies had crashed down upon the fern and bracken, some few yards away from the actual position of the crash.

"Two of them," muttered Ferrers Locke, examining the beaten down ferns. "No wonder there was no sign of human remains in the burnt-out car. For this was where they were pitched out, I'd wager my reputation!"

He gazed about him afresh, saw one or two ominous blood stains, and a zig-zag trail which wound across country as far as the eye could see.

"And that's the way they went," he told himself. "For some reason best known to themselves, they did not wish to linger in the vicinity, although they were hurt."

Memorising these important details, and deciding to follow that trail later, Locke climbed back into his car and set off again for the Tudor cottage. He found it without much difficulty, and learned from a buxom lady who rented a cottage about a quarter of a mile away that the place was owned by a Mr. Eustace Johnson.

"Only seen him once or twice, sir," she informed the detective. "Hardly ever comes to live down here."

She gave a description of the owner of Ivy Cottage, but in no way did that provide a clue, for the description could have fitted a dozen men.

"Then you haven't seen him down here—say yesterday—eh?" finally asked Ferrers Locke.

"No, sir. The place—you can see it from here—has been empty for the best part of a year. Good-day, sir!"

Ferrers Locke climbed back into his car, and toiled the car along slowly to Ivy Cottage. His mind was busy. There was an entanglement of clues which well-nigh baffled him.

He stopped the car outside Ivy Cottage, and walked up to the door. The place seemed deserted, but Locke thumped heavily on the panels of the door first before attempting to force an entry.

The place echoed and re-echoed to his heavy summons, but there came no response.

"Perhaps I shall owe Mr. Eustace Johnson an apology," said Locke grimly, "for I'm going to break into his property. We shall see."

He withdrew a bunch of keys from his pocket, and, within ten seconds, the weather-beaten door was swinging open.

Beyond the narrow hall lay the living-room, and Locke's keen eyes quickly saw traces of muddy boots.

"Two people been here—fairly lately, too," was his reflection, as he examined those tell-tale marks. "And I have a feeling that I'm walking into a trap."

Little did the detective realise how diabolical that trap was!

(Look out for further chapters of this thrilling tee story in next Saturday's MAGNET.)

**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.*

**W**HO are the most popular school-boy characters the world has ever known? Why, Harry Wharton & Co., the chums of Greyfriars! For years and years these cheery schoolfellows have entertained thousands of readers with both their thrilling and light-hearted adventures. Every week letters reach me from north, south, east, and west. In fact, in every corner of the globe there are ardent readers of the good old MAGNET. Some of the letters are from readers of long standing, while others are from readers overseas who have met Harry Wharton & Co. for the first time. It is to the latter particularly that I wish to offer a hearty welcome—to those living in Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa, where the fame of the MAGNET is spreading these days by leaps and bounds. May you one and all, chums, follow the merry escapades of Harry Wharton & Co. for many years to come.

**H**ERE is some interesting information for my "air-minded" chums, which I am giving in reply to a query from Tom Dickinson, of Whitby. He wants to know which is

**THE WORLD'S LONGEST AERIAL TRANSPORT SYSTEM!**

At the present time, this is the route from Paris to Santiago, in Chile, although part of it is carried out by boat. The distance is about ten thousand miles in all, and it can be covered in eight days. The journey proper commences from Le Bourget aerodrome, and the aeroplane service covers France, Spain, the Straits of Gibraltar, and Northern Africa, arriving eventually at Dakar, in Senegal. Fast boats cross the Atlantic from here to

Natal, on the coast of Brazil, where aeroplanes again come into use. The journey continues by plane to Rio de Janeiro, Santos, Montevideo, and Buenos Aires, the largest city in South America. Then follows a most thrilling flight over one hundred and twenty-five miles of the famous Cordilleras, and the plane eventually lands at Santiago, on the Pacific coast of Chile.

"Some" trip, eh, chums? Considering that there are several planes a day from London to Paris, and the journey only takes about two hours' flying time, this new transport system will soon enable an Englishman with three weeks' holiday leave to pop across to Chile and back.

**WHAT IS A SUPERCHARGER?**

If you're interested in stories of motor racing, you may have seen lots of references to supercharged cars. Harry Goodman, of Hove, asks me what a supercharger is. In an ordinary car we rely upon the movement of the pistons to suck the petrol-air mixture into the cylinders. On a supercharged car, however, a pump forces the mixture in, and with its help the gases inside the engine are more compressed, and therefore the accelerative powers and all-out speed of the engine are greatly increased. The result is that a much smaller and lighter engine will give a performance equivalent to that of a much bigger one that has not been supercharged.

Now for next week's programme. The Greyfriars yarn which I have in store for you is a real corker, and Frank Richards has fairly let himself go in:

**"THE WORST MASTER IN THE SCHOOL!"**

which contains more thrills and laughs than I've encountered for a long time. Don't miss this "real winner," boys, whatever you do. Tell your newsagent that you want a copy reserved for you. There will be another full-of-thrills instalment of our splendid serial, and, as usual, our shorter features will include an extra-special "Greyfriars Herald" supplement, a clever poem by the Greyfriars Rhymester, an interesting cricket article by "Umpire," and another little chat with

Your sincere pal,  
**THE EDITOR.**  
THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,371.



## THE BOUNDER'S SACRIFICE!

(Continued from page 24.)

### THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

#### Unexpected!

**T**HE Bounder's eyes gleamed. He was in the passage outside the Head's study when Mr. Smedley came along from the other direction.

Smithy had had his dinner with the Remove. Since receiving the Head's order to pack his box he had had no word from Dr. Locke, and no arrangement had yet been made for his departure.

With all the coolness and nerve he had shown before the Removites, Smithy had a heavy heart that day. The prospect before him, when he reached home, was enough to appal any fellow. And it was in his mind to make some further appeal to the headmaster—to try and make him believe that he had told the truth. With that thought in his mind he came at last to the Head's study, and he was about to tap on the door when Mr. Smedley appeared. And his eyes gleamed at the Creeper and Crawler.

"What are you doing here, Vernon-Smith?" snapped Mr. Smedley.

"I'm going to speak to the Head!" growled the Bounder.

"You had better go!" snapped Mr. Smedley. "I am about to see your headmaster! You may go, Vernon-Smith."

The Bounder did not go. If he was sacked, if this was his last day at Greyfriars, Smedley mattered little to him.

"Do you hear me, Vernon-Smith?" rapped Mr. Smedley sharply.

"I'm going to speak to the Head," answered the Bounder doggedly; and he did not recede an inch.

Mr. Smedley's eyes glinted at him. The Creeper and Crawler was himself in a rather disconcerted frame of mind. Why the Bounder was not yet gone was a puzzle to him.

Dr. Locke, instead of attending to that matter, which was surely an urgent one, had gone out suddenly in his car. He had come in late to lunch, and then gone to his study. And Mr. Smedley was coming there to ascertain how matters stood—to learn whether there was, at the last moment, a slip 'twixt cup and lip. He did not want the Bounder there, and he made a stride towards the junior.

"Go!" he rapped.

"I won't!"

And the Bounder, panting, knocked on the Head's door—a loud, sharp knock.

"Come in!"

Smedley had to suppress his rage as Vernon-Smith opened the study door, and both of them were under the headmaster's eyes.

"Come in, Vernon-Smith!" said Dr. Locke, in an unexpectedly kind voice. "I was about to send for you!"

The Bounder entered.

That kind note in his headmaster's voice gave him a gleam of encouragement. Mr. Smedley followed him at once.

"If you desire me to make arrangements for this boy to reach his home, sir—" said Mr. Smedley.

"Thank you, Mr. Smedley!" said the Head. "But that will not now be necessary."

"Not—not necessary?" Mr. Smedley seemed hardly able to utter the words. "I—I did not quite see—"

He stammered.

"Vernon-Smith is not leaving, Mr. Smedley."

"Not—not leaving?"

"No!"

Mr. Smedley had to turn his face away so that his headmaster should not read its expression. He had failed again—how, he could not begin to guess! But he had failed!

Vernon-Smith heard Dr. Locke's words like a fellow in a dream. He could only stare at his headmaster. Evidently, Dr. Locke had changed his mind. Why, was as deep a mystery to the Bounder as to his enemy.

"I will explain, Mr. Smedley," said Dr. Locke, with a kind glance at the staring junior. "Vernon-Smith informed me in this study that he had sold a valuable trinket, as you supposed, and received, only yesterday, the sum of forty pounds. This money is no longer in his possession. The boy has explained that he used it, not for any disreputable purpose, but in order to give assistance to a certain person who was in need of help."

Smedley blinked at him.

"Vernon-Smith has had the impudence to tell you such a palpable falsehood!" he gasped. "Surely, sir, you did not believe him?"

"I did not, Mr. Smedley. But I have since made certain inquiries, which have convinced me that Vernon-Smith stated the exact facts."

"Dr. Locke!"

"This boy," said the Head, in a slightly raised tone, "has done a somewhat thoughtless but extremely generous action. It was not such an action as

I should have expected of him, and it has raised him very much in my opinion."

"Oh, sir!" gasped the Bounder.

"I shall not go into details," said the Head. "Vernon-Smith has afforded help to a man who could not possibly have accepted it at his hands, and he therefore acted anonymously, and so was debarred from explaining the matter fully to me. Fortunately, I am now in possession of the facts."

"But—" gasped the hapless Creeper and Crawler.

"There is no doubt on the subject, Mr. Smedley. I am only too thankful that I learned the facts in time, Vernon-Smith!"

"Yes, sir!"

"You have shown, my boy" said the Head kindly, "that you, whom I have had reason to believe the worst boy in the school, can act in a kind and generous way, and this gives me great hopes of you. I shall hope that you will try to keep the good opinion I have now formed of you."

"I'll try jolly hard, sir!" gasped Smithy.

Dr. Locke smiled.

"Very well, Vernon-Smith! You may go back to your Form!"

The Bounder left the study, walking on air! Mr. Smedley left it with feelings that could not have been expressed in words.

That afternoon the Remove had the sharpest cutting edge of their temporary Form-master's temper.

But there was one fellow in the Remove, at least, who did not mind.

That was the Bounder.

Once more his phenomenal luck had held good, and he had pulled through. And his last state was better than his first—he had gained his headmaster's good opinion, and had a friend in that quarter.

The other fellows had hardly expected to see him, after what he had told them. Evidently, the sack had not materialised. The Bounder was there, and he drew a sardonic amusement from the snapping voice and frowning brow of the Creeper and Crawler. That gentleman, like the spider in the story of Bruce, found that he had to begin again at the beginning. And, unlike the spider in the story, he was getting rather discouraged.

THE END.

("THE WORST MASTER IN THE SCHOOL!" is the title of the next yarn in this popular series, and you'll find it in next Saturday's MAGNET. See that you order your copy EARLY!)

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### ANTIQUE DEALERS, NOTE

Advertiser requires complete suit of armour with a view to learning American Football.—R. RUSSELL, Study No. 3, Remove.

### WARNING TO NERVOUS PEOPLE

Follows with weak hearts and those who can't stand intense excitement are advised to keep away from the Head's garden on Monday. Mr. Hacker is going to play Mr. Prout at croquet!



# THE NEW Greyfriars Herald



No. 86 (New Series).

EDITED BY HARRY WHARTON.

May 26th, 1934.

### FIRE BRIGADE VOLUNTEERS

Urgently wanted for the Remove Fire Brigade. The House is likely to burst into flames at any moment now that Hoskins has started playing "hot" music!

### DYNAMITE

Advertiser, for a small fee, will give lectures on this subject. Thousands delighted! "Form-master" writes: "We found your lecture on 'Dynamite' most 'uplifting.'"—S. Q. I. FIELD, Study No. 14, Remove.

## PANIC AT CHESS DUEL.

A sepulchral silence brooded over the prefects' room. Doors and windows were closed, heavy plush curtains drawn. Not a sound from without penetrated the thick walls of the sanctum sanctorum of the Sixth; and there was not a ghost of a sound from within.

But the absence of noise did not indicate that life was absent. On the contrary, fully a dozen fellows were present, clustered around a table at which a tense drama was being enacted.

Wingate was playing North in the final of the Senior Chess Championship.

It was a relentless struggle, and silent as the air was, it was as though charged with electricity. There had been no move for two hours, and as minute succeeded minute and still nothing happened, the excitement became more and more intense. The breathless spectators, motionless as statues, gazed at the chessboard with fascinated, bloodshot eyes and distorted faces. The expressions of the principals were as masks.

Longer and longer became the suspense; more and more breathless the spectators; heavier and heavier the silence. And then—CRASH!

A deafening roar seemed to echo across the room, throwing the whole assembly into wild chaos. Husky shouts of fear rang out, and one man even yelled: "Where's my bullet-proof waistcoat?"

Somebody had dropped a pin!

## NO JAM FOR BUNTER

Just before the opening of the mass meeting to advocate the provision of more hard courts at Greyfriars for the coming tennis season, Billy Bunter rushed into the crowded Hall, greatly excited.

"I say, you fellows, where is it?" he panted.

"What the thump—"

"If you greedy bounders have pinched it I hope you'll have the common decency to hand it over! Skinner told me about it first, and I consider I've got the first claim on it!"

"In the name of thump what are you—" "I'll be sporty about it," broke in Bunter, considerably. "If you chaps have collared it I'll whack out a half between you and I'll be satisfied with the rest."

"But what on earth are you burbling about?" shrieked Tom Brown.

"The jam, of course!"

"Jam?"

"Exactly! Skinner assured me on his word of honour that if I came here I'd find a tremendous jam. Well, where is it?"

"There was a gasp. Then a yell."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Tremendous jam!" chortled Tom Brown. "And you naturally imagined a large jam of preserves! Better get ready for a shock, old fat bean!"

"Has it gone, then?" demanded Bunter.

"Not gone; it's still here, all around you. But not the kind of jam you mean! Skinner meant there was a jam of people in Hall. So there is—a tremendous jam!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The fellows yelled, but Bunter swooned.



Taking the school entirely unawares, a party of juniors belonging to the Fourth Form have begun an amazing mutiny! This is the remarkable item of news we have to record this week.

Mutinies, of course, are not new to Greyfriars. Most of our readers are aware that on more than one occasion in the past attempts have been made at rebellion against authority.

The present mutiny, however, is unique, for the mutineers are not, as on previous occasions, members of the Sixth or Fifth Forms, but mere infants of the Fourth!

The excuse (we can call it nothing more!) for this outbreak is that our worthy and respected headmaster, Dr. Goodsmyte, has been meting out punishments in too severe a fashion. The revolt was hastened by his sentencing Summerville, of the Fourth, to two weeks in an underground cell on bread and water and a flogging for being two minutes late at calling-over. As soon as the Fourth heard of this sentence wild excitement seized them, and a number of them, led by George Wharton, paraded beneath the headmaster's window, hooting and hissing!

Why these infants should become so excited is a puzzle. Any old boy could tell them that two weeks in a dungeon and a flogging would have

The headmaster, we need hardly assure our readers, did not mince his words. He told the foolhardy juniors that if they surrendered at once they would be let off with floggings all round and bread-and-water

diet for the rest of the term. Strange to relate, this generous offer was not accepted.

Having heard the decision of the mutineers, Dr. Goodsmyte tried to force his way through the front door into the mill—and it was then that the almost incredible climax of the drama was reached. Just as he was rattling the handle of the door Wharton and Summerville leaned out of the window above him and inverted a sack of flour—and in an instant the headmaster was converted into a figure of white.

He returned to Greyfriars after that and a howl of derision followed him from the mutineers!

It is evident that Wharton and his colleagues are in the mood to offer the most desperate resistance, and at the moment it is difficult to foresee the future course of events. One thing is certain—sooner or later, the rebellion is doomed to end in defeat. We shall not care to be in Wharton's boots when that time arrives!

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## GREYFRIARS 100 YEARS AGO

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## Louts Taught a Lesson

### Greyfriars Master's Little Surprise

Two pie-faced sports from London who have been staying at the Cross Keys at Eriadale lately have been trying out a peculiar brand of humour. The idea seems to have been to wait for a Greyfriars chap or a master to come along the road, then bump into him as violently as possible and ask belligerently: "Where d'you think you're goin', eh?" Any retort to that question is a signal for the peeling off of coats and the rolling back of sleeves!

The pugnacious pair got away with this little pleasantry quite a number of times, with the result that they became more offensive as time went on.

At least, they did until last Wednesday—and then a slight change of programme made them revise their ideas a little.

A Greyfriars master came walking down the lane immersed in a massive volume on the theories of one Einstein. That massive volume, in conjunction with the reader's cap and gown and academic air, gave the humorists an idea that a very suitable victim was approaching. Exchanging a wink, they lounged across to the master and did their stuff. Having barged him into the middle of the lane, they remarked respectively: "Where d'you think you're goin', eh?" and "Look out, can't you?"

The beak looked up and mildly told them that he thought they were to blame for the collision themselves. In an instant they were discarding their coats and squaring up to him.

The beak raised his eyebrows and carefully placed his book aside.

The next moment a cyclone struck the one and a hurricane the other. Both found themselves lying in the middle of the lane staring dizzily at a million stars which had unexpectedly appeared before them!

They are still wondering vaguely what happened.

We can enlighten them. The man they tackled happened to be Larry Lascelles—maths master at Greyfriars and also ex-light-heavyweight champion!

Perhaps they'll know better now!

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## Haunted Cave Mystery

### Juniors' Startling Experience

A party of Remove fellows consisting of Nugent, Squiff, Skinner, Kipps and Bulstrode have mot with an adventure which is going to take a lot of explaining. To get to the point right away, they've met a walking skeleton!

In case you wonder what brought such an oddly-assorted crowd together, we should explain that they happened to be the victims of a recent borrowing campaign on the part of Fisher

Fish had hired a motor-boat and set off alone on a trip round the Shoulder. So they, too, hired a motor-boat and took the same course.

Fish was not to be seen when they rounded the promontory and Bulstrode suggested that he might have gone exploring in one of the caves that abound on this part of the coast. Accordingly, the Remove party guided their boat into the first cave they came to and did a bit of exploring themselves.

It was dark in the cave, and the torch which Squiff happened to have thrown but a feeble light on the scene. Dark as it was, however, there was sufficient light to reveal the sinister object which reposed in a distant corner of the cave.

That alone was a startling enough discovery. But it was nothing compared with the development that occurred a minute later.

As the explorers stared at the gruesome relic they saw suddenly to their horror that the skeleton's arms were beginning to move—and a little later its legs, too! To complete its amazing activity, the entire skeleton then stood

upright and began to walk with slow, stately steps towards the Remove party!

Squiff, who was at the wheel, has never been accused of being a funk. But he doesn't mind admitting that at the sight of that grisly spectre advancing from the eerie depths of the cave, he just stepped on the gas and steered the motor-boat right out of the cave. And the rest of the party don't mind admitting that his action met with their entire approval.

Don't ask us what is the explanation of the strange phenomenon—we can't tell you!

We only know that Nugent and Squiff and Skinner and Kipps and Bulstrode didn't hang about the caves looking for Fish any longer that afternoon. They were jolly glad to get back to shore safe and sound and hurry back to Greyfriars to tell the whole school the story of their astounding adventure!

So that's all we can tell you about the skeleton in the cave under the Shoulder this week.

Perhaps by next week some of our enterprising reporters will have paid a visit to the cave and unearthed the "story."

Look out for next week's number and see!

Q: Why is a cook like a barber?  
A: Because he dresses hair!



T. Fish, our pet business expert from U.S.A., and had met for the purpose of cornering him.

Hearing that Fish had been seen making towards Pegg Village, they set off in pursuit together. Arriving at Pegg sands, they were told that

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