

THE
MAGNET

"THE SECRET OF THE DUGOUT!"

Amazing
School-Adventure
Yarn of Greyfriars

INSIDE!

The Magnet ^{2^D}



TROUBLE ON THE TRAIL!



The GREYFRIARS HERALD



EDITED BY HARRY WHARTON

THE IMPATIENT PATIENT!

BY THE EDITOR

YESTERDAY the other members of the Famous Five and myself had occasion to bump Coker of the Fifth under the elms. We often do these kindly little actions for old Coker, but he's not very grateful. He jumped up and hurled himself at us.

We dodged away through the elms towards the sanny, but Coker grabbed me by the collar of my jacket. I tried to break free, and tore my jacket across the shoulder. Whereupon, we booted Coker out of the picture.

Mrs. Kebble, the matron, was standing at the door of the sanny.

"Oh, look at your jacket, Master Wharton!" exclaimed the good soul. "You'd better come in and let me sew it for you."

"Thanks awfully, ma'am!"

There was no patient in the sanny. I took off my jacket and sat on a bed, while Mrs. Kebble went to the matron's room to do the repairs.

While I was sitting there, Dr. Pillbury paid his morning visit.

"Hallo, young man! Where's Mrs. Kebble?" he said, opening his bag and taking out a stethoscope.

"She won't be a moment, sir, if you wouldn't mind waiting."

He nodded and popped a thermometer into my mouth. I gobbled frantically, trying to tell him I was not ill.

"Keep it under your tongue, my boy," he said, opening the neck of my shirt and pushing the stethoscope on my chest. "Now just breathe normally and sit quiet."

He listened gravely for a few minutes, then took out his watch and felt my pulse.

"H'm! Excited irregular action," he commented. "You must stay in bed and keep perfectly quiet. Let's look at your temperature."

He removed the thermometer and allowed me to speak.

"I—I say, sir, I'm not ill——"

But he interrupted me.

"My dear boy, you must allow us to know best about a thing like that. It's not serious," he said cheerily, "but we must take great care of you. I shall put you on a diet. Oh, Mrs. Kebble," he said, as the matron came in with my jacket, "we shall need to take particular care of this case! I will prescribe a tonic——"

"But, bless my heart, the boy's not ill!" cried Mrs. Kebble, in surprise. "He was sitting there while I mended his jacket!"

"Ah! H'm! Quite so!" gasped the doctor, in confusion. "A delicate boy—he ought to be careful—I don't like the look of him at all." And he faded away, with a shake of his head. Delicate my foot! He can't pull my leg like that!

Yours wisely,
HARRY WHARTON.

DICK RAKE TELLS OF— THE STATUE MYSTERY!

Big Hall at Greyfriars is a fine place with a raised platform at one end, on which the master stands to call the roll. Sometimes, of course, this platform is used for a more painful purpose. The Head stands on it to flog some wretched youth who is spreadeagled on Gosling's back. This was the case not so long ago, when Kenney of the Upper Fourth was honoured with a public flogging for visiting the Three Fishers.

Now a public flogging is a very solemn occasion. Nobody feels cheerful about it, because they all wonder uneasily who will be the next to go through it. But at Kenney's whopping there were loud and persistent giggles from all parts of the Hall. The Head was greatly shocked.

"How dare you?" he stormed. "If there is any more of this unseemly laughter—Really, Mr. Prout, is it possible that you are laughing?"

"Far be it from me to laugh, sir!" gasped old Pompous, red in the face. "Far be it from me to see anything amusing in such an outrage, sir. Are you not aware, sir, that the Wycliffe statue has been tampered with?"

At the side of the platform, out of view of the Head, stands a marble statue, supposed to be of John Wycliffe. How or why it is there nobody knows. Wycliffe is shown as a bearded figure, dressed in a loose gown very like a master's. He has an open book in his left hand, and his right fin is raised in a sort of passionate gesture.

Now some criminal had stuck an old mortar-board on his head, and put a large birch in his upraised hand. He looked for all the world as though he were about to administer a public flogging on somebody, and this ludicrous appearance was so apposite that we couldn't help gurgling.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed the Head, stepping down from the dais. "Who has ventured to commit this outrage?"

"I have no idea, sir!" spluttered Prout. "Doubtless a junior—ha, ha! I mean doubtless some reckless boy in the Remove."

"Nothing of the kind, sir!" said

Quelchy hotly. "I am convinced that my boys are incapable of such an act."

I wasn't convinced myself—in fact, I could have given Quelchy half a dozen likely names—but it wasn't my place to say so.

The Head removed the birch and mortar-board and then resumed operations on Kenney. After which, he said:

"And now I command the boy who touched that statue to step forward."

Prout turned lobster-colour and Quelch smiled gently as Fitzgerald of the Fifth stepped out. It is absolutely impossible for Fitzgerald to lose the chance of a practical joke. He spends his entire life in trouble because of this weakness.

"Sure, I did it," he confessed dolefully. "Bedad, sir, I've been wanting to do that same every toime I see the ould statue, and I just couldn't help it, intoirely!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And ever since then, poor old Fitz has been writing lines. He hopes to get his imposition finished about July, 1944.

A POEM BY PENFOLD

HARD LUCK, BUNTER!

See Bunter to the house is bound,
He doth not wait nor tarry,
He hath a cake so large and round,
As much as he can carry.
"Now who be ye who cross this quad,
Just like a barrel rolling?"
Thus cries the worthy Peter Todd,
As he is idly strolling.

"Oh, really, Toddy! Let me go!
I'm rather in a hurry.
This isn't Coker's cake, you know;
It's mine, old chap—don't worry!
But Coker's seeking me, I fear,
So let a fellow travel,
For if the beast should catch me here,
My blood would stain the gravel!"

"Oh, haste thee, haste!" the Porpoise cries.

"Don't be a heartless joker.
I'll meet the raging of the skies,
But not an angry Coker!"
Too late, alas! For Coker comes.
They hear a roar like thunder.
The Owl can only say: "Oh crumbs!"
Before he's trampled under.

"Oh, Coker, stay thy heavy hand!"
But none heard Toddy speaking.
Said Skinner: "Listen to the band!"
At Bunter's frantic squeaking.
For Coker's boot came into play,
And Bunter, sore repenting,
Saw Coker take that cake away,
While he was left lamenting.

WHAT STRANGE SECRET IS HIDDEN BEHIND THE GREEN DOOR OF THE DUGOUT AT SEA VIEW? THAT'S WHAT HARRY WHARTON & CO. WANT TO KNOW!

The SECRET of the DUGOUT!



By
FRANK RICHARDS

QUICK CURE!

Taking a packet from his inside pocket, the new master at Greyfriars dropped it into the cavity beneath the floor!

"HOW much?"
"Oh, really, Cherry—"
"How much?" roared Bob Cherry.

Bob stood in the doorway of Study No. 7 in the Greyfriars Remove, with a large basket in his hand. Billy Bunter sat in the study armchair and blinked at him through his big spectacles.

That basket was about half-full of scraps of paper.

Since tea, Bob had been carrying that basket from study to study in the Remove passage; and at every study, till he came to No. 7, there had been contributions to its contents—in the shape of torn-up newspapers, old exercises reduced to fragments, and all sorts of literature in small sections.

Which was in preparation for the Remove paperchase on the morrow.

Scent for a paperchase was not so easy to come by as of old. There was rather a shortage of material. Newspapers and other publications were to be had—but they were sadly reduced in size.

But there could not be a paperchase without scent. So it was a case of all hands to the mill. Every fellow in the Remove was expected to get something from somewhere. And every fellow did—with the exception of Billy Bunter.

Billy Bunter, sitting in the armchair in Study No. 7, did not seem

to be bothering about paperchases when Bob Cherry looked in.

Leaning back in the armchair, with one fat leg crossed over the other, Bunter was consuming a chunk of toffee. He turned his big spectacles on Bob Cherry with an indignant blink.

Bob held out the basket.

"How much?" he demanded, for the third time.

"I haven't been able to get any," explained Bunter. "I'm not coming on the run to-morrow, you know."

Super School Story, Starring
HARRY WHARTON & CO.,
the World-Famous Chums of
GREYFRIARS.

"Every man in the Remove is coming!" answered Bob cheerily. "That's official! Slackers will be rooted out and booted. Every man has got to help provide scent. Get a move on!"

"I can't come!" hooted Bunter. "I'm keen enough, of course—nothing I should like so much, really! But I've sprained my ankle."

Bob Cherry stepped into the study and slammed the basket down on the table. If Billy Bunter had sprained a fat ankle, Bob was prepared to be properly sympathetic. But he seemed to have doubts.

"Roll out of that chair!" he said.

"I can't get up at present! I'm resting that sprain. The pain is fearful." Bunter screwed up his fat features into an expression of anguish. "Like burning daggers, old chap! It may be better to-morrow. But I'm afraid it won't be well enough for me to join in the paperchase—keen as I am."

"Which ankle?"

"I forget—"

"What?"

"I—I—I mean, the—the right ankle!" amended Billy Bunter hastily. "The agony is awful! You might tell Wharton that I shan't be able to join up to-morrow! Tell him it's no good making a fuss—I simply can't. With a sprained ankle, you know—"

"You've sprained it to-day, all ready for to-morrow?" asked Bob.

"Yes—I mean, no—of course not! I—I slipped coming upstairs, and— and gave it a fearful cosh! I could hardly limp into this study!" said Bunter pathetically. "The pain was—was harrowing."

Bob Cherry looked at him.

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"You can't get out of that chair?" he asked.

"Not at present, old fellow! I may be able to limp about later, if I give it a good rest. But I can't go rooting over the House after waste paper! That's simply impossible. The agony——"

"Rough luck!" said Bob sympathetically. "No good asking you to come along to my study for a spread, then? You'd hardly care for jam tarts or doughnuts, in that awful agony."

Bob picked up the basket and went to the door.

Billy Bunter fairly bounded out of the armchair.

"I—I say, old chap, I'll come!" he gasped. "I can get to your study all right. That's all right, old fellow!"

Bob Cherry turned back.

"I fancied you could if there was a spread on!" he agreed. "But as there isn't——"

"What?"

"Nothing of the kind!" said Bob cheerily.

"Why, you beast, you said there was!" howled Bunter.

"Not at all! I said it would be no good asking you to my study for a spread. It wouldn't, would it, when there isn't any spread?" asked Bob affably.

Billy Bunter gave him a glare that almost imperilled his spectacles, and sat down in the armchair again.

"Beast!" he snorted.

"Still, if you can get as far as my study, you can get as far as some other study, and bag some waste paper for scent!" chuckled Bob.

"I can't! How can I move, with this awful sprain?" howled Bunter. "My left ankle's nearly busted——"

"Your left as well as your right?"

"I mean my right! I tell you, I gave it a fearful cosh, going downstairs——"

"Oh, my hat! You must be like Mr. Facing - both - Ways in the Pilgrim's Progress, if you were going downstairs when you were coming upstairs!"

"I mean when I was coming upstairs! Look here, you leave a chap to rest a sprained ankle when he's suffering awful agonies!" exclaimed the fat Owl of the Remove indignantly. "I can't get up! If there was an air-raid warning this very minute, I couldn't stir!"

Harry Wharton, the captain of the Remove, looked into the study.

"How are you getting on?" he asked. "Got it full yet?"

"Not quite!" answered Bob. "Bunter hasn't done his whack! He's sprained his ankle——"

"What?"

"He doesn't know which, but it's giving him fearful pains and awful agonies. He did it going downstairs and coming up at the same time. He can't get out of that chair—so I'm going to help him out."

Bob Cherry grasped the back of the armchair and tilted it forward.

Bunter got out of that armchair! He got out quite quickly! He rolled on the study carpet with a roar.

"Yaroooh!"

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"Can you get up now?" asked Bob.

"Beast! No! Rotter! Wow!

No! I can't move!" roared Bunter.

"Why, you awful swab, if you roll that armchair over on me, I'll——"

Bunter bounded.

Considering the weight he had to lift, and the fact that he had a sprained ankle, the activity he displayed was really wonderful.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Wharton, at the doorway. "That looks as if you can move, Bunter!"

"Beast!"

"Can you walk out of the study, Bunter?" asked Bob.

"No!" yelled Bunter.

"Oh, all right! If you can't, you can't, and you won't be able to collect any waste paper. But I'm going to boot you till you do!"

Billy Bunter bounded again.

"Beast! Keep off! If you don't stop kicking me, you beast, I'll—— Yarooop!"

It appeared that Billy Bunter could, after all, walk out of the study. Not only could he walk—he could run! And he did!

Before Bob Cherry's foot had landed more than thrice on the tightest trousers at Greyfriars School, Billy Bunter was sprinting.

Bob Cherry followed him from the study, grinning.

"Don't come back without your whack of waste paper!" he roared. "More to come, if you do!"

"Beast!" A fat squeak floated back.

And Billy Bunter disappeared down the Remove staircase—going strong, sprained ankle and all!

WASTE PAPER WANTED!

"VERNON-SMITH——"

Billy Bunter paused as he heard that name.

His fat hand was raised to tap at the study door of Mr. Lamb, the art master of Greyfriars. Bunter was in search of his whack of waste paper.

Other fellows had already rooted through most of the available studies. Bunter had left it so late that he had to glean, as it were, after the others had reaped. That was why he had rolled up Masters' Passage to Mr. Lamb's study.

Lamb had lots of papers. Lamb, the art master, did pen-and-ink drawings for illustrated papers, of which plenty lay about his study. Bunter did not see why Lamb should not let him have a few. They were not, so far as Bunter could see, of any value.

As Lamb, during the enforced absence of Mr. Quelch, was taking the place of the Remove master, there was no reason why he should not oblige a member of his Form. Bunter was going to ask him, anyhow. A pile of illustrated papers would see Bunter through. If he found Lamb in a good temper, it would be all right. And nine times out of ten Lamb was found in a good temper.

But as Mr. Lamb's voice reached his ears from within the study, the fat Owl of the Remove paused and

did not knock. Instead of using his fat paw, he used his fat ears.

Lamb's voice was generally a mild and inoffensive bleat. But when he uttered the name of Vernon-Smith, a hard note crept into it.

All the Remove knew that Lamb had a very heavy down on Herbert Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars. Most of the fellows thought that Smithy had asked for it. He had a feud on with Lamb—and if it was true that Lamb had started it with a savage outbreak of unexpected temper, it was equally true that the Bounder had carried it on with systematic ragging ever since the term had started.

And Smithy's rags were not of a mild order. Tossing a bundle of fireworks into Lamb's window in the middle of the night, and introducing a bulldog into the Form-room, were rather over the limit, even in the opinion of fellows rather given to ragging. And the fact that Lamb could not pin the Bounder down for these offences probably made him all the more annoyed.

Billy Bunter grinned as he listened to Lamb's voice from the study. He was very curious to hear what Lamb was saying about the junior he disliked. He wondered to whom Lamb was saying it.

He knew the next moment as he heard the voice of Loder of the Sixth. It was a Sixth Form prefect who was discussing the Bounder with Mr. Lamb in his study.

"I have no doubt of it, sir! I have every reason to believe that Vernon-Smith has gone out in the black-out several times. I have not actually spotted him, but I have no doubt of it!"

Lamb's voice came again.

"Vernon-Smith is the worst boy in my Form, Loder! I have heard that he was so considered when Mr. Quelch was here!"

"That is certainly so, sir!"

"I believe," said Mr. Lamb, "that he breaks out of bounds at night. I may say that I am assured of it. Such a boy should leave the school, Loder! His influence over the other boys must be bad. I think——"

A door opened along Masters' Passage, and Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth, rolled out of his study.

Billy Bunter's fat ear was at once withdrawn from Lamb's keyhole.

Bunter, sad to say, had no scruples about acquiring information by way of a keyhole. But he did not want to be caught at it. The consequences would have been painful. So, as Prout appeared in the offing, Bunter relinquished the keyhole at once and tapped on the door.

"Come in!" came the Lamb's bleat. The fat Owl opened the door.

Mr. Lamb was seated at a drawing-board, with a brush dipped in Indian ink in his hand. Loder was standing by the table. Both had ceased to speak.

"If you please, sir——" squeaked Bunter.

"What is it, Bunter?" rapped Mr. Lamb. The fat Owl could see that he did not like the interruption of his talk with Loder.

"If you please, sir, we're having a paperchase to-morrow, and we want all the paper we can get. May I have some of these, sir?" Bunter indicated a pile of illustrated magazines on the table.

Mr. Lamb stared at him over his gold-rimmed glasses. Perhaps, as his drawings were published in those magazines, he attached more value to them than Billy Bunter did.

"No!" he snapped.

"I mean, as they're no good, sir——" explained Bunter.

"Take fifty lines, Bunter!"

"Eh?"

"Now go!"

"Oh!"

Billy Bunter went. He had not, after all, been lucky enough to catch Lamb in a good temper.

He shut the door before he murmured:

"Beast!"

Lamb's conversation with Loder on the subject of Vernon-Smith was resumed. But the fat Owl had no further chance of eavesdropping. Prout was in the passage, talking to Mr. Capper, the master of the Fourth, in his doorway.

Bunter rolled disconsolately away.

Lamb had let him down, like the beast he really was, in spite of his usual soft and fluffy ways. But Bunter had to get waste paper from somewhere. That unspeakable beast, Bob Cherry, would boot him if he went back empty-handed.

But the fat junior grinned as he rolled out of Masters' Passage. He knew what he was going to do. Gerald Loder was with Lamb—Loder's study in the Sixth, therefore, was unoccupied. Loder's study, being unoccupied, was safe. Bunter rolled off to the Sixth Form quarters.

He knew that there were available supplies there. Some of Gerald Loder's manners and customs were better known to the juniors than to the headmaster. Bunter had no doubt that a careful search of Loder's study would reveal two or three newspapers of the "Racing Tips" and "Sporting Scoops" variety. Loder was a beast—he had often whopped Bunter. It would be rather a lark to bag his sporting papers.

Billy Bunter blinked round him very cautiously through his big spectacles, saw that the coast was clear, and whipped into Loder's study in the Sixth.

Nothing in the nature of a racing paper was to be seen at a casual glance. Loder was not so incautious as that. But the Peeping Tom of Greyfriars knew a lot about Loder. From under the cushion in the arm-chair Bunter disinterred a pink paper with the attractive title of "Sporting Scoops." From behind a row of school books on a shelf he extracted a "Racing Calendar"—quite a thick volume with a lot of waste paper in it. From beneath the blotter on the table he jerked a daily paper, open at the football pools page. Grinning, the fat Owl stuffed his plunder under his jacket, and left Loder's study as cautiously as he had entered it.

Loder, discussing that bad boy,

Vernon-Smith, with Mr. Lamb, remained in blissful ignorance of the loss of his sporting literature.

Billy Bunter, as he rolled away, had no doubt that Loder would be fearfully wild when he discovered the loss. But he had no doubt, either, that Loder would bear that loss with silent resignation. Racing papers were not the kind of things that could be inquired after by a prefect of the Sixth. So far from inquiring after the missing papers, Loder would not dare to admit that they were his if they turned up.

So the fat Owl felt quite safe as he rolled away to the Remove passage with his plunder.

IN BLACK AND WHITE!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"

"Bag him!"

"Bump him!"

"Scrag him!"

There were seven fellows in Study No. 1 in the Remove when Billy Bunter's fat face and big spectacles glimmered in at the door.

The Famous Five were there—and Vernon-Smith and Tom Redwing. On the study table stood the basket—now full nearly to the brim. But it still lacked Billy Bunter's contribution—hence the remarks with which the fat Owl was greeted as he blinked into the study.

"I say, you fellows——" began Bunter.

"You fat, frowsting, frabjous frump!" said Harry Wharton. "If you don't shove your whack into the basket——"

Bob Cherry rose to his feet.

"Turn round, Bunter!" he said.

"Eh? Wharrer you want me to turn round for?"

"Haven't you come here to be booted?"

"Oh, really, Cherry——" Billy Bunter jerked a pink paper in haste from under his waistcoat. "I've got lots! Look here!"

"Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Frank Nugent, staring at "Sporting Scoops." "Where on earth did you dig up that rag?"

"Better not let a beak see you with it!" grinned Johnny Bull.

"I'll watch it!" said Billy Bunter.

"I expect if it was found on me, Loder would make out that it wasn't his at all!"

"Loder!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"I got it in his study!" explained Bunter.

"Does he know?" grinned the Bounder.

"The knowfulness is probably not terrific!" chuckled Hurrec Jamset Ram Singh.

"Well, he was jawing with the Pet Lamb in his study, so it's all right," said Bunter. "He won't make a fuss about it—he, he, he! I've got another paper here—looks as if Loder goes in for the football pools! That's two! And I've got something else, too!"

Bunter produced the "Racing Calendar."

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry, staring at it. "That must

have cost Loder three or four shillings."

"Well, it's waste paper, ain't it?" said Bunter.

"Yes, rather—if ever there was waste paper, that is!" agreed Bob. "But——"

"Let's have a look at that!" said Vernon-Smith.

He jerked the "Racing Calendar" from Billy Bunter's fat paw.

Smithy was interested in such things—as interested as Gerald Loder was.

Tom Redwing frowned as Smithy opened the volume and glanced into it.

That kink of blackguardism in his chum was irksome to Redwing; though, as he had a great capacity for minding his own business, he said little or nothing on the subject.

"Sporting Scoops" and the football pools paper were quickly reduced to shreds and mixed up with the other contents of the basket. Then the Famous Five looked expressively at Smithy.

Bunter's methods of obtaining his whack in the scent did not perhaps wholly meet with their approval. Still, Loder was better off without such pernicious rubbish; and the sooner a racing volume was reduced to fragments, the better for everybody concerned.

"Hand it over, Smithy!" said Harry Wharton.

But Smithy was not in a hurry to hand it over.

He was gazing very intently into that volume.

"I say, you fellows, Loder was with the Pet Lamb!" grinned Bunter. "I heard them talking about Smithy."

Vernon-Smith looked up quickly.

"About me?" he exclaimed.

"He, he, he! The Lamb's got his knife into you, old chap!" chuckled Bunter. "I'll bet you he knows it was you who got that bulldog into the Form-room the other day—he jolly well guesses, anyhow! He jolly well knows that it was you who chalked 'Who's Nobby?' on the blackboard. Think he doesn't guess?"

"I meant him to, so long as he can't fix it on me!" said Vernon-Smith coolly. "If a Greyfriars master chooses to be acquainted with a ruffian like that man Nobby Parker, he must expect to have it rubbed in—after smacking a fellow's head! But what about Loder?"

"I'll bet you he's getting Loder to cop you!" said Bunter. "He was telling Loder you break out at night! So you jolly well do! You're an awful blackguard, Smithy, ain't you? Ain't he, Redwing?"

Redwing did not answer that question. But the Bounder answered, by picking up a cushion and whizzing it across the study.

Plop!

The cushion suddenly enveloped a fat face, and Billy Bunter staggered and sat down with a startling suddenness.

Bump!

"Ooooooogh!" spluttered Bunter.

"Look here, Smithy!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"Ow! I say, you fellows—ow!" roared Billy Bunter. "You beast, Smithy, wharrer you fancy you're up to? Beast!"

Billy Bunter scrambled to his feet, red with wrath. He grabbed up the cushion, with a deadly blink behind his big spectacles.

Bunter had been knocked over by that cushion! Smithy was going to have it back, as hard as Bunter could send it.

He backed into the doorway—ready for instant retreat as soon as he had buzzed the cushion. Then he buzzed it, good and hard.

It flew, and crashed! It missed Vernon-Smith by about a yard, and caught Johnny Bull under the ear. Bunter was rather cack-handed in these matters.

There was a fearful roar from Johnny as he rolled off his chair and distributed himself over the carpet of Study No. 1.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter. And he fled.

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

"Ooogh!" Johnny Bull sat up dizzily. "Ow! Wooh! Why, I—I'll slaughter that mad ass! I'll—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Johnny Bull scrambled up.

But the mad ass had not remained to be slaughtered. Billy Bunter had vanished.

Johnny glared round at six grinning faces. Johnny did not seem to see anything at which to grin. He rubbed places that had established sharp contact with the floor, and grunted.

"Look here, hand over that muck, and let's get it torn up, Smithy!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "Pretty set of cads we should look if it was seen in our study."

The Bounder gave a jeering laugh. "This belongs to Loder!" he said. "And Loder's after a chap for kicking over the traces. Precious sort of a fellow to come the prefect, isn't he?"

"Loder's a rank rotter!" answered Harry. "He would be jolly well sacked if Dr. Locke knew what two or three dozen fellows could tell him. But never mind that—chuck that muck over, and let's get rid of it!"

The Bounder grinned sourly.

"I'm keeping a page out of it as a souvenir!" he answered. "Look at that!"

He held out the open volume for inspection.

The Famous Five stared at what they saw. On the open page was a list of horses. On the margin was something written in Loder's handwriting.

Evidently the black sheep of the Sixth had been studying that volume. Loder, among his sporting friends in the Sixth, prided himself on knowing all about geegees. The volume was well thumbed—Loder had given it a lot of attention at various times. And on that special page, he had made some notes for his future guidance. Loder's notes ran:

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"Blue Bag's a dark horse. Four times third, three times second. O.K."

Harry Wharton blinked at that cryptic inscription.

"What's that—a puzzle?" asked Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Smithy.

"Well, if it isn't a puzzle, what is it?" demanded Bob gruffly. "I can't make head or tail of it."

"You wouldn't!" grinned the Bounder. "Loder's picked out Blue Bag as a winning horse, you ass. He's come in third four times, and he's come in second three times, so jolly old Loder thinks it's time he came in first—and won! So he's O.K.'d him to back."

"The dingy sweep!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"For goodness' sake tear the rubbish up!" exclaimed Frank Nugent. "That's enough to get Loder sacked, if the Head saw it!"

"Quite!" agreed the Bounder.

He coolly tore out the page with the written-on margin, folded that page, and packed it away in his wallet. Then he tossed the volume on the table.

"Get on with it," he said. "I'm done with that—now."

The juniors looked at him—rather grimly.

Tom Redwing's face was crimson. He did not speak, but Harry Wharton did, emphatically.

"You've no right to keep that, Vernon-Smith."

"Think not?" sneered the Bounder.

"You jolly well know you haven't!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Look here, let's tear that page up with the rest."

"I'll watch it!"

Harry Wharton rose to his feet.

"You can't keep that page, Vernon-Smith!" he said quietly. "It's a dirty trick. It serves Loder right to have his dingy rubbish torn up, but keeping that page is dangerous to him—and it's no bizney of yours what a Sixth Form man does! Hand it over!"

"No bizney of mine?" repeated the Bounder, with a sneer. "Not when our dear little Baa-Lamb has set him to catch me out, if he can!"

"He can't catch you out if you don't do anything to be caught out at! If you play the goat, you can take your chance."

"So can Loder!" said the Bounder grimly. "I've got it, in black and white. Let Loder trail me all he likes—he may find a surprise at the end of the trail! I'm looking after Number One, and if you don't like it—"

"I don't!"

"Lump it, then!" said the Bounder coolly.

He walked to the study door.

The Famous Five made a movement, all together—half-inclined to collar him. But Smithy stepped quickly out of the study, and walked up the passage.

Redwing, with a crimson face, followed him; and Harry Wharton & Co. were left alone in Study No. 1. They looked at one another.

"No bizney of ours, I suppose?" said Bob Cherry at last.

And the remainder of the "Racing Calendar" was reduced to fragments, and added to the contents of the basket.

JUST LIKE BUNTER!

"Oh crumbs!"

"That ass!"

"Look!"

The whole Remove fairly gasped. Every eye in the Form turned on the blackboard and the chalked inscription thereon.

Only one member of the Form did not seem startled. That one was Billy Bunter.

Bunter grinned—like a fellow enjoying a joke.

"You blithering ass!" Peter Todd whispered in a fat ear.

"Eh?"

"You potty porpoise!" muttered Vernon-Smith.

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"Look out for squalls!" grinned Skinner.

"I say, you fellows, I never did it!" breathed Billy Bunter, in alarm.

"I say, don't you get making out that I did it!"

"Ass!" said Bob Cherry.

"Beast!" hissed Bunter.

Mr. Lamb had let his Form in for third school in the morning. He had gone to his desk and so had not seen what was on the blackboard, as it stood on the case facing the Form. He would see it in a minute or two, that was certain. All the juniors saw it as they took their places. And—with the exception of Bunter—they saw it with alarm.

In big sprawling capital letters, chalked on the board, were the words:

"WHOO'S NOBBEY, I'D LIKE TO NO?"

There was only one fellow in the Greyfriars Remove capable of putting up spelling like that. Bunter was a real genius at that game. If it was possible, barely possible, to misspell a word, Bunter was not the man to miss that possibility! Bunter would ask a fellow how many "k's" there were in "cucumber," and put in two, or even three, to make sure!

So, as soon as they saw that chalked inscription on the board, all the Remove knew, of course, that Bunter had done it.

Evidently, the fat Owl had got into the Form-room in break, and left that query on the blackboard to greet Mr. Lamb's eyes in third school.

It was Bunter all over.

Smithy had been finding it no end of a rag to rub in, as he called it, the curious circumstance of Mr. Lamb's acquaintance with the man Nobby—whose surname was Parker, and who was caretaker at the chalet Sea View on the cliff road, the other side of the village of Friardale.

Parker was a stocky, pimply, unpleasant sort of man, low-browed and surly and disagreeable. He looked, in the Bounder's opinion, like a gangster. He was certainly a curious acquaintance for a Greyfriars master.

But the Bounder had seen Mr. Lamb visit the sea-road chalet; he had seen him go down into the air-raid dugout there with Nobby Parker, and he had heard him address Mr. Parker by the familiar nickname of "Nobby."

The fact that Mr. Lamb was a man with secrets to keep would not have interested Smithy specially, but for the fact that he had a feud on with the art master, who had started that term with Smithy by losing his temper and smacking Smithy's head. In the circumstances, it interested Smithy very much, and he made the most of it.

So the fat Owl saw no reason whatever why he should not give Lamb a taste of the Nobby of whom he disliked so much to hear.

The juniors took their places—but Bob Cherry, always good-natured, paused. A duster was hanging on the peg of the blackboard, and Bob wondered whether there was a chance of getting hold of it and rubbing out the inscription before it met the Lamb's eyes. Any other fellow could have chalked on the board without being spotted, but it was clear that Bunter was going to be spotted.

"Oh, you fat chump!" muttered Bob. "You'll get six for this, and

"You fat chump!" breathed Bob. "I tell you—"

"Don't you butt in, you cheeky beast!"

Bob jerked at his sleeve.

Bunter held on to it. He wasn't going to let his inscription on the board be wiped out! Not Bunter! So far as Bunter could see—which was not very far, even with the aid of his big spectacles—it was as safe for him to jape Lamb like this as it was for Smithy! Bunter wasn't going to have a cheeky ass butting in!

Mr. Lamb glanced up as Bob



Vernon-Smith's left shot out and caught Nobby Parker under the chin. The caretaker reeled back, lost his footing, and landed with a terrific splash in the ditch!

The disconcerting question: "Who's Nobby?" had been found on the blackboard once before. It had been found written on a sheet of paper in Lamb's study. It had been called in at the Form-room door. And there was no doubt that it made the Lamb wild! That was why Smithy did it!

It was like Bunter to follow the Bounder's lead and give himself away by so doing!

Lamb was a beast. He had given Bunter fifty lines merely for asking him for waste paper. He had doubled those lines as they had not been handed in. Lamb did not seem to like Bunter much—which was remarkable, Bunter being such a charming fellow. But there it was—he did not like him!

Often and often the Lamb forgot to ask a fellow for his lines. But he never forgot to ask Vernon-Smith, and he seldom forgot to ask Bunter.

you know how the Lamb lays it on when he's shirty!"

"He won't know who did it—besides it wasn't me, you know. I never came into the Form-room in break. The Lamb didn't leave the door unlocked, and I never opened it when I came in—I mean, when I didn't come in—"

"I'll rub it out, you fat ass, if there's time!" whispered Bob.

He glanced towards Mr. Lamb.

The little art master was taking papers from his desk. He was not, at the moment, giving his class attention.

Bob resolved to risk it.

He made a movement to cross to the blackboard.

Billy Bunter grabbed him by his sleeve.

"Look here, you leave that alone!" he hissed. "Lamb won't know who did it. It will make him sit up. You leave it alone—"

jerked and Bunter pulled! He peered at his class over his glasses.

"Order, please!" he bleated. "Please keep order, my boys! There is too much noise in this Form-room. It has been complained of! Cherry, sit down at once."

That did it!

Bob Cherry sat down, and the fat Owl had to be left to his fate!

Bunter grinned at him triumphantly.

"Cheeky ass!" he whispered. "Butting in—yah!"

There was a chuckle among the Form. Most of the Remove thought that Bunter would soon be wishing that he had let Bob butt in.

But it was too late now; Lamb had left his desk, and was coming towards the class. His look was quite amiable—he was the Pet Lamb, mild and fluffy, that he generally was. But the Remove knew that the Pet

Lamb's amiability was liable to break down very suddenly, and to allow a very fierce temper to flash out. And they expected it to happen as soon as he saw what was on the blackboard.

And they were right! As he came within view of the front of the board, Lamb glanced at it, and his face hardened like iron, his eyes gleaming over his glasses.

He gave Bunter's inscription one look, and stepped back to his desk for his cane. Then he came towards the Form again, and his hard, glinting eyes fixed on the Owl of the Remove.

"Bunter!" he rapped.

Bunter jumped!

The beast was picking on him, after all. Bunter did not know why.

"Oh! Yes, sir!" he gasped. "It wasn't me, sir—"

"Stand out before the Form."

"But I never—"

"Stand out at once!"

"Oh lor'!"

In the lowest spirits, Billy Bunter crawled out before the Form. Evidently it was not so safe as he had supposed to follow in the footsteps of the Bounder.

GETTING SMITHY!

MR. LAMB swished the cane in the air.

His eyes were fixed on the palpitating Owl of the Remove, with a glint in them that gave the unhappy Owl a chill.

The Remove looked on—the Bounder with a sneer on his face. The man who played the part of a mild and lamb-like master, who was looked on all through the school as a silly ass, was giving himself away, in Smithy's opinion—giving away his real nature, as he often did when his angry, bitter temper was roused. The wretched fat Owl blinked at him, rather like a fat rabbit fascinated by a particularly dangerous snake!

Mr. Lamb pointed to the blackboard with the cane.

"You chalked those words on the board, Bunter?"

"Oh, no!" gasped Bunter. "I—I haven't been in the Form-room, sir! I—I couldn't get in, as the door was locked—"

"The door was not locked."

"I—I thought it was, when—when I turned the handle, sir! I mean, I never turned the handle! I was in the tuckshop at the time. I—I've never heard the name of Nobby, sir! Never in my life."

"Who told you to chalk those words on the board, Bunter?"

Vernon-Smith's lip curled. The Lamb was thinking of him, of course. He was ready to let Bunter off, if he could get at the Bounder.

"Oh! Nobody, sir!" moaned Bunter. "You see, I never did it! Besides, it was only a lark! I never knew it would make you wild, sir!"

"You are the most stupid boy in this Form, Bunter! I have no doubt that some other boy induced you to do this. Give me his name at once!"

Bunter blinked at him helplessly.

Nobody had put him up to it. He had perpetrated that jest all on his

own. It was true that he had only followed the Bounder's example. But the Bounder had known nothing of it. Had he known, he would certainly have warned the fat and fatuous Owl to steer clear of japing the Lamb.

The Remove sat silent, but some of them looked contemptuous. Lamb was, in point of fact, asking Bunter to sneak—a thing that Mr. Quelch would never have dreamed of doing. Not for the first time, the Remove compared Mr. Lamb very unfavourably with their old Form-master. There were many fellows in the Form who wished fervently that Ferrers Locke, the detective, would succeed in finding their kidnapped Form-master; they had had enough of his substitute.

Mr. Lamb swished the cane again.

Billy Bunter's podgy knees knocked together.

"You had better tell me the facts, Bunter!" he said grimly. "I am quite assured that you did not think of this yourself."

Lamb was quite right in that. Bunter had picked up this jape from the Bounder; certainly it never would have evolved out of his own fat head.

"It—it wasn't nobody—I—I mean, anybody!" groaned Bunter. "Besides, I never did it, sir! I was in my study when I came here—I mean, when I never came here. I—I didn't want to make you wild because you gave me lines, sir! I—I like lines!"

Mr. Lamb watched him like a cat. All the Remove could see that he was not going to cane Bunter if he could get at Vernon-Smith. Otherwise, certainly the fat Owl was for it, good and hard.

"Who mentioned this name to you, Bunter?" asked Mr. Lamb, indicating the name on the blackboard with the cane.

"N-n-nobody, sir! I—I've never heard it before."

"That name," said Mr. Lamb, "is the name of a man who was employed as a gardener at Oakshott School when I was a master there. His name is Parker, but he was nicknamed Nobby by the boys. He is now employed as a caretaker at some seaside house. For some reason, some boy in this Form thinks it is annoying to me to repeat the man's name. It has been done on several occasions."

The Remove listened to that with attention. It was a simple enough explanation of the fact that Mr. Lamb was acquainted with the caretaker at Sea View.

But the Bounder had a mocking look in his eyes. In his view, it was the best Lamb could do to explain a circumstance that could no longer be kept a secret, as he had desired.

"Now," went on Mr. Lamb, "I do not intend to permit this impertinence to continue. If you have been guilty of those repeated tricks, Bunter—"

"Oh, no!" howled Bunter in alarm.

"It wasn't me last time! This is the first time I've done it, sir—and I never did it, either! Never thought of such a thing. I was in the tuck-

shop when I was in my study—I mean, I was in my study when I was in the Form-room—that is, I—I mean—"

"It was not you who wrote similar words on the blackboard last week?" asked Mr. Lamb.

"No fear! I—I mean, no, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I never did, and I wish I hadn't now— Oh lor'!"

"Then who was it?" asked Mr. Lamb.

"I—I—I don't know, sir!" groaned Bunter. "I—I haven't the foggiest idea! I—I think it was a—a—a fellow in another Form, sir! Perhaps it was Loder, or—or Coker, or—or somebody, sir!"

"It is perfectly clear to me, Bunter, that this foolish trick was put into your foolish head by another boy. You have merely followed his example."

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter, blinking at him. This seemed rather like magic to Bunter. He could not imagine how Lamb had guessed that.

"Is that the case, Bunter?"

"Oh, yes! I mean, no! I never knew Smithy—"

"Vernon-Smith!" Lamb snapped on the name.

"Oh, no! I never meant to say Smithy, sir!" gasped Bunter, in such a state of terror and confusion by this time that he hardly knew what he was saying at all. "I never knew it was Smithy—I never heard him tell Skinner. Did I, Skinner?"

Harold Skinner answered that question only with a deadly glare.

"I think we have arrived at the truth now," said Mr. Lamb grimly. "Bunter, as you have only followed the example of another boy in your usually foolish manner, you may go back to your place."

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. He almost bounded back to his place.

"Vernon-Smith, you will stand out before the Form!" said Mr. Lamb.

Vernon-Smith gave the fat Owl of the Remove an expressive look, indicative of trouble to come, and stepped out.

Lamb fixed his eyes on him.

"I shall not ask you, Vernon-Smith, whether it was you who played these repeated impertinent tricks," he said. "You would answer me untruthfully, as I am well aware. The fact is established now, and I shall punish you."

He pointed to a desk with his cane.

"Bend over that desk, Vernon-Smith!" His voice came in almost a snarl, and he swished the cane.

The Bounder, in savage silence, bent over the desk. The fact, as the Lamb said, was established now—what he had suspected before, he knew; and Smithy had to face the music.

Six strokes rang through the Remove room; they rang loud and sharp. Mild little man as Mr. Lamb generally looked, he packed a lot of muscle. He put most of it into that swiping.

Smithy was hard as nails, but his face was white when it was over. Quelch had never laid on the cane like that in the Form-room. Smithy certainly had asked for this; but

there was a streak of cruelty in the Lamb, and it came out in that whopping. When it was over, the Bounder went quietly back to his place—with a white, set face.

Mr. Lamb laid down the cane, took the duster, and wiped the blackboard clean; then he turned to his Form—the amiable Pet Lamb again.

"Now," said Mr. Lamb, "we will commence. We have lost time; we must work all the harder for it—what?"

Most of the juniors were relieved to see the Pet Lamb his mild and docile self again. Third school went through without another spot of trouble—only the Bounder sitting with a pale, savage face.

When the Form went out, after the hour, Lord Manleverer ambled into the quad after the Famous Five. His lordship had a very serious expression on his face.

"That man's a rank rotter, you men!" said Mauly, shaking his head. "He's the limit! He's the outside edge! He makes me ill!"

And Mauly ambled on, having delivered himself of that opinion. With which opinion Harry Wharton & Co. were in full accord.

THE PAPERCHASE!

"FEEL fit, Smithy?"

"Why not?" snapped the Bounder.

"Oh, all right!" said Harry Wharton amicably. "But if you'd rather not run as hare——"

"I'm going to run!"

"O.K.!" said the captain of the Remove.

Harry Wharton carefully took no notice of the Bounder's unpleasant manner. It was some hours since that savage whopping in the Form-room, but it was quite plain that Herbert Vernon-Smith was still feeling it.

Smithy and Wharton had been selected as hares in the paperchase; and some fellows, perhaps, might have preferred to be excused after what Smithy had had that morning. But he was welcome to have his way.

"Think I'm made of putty?" growled Vernon-Smith. "I can stand a licking, I hope, without doing a song and dance about it!"

"It was a bit tough——"

"Yes," said the Bounder, between his teeth, "it was tough! The rotter made a point of that after frightening that fool Bunter into giving me away. I'll get even with him!"

"He's a rotter!" said Harry. "Even old Mauly can't stand him. I wish poor old Quelch was back!"

"Oh, we shan't see Quelch again in a hurry!" sneered the Bounder. "That man Ferrers Locke is supposed to be in search of him—and it's well known that he was kidnapped by Slim Jim, the cracksman—and Locke can't do a thing. Last week there was another crib cracked near Court-field—Slim Jim at it again. Locke must be a fool!"

"Hardly that," said Harry. "But he doesn't seem to be having much luck, if he really is at work on the case. Slim Jim isn't easy to catch—

nobody has ever seen his face, except poor old Quelch—and he's taken jolly good care that Quelch doesn't get a chance of pointing him out. Well, it's about time we got going. Wingate's going to start us at the gates——"

"Hold on a minute!" said Vernon-Smith. "Mind if Reddy runs with me—and you in the pack?"

Wharton paused a moment.

"O.K., if you like, old bean!" he said. "I'll tell Redwing. He's a good man on a run—and I'd just as soon be with my friends."

Wingate of the Sixth started the run at the school gates—which were to be "home" after the run. Harry Wharton had marked out the course of the run, and it did not occur to him that the Bounder had any idea in his head of changing that course after he had started. That the Bounder could do if he liked, if his fellow-hare made no demur—the pack had to follow the paper trail wherever it led.

All the Remove gathered outside the gates, even to Fisher T. Fish, Skinner, Snoop, and Billy Bunter. Every man in the Remove had to join up. But it was probable that the weaker brethren would tail off fairly early. Billy Bunter certainly was likely to disappear at the very first favourable opportunity. Ten yards was about as much as Bunter wanted—ten feet would have suited him better. Peter Todd had promised to run behind him and help him with his boot, and the fat Owl was already watching for a chance to dodge Toddy's eye.

Vernon-Smith and Tom Redwing, with their bags of scent slung over their shoulders, stood ready.

At the signal from the Greyfriars captain, they started at a swinging trot down Friardale Lane.

Ten minutes' start was allowed. Then Wingate's signal set the pack in motion.

The whole Remove went swooping down the lane—the Famous Five and other strenuous fellows in the lead, such as Squiff, Tom Brown, Mark Linley, Ogilvy, and Penfold. After them streamed the rest of the pack—Billy Bunter dropping immediately to the rear—and Peter Todd dropping after him and giving him the promised assistance which restarted Bunter to the accompaniment of a fiendish yell.

The hares, out of sight in the winding lane, ran on lightly. Tom Redwing's face was bright and cheery. He was enjoying the run in the keen, fresh air on a fine afternoon with a touch of spring about. Smithy's face was not so bright. He was feeling some sharp twinges from Mr. Lamb's cane, and there were bitter thoughts in his mind and bitter feelings in his heart.

"This way, Smithy!" called out Redwing, as they reached the stile in the lane, which gave on the footpath through Friardale Wood. The Bounder was running on towards Friardale.

"Come on!" called out Vernon-Smith over his shoulder.

Redwing cut after him.

"Wharton mapped it out by Pegg

and up the other side of the Sark to the bridge, Smithy!" he said.

"I've mapped it out again since then."

"Oh, all right!"

"We can get to Pegg by the sea-road," said Smithy, as they ran on towards the village.

"Well, that's not so good!" said Tom, rather perplexed. "There's a wind from the sea, and the trail may get scattered on the open cliffs."

"They can take their chance of that!"

"Well, yes; but——"

"Oh, come on!" grunted the Bounder.

It dawned on Tom Redwing that Smithy had some special reason for going by the sea-road. He did not for the moment guess what it was.

They trotted on, skirting the village, laying the paper trail across the meadows. From the meadows they emerged into the cliff road—the sea on their left shining blue in the winter sunshine. On their right, as they ran, was a fence, barring off fields from the road, and here and there the garden of some seaside bungalow.

Vernon-Smith slowed down as they came abreast of the gate of Sea View. Back from the road stood the chalet. A stocky, pimply man who was smoking a pipe in the veranda stared across at them, and scowled.

Mr. Parker, the caretaker of Sea View, knew Vernon-Smith by sight. Some distance from the house, farther back, was the grassy mound that camouflaged the air-raid dugout among the hawthorns and poplars.

"That's the place, Reddy!" said Vernon-Smith. "That's the dugout where I saw Lamb go down with that man Parker—whom he calls Nobby! That's the blighter in the veranda yonder! Looks the sort of acquaintance for a Greyfriars master, doesn't he?"

"Well, if he was employed at a school where Lamb had a job, I suppose Lamb would speak to the man if he saw him."

"Do you believe that yarn?" sneered the Bounder.

"Well, yes, I suppose so."

"Then you're a silly mug!"

"All right. Let's get on; we're wasting time," said Redwing, with a glance back along the sea-road. "We don't want to get caught half-way out, Smithy."

"Come on!"

"Smithy," shouted Tom Redwing, as Vernon-Smith coolly threw open the gate and ran into the chalet garden, "stop! You can't go across there! It's trespassing, Smithy—and you know how savage Lamb was when Wharton——"

"Come on, I tell you!"

Giving the house a wide berth, the Bounder ran on towards the air-raid dugout, scattering the scent as he went.

Tom Redwing understood now what was in his chum's mind. Simply because he was convinced that Lamb desired to keep his acquaintance with Nobby as dark as he could Smithy was going to lead the whole Remove across the gardens of Sea

View—for where the trail led, the hounds had to follow. There was going to be a rush of custom, so to speak, that afternoon at the usually lonely chalet on the sea-road by the cliffs.

"Smithy," Redwing shouted in the gateway, "come back!"

The Bounder ran on. If his chum did not follow, he was going on alone.

But Redwing, after a brief pause, followed. Actually, there was no harm done in crossing the acre of ground that surrounded the chalet. It was uncultivated, except in one spot where the caretaker grew vegetables, and in another where there was a chicken run. Still, it was private ground, and Smithy certainly ought not to have entered it without leave. Neither would he have done so, but for his feud with the Pet Lamb.

Redwing cut after his chum at top speed. The sooner they were out of those forbidden precincts, the better.

From the veranda of the chalet came a roar of wrath as Mr. Parker beheld the two schoolboys one after the other, streaking across, right under his eyes.

Mr. Parker threw down his pipe and rushed down the steps from the veranda, rather like a lion from his lair.

Tom Redwing put on a spurt and rejoined his chum. And after them, with his pimply face crimson with wrath, came Nobby Parker, raging.

UNPLEASANT FOR PARKER!

THE Bounder chuckled breathlessly as he looked round over his shoulder.

"Come on—quick!" panted Redwing.

"This way!" grinned Smithy.

He did not head directly across the ground to the hedge of the meadow on the farther side. He trotted round the mound that covered the air-raid shelter.

Redwing ran by his side, angry and impatient. He was anxious to get away as quickly as possible. The Bounder was not. The red rage in Mr. Parker's face, astern, did not worry Smithy; it only amused him.

Smithy laid the paper trail round the clump of poplars that grew round the dugout. On the farther side, away from the road, he came to a halt. He pointed to a green-painted door, sunk in the side of the mound.

"That's the entrance," he said. "That's where I saw Lamb go down with Parker!"

"For goodness' sake, come on!"

"Oh, that blighter won't catch us in a hurry!" said the Bounder coolly. The juniors could hear the panting breath of Nobby coming round the mound after them. But the great mass of earth hid him from sight for the moment. "Take him round again, shall we?"

"Let's get out!"

"What's the hurry?"

"You utter ass!" exclaimed Redwing. "The man will report this at the school. He did before, when

Wharton and his friends were here, though they only took shelter from the rain in his veranda."

"Let him report! Hallo, here he comes!"

Parker came panting round.

The Bounder waved a cheery hand at him and started off again.

The juniors ran on, completing the circle of the mound. Then the Bounder struck off towards the chalet.

"Smithy!" panted Redwing.

The Bounder laughed and cut on, his reluctant chum with him.

Parker, in his turn, left the mound behind and rushed after them.

The stocky man was fairly active, but the schoolboys were easily able to keep ahead. They ran past the front of the house, scattering the paper trail, and circled entirely round the building. If the pack followed the trail—as they must—Mr. Parker was booked to see quite a lot of the Greyfriars Remove that afternoon.

Parker, panting and spluttering, raged on the track of the hares. Having circled the house, the Bounder at last cut off towards the distant hedge at the back.

"Oh, my hat!" he ejaculated, as the hares drew near it.

The hedge was thick and high. On the near side of it was a wide and deep ditch, half-full of flowing water and thick with mud. From the road that ditch was not visible. But it became visible as the hares drew near to it.

"Oh, you ass, Smithy!" exclaimed Redwing. "We can't jump that with the hedge on the other side!"

"We've got to get out somehow! Parker doesn't look as if he wants us to stay!" chuckled the Bounder.

He ran along the edge of the ditch, looking for a practicable crossing. But this lost ground, and gave Mr. Parker a chance of cutting across and getting to close quarters.

"Here you are!" exclaimed Smithy.

He stopped, spotting a gap in the hedge on the farther side of the flowing ditch. By taking a little run, it was possible to leap across at that point.

But there was now no time either for taking a run or a jump! Mr. Parker was arriving on the spot, full pelt.

He rushed straight at Vernon-Smith and grasped him by the shoulder.

The Bounder, without the slightest hesitation, struck at him, thumping him on the chest with a thump that made the stocky man stagger.

"Hands off, you rat!" snapped Smithy.

"Keep back, my man!" exclaimed Redwing. "We're going—"

Parker did not heed him. He staggered back three or four paces under the Bounder's hefty thump; and then, recovering himself, rushed at Vernon-Smith again, his clenched fists up his face flaming with rage.

The Bounder side-stepped with lightning rapidity. He was standing almost on the edge of the ditch. Parker checked himself, on the very verge.

But, as he checked his rush and

turned on the Bounder, Vernon-Smith made a quick spring and thumped again, getting Nobby Parker under the chin.

Parker reeled back, lost his footing on the muddy edge of the ditch, and fell in backwards.

There was a terrific splash as he landed in the ditch. The water flew up almost in a water-spout.

"Oh!" gasped Redwing, aghast.

The Bounder gave a breathless laugh.

"That's that!" he panted. "Come on!"

Mr. Parker, rolling over in the ditch, spluttered and howled. There was a good foot of water, over a foot of mud, and Parker sat up in it, streaming.

Redwing stared at him in dismay. The man was a surly brute, but that did not alter the fact that the schoolboys were crossing his land without leave, and laying a trail for about twenty other fellows to follow.

"Oh, Smithy, you ass!" breathed Redwing. "There will be a fearful row about this—"

"Think I was going to let that ruffian lay his paws on me?" snapped the Bounder. "Don't be a fool!"

"Yurroogh!" came spluttering from Mr. Parker, as he strove to drag himself to his feet, squelching frantically in mud and water. "Urrrh! I'll limb yer! Urrrh!"

"Are you coming, Reddy, you fat-head?"

The Bounder, heedless further of the spluttering and squelching caretaker of Sea View, took a quick run and cleared the ditch with a bound. He landed in the gap in the hedge, and then ran into the meadow.

"Come on, you dummy!" he shouted, waving his hand to Redwing.

Tom followed him, leaping the ditch and landing in the gap.

Vernon-Smith, grinning, looked back through the gap at Nobby Parker.

Parker was crawling out of the ditch on the other side, gasping for breath, streaming with water, and breathing mud and fury.

He stood up, looking a deplorable object, wet and muddy, clothed in mud as in a garment.

The Bounder laughed loud and long. Mr. Parker, in his opinion, had got just what he had asked for; and as for possible consequences, the reckless Bounder dismissed them from his mind.

Parker went squelching away towards the chalet, leaving a trail of mud on the grass.

Smithy, looking after him, was still laughing.

Suddenly he ceased to laugh, and caught Redwing by the arm.

"Duck!" he whispered.

"What—"

"Quick!"

He dragged Redwing down into cover of the hedge.

Redwing stared at him in amazed inquiry.

Smithy pointed through an interstice in the hedge.

"Look!" he breathed.

"But what—"

"The jolly old Lamb!"

"Oh!" gasped Tom.

He looked across the field, past the chalet, towards the sea-road. A figure was visible on the road, stopping at the gate. The sunshine gleamed on gold-rimmed glasses.

It was Mr. Lamb, the art master of Greyfriars.

The Bounder gave a sneering laugh as Redwing stared through the hedge at the distant figure of the Pet Lamb.

"He's here again!" he said. "This seems to be his favourite walk on half-holidays! He seems to like to see that pimply blighter who was a gardener at Oakshott when he was there—what? What's his game, Reddy?"

"No business of ours—for goodness' sake, let's get out of this!" muttered Redwing. "By gum, though, the other fellows will be coming on—there'll be a crowd here soon, and I—"

"Nice for Lamb!" grinned the Bounder. "His visit won't be very private this time—he's dropped in, right between the hares and the pack! Half the Remove will see him here this time! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, come on!" muttered Redwing. He was quite dismayed at the outcome of his chum's recklessness.

"Keep your head low!" said Smithy. "The hedge will cover us! That ruffian Parker doesn't know our names—I don't see how he's going to report us at Greyfriars; but if Lamb spotted us—"

"Come on!"

Keeping their heads low as they ran, the two schoolboys cut across the meadow, dropping scattered paper behind, and in a few minutes, scrambled over a stile into a lane. Then they trotted on—the Bounder in great glee—Redwing wondering what on earth would happen when the Greyfriars pack arrived at Sea View and came on Mr. Lamb there!

MR. LAMB HUNTS COVER!

MR. LAMB, at the gate of Sea View, uttered an exclamation of annoyance.

There was a strong wind from the sea, blowing rather hard on the road along the cliffs, and—for some reason unknown to Mr. Lamb—it was scattering fragments of paper, several of which blew into his face.

Lamb had not come from the direction of the school, through Friardale. Had he done so, he would doubtless have seen something of the hares or the hounds.

He had come from the opposite direction—from the village of Pegg, on the coast. That meant that Mr. Lamb had walked across to Pegg first, and started towards the chalet from the Pegg end of the sea-road. Which, if anyone had observed it, would certainly have borne out the Bounder's belief that Lamb desired to keep his visits to the lonely chalet a secret. He had left the school immediately after lunch and taken a roundabout course, which covered at

least three miles instead of one and a half.

Of the Remove paperchase he knew nothing, unless he remembered Billy Bunter's request for waste paper the day before. Certainly he would never have guessed that Smithy was leading a paperchase across the field surrounding Sea View—after several fellows in the Remove had been severely punished for trespassing at that spot.

So Mr. Lamb had no idea why fragments of paper were flying about in the wind from the sea, only he was annoyed when they blew into his face.

He opened the gate and went in, letting the gate swing shut behind him. Then his eyes fell on a dismal and bedraggled figure coming across the field.

He stared at the muddy Mr. Parker over the gold-rimmed glasses, which Mr. Lamb really did not seem to need to improve his vision.

Parker was coming away from the ditch, squelching mud at every step, and clawing mud from his face as he came.

Mr. Lamb hurried towards him. He noticed, though without specially heeding, that a lot of those fragments of paper were blowing about the field. He broke into a run and passed the air-raid shelter, meeting Mr. Parker on the farther side of it.

"What has happened?" snapped Lamb. There was no trace of the amiable Pet Lamb about him now. That outward aspect was kept for Greyfriars.

Parker spluttered.

"Two of them young rips!" he gasped. "One of them 'as been here before—I know his face, though I don't know his name. Not one of them five that you copped—the one that was with them and got away! He's tipped me into the ditch—urrgh! Look at me!"

"A Greyfriars boy!" exclaimed Mr. Lamb. "A Remove boy if he was with Wharton and his friends that day! Where is he now? I saw no one on the road—"

Parker pointed to the hedge at the back of the field.

"That's the way they went—two of 'em, blow 'em! One was a quiet lad enough—but the other—I'll limb him, if I get my 'ands on him! Tipping a covey into a ditch—"

"I shall inquire into this at the school!" said Mr. Lamb, between his closed lips. "Wharton and his friends have already taken warning not to come here again—I shall see that others do the same."

"I fancy there'll be some more of them coming along!" grunted Mr. Parker, as he clawed at mud.

"What! Why?" snapped Mr. Lamb.

"It's a paperchase!" grunted Parker. "Ain't you seen the trail across the field? There'll be a 'ole crowd along 'ere soon, you can lay to that!"

"Oh!" exclaimed Mr. Lamb.

His eyes shot round towards the road. At the same time, he made a movement to get into cover, placing the dugout mound between him and

the road. If a whole crowd of Greyfriars fellows were about to come whooping along that road, Mr. Lamb did not want to be a conspicuous object on the landscape when they came.

The road, for the moment, was bare and deserted. But, as he looked, bobbing heads over a low fence in the distance caught his eye.

A number of fellows were running up the road, though the fence hid them from sight, so far, with the exception of the heads that bobbed into view from moment to moment.

Mr. Lamb stared for a moment or two, his features setting hard, his eyes glinting, his teeth shutting together.

He knew now what had happened; the paper trail led from the gate, across the field to the hedge at the back. In a minute or two, the Greyfriars pack would be at the gate—and whether they entered or not, they would have a full and clear view across the field. Unless he kept in cover, he would be seen. Dozens of eyes would spot him there—which Mr. Lamb, for good reasons of his own, desired to avoid.

He backed farther out of view, behind the grassy mound. His face was dark with rage. But he had had, as a matter of fact, a lucky escape of being spotted already. Had he been a minute or two later at the gate, he must have been seen by the pack streaming up from Friardale.

"Ere they come!" Parker left off scraping mud for the moment. "You can 'ear them now!"

"They will not cross the field!" muttered Lamb. "They know that it is trespassing, and—"

He broke off. The hares had disregarded that consideration, and it was only too likely that the hounds would do the same. They had to follow on the trail, or else give up the run half-way out. The hares, certainly, should not have laid the trail where they had laid it. But they had done so—and a keen pack were not likely to turn back—all the more because there obviously was no harm in crossing a weedy, uncultivated field.

"They'll come, all right!" grunted Mr. Parker. "Cut across to the 'ouse, and lie low till they've gone!"

"Fool!" was Lamb's reply to that.

He noted, at a glance, that he had no time to cut across to the chalet and dodge indoors before the leaders of the pack reached the gate and saw him.

"They'll be 'ere in a matter of minutes!" grunted Parker. "That young rip laid his trail right round the dugout, and round the 'ouse, too—they'll be coming right round this 'ere—"

Lamb breathed hard.

"I will make them sorry for this, later!" he said, between his teeth. "But they must not see me here—it would make too much talk. It is easy enough—I will go down, and you follow and tell me when the coast is clear. I have to go down into the dugout, in any case—it matters little."

"O.K.!" said Mr. Parker. "But I tell you, if they come in at that there gate, some of them will be sorry for themselves when I lay my 'and on a stick!"

Parker hurried across to the house. Unheeding him, Mr. Lamb stepped down to the green-painted door, and unlocked it. It seemed that he had a key to the air-raid dugout at Sea View, as well as the caretaker.

Quickly he opened the door. Within, all was black, but the glimmer of light from outside revealed the head of a wooden staircase.

The door snapped shut with a spring lock. Then Mr. Lamb touched a switch, and an electric light shone out on the wooden staircase.

The dugout was supplied with electricity, by a sunken wire from the chalet. The art master of Greyfriars descended the wooden stair, passed a door that was locked and bolted on the outside, and entered a small room, with wooden matchboard walls.

If Herbert Vernon-Smith, whose suspicions of the art master were deep though vague, had been able to witness his next action, Smithy's suspicions might have taken a more definite form. For Mr. Lamb's next action was to pull aside a square of carpet, unscrew a short section of board in the wooden floor, and then to take a packet from an inside pocket, which he dropped into the cavity beneath the floor.

A SPOT OF TROUBLE!

"THAT cheeky ass—"
"That chump—"
"That terrific goat—"

The Famous Five were deeply exasperated.

They gathered at the gate of Sea View, where the paper trail had led them. They stared over that gate, with deep feelings. More and more fellows came streaming up the road, and joined them there. There was a general halt at the gate.

At that distance from the school the pack had thinned down. Billy Bunter had been the first to dodge, the moment Toddy's eagle eye was off him. Skinner and Snoop and Fisher T. Fish had not been long after him. Other fellows had dropped out. But twenty juniors were still on the run, and most of them gathered at the gate—staring over it at the paper trail that led across forbidden country.

"The dummy!" said Harry Wharton. "That's why he wanted to drop me and take Redwing. I should have stopped him at this game."

"We can't go across!" said Frank Nugent. "That surly brute Parker will make trouble, and it means another row with Lamb!"

"The terrific ass ought to be booted!" said Hurrec Jamset Ram Singh. "But the chuckfulness of the run is not the proper caper!"

"No fear!" said Johnny Bull.

"We've got to keep on!" said Peter Todd.

"Can't chuck it at this!" declared

Tom Brown. "Dash it all, there's no harm in cutting across—nothing growing in the fields but weeds—"

"Come on!" said Squiff, putting his hand to the gate.

Harry Wharton stood angry and uncertain.

This was just one of the Bounder's wild tricks. He had deliberately led the chase across Sea View, because he knew that Lamb had some reason for wishing Greyfriars fellows to steer clear of the place. Or, rather, he did not know it, but only suspected it.

Certainly, the Famous Five believed that the Bounder was right on that point—Lamb did object, for some mysterious reason. He had punished the whole Co. with very unusual severity, on a complaint from Parker, though they had only taken shelter from the rain under the veranda roof.

But that was all the more reason for steering clear of the place. The Famous Five were not seeking trouble with Lamb, if the Bounder was.

"Can't go round and pick up the trail again," said Bob Cherry. "Might as well chuck up now, as try that on!"

"We've got to keep on!" growled Bolsover major. "Why the thump not? Nothing in that field to damage that I can see!"

"I know that!" grunted the captain of the Remove. "But it's the garden of that chalet, though it's only a rough field. The caretaker will make a fuss, and it means a row with Lamb."

"Blow the caretaker!" growled Bolsover major.

"And blow Lamb!" said Ogilvy.

"There's the man!" said Harry, as Mr. Parker came in sight from the house, with a big stick under his arm.

"By gum! Looks as if he wants a wash!" said Russell.

"Looks as if he's had one, in mud!" grinned Bob Cherry. "I wonder if that mad ass Smithy has been having trouble with him?"

"Smithy all over!" said Nugent. "If there's any trouble lying around, frust Smithy to pick it up. Are we going on?"

"I jolly well am!" declared Bolsover major, and he threw open the gate and tramped in. "We're doing no harm—let that rotter say what he likes!"

"Oh, come on!" exclaimed Squiff. "We're not chucking up! If Smithy can lead the way, we can follow."

Harry Wharton made up his mind. The pack were getting rather out of hand, in any case. And, little wish as the Famous Five had to follow the Bounder's lead into reckless escapades, it was a point of honour for the pack to follow where the hares led.

"Go it!" said the captain of the Remove, at length. "We shall have

to chance it! The trail leads across to that dugout. Smithy may have cut back to the road another way. Anyhow, we're going after him."

There was so sign of the hares to be seen. They had been well ahead—and the delay at the gates had given them time to get still farther ahead. Whether they had crossed the field to the distant hedge at the back, or left Sea View at any other point, could only be discovered by picking up the trail—and the trail was not so clear as could have been wished, owing to the sea-wind having scattered a good many of the paper scraps.

The Famous Five led the way, putting on a good speed, hoping—



Harry Wharton jammed his foot against the door and shouted. "Push!" Parker shouted.

though with rather a faint hope—to avoid trouble with Mr. Parker.

Of Lamb's presence they knew nothing, and it did not cross their minds that he was nearer to them than Greyfriars School. That he would hear about it later, from Parker, they did not doubt—but that could not be helped; the wilful Bounder had landed them in that.

"Ere, you stop!" shouted Mr. Parker, cutting across from the house with a stick in his hand.

Mr. Parker looked as if he was going to use that stick.

The Famous Five, unheeding, ran on towards the mound, the rest of the pack streaming after them.

Mr. Parker, instead of following them round, cut round the other way to meet them face to face as they circled the air-raid shelter.

Harry Wharton & Co. followed the trail round the wide, grassy mound.

As they came round to the back, they glanced at the sunken, green-painted door—little guessing that only a few minutes ago it had closed behind the Pet Lamb.

"That's where Smithy saw Lamb with Parker, a week or two ago, from what he told us," said Bob Cherry. "Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Parker!"

Mr. Parker came charging round the mound from the other end, meeting the Greyfriars fellows face to face.

"Look out!" exclaimed Nugent.

"Oh, my hat!"

Mr. Parker did not pause, and he did not waste time in words. He ran



of the dugout. "Come on, you fellows!" he roared frantically, but to no avail.

straight at the juniors, lashing out with the stick.

Nobby was in an extremely bad temper. A ducking in a muddy ditch had made a bad temper worse. Nobby wanted to take it out of somebody; and his idea, apparently, was that with that big stick he could drive the schoolboys before him like a flock of sheep. He was chiefly anxious that they should not scatter out of reach before he had had time to get in a few good ones!

Swipe, swipe, swipe, swipe!

The exasperated Nobby did not seem to care where his blows fell, so long as they fell on the schoolboys. They landed hard and fast.

There were loud yells from the Greyfriars fellows as they jumped and dodged to escape those savage swipes.

"Oh!" roared Bob Cherry, as the stick landed on the side of his head.

Bob went sprawling, half-stunned by the blow.

The next moment, Peter Todd went over, and after him, Johnny Bull.

Nobby was quite reckless in the use of that stick!

"Collar him!" shouted Harry Wharton, his eyes blazing.

"Scrag him!" yelled Squiff.

Nobby lashed right and left. But five or six of the juniors rushed him down, heedless of the swiping stick, and Mr. Parker went over, rolling down the incline to the sunken door of the dugout, dropping his stick as he rolled.

He scrambled up, panting, at the green door.

The whole pack gathered on the spot. Harry Wharton helped Bob to his feet. Bob stood dizzily, his hand to his head.

"Oh!" he gasped. "The rotten brute—oh! Oooh!" He fingered a big bruise that was forming under his mop of flaxen hair.

Harry Wharton set his lips. The hares and the paper-trail were forgotten for the moment.

Hurree Janset Ram Singh pounced on Mr. Parker's stick, and snatched it up.

"Give him a few!" shouted Harry Wharton.

"Yes, rather!" panted Nugent.

"The ratherfulness is terrific."

Mr. Parker glared up at the angry crowd of schoolboys. He was going to get some of the same, and he did not like the prospect. He snatched a key from his pocket, and swiftly unlocked the green door.

"Bag him!" roared Johnny Bull, as Parker pushed open the door, and plunged into the dugout.

Harry Wharton made a rapid spring. He reached the green door before Parker could close it, and jammed his foot against it.

"Come on!" he shouted. "Push!"

The whole crowd of juniors rushed to back him up.

Inside the green door, Parker shoved frantically to get it shut, for the spring lock to snap and fasten. But Wharton's foot was in the way—and five or six fellows, gathering round him, pushed on the door.

Mr. Parker could not get it shut! Neither could he prevent the Greyfriars fellows from pushing it farther open.

The stocky man exerted all his strength. But the weight outside was irresistible, and the green door flew open at last, and a crowd of juniors rolled in over Mr. Parker.

HARD PRESSED!

HENRY SAMUEL QUELCH, the master of the Greyfriars Remove, stood with a coffee-pot in one hand and a steaming kettle in the other.

The kidnapped Greyfriars master was about to make coffee.

This was one of Mr. Quelch's few comforts in his weary imprisonment in a dugout, he did not know where.

An electric light hung from the wooden ceiling of the dugout. In a corner was an electric kettle, near a tap. Whether that dugout had been designed for shelter in air raids or for the reception of a prisoner, it was well-equipped.

But Mr. Quelch paused and laid down kettle and coffee-pot, as there was a sound at the door of the room.

He heard a bolt withdrawn. That sound meant that his gaoler was coming—accompanied, perhaps, by the man in the mask whom the Remove master knew to be Slim Jim, the cracksman.

Since he had been in his present quarters, the Remove master had seen his gaoler once or twice every day, and on three or four occasions he had seen the man in the mask.

He suspected that that air-raid shelter was not only used to keep him a prisoner, but that it was a hiding-place for Slim Jim's plunder, stowed there in secret till it could be disposed of. That was why the masked man came—though every time he came, he looked in on the kidnapped Form-master to satisfy himself that his prisoner was still safe.

The door opened.

It was the man in the mask who entered. The stocky man who acted as gaoler was not to be seen.

Mr. Quelch's eyes glinted at the man in the mask. Not since that night at Popper Court, long weeks ago, had he seen Slim Jim's face. But if the cracksman hoped that his memory of that face would grow dim, it was a delusive hope. Every feature of it was clearly imprinted on the Remove master's memory. Once he was free—if ever he was free again—he would be able to identify the man as soon as his eyes fell upon him.

The masked man did not, for the moment, take heed of the kidnapped Greyfriars master. He stood in the open doorway, listening—perhaps for the expected step of his associate.

But he stepped in at last, leaving the door ajar. The eyes, from the eyeholes of the mask, fixed on Mr. Quelch.

"So you are here again!" said the Remove master, breathing hard. "Does that mean that another robbery has been perpetrated, and that you have loot to hide in this secret den?"

There was a laugh from under the mask.

"You've guessed it, Mr. Quelch! But this time you will enjoy my company a little longer than usual. I shall have to wait here some minutes, at least."

The Remove master gave him a quick look. His one hope, in his weary captivity, was that Ferrers Locke, sooner or later, would get on the track of the elusive crook, and that the arrest of Slim Jim would lead to his own release.

"You are watched!" he exclaimed breathlessly.

The masked man laughed again. He read the eager hope in the Form-master's face, and it seemed to amuse him.

"Not at all!" he answered. "If you are thinking of Ferrers Locke, you may as well abandon the idea. I have good reason to believe that Locke is at least three hundred miles from this dugout. Even if he were at hand, is there anything suspicious in an air-raid shelter to draw his notice? The country is spotted with them—this is only one of the scores in this very district. No, my dear sir, I am not watched! I have never been shadowed yet—and I do not think that it is ever likely to occur." "Yet you are skulking here!" said Mr. Quelch.

"For a few minutes only! I desire to avoid the eyes of certain parties who know me only in my daily aspect, and who might be surprised to see me in this quarter! That is all, I assure you."

A sound came from above, and the masked man gave a violent start.

Mr. Quelch made a step nearer the door, to listen.

It was a sound of scuffling from the top of the wooden staircase that led up to the surface of the earth.

A muttered oath came from under the mask. Clearly the man in the mask was alarmed.

He stepped closer to the door to listen. Plainly, from the top of the stair, came scuffling, tramping, gasping!

Then came a trampling and bumping, as if a number of persons were rolling over in a wild, scrambling struggle. Then a voice came in a shout:

"We've got the rotter! Collar him!"

Mr. Quelch fairly bounded.

He knew that voice.

It was the voice of Harry Wharton, the captain of the Remove—his head boy at Greyfriars.

For a second he stood utterly amazed. Then he made a rush towards the door where the masked man stood.

The man in the mask turned on him with a snarl. A savage blow that landed on the Remove master's chest sent him spinning backwards, to fall with a crash on the planks of the floor.

Not even glancing at him after he had struck, the masked man turned to the door, snatched the key, and slammed the door shut.

He jammed the key into the inside of the lock and turned it. He was no more than in time, for a bumping and crashing on the stair showed that others were coming.

With the door locked on the inside, he turned to face the prisoner again, his eyes gleaming like a snake's from the cyeholes of the mask.

Mr. Quelch staggered to his feet.

He was no match for the masked man—not half a match for him. The man was small in stature, but he was a mass of muscle, twice or thrice as strong as the Remove master, though Quelch was tough and wiry.

But if he had no chance in a struggle, one shout would bring help.

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Harry Wharton was there; how and why, Quelch could not begin to guess. But he was there, and Quelch had heard his voice; and it was plain, too, that he was not alone.

From the Form-master's prison no shout could have reached the upper air with both doors at the top and bottom of the stairs closed. But the Greyfriars fellows were within the upper door; they were on the stair, and they would hear.

If they could not save him, they could tell where he was to be found; they could hear a shout through the door. It was such a chance as the prisoner of the dugout had never dared to dream of.

But even as the Remove master staggered up, the masked man was upon him with the spring of a tiger.

An iron grasp forced Quelch to the floor again. Two hands that seemed to have fingers of iron gripped his throat.

The Remove master struggled with all his strength, but his strength was like an infant's in the grasp of Slim Jim. He strove to cry out—to send forth one shout that would have saved him—but the throttling grip on his throat choked him into silence.

Helpless, silent, in the desperate grip of the man in the mask, Mr. Quelch heard trampling footsteps and exclaiming voices outside the locked door—voices that were familiar to his ears. He heard them—without being able to utter a sound! Only a door separated the master of the Remove from his boys—and he could not let them know that he was there.

DOWN IN THE DUGOUT!

"O H crumbs!"

"Look out!"

"Oh, my hat!"

Bump! Thump! Crash!

It was dim within the green-painted door of the dugout. The Greyfriars fellows hardly saw the stairs. Parker, in the midst of the mob of fellows who had fallen over him when the green door flew open, struggled frantically—not so much to escape what was coming to him as in alarm at what might be discovered below. In that frantic struggle he rolled down the steep wooden stair, three or four of the juniors rolling with him, in black darkness.

There were bumps and thumps and yells as they rolled. A heap of humanity brought up at the foot of the stair, and excited voices yelled on all sides. Every fellow who had rolled down had collected damages in transit.

Harry Wharton rolled against a door. He scrambled up dizzily. He could see nothing in the blackness, but there were howls and yells all round him.

The captain of the Remove gasped for breath. As he staggered against the door his hand came in contact with a switch on the wall. Immediately he switched it on, and there was a sudden flood of light in the dugout.

It disclosed a startling scene.

Mr. Parker sprawled at the foot

of the wooden stair, with three or four juniors sprawling over him.

From the top of the stair a dozen fellows, crammed together, gazed down.

Parker strove to struggle up.

"Leave go!" he panted. "Get out of this! You 'car me? Get out of this! You get out of this 'ere!"

"Collar him!" snapped Wharton.

"Leggo!" yelled Mr. Parker, struggling in many hands. "Leggo!" He struggled and wrenched in fury.

But the Greyfriars fellows were too many for Mr. Parker. And more and more swarmed down the wooden stair now that the light was on.

Mr. Parker was grasped on all sides and speedily reduced to helplessness. The boarded passage at the foot of the stair swarmed with breathless juniors.

Some of them looked round curiously.

At the end of that boarded passage was a small room, of which the door was half-open. Closer at hand, near the foot of the stair, was another door, but this was shut.

There was a bolt on the outside, but it was not fastened.

Peter Todd turned the door-handle, but the door did not open; it was locked.

That it was locked on the inside, naturally, did not occur to any of the juniors. There was no sound from the locked room, and they naturally supposed that it was kept locked by the caretaker.

Mr. Parker, wriggling in the grasp of many hands, gave a gasp of sheer terror as he saw Peter turn the door-handle. But, as the door did not open, he realised that his confederate had taken warning in time. He knew that the man in the mask must be on the other side of that locked door, and that he must somehow be keeping the prisoner silent.

But every moment, in such a situation, was fraught with terror for the caretaker of Sea View.

"Will you get out of 'ere?" he panted. "You're trespassing 'ere, and your 'cadmaster will know all about it, as soon as I can tell him!"

"You rotten ruffian!" answered Harry Wharton. "You're going to get a taste of your own stick! You could be run in for landing out with a stick like that, you rascal!"

Bob Cherry rubbed the bruise on his head.

"It would serve the brute right to crack his nut—he's jolly nearly cracked mine!" he exclaimed. "But we'll give him six—of the very best! He can tell Dr. Locke if he likes—and I'll show the old bean this bruise!"

"Look 'ere——"

"Tip him over!" said Harry Wharton. "Where's that stick?"

"Here you are, my esteemed chum!" grinned Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh. He handed the stick to the captain of the Remove.

"Leggo!" yelled Mr. Parker.

But nobody heeded Mr. Parker. He was tipped over, face down, on the stairs, and held there. Then Harry Wharton started with the stick. Mr. Parker had handled that stick not

only brutally but dangerously, and he was going to have a lesson on the subject of handling sticks!

Swipe!

The stick came down on Mr. Parker's trousers with a terrific concussion.

Parker's frantic yell rang far beyond the dugout.

"Go it!" grinned Bob.

Swipe!

Harry Wharton put plenty of beef into it!

Parker yelled frantically—the juniors little dreaming whose ears those frantic yells reached on the other side of the locked door.

Swipe, swipe, swipe!

Parker struggled and yelled and kicked. He was going through it, though certainly he was not getting what he had handed out. But he was getting much more than he wanted.

Swipe!

"Yooooooo-hooooop!" roared Mr. Parker.

"That's the lot!" said Harry Wharton. "You may think twice before you handle a stick on fellows' heads again, you rotten rascal!"

"Oooooogh!" gasped Mr. Parker.

"Ow! Oh! I'll limb yer! Ooogh!"

"Chuck him out of the way!" said Wharton.

Mr. Parker was bundled off the stair and pitched out of the way. He sprawled, spluttering and gasping, on the passage floor, while the juniors tramped up the stair again.

The spluttering rascal was only too glad to see them go. Glad, too, was the masked man in the locked room, to hear the sound of receding footsteps on the stair.

But it was with a heart like lead that Mr. Quelch listened—and knew that of the crowd of fellows on the other side of the locked door, not one had a suspicion that there was a prisoner in the dugout—not one had the remotest idea that he was only a few yards distant from his kidnapped Form-master.

Little dreaming of what they left behind them, Harry Wharton & Co. streamed out at the upper door into the open air again. Parker was left spluttering, the juniors giving him no further heed.

Wharton tossed the stick away.

"Come on," he said, "we've lost no end of time—all the fault of that fat-head Smithy for coming this way! We've not got an earthly of running them down now—but put it on!"

Once more the pack started off on the paper trail.

A few minutes more, and they were outside the precincts of Sea View, streaming across the meadows, putting their best foot foremost on the trail. But, as the captain of the Remove had said, too much time had been lost—and they did not catch sight of the hares again till they were home at the school gates.

LET OFF!

"ROT!"

"You silly ass——"

"Oh, rot!"

There was a warm argument going on in the Rag after tea. Fellows in the changing-room, after the run, had

agreed that Smithy had mucked it up. Now they were telling him so.

The Bounder did not seem to care. He had gained his object, which was to cause the whole Remove to swarm over the place which Lamb preferred Greyfriars fellows to avoid. If there were a row about it, it would draw more and more attention to Sea View, and Lamb's strange acquaintance with the low-browed, pimply-faced caretaker of that seaside residence—and the more the place and the man were talked about, the more Lamb was irritated, as Smithy very well knew.

So he listened with equanimity while the annoyed pack told him what they thought of him.

"You call that a win, I suppose?" growled Squiff. "We should have had you all right if you hadn't——"

"You ought to have had more sense, Smithy!" said the captain of the Remove. "You know jolly well that a paperchase can't be run over private land, without the owners kicking up a fuss."

"And coming to the Head!" growled Tom Brown. "The Head or Lamb will hear of this before prep."

"Oh, give us a rest!" said the Bounder. "Hares can run where they jolly well like; and the pack can take its choice about following on. If you funk a row, you could have turned round and walked home."

"You cheeky ass!" roared Peter Todd. "Look at this bump on my napper from that ruffian Parker's stick!"

"And on mine!" hooted Bob Cherry.

"And on mine, too!" snorted Johnny Bull. "Three of us with our nuts nearly cracked and half a dozen other chaps hurt, because you wanted to play a silly trick on the Pet Lamb."

"And a terrific row to come when the Lamb begins on us!" said Nugent. "He was wild when a few of us were there—what is he going to say to the whole Form swarming over the place?"

The Bounder laughed.

"That's what I wanted!" he answered coolly. "But you mean to say that you didn't see the Lamb there? He was there when I left."

"We never saw him!" said Harry. "If he had been there, we couldn't have crossed that field at all—he would have seen to that."

"Think he'd have stopped you?" jeered the Bounder.

"Of course he would."

"Well, he wouldn't! He wouldn't let a crowd of fellows see him there, as I jolly well know, if he could help it!" sneered the Bounder. "He must have dodged into cover before you came up——"

"If he were there at all!" snorted Johnny Bull.

"Well, he was. Reddy saw him, too——"

"Yes, he was there!" said Tom Redwing. "He would have spotted us, if we hadn't kept low behind the hedge."

"Blessed if I know what became of him, then," said Bob Cherry, puzzled. "We weren't so very far

behind you. But he wasn't in sight when we got there."

"Cut into the house, or the dugout, to keep doggo," jeered the Bounder. "He never knew we saw him—and I dare say he thinks he's kept it quite dark that he was there at all!"

"He wasn't in the dugout," said Bob. "We went down, after that rat Parker, and nobody else was there."

"Oh gum!" exclaimed Peter Todd. "Remember that locked door? Think Lamb parked himself in there?"

"Oh, there was a locked door, was there?" grinned Smithy. "Bet you Lamb was behind it, then, keeping doggo!"

"But why the dickens——" asked Ogilvy.

"He's keeping his Nobby dark—as dark as he can!" said Vernon-Smith. "Don't I know it? Goodness knows what the game is at that place—but Lamb doesn't want it shouted from the housetops! By gum! We've got him on toast, if you fellows play up! A man isn't allowed to crack fellows' heads with a big stick. What about going to the police station about it?"

"Wha-a-t?"

"Think of Lamb's face, if a bobby called on his Nobby!" grinned the Bounder. "Think he'd like it?"

"I say, you fellows," squeaked Billy Bunter from the door. "I say, the Lamb's coming!"

The hubbub of voices in the Rag died away, as Mr. Lamb appeared in the doorway.

One glance at him showed that he was not, for the moment, the mild and fluffy Pet Lamb that he usually appeared. His face was cold and hard.

It was clear that he had heard that the paperchasers had returned, and that he had come to deal with them. But for the fact that they knew from Smithy that he had been on the spot, the juniors would have wondered how he knew so soon what had happened a couple of miles from the school. It was clear from his look that he did know.

The Bounder faced him with perfect coolness. But a good many of the fellows felt uneasy. They knew that look on the Lamb's face, and they knew what it portended to delinquents. He had a cane in his hand, and it was plain enough that that cane was going to be given some extensive use.

There was a deep silence in the Rag, till Mr. Lamb spoke.

"I am given to understand," he said in a low, hard voice, quite unlike his accustomed bleat, "that a number of boys in my Form trespassed this afternoon at a seaside-house. Several boys were punished a week or two ago for this very thing; now, I am told, it has occurred again on a larger scale."

The juniors looked at him in silence.

Lamb's words conveyed, and were evidently meant to convey, that the matter had been reported to him. Yet they knew, from Smithy and Redwing, that he had been on the spot, and had personal knowledge of it. If Mr. Lamb was not exactly lying, what he said was perilously near it.

Mr. Lamb paused a moment or two, eyeing the silent juniors with glinting eyes over his glasses.

"Every boy who was at Sea View this afternoon will stand to one side!" he rapped out, pointing with the cane.

The Famous Five quietly moved to the side of the room indicated. Billy Bunter promptly rolled to the other side.

Peter Todd, Squiff, Tom Brown, and Mark Linley followed the five; and then, one by one, the other fellows joined them. Redwing went with them, and the Bounder followed. Plenty of fellows could have stood out, for Lamb obviously could not know how many had been there, and which fellows they were; if he had seen some, he could not have seen all; and certainly he had not seen the hares, however many he had seen of the pack. But Smithy was not the man to stand out while other fellows took the gruel. Moreover, the Bounder had an idea in his wary mind which he rather fancied was going to alter the aspect of things shortly.

There were about twenty delinquents—rather a large order for Lamb, if he were going to whop all the offenders.

"Very well!" said Mr. Lamb, when the juniors had sorted themselves out. "I shall cane every boy who trespassed this afternoon. I shall cane every boy with very great severity; and I shall send him in to Extra School for the next three half-holidays."

The juniors heard that in silence. Lamb was coming it strong—plain proof enough, in the general opinion, that Smithy had it right about his dislike of Greyfriars fellows going to that particular spot.

Vernon-Smith broke the silence. There was a mocking gleam in his eyes.

"May I speak, sir?" he asked meekly.

"I have no doubt that you were the ringleader, Vernon-Smith!" said Mr. Lamb. "I shall cane you first."

"Very well, sir!" said the Bounder in the same meek tone. "But we want to ask you first, sir, as our Form-master, to telephone the police station and ask a constable to come here."

Mr. Lamb gave a violent start.

"What?" he exclaimed. "What do you mean, Vernon-Smith?"

"The man at Sea View attacked some of the fellows with a stick," said the Bounder coolly. "Three of them have bruised heads, and we think that that ruffian ought to be reported to the police. It is for the Head to decide whether a charge shall be made against him, I suppose, sir?"

Mr. Lamb set his lips hard.

"How dare you make so ridiculous a suggestion, Vernon-Smith?" he said harshly. "The man Parker has told me that he was assailed, and that he defended himself against a mob of schoolboys."

"He can tell you what he likes, sir!" said Vernon-Smith. "But every fellow here is a witness to what

really happened. Will you telephone for a constable, sir?"

"Certainly not!" rapped Mr. Lamb.

"Very well, sir, I will ask the Head to do so."

Lamb's eyes seemed to flame for a moment.

"I forbid you to do anything of the kind, Vernon-Smith!" he said, breathing hard. "Nothing could have occurred, but for your trespass on the property of which this man is caretaker."

But he paused. The Bounder's face was obstinate, his eyes mocking. He meant what he said: he was going to Dr. Locke—if Mr. Lamb handled that cane!

If Mr. Lamb did not want his connection with Sea View made known to the headmaster, he had to cut out that caning! Lamb, it was clear, was quick on the uptake—he read clearly in Vernon-Smith's face what was in his mind.

It was rather a long pause. Probably Mr. Lamb realised that the man Parker was a dangerous ruffian, with a stick in his hand, and that some of the juniors had rather serious damages to show. He did not want those damages displayed to Dr. Locke's gaze.

"Wharton!" said Mr. Lamb at last.

"Yes, sir!" said Harry quietly.

"Is it a fact that injury has been sustained by any boy concerned in the scuffle with the caretaker at Sea View?"

"Yes, sir—three fellows have bruises on their heads—and three or four others pretty hard knocks. If you think we had better go to the Head about it, sir, we will go at once!" added Wharton demurely.

Mr. Lamb breathed very hard.

"What has happened is entirely your own fault," he said. "You have been warned to keep away from that place, and not to annoy the caretaker there. I trust that what has occurred will be a lesson to you, and that there will be no more of this lawless conduct. In the circumstances, I shall dismiss the matter; but any recurrence of such conduct will be dealt with very severely."

With that, Mr. Lamb walked out of the Rag—his eyes lingering for a moment on Herbert Vernon-Smith as he went.

The Bounder laughed jeeringly.

"We're let off!" he said. "Lamb doesn't want it to go before the Big Beak! I fancied he wouldn't!"

"He doesn't, by gum!" said Bob Cherry. "We're in luck!" He rubbed the bruise on his head. "But he's got it in for you, Smithy! See that squint he gave you when he went?"

Smithy shrugged his shoulders.

"I've got it in for him, too!" he said coolly. "Anyhow, we're let off—he doesn't dare carry it any further."

Whether Lamb dared carry it no further or not, it was the end of the matter. Nothing more was said about the paperchase, or the row at Sea View; but some of the fellows wondered what Lamb would be like in the Form-room next morning! But

in the Form-room next morning he was the mild, fluffy, amiable Pet Lamb again, seemingly having dismissed the whole affair from his mind—which the Bounder, at least, did not believe for a moment.

A MYSTERY OF THE NIGHT!

FERRERS LOCKE stood still in the darkness and listened.

The night was dark—a dark February night. At eleven o'clock all Greyfriars School was—or should have been—fast asleep! But a sound had come to the detective's ears—the sound of a window that was softly and stealthily opened.

The Baker Street detective listened. He wondered whether this was luck, at last, after so many nights of watching and waiting.

It was weeks since Ferrers Locke had taken his place as "John Robinson," the Head's new chauffeur, at Greyfriars. And whether he was yet on the track of Slim Jim, the detective could not be sure.

Ever since his suspicions had fixed on Mr. Lamb, the art master of Greyfriars, Locke's activities had been almost wholly confined to the precincts of the school. His suspicion had grown deeper and stronger—many little circumstances, trifling in themselves, pointed to the same conclusions. But he could not be sure—and there was only one way of becoming sure.

That the mystery cracksman had some post in the vicinity he was certain, in which the man led a daily life that was open to inspection and above suspicion. Was that post the post of art master at Greyfriars, where Mr. Lamb had taken the place of Mr. Woosey, who was away till the end of the term? Was that little, mild-looking, spectacled, artistic gentleman in reality the cracksman whom the police had never been able to trace? It seemed unlikely; it seemed, indeed, almost impossible; yet conviction was growing in Locke's mind.

If that conviction was well-founded, there was one way of proving its truth—for if the man was Slim Jim he had to leave the school in the secret hours of the night to carry on his raids—which occurred with almost monotonous regularity, seldom less often than once a week.

But almost any door or window, among hundreds, might be his mode of egress; likely enough he had gone, and returned, more than once in the dark hours while the detective was on the watch—if indeed he was the wanted man. Patience was needed—untiring patience; but of that the Baker Street detective had a good share.

Standing in the darkness, Locke looked up. A window had opened, he knew that, though he could see nothing in the gloom. Someone, at that late hour, was leaving the House—by a window!

But Locke remembered the night when his hopes had been raised by a dark and silent figure that crept out

and he had shadowed Loder of the Sixth to the Cross Keys!

There were two or three young rascals in the school given to breaking out at night—a complication in the detective's task. So that even now, as he heard the cautious sound of the window and knew that someone was getting out, he could not be sure that it was the man he wanted. His lips set at the thought that it might be Loder or some similar black sheep giving him unnecessary trouble in a task already sufficiently difficult.

That window, he knew, was the window of the box-room at the end of the Remove passage. Was it a thief in the night who was secretly leaving the House? He could not tell—yet!

Under that window were flat leads, from which a rain-pipe gave access to the ground. It was no easy or safe task to clamber down in the dark—but Slim Jim, as was well-known, was as active as a cat.

The detective, standing silent, listened to the brushing, scuffling sound, made by a hardly-seen dark figure that clambered down the rain-pipe and landed—only a couple of yards from him in the gloom.

He heard the panting breath of the fellow who had climbed down. In the gloom he had only a dim glimpse of the figure. It looked about the same height as Mr. Lamb—but then, Lamb was a small man, and there were fellows in the Remove nearly as tall—fellows in the Fifth and Sixth a good deal taller. So far, it might be anybody.

Locke made no sound.

The figure, after standing panting for a minute, moved away quietly.

Locke shadowed it silently.

If it was Lamb, he expected the man to head for the private gate to which all masters had a key. But it was in the direction of the old Cloister that the stealthy figure went.

Ferrers Locke had studied his ground carefully; he knew, as well as any breaker of bounds at Greyfriars, a certain spot in the Cloister wall where it was easy to climb over and drop into a lane outside. He knew now where his quarry was heading.

Was it the man he wanted, avoiding Masters' Gate and intending to climb out like some truant schoolboy, or—

There was a gleam of sudden light.

In the black darkness, it was not easy to find the spot for clambering out. And at that distance from the House it was safe to turn on a spot of light. It was a flashlamp that gleamed before the detective's eyes only two or three yards distant.

The light flashed on an old stone wall and clusters of damp, frosty ivy. And the detective, at length, had a glimpse of the figure he had followed—and his teeth shut hard!

It was another disappointment; whether Lamb was Slim Jim or not, this was not Lamb! This was a junior whom the detective knew well enough—Herbert Vernon-Smith of the Remove.

The light was shut off when the Bounder found the place he wanted. A rustle of the old ivy followed as he climbed.

Locke stepped quietly forward. He had given Loder of the Sixth a lesson, the night he had caught the Sixth Form sportsman out of bounds. There was another lesson in store for this young rascal.

Vernon-Smith had his chest on top of the wall when he gave a sudden startled cry as his legs were grasped from below.

He was dragged bodily back; and only a grip on his collar saved him from bumping down on the old stone flags.

"Oh!" gasped the Bounder. He panted with rage as he struggled in that grip. "Loder, you spying cur—did Lamb set you to watch me, you rotten hound?"

The Bounder had no doubt, for the moment, that it was Loder. But in another moment he realised that it was not.

He could not see who had grasped him; the darkness was intense and the iron grip on his collar prevented him from turning his head even had there been a light.

That grip forced him away with a strength the Bounder had no chance of resisting; a resistless strength that told him that it was not Gerald Loder in whose hands he had fallen. He was forced to walk back along the Cloister the way he had come.

"Lamb!" he breathed. "Oh, you rotter, it's you! You've been watching—this is your game, is it— Oh, you rotter!"

There was no reply.

The Bounder's heart was like lead as he was driven back to the House in that grip of iron.

He had no doubt now that it was Lamb—he had felt the powerful grip of the man who, on his looks, few would have suspected of possessing great strength. Lamb, he knew only too well, would be glad of a chance of getting him sacked; and his dingy recklessness had placed him in the man's power. With Loder, he might have made terms—that page from the "Racing Calendar" with Loder's fist on it was a trump card he had to play. But he was at Lamb's mercy—the man had only to walk him back to the House caught out of bounds late at night; the sack would automatically follow. A hundred times he had risked it—and his luck had failed him at last.

But, to his amazement, the man who gripped the back of his neck did not walk him to the door of the House! He walked him round to the back of the school buildings.

Slowly but surely it dawned on the Bounder's mind that this could not be Lamb!

It was not Lamb in whose grasp he was! It was not some other master—any master would have taken him into the House. It was not a prefect—a prefect, of course, would have done the same. Then who was it—not old Gosling, or Mr. Mible, the gardener—who, in the name of mystery, could it be?

Vernon-Smith felt something like a chill of terror as he realised that he was in unknown hands—in the hands of a man at whose identity he could not even guess! And what was the

man's purpose? What did he fancy he was up to?

"Who are you?" he hissed, at last. "What does this mean? What game are you playing? Who are you?"

He received no reply. He was marched on resistlessly till he reached the wall where the rainpipe was clamped, the way he had descended from the Remove box-room window.

It dawned on him that he was intended to go back into the House by the way he had left it. But who—who could it be? The Bounder was utterly bewildered.

Certainly, it never occurred to him to guess that he was in the grip of John Robinson, the chauffeur—or in that of Ferrers Locke, the detective, of Baker Street. He was utterly puzzled and perplexed.

"Who are you?" he breathed.

But there was no answer; and the Bounder made an effort to drag the flash-lamp from his pocket, determined to see, if he could, who it was that held him.

But it did not appear that the unknown man wished to be seen; for the Bounder's arm was instantly twisted, and the flash-lamp went with a crash to the ground, Vernon-Smith uttering a gasp of pain.

He made a desperate and frantic effort to wrench himself loose; but the iron grip on the back of his collar did not relax for a second.

Then suddenly he was twisted over and forced to the ground. A faint glimmer on the dark earth showed him that his face was over a puddle left by rain. For a moment he did not understand what was intended—then, as his face plunged into water and mud, he knew!

He gurgled wildly.

His struggles were desperate, but they did not avail him. The iron grip on his collar forced his head down, and his face was driven deep into the puddle, fairly wiping up the mud with his features.

Half suffocated, coated and drenched with mud, the Bounder was jerked up again. He panted and gasped and spluttered, mud all over his face, in his ears, and in his mouth.

"Urrrgh! Urrrgh! Ooogh!" gasped the Bounder. "Oh gad! Urrgh!"

The grip on his collar suddenly relaxed. He did not hear a sound, but he knew that he was left alone.

Clawing at the mud on his face, the bewildered Bounder stared round in the gloom.

His assailant was gone. Whether he was still at hand, perhaps watching him, Smithy could not tell—it was likely enough. For a long minute he stood clawing and gouging at clinging mud, and gasping and panting for breath in a state of rage and fury mingled with terror.

Then he clambered up the drain-pipe.

If Soapy Smith was expecting him at the Three Fishers, Soapy had to be disappointed. Obstinate as the Bounder was, he did not feel disposed to carry on in his muddy state, and with that mysterious and sinister

figure lurking in the darkness, perhaps ready to pounce on him again.

Herbert Vernon-Smith was glad to get back into the box-room—and, in a state of enraged bewilderment at the strange happening, he crept back to the Remove dormitory.

Ferrers Locke smiled grimly as he heard the box-room window shut.

He was not at Greyfriars to intervene in matters of school discipline—he could not hand that young rascal over to his headmaster. But he thought it very probable that, after that startling experience, the Bounder of Greyfriars would think twice, if not three or four times, before he ventured to break out at night again. And in that the Baker Street detective was right.

NOT OUT OF BOUNDS!

HARRY WHARTON opened his eyes with a sudden start.

He blinked in the light.

He sat up in bed, staring round him in astonishment.

What the hour was he did not know, but he knew that it was very late. The light had suddenly come on in the Remove dormitory.

He stared towards the door. It was wide open, and in the doorway stood Mr. Lamb, looking in over his glasses.

The captain of the Remove stared at him blankly. He could not begin to guess what had brought the Lamb there, in the middle of the night.

Several other fellows awakened and lifted their heads from their pillows. One—who was already awake—did not stir. But that one—the Bounder of Greyfriars—felt his heart beat with an uncomfortable throb.

Smithy had been back in bed barely three or four minutes. But for the strange incident out of the House, he would now have been on his way up the towpath to the Three Fishers. And there was Lamb, standing in the doorway of the dormitory, looking in.

The Lamb stepped in. His glance shot up and down the row of white beds.

"Is anything the matter, sir?" asked Harry Wharton. He wondered for a moment whether there had been an air raid alarm.

"I fear so, Wharton!" bleated the Lamb. "I am afraid I have reason to believe that a boy belonging to this dormitory has gone out of bounds."

The Bounder's heart stood still.

"Oh!" exclaimed Harry.

His eyes turned at once on Vernon-Smith's bed.

If any fellow in the Remove had gone out, after lights out, it was fairly certain to be Smithy. And if Smithy was out of bounds, at that late hour of the night that was likely to be his last night at Greyfriars School. Only too well, he knew that the Lamb would not spare him.

But, to Wharton's relief, he made out the form of a sleeper in Smithy's bed.

That, however, was not wholly re-

assuring. If the Bounder was gone, it was likely enough that he had left a dummy in his bed to deceive a casual glance.

The Pet Lamb looked his amiable self. But Harry Wharton could read the cold, hard glint in his eyes. The man did not fear that a Remove boy was out of bounds—he hoped that Vernon-Smith was! He had not, after all, forgotten the affair at Sea View.

"I don't think anyone is out, sir," said Harry.

"I hope not—I hope not!" bleated the Lamb. "But I certainly heard someone on the landing—I am sure of that. I am assured that some boy is out of his dormitory."

Wharton's face set.

"I don't see why you should think it was this dormitory, sir," he said. "It might be anybody—"

"Oh, quite!" smiled the Lamb. "But this dormitory is under my supervision, Wharton—this Form is in my care. And I greatly fear that there is, at least, one boy in this Form who is capable of such conduct."

Wharton did not answer that. It was certainly true, as the captain of the Remove knew better than Mr. Lamb did.

"Vernon-Smith!" called out Mr. Lamb loudly.

No answer.

Tom Redwing was sitting up in bed, his face pale.

He could see the figure of a sleeper in his chum's bed, but he could not be sure that it was genuine. His heart was heavy with the fear that Smithy was out of bounds, and that his enemy had caught him out.

"Vernon-Smith!" repeated Mr. Lamb more loudly.

Still no answer.

Every other fellow in the dormitory was awake now. Even Billy Bunter was sitting up and blinking. Only the Bounder remained motionless, and gave no sign.

"Smithy's asleep, sir," said Bob Cherry.

"Indeed!" smiled Mr. Lamb.

"You can see that he is in bed, sir," said Bob, staring.

"Indeed!" repeated Mr. Lamb. "If he is in bed, it is very singular that he has not awakened when every other boy has done so. I have heard of such tricks as making up a dummy in a bed—what?"

"Oh!" gasped Bob.

"By gum!" breathed Skinner. "Smithy's caught out this time!"

Skinner knew of the Bounder's planned excursion for that night.

Vernon-Smith lay motionless. He made no sound and no movement. His heart was beating very unpleasantly.

Only too clearly he realised how terribly narrow his escape had been. But for that strange happening out of the House which had caused him to return, he would have been fairly caught.

How had Lamb known?

He had not heard Smithy on the landing. The Bounder had made no sound—and if he had done so, Lamb could not have heard it from his

room. Yet he had known that someone was out of bounds, and suspected—probably hoped—that it was Vernon-Smith. But how?

The Bounder knew. He was sure that he knew. Lamb had been out of the House himself.

Smithy knew that the art master sometimes left the school silently late at night. Once he had seen him open his window at midnight. Once, watching late for Loder at the door of the Sixth Form lobby, Smithy and the Famous Five had bagged Lamb in mistake for Loder.

Lamb had been out—Smithy was sure of it—on one of his mysterious nocturnal excursions—and he had seen something, or heard something. Perhaps he had glimpsed that spot of light in the Cloister. Anyhow, he knew that someone was out—and had thought at once of Smithy.

That must be it. That accounted for his delay in coming to the dormitory, which had given Smithy time to return. He had had to get back into the House himself—secretly, silently.

He had postponed his night-prowl on this chance of catching the Bounder out. And he would have caught him, but for that unknown lurker of the night, who had caused the breaker of bounds to return. Of that Lamb obviously knew nothing.

"Vernon-Smith!" came Lamb's voice for the third time.

Still the Bounder did not stir.

He had been nearly caught—but not quite. Five minutes ago his bed would have been empty—and his game up. Now he was safe—safe as houses. He was in his bed in his dormitory. And who was to say that he had left it since lights out?

His heart was throbbing with the narrowness of his escape. But there was a sardonic grin on his face, hidden by the edge of the sheet.

He was letting Lamb run on—letting him believe that he had made a catch. His face would be worth seeing when he discovered that it was not a dummy in the bed, but the Bounder himself.

There was a buzz among the awakened juniors.

Nobody now doubted that Herbert Vernon-Smith was out of bounds—that the Lamb had caught him at last!

Plainly the Lamb thought so. There was a smile on his face—not a pleasant smile—as he stood looking towards Vernon-Smith's bed.

"I think," said Mr. Lamb smoothly, "that there is no doubt in the matter now. I regret that it will be my duty to report Vernon-Smith to his headmaster. I fear that Dr. Locke will have no alternative but to expel him from Greyfriars!"

He stepped nearer to Vernon-Smith's bed.

He was sure now. A fellow could hardly have remained asleep after his name had been called loudly three times. But he was going to throw back the bedclothes and reveal the dummy which he had not the slightest doubt had been packed there to give the appearance of a sleeper in the bed.

All eyes in the dormitory were



The iron grip forced Vernon-Smith's head down and his face was driven deep into the puddle.

"Urrrgh! Ooogh!" gasped the Bounder. "Oh gad! Urrgh!"

upon him. Smiling in a catlike way, Mr. Lamb grasped the bedclothes and threw them back. Every fellow expected to see a bundle of coats or rugs revealed, as Mr. Lamb certainly did.

The Bounder sat up.

There was a general gasp.

"Smithy!" panted Redwing.

"Smithy!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Oh crumbs, he's there!" stuttered Skinner.

"Oh, my hat! Smithy!"

Mr. Lamb almost staggered. He stood staring at Herbert Vernon-Smith as if he could hardly trust his eyesight.

The Bounder gave a yawn and rubbed his eyes, like a fellow newly awakened from sleep. He blinked round drowsily at staring faces.

"What's the row?" he asked. "Anything up? Has the siren gone? I never heard it—I was sound asleep!"

"You must have been!" gasped Harry Wharton. "Mr. Lamb called you three times!"

"The soundfulness must have been terrific!"

"Did you want me, sir?" asked Vernon-Smith innocently. "Wharton says you called me. Sorry I didn't hear you, sir; I'm rather a sound sleeper."

Mr. Lamb drew a deep, deep breath. He knew that someone had been out of the House. He had suspected that it was Vernon-Smith. Evidently, however, it was not—unless the breaker of bounds had changed his mind and immediately returned, after

Lamb had spotted a shadowy figure creeping in the dark quad.

Mr. Lamb's feelings were deep as he gazed at the innocent Bounder.

Someone else was out of the House, apparently. Not Vernon-Smith—for here he was—blinking at his Form-master!

Lamb found his voice at last.

"I am glad that you are here, Vernon-Smith!" His voice did not sound glad. "It must have been some boy from another dormitory that I heard—not a boy of my own Form. I am glad of this!"

Mr. Lamb walked back to the door.

"Good-night, my boys!" he bleated, and shut off the light. The door closed on him.

The Bounder gave a low laugh when the door was shut. His escape had been narrow; but a miss was as good as a mile.

"Were you really asleep, Smithy?" asked Skinner.

"Not at all—only pulling Lamb's leg!" answered the Bounder. "The dear man rejoiced a little too soon—counting his chickens before they were hatched!"

"But who the dickens did he hear on the landing?" asked Bob Cherry. "Can't have been jolly old Loder—his room's downstairs! Price of the Fifth, perhaps!"

"He never heard anybody on the landing," answered Vernon-Smith coolly. "If he had, he would have been here like a shot—before I got back!"

"You've been out!" gasped Redwing.

"Sort of! Lamb was hardly five

minutes after me!" grinned the Bounder. "He's been out himself—that's how! Anybody able to guess why Lamb goes hiking in the middle of the night?"

"Oh, rot!" said Bob.

"Rot or not, that's how!" said Vernon-Smith. "If I hadn't come back, he would have had me! He won't get another chance—I'll watch that! No more night-prowls for me—while Lamb's our beak! Wasn't his face worth a guinea a box when he saw me in bed?"

There was a chuckle in the Remove dormitory.

Vernon-Smith laid his head on the pillow again, and the Removites settled down to slumber.

But it was long before the Bounder slept. The strange incident in the dark haunted his mind—and he strove in vain to guess who it could possibly have been who had grasped him in the Cloister and marched him back to the House.

But he could not guess—he could not even surmise. Whoever it was, he had saved Herbert Vernon-Smith from the sack—there was no doubt about that!

Startling as that happening had been, the Bounder had reason to be glad that it had happened.

CAUGHT!

"OH, the ass!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

"The terrific fathead!"

"The silly goat!"

The Sark was frozen hard. Five
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fellows on skates were enjoying life in the keen frosty air, with scarves flying in the wind and ruddy faces.

Harry Wharton & Co. sighted the Bounder suddenly. They had skated up the frozen river as far as Popper's Island, circled the island, and were coming back in a cheery bunch when they spotted Smithy on the bank.

Smithy, evidently, had walked up the towpath from Greyfriars. As the chums of the Remove sighted him, he was stopping at a gate in a fence at the back of the path.

He did not look up the river, and did not see the bunch of juniors in the distance. But they saw him clearly enough, and saw him open the gate of the Three Fishers and pass in.

But that was not all they saw. Farther down the towpath, they saw a Sixth Form man of Greyfriars emerge from behind a mass of frosty bushes on the edge of Popper Court Woods. And they saw the grin on the face of Gerald Loder of the Sixth Form.

Smithy disappeared into the inner garden. Loder stood looking at the gate by which he had entered.

"Oh, the fool!" breathed Harry Wharton. "The dingy fool—falling into it head-first like that!"

"That does for Smithy!" said Johnny Bull. "He can't say he hasn't asked for it! That's the lid on!"

Loder, on the towpath, glanced at the juniors as they came whizzing along. He grinned at them as they passed, evidently in a mood of con-

siderable satisfaction. He could see that they had seen what he had seen—the scapegrace of Greyfriars entering the most disreputable resort in the district. They knew, as he knew, that Herbert Vernon-Smith's number was up.

Five ruddy faces were clouded as the juniors skated on.

Loder—not at all clouded—left the towpath to take the short cut through the woods back to the school.

Loder had reason to be satisfied. He was very far from an irreproachable character himself—but he had no sympathy for a reckless junior who followed his bad example. Vernon-Smith was a cheeky young rascal, and Loder had had plenty of trouble with him. Mr. Lamb had asked him to keep a special eye on that young rascal, and Loder had been more than willing to oblige. Not always a dutiful prefect, Loder had done this particular duty with a whole heart. And now he had been successful, with a satisfactory report to make to the young rascal's Form-master.

Harry Wharton & Co.'s feelings were quite different.

No doubt Smithy deserved to be sacked. But they did not want to see Smithy turfed out of Greyfriars, even if he did deserve it. Smithy's shady ways were more or less a pose; he had many good qualities, and it was chiefly a reckless desire to kick over the traces that led him to play the goat. He was not, as they knew, a black sheep like Loder himself. Had there been a football match on that afternoon, wild horses would not have dragged Smithy away from it to the Three Fishers. But Gerald Loder would have preferred a billiards-room to a football field any day.

"The fool!" repeated Harry. "He knows that Lamb is watching him like a cat—he knows that Lamb's got Loder to watch him! Yet he hasn't sense enough to keep clear."

"That cad must have followed him from the school," grunted Bob Cherry, "and jolly well kept out of Smithy's sight while he was doing it! The Head doesn't expect his prefects to spy on a chap."

"The terrific toad!" said Hurrec Jamsset Ram Singh. "But the copfulness of the esteemed and black-guardly Smithy is a deadly cert, all the same."

"Lamb will like this!" said Nugent dismally. "Smithy's made him sit up a good deal—now it's his turn."

"It's the sack!" said Johnny Bull. "How often has Smithy risked it? Two or three times this term already. If a chap can't run straight, he's bound to get the chopper in the long run."

Which was true enough, though no comfort to fellows who did not want to see the Bounder sacked.

The Famous Five took off their skates at the Greyfriars boathouse, and walked up to the school. All this while the Bounder was at the Three Fishers—probably playing billiards with Ponsonby & Co., from Higheliffe, or arranging some dingy betting transaction with Soapy Smith—and never dreaming that a prefect had spotted him and gone back to the school to report. The chums of the

Remove could not help thinking of the overwhelming blow that awaited him when he came in.

Tom Redwing met them when they came into the quad.

"Seen anything of Smithy?" he asked.

"Um! Yes! We saw him up the river!" answered Bob. He did not feel disposed to tell Smithy's chum exactly what he had seen, and what was bound to follow. Redwing would know soon enough.

"The ass!" said Tom. "I'm afraid he's gone to that rotten show—as he seems to have been stopped last night. He jolly well ought to be booted for being such a fool!"

In which the Famous Five could only concur—though they had no doubt that something much worse than a booting awaited the Bounder on his return.

The Famous Five went up to Study No. 1 to tea—not in their cheerfulest mood. Loder, they had no doubt, was back by that time—and had gone to Lamb with his report. The Lamb would be waiting for Smithy—and with all his mild, fluffy ways, they knew how implacable he could be—where the Bounder was concerned. Smithy would be taken to the Head—and sacked! They were not even sure that they would see him again before he left!

It was a rather dismal tea in Study No. 1.

CAT AND MOUSE!

"MASTER VERNON-SMITH!"
"Hallo!"
"Mr. Lamb's study, sir!"
said Gosling, peering curiously at Vernon-Smith, as he came in at the gates.

The Bounder stopped dead and looked at the old Greyfriars porter. Gosling's words gave him rather a shock—considering where he had just come from.

"Did Lamb tell you?" he asked.
"Yessir!" answered Gosling.
"O.K.!" drawled the Bounder, and he walked on lightly towards the House.

But his heart was beating unpleasantly. His intended visit to Soapy Smith had been stopped the previous night by that strange occurrence that was still a mystery to him. He had gone that afternoon, and, so far as he knew, no eye had been upon him. What did Lamb want him for? It was a rather disconcerting coincidence that Lamb wanted him—immediately on his return from an excursion out of bounds.

But his manner was quite cool and calm, as he tapped at the door of Mr. Lamb's study and entered.

Lamb was bending over a drawing-board on which a drawing was pinned. His pen was at work with an easy facility. He did not look up as the Bounder came in, and Vernon-Smith waited.

"Gosling said you wanted me, sir!" said Vernon-Smith, at length.

"Yes; quite!" agreed the Lamb.

"Please wait a few minutes!"
The Bounder waited.
Lamb went on with the drawing, his attention concentrated on it.

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Vernon-Smith set his lips as he waited.

The man was interested in his work, no doubt; but Smithy had a feeling that Lamb was deliberately keeping him in suspense, playing with him like a cat with a mouse. Only too well he knew that there was a streak of catlike cruelty in the fluffy little Lamb—only too well he knew that Lamb had not forgotten for a moment the shindy at Sea View, and had been only awaiting his chance.

It dawned upon him, as he stood waiting, that the Lamb knew where he had been—though how, he could not begin to guess.

For five long minutes the Bounder waited in silence, while Lamb added touches to his drawing. Then, at last, the art master laid down the pen—wiping the nib, in his fussy, methodical way, before he turned to the Bounder.

"Ah! You have returned, Vernon-Smith!" he bleated. He looked quite the pleasant little Lamb; but Smithy knew that cold, flinty look in the eyes over the gold-rimmed glasses. "Where have you been?"

"A walk up the river, sir."

"You have not been in any place out of school bounds, Vernon-Smith?" asked the Lamb.

Smithy knew then, that Lamb knew. But he answered coolly:

"Certainly not, sir!"

Vernon-Smith made that answer without hesitation. His view was that a beak had no right to ask a fellow to accuse himself. He was not going to admit anything, if he could help it. But he knew, even as he spoke, that the untruth was useless.

"You did not enter a place called, I think, the Three Feathers—no, the Three Fishers?" bleated the Lamb. "No? Come, come! I think you are the most untruthful boy in the Remove, Vernon-Smith, except perhaps Bunter—but prevarication will not help you."

The Bounder coloured. He had no scruple about telling the tale to beaks or prefects; but it gave him rather a jolt to be classed with Bunter.

Lamb glanced at his watch.

"At six o'clock, Vernon-Smith, Dr. Locke will be in his study," he said. "I shall then take you to him. I am afraid that you must be prepared to leave the school. The prefect who saw you enter the Three Fishers will be present."

The Bounder's heart sank almost into his boots. Wingate, or Gwynne, or Walker—one of the prefects, at all events, must have been up the Sark that afternoon, and seen him.

Then suddenly Loder's name flashed into his mind.

Was it Loder? He knew that Lamb had set Loder to watch him.

He drew a deep, deep breath.

"I think, sir, there must be some mistake," he said evenly. "If the prefect you are speaking of is Loder, he has often made mistakes."

Mr. Lamb smiled.

"I do not think that Loder has made a mistake on this occasion, Vernon-Smith," he answered. "According to his report to me, he was standing not more than

a dozen yards from you when he saw you enter that disreputable resort, which you know to be strictly out of bounds for all Greyfriars boys. However, the headmaster will judge the matter. For the present you may go. Return here at five minutes to six, and I will then take you to Dr. Locke."

"Certainly, sir!" said Vernon-Smith.

Lamb gave him a sharp look.

There was a perceptible sneer on the junior's face—a dancing light of derision in his eyes. He did not look, as the Lamb expected, overwhelmed. Yet the case was clear—it could not have been clearer. Loder had seen him—watched him, and the headmaster had to act on a prefect's report. The Bounder's look puzzled him.

"I think Loder has made a mistake, sir!" said Vernon-Smith. "It's a bit misty this afternoon—perhaps he saw some other fellow—"

"That will do!" snapped Mr. Lamb. "Leave my study!"

"Very well, sir!"

The Bounder left the study, closing the door behind him.

In the passage, he laughed.

Loder had spied—and Loder had spotted him! Loder's report to the Head meant the sack for him—unless Loder had made a mistake—and admitted it.

In the wallet in the Bounder's pocket was the page torn from the "Racing Calendar," with marginal notes in Loder's fist.

The Bounder laughed as he walked down the passage. He had Lamb's spy in the hollow of his hand.

Laughing, the Bounder walked away to the Sixth Form passage, where he tapped on the door of Gerald Loder's study.

UNEXPECTED!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"

"Smithy!"

Harry Wharton & Co. were on the Remove landing, after tea, when Herbert Vernon-Smith came up.

Smithy was rather late for tea in his study—owing to the time taken up by an interview with Mr. Lamb, and another with Loder of the Sixth.

The Famous Five hailed him at once. He looked cheerful and careless—from which, they supposed, he was still unaware of the sword of Damocles that was suspended over his head.

"Hold on, Smithy!" said Harry Wharton.

The Bounder held on, smiling! He seemed to be in a rather elated mood.

"Anything up?" he asked.

"Your number!" answered Johnny Bull.

"How's that?"

"We saw you this afternoon," said Harry Whar-

ton. "We were skating on the Sark when you—"

"Did you?" drawled the Bounder. "I suppose you're not going to call on his Nibs and tell him what you saw?"

"Don't be a goat!" said Wharton gruffly. "Loder saw you, too! He was watching you—as you might have expected, after what Bunter told you the other day. I don't see that there's anything you can do—but now you know what's coming, at any rate."

Smithy looked at them rather curiously.

"You're all lookin' as serious as a family of moultin' owls," he remarked. "Is it on my account?"

"Nobody wants to see you sacked," said Harry. "You jolly well deserve it, if it comes to that, but—"

The Bounder chuckled.

"You know what jolly old Shakespeare says," he remarked. "Give every man his deserts, and who shall escape whipping?" Actually, I've been up to no harm this afternoon. I only dropped in to tell Soapy that I shouldn't be seeing him again this term—turnin' over a new leaf and all that."

"Well, we believe you, of course—but you can't expect the Head to, with so much against you, in one way and another," said Harry. "I hope the Head will believe that, Smithy! But—"

"The butfulness is terrific!" murmured Hurrec Jamset Ram Singh.

"Think I'd spin that to the Head?" grinned the Bounder. "It happens to be true—but it doesn't sound like it! Sounds like the thinnest yarn a chap could tell to wriggle out of a scrape."

"I'm afraid it does," said Harry. "I can't make you out, Smithy! You know what to expect, now I've told you—"

"Oh, I knew before you told me!" said Vernon-Smith. "Gosling tipped me to go to Lamb as soon as I came in."

"Oh! You've seen Lamb!"

"I've had that pleasure! He's taking me to the Head at six! I've just time to scrounge a tea before I go up for the chopper. What a life!"

"You know it will be the sack, I suppose?" exclaimed the captain of the Remove, staring at him.

"Think so?"

"It is a deadly cert, my esteemed Smithy!" said Hurrec Jamset Ram Singh, with a shake of his dusky head.

"Oh, life's full of chances!" said the Bounder negligently. "Did you

(Continued on next page.)

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fellows notice that it was a bit misty along the river?"

"Yes; what about it?" asked Nugent, staring.

"Loder might have taken one fellow for another—it was so misty! He can't be sure it was poor little me that he saw."

"That's rot!" said Harry. "We were farther off than Loder, and we saw you plain enough!"

"If that's what you're banking on, Smithy, it's N. G.!" said Bob.

"Well, I've nothin' else to bank on, have I?" said the Bounder blandly. "I shall have to bank on that. I've always been lucky—I don't fancy that my luck is goin' to let me down with a bump this time."

"Oh, here you are, Smithy!" Tom Redwing came out of the Remove passage. "Don't you want any tea?" Redwing glanced at the faces of the Famous Five. "Is anything up?" he added.

"Lots!" answered the Bounder. There were a dozen fellows within hearing, and they all looked round at Vernon-Smith. Smithy spoke loudly enough for everybody to hear. Smithy liked an audience. "What do you think, Reddy? I'm sent up to the Head—"

"Oh!" gasped Redwing. "You fat-head—you ass—I guessed where you had gone this afternoon. Do you mean—"

"Don't shout out your guesses, old man!" said the Bounder, laughing.

"Do you mean that you were spotted?" breathed Redwing.

"Loder seems to think that he spotted me!" drawled Smithy. "I'll tell you exactly what happened. Loder, being a dutiful prefect—you all know how dutiful he is—"

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

"Being so dutiful, he gave up horses and banker for the afternoon to keep an eye on me!" continued the Bounder.

There was a chuckle on the Remove landing. A crowd of fellows were gathering round to listen to the Bounder.

The Famous Five stared at him blankly. So far as they could see, Smithy's number was up—he had no chance whatever of pulling through this time. His luck was a proverb in the Remove—but they failed to see how his luck could help him now. But, so far from appearing uneasy or alarmed, the scapegrace of Greyfriars seemed to be enjoying the situation.

"No football bein' on this afternoon," went on Smithy, "I took a little walk along the river. Healthy exercise, combined with a love of scenery, was the reason—"

"Oh crikey!" said Skinner. "Pile it on, Smithy!"

"By an odd coincidence," said Vernon-Smith, "Loder of the Sixth took a walk in the same direction—feelin', like me, the urge for healthy exercise, and perhaps bein' equally interested in scenery."

"Just about!" agreed Skinner.

"But the oddest thing is," said the Bounder, "that Loder saw, or

fancied he saw, a Greyfriars man going in at the gate of the Three Fishers."

"Smithy!" breathed Redwing.

"If he did," said Smithy, "I can't begin to guess who it was! No such bad character in the Remove, I feel sure! Wharton and his pals were not far from the spot, it seems—but it can't have been one of them! They're above such things."

"You silly ass—" began Johnny Bull.

"My dear chap, nobody suspects you for a moment!" said the Bounder. "Even Loder wouldn't! He knows your high character—knows, as well as we do, that you set a worthy example to the Form, treading the path of righteousness, and looking neither to the right nor to the left."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Johnny Bull gave the Bounder a look. But he decided not to punch a fellow who was going up to the Head to be sacked. He contented himself with a grunt.

"So who it was is a deep mystery!" continued Smithy. "It can hardly have been Bunter—he couldn't walk so far without falling down dead—"

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"It wasn't you, was it, Skinner?"

"Not quite!" said Skinner.

"Well, Loder thinks he saw somebody," said the Bounder. "The queerest thing is, that he fancied, at the time, that it was me, you know! Of course, it was misty on the river—that may account for the mistake! But a prefect ought really to be more careful!"

"That chicken won't fight, Smithy!" said Skinner. "For goodness' sake, think out a better one than that!"

"Bunter could do better than that!" remarked Peter Todd. "Help Smithy out, Bunter—this kind of thing is in your line!"

"Yah!" from Bunter.

"With this queer idea in his head," continued Vernon-Smith, "what does Loder do? He hikes back to the school and reports to Lamb! Lamb reports to the Head, and the Head fixes six o'clock to see me in his study. The whole stage is prepared for the drama. Lamb's going to take me to the Big Beak, Loder's to be there to do his stuff, and then—"

"Then the long jump!" said Tom Brown.

"I wonder!" said Vernon-Smith. "Possibly not! I still hope that, after reflectin' on the matter, Loder may realise that he may have been in error—to err is human, you know, and Loder is human, or nearly—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Bounder looked at his watch. "Ten minutes to go," he said. "Just time to scrounge a tea—if you've got anything in the study, Reddy!"

The Bounder walked up the Remove passage to his study, with his dismayed chum at his side.

The Removites on the landing stared at one another. Everybody knew the Bounder's nerve, and knew that if he had to go, he would go with his chin up. But this seemed

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the limit of bravado, even for the iron-nerved Bounder.

"I say, you fellows, what has Smithy got up his sleeve?" said Billy Bunter. "He's jolly well got something up his sleeve."

"Looks like it," said Bob. "But what?"

The whole crowd followed along the passage to the Bounder's study.

The door of Study No. 4 was wide open—Smithy sitting at the table, starting on a hurried tea.

He glanced up at the swarm of curious faces looking in, and grinned.

"No charge!" he said.

And he went on cheerfully with his tea, while the Removites stared.

NO LUCK FOR LAMB!

TAP!
"Come in!" said Dr. Locke. The clock in the Head's study indicated six. That was the time appointed for Mr. Lamb to bring the delinquent before him. And the stern expression on the headmaster's face showed very clearly what that delinquent had to expect when he appeared.

What he had to expect was the brief sentence of the sack. Other fellows might have been let off more lightly, but there was too much against the Bounder already. In Mr. Quelch's time, he had been considered the worst boy in his Form—and Mr. Quelch's substitute seemed to have the same opinion of him—even the meek and mild little art master! Nobody at Greyfriars School would be surprised to hear that Herbert Vernon-Smith had been bunked—the surprising thing, to most fellows, was that he had not been bunked already. Certainly he had asked for it often enough.

The door opened, and Mr. Lamb came in—peering over his gold-rimmed glasses in his owlish way.

Herbert Vernon-Smith followed him in.

"Here is the boy, sir!" said Mr. Lamb.

Dr. Locke's glance dwelt on the Bounder with disfavour. He had seen Herbert Vernon-Smith in his study often—too often. Fellows who were sent up too often were in danger of taking a long leave of the school. Now it was the finish.

The Bounder was cool and calm. His manner was very quiet and respectful; mutineer as he was by nature, the scapegrace of Greyfriars was very careful under the eyes of his headmaster. Smithy, in fact, who respected hardly anybody or anything, had a real respect for his headmaster, and would not have wished to cheek him, even if he could have ventured to do so.

"Is not Loder here?" Mr. Lamb blinked round the study. "I requested Loder to be present at six o'clock, sir, as it is necessary for you to hear him."

"Tap!"
"Come in!"

Loder of the Sixth entered the study.

He came in slowly, his manner hesitating, and a flush in his cheeks.

COME INTO THE OFFICE, BOYS AND GIRLS!

BY way of a change, this week I am publishing a letter which reaches me from Putney. It is a sample of one of the many complimentary letters I receive in the course of a week. It reads:

"Dear Mr. Editor,—This is a letter from a family of MAGNET readers of twenty-five years' standing, to thank you and Mr. Frank Richards for all the pleasure we have had from the Greyfriars stories. We very much appreciate Mr. Frank Richards' powers of description, study of character, and the good, clean, wholesome tone of the stories. They are all enjoyable. Favourite characters with us are Bunter, Coker, Lord Mauleverer, and Wibley. We can't offer any suggestions for improving the MAGNET, as this wouldn't be possible; but hope you will always find some room for your 'Come Into the Office'—it's so friendly.

"Whatever else we have to do without in war-time, let us hope the good old MAGNET will continue as successfully as ever.

"Please don't think that this is just a lot of fulsome praise—we are only attempting to show our appreciation. Best wishes to you and Mr. Frank Richards (more power to him) for the New Year. From

"THREE PUTNEY READERS."

Thanks for the very nice letter, my Putney chums! Rest assured that I will do all in my power to keep the MAGNET on the high pedestal on which it stands to-day!

As you know, the MAGNET goes to Press some weeks in advance of publication. Such being the case, I have been unable—until now—to thank the many readers who kindly sent me Christmas and New Year cards. To write every reader personally would take up more time than I can possibly spare, so I am taking this opportunity, through the medium of this chat, to thank you one and all, chums, for your very kind wishes.

And now for next week's grand Greyfriars yarn. All you fellows who have been asking for a yarn starring William Wibley, the school-boy impersonator, can look forward to reading:

"THE THIEF OF THE NIGHT!"

By Frank Richards,

in next Saturday's MAGNET. You'll find thrills and chuckles galore in this splendid yarn. If you have not already ordered your copy, do so NOW!

YOUR EDITOR.

The Bounder did not look at him. But he could guess that Gerald Loder wished himself anywhere but in the Head's study just then.

In that matter Loder had no choice.

The affair, having been reported to the headmaster, had to be dealt with by the headmaster. Loder had to go through with it now.

"Ah! Here is Loder!" said Mr. Lamb. His eyes, for a moment, glinted at the Bounder over his glasses. "Loder, you will be kind enough to repeat what you reported to me this afternoon, and which I have already reported to Dr. Locke."

"Yes, sir!" mumbled Loder.

Dr. Locke fixed his eyes on the prefect. He could not quite understand Loder's hesitating manner. "Loder," he said, "from what Mr. Lamb has told me, it appears that you saw this junior this afternoon entering a disreputable resort called the Three Fishers."

"Yes, sir!" stammered Loder. "I—I thought so, sir—"

Dr. Locke raised his eyebrows.

"You thought so!" he repeated. "I do not understand you, Loder! On your report to Mr. Lamb depends whether this boy remains at this school, or whether he is expelled from Greyfriars in disgrace. This is not a matter for uncertainty, Loder! What do you mean by saying that you thought so?"

Lamb's eyes gleamed at Loder of the Sixth. He was as surprised as the Head, and a good deal disconcerted, too.

"Loder's statement to me was most definite, sir!" he said.

"So I understood," said Dr. Locke. "If, however, there is any doubt in the matter—"

"There is no doubt, sir!" Lamb's voice was sharp. For the moment he forgot his usual circumspection.

Dr. Locke gave him a glance. It was rather a cold glance.

"Please let Loder speak!" he said.

"Loder, explain yourself at once. If you have any doubt in your mind, say so frankly."

Loder's face was crimson.

"I—I—I certainly thought so, when I reported to Mr. Lamb, sir," he stammered. "But—but since—"

"Well?" rapped the Head.

"I—I—I'm sorry, sir, that your time should be wasted like this, but—but—" Loder gasped a little. "But—it was a misty afternoon, sir, and—and I am afraid I made a mistake."

"Nonsense!" said Mr. Lamb.

"If there is the remotest possibility that you made a mistake, Loder, the whole matter ends here and now!" said Dr. Locke sharply. "Kindly make a plain and definite statement."

"It—it was a mistake, sir!" gasped Loder. "I—I see it now—now I've thought over it. I feel sure, sir, that—that it was not Vernon-Smith that I saw. I—I feel bound to—to tell you so, sir—"

"Most decidedly!" exclaimed the Head. "You should be more careful, Loder, in so very serious a matter. Nevertheless, I am very glad to hear this. Vernon-Smith, you may leave my study."

"Thank you, sir!" said the Bounder, with quiet demureness.

He left the study, aware that Lamb's eyes followed him as he went.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1.669.

like a cat's following an escaping mouse.

In the Head's study there was a brief silence after the scapegrace of Greyfriars had gone. The Head was feeling relieved; it was a painful duty to him to pass a sentence of the sack on a Greyfriars man. Mr. Lamb's feelings, whatever they were, were not of relief! It was, in fact, very difficult for Mr. Lamb to keep those feelings from showing in his face.

"You should exercise more care, Loder," said Dr. Locke. "On another occasion I recommend you to reflect before not after, reporting to a Form-master. The matter is now ended."

Dr. Locke took up his pen.

Loder was already edging to the door. He got out of the study as quickly as he could.

Mr. Lamb followed him out, shutting the door after him.

"One moment, Loder," said Mr. Lamb, in the corridor.

Loder gave him an uneasy look. He was almost as anxious to get away from Mr. Lamb as from the Head.

"Yes, sir," he mumbled. "I—I'm sorry for the mistake, but—"

Lamb's eyes glinted at him like cold steel.

"I do not understand you, Loder," said Mr. Lamb. "But I know that you have wasted my time, and the Head's time, and caused me a great deal of trouble for nothing. Take that!"

Smack!

"Ow!" howled Loder, as he took it.

Mr. Lamb walked away to his own study, leaving him staggering.

Rubbing that burning ear, and gasping with rage, Loder tramped away to his study. He went into that study and banged the door with a bang that rang in all the other Sixth Form studies. Mr. Lamb had found solace in that smack, but he was not likely to obtain any more services from Loder of the Sixth. Loder's feelings towards Lamb were deep—and not friendly.

The door opened again a minute later.

Herbert Vernon-Smith looked in.

Loder gave him a look.

"Thanks!" grinned the Bounder.

He tossed a crumpled scrap of paper in the study, shut the door, and walked away.

Loder pounced on that scrap of paper. It was a page torn from the "Racing Calendar," with marginal notes by Loder. In a split second, that scrap of paper was tossed into Loder's study fire!

"I SAY, you fellows, here he comes!" yelled Billy Bunter. "Here's Smithy!"

"Sacked!"

"Bunked!"

Herbert Vernon-Smith came up to the Remove passage, laughing. Almost all the Remove were gathered there, waiting for him and waiting to hear the verdict.

Tom Redwing breathed more freely as he saw the Bounder's laughing face.

"Smithy, is it all right?" breathed Redwing.

"Right as rain!"

"You don't mean to say you've got off?" howled Bob Cherry.

"Why not?"

"Well, I'm jolly glad," said Harry Wharton. "I can't understand it—I thought Lamb had you this time! But I'm jolly glad."

"Is Bunter here?" asked the Bounder, looking round. "Like to do something for me, Bunter? Take this pound note down to the tuckshop and spend it on tuck. I'm standing you a spread, considering what pals we are!"

The other fellows gazed at Herbert Vernon-Smith.

"What the thump!" said Bob Cherry.

"Don't you think Bunter deserves a spread?" asked the Bounder. "Bunter's a stout lad! Look how he bagged scent for us in the paper-chase! Member how he bagged Loder's sporting literature? Some of it came in jolly useful!"

"Oh!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"My idea is," said Smithy, "that every man in the Remove ought to stand Bunter a spread. But for Bunter you might have lost me! Think what your feelings would have been like then!"

And the Bounder, laughing, walked on to his study.

THE END.

(Don't miss "THE THIEF OF THE NIGHT!"—next week's spanking fine yarn of Harry Wharton & Co. It's better than ever.—Ed.)

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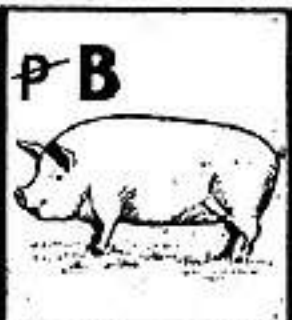
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"O.K.!" said Mr. Parker. "But I tell you, if they come in at that there gate, some of them will be sorry for themselves when I lay my hand on a stick!"

Parker hurried across to the house. Unheeding him, Mr. Lamb stepped down to the green-painted door, and unlocked it. It seemed that he had a key to the air-raid dugout at Sea View, as well as the caretaker. Quickly he opened the door. Within, all was black, but the glimmer of light from outside revealed the head of a wooden staircase.

The door snapped shut with a spring lock. Then Mr. Lamb touched a switch, and an electric light shone out on the wooden staircase.

The dugout was supplied with electricity, by a sunken wire from the chalet. The art master of Greyfriars descended the wooden stair, passed a door that was locked and bolted on the outside, and entered a small room, with wooden matchboard walls.

If Herbert Vernon-Smith, whose suspicions of the art master were deep though vague, had been able to witness his next action, Smithy's suspicions might have taken a more definite form. For Mr. Lamb's next action was to pull aside a square of carpet, unscrew a short section of board in the wooden floor, and then to take a packet from an inside pocket, which he dropped into the cavity beneath the floor.

A SPOT OF TROUBLE!

"THAT cheeky ass!" "That thump!" "That terrific goat!" The Famous Five were deeply exasperated. They gathered at the gate of Sea View, where the paper trail had led them. They stared over that gate, with deep feelings. More and more, fellows came streaming up the road, and joined them there. There was a general halt at the gate.

At that distance from the school the pack had thinned down. Billy Bunter had been the first to dodge, the moment Toddy's eagle eye was off him. Skinner and Snoop and Fisher T. Fish had not been long after him. Other fellows had dropped out. But twenty juniors were still on the run, and most of them gathered at the gate—staring over it at the paper trail that led across forbidden country.

"The dummy!" said Harry Wharton. "That's why he wanted to drop me and take Redwing. I should have stopped him at this game."

"We can't go across!" said Frank Nugent. "That surly brute Parker will make trouble, and it means another row with Lamb!"

"The terrific ass ought to be booted!" said Hurrec Janset Ram Singh. "But the chackfulness of the runner is not the proper caper!"

"No fear!" said Johnny Bull. "We've got to keep on!" said Peter Todd.

Tom Brown. "Dash it all, there's no harm in cutting across—nothing growing in the fields but weeds—"

"Come on!" said Squiff, putting his hand to the gate.

Harry Wharton stood angry and uncertain. This was just one of the Bounder's wild tricks. He had deliberately led the chase across Sea View, because he knew that Lamb had some reason for wishing Greyfriars fellows to steer clear of the place. Or, rather, he did not know it, but only suspected it.

Certainly, the Famous Five believed that the Bounder was right on that point—Lamb did object, for some mysterious reason. He had punished the whole Co. with very unusual severity, on a complaint from Parker, though they had only taken shelter from the rain under the veranda roof.

But that was all the more reason for steering clear of the place. The Famous Five were not seeking trouble with Lamb, if the Bounder was.

"Can't go round and pick up the trail again," said Bob Cherry. "Might as well chuck up now, as try that on!"

"We've got to keep on!" growled Bolsover major. "Why the thump not? Nothing in that field to damage that I can see!"

"I know that!" grunted the captain of the Remove. "But it's the garden of that chalet, though it's only a rough field. The caretaker will make a fuss, and it means a row with Lamb."

"Blow the caretaker!" growled Bolsover major. "And blow Lamb!" said Ogilvy.

"There's the man!" said Harry, as Mr. Parker came in sight from the house, with a big stick under his arm. "By gum! Looks as if he wants a wash!" said Russell. "Looks as if he's had one, in mud!" grinned Bob Cherry. "I wonder if that mad ass Smithy has been having trouble with him?"

"Smithy all over!" said Nugent. "If there's any trouble lying around, trust Smithy to pick it up. Are we going on?"

"I jolly well am!" declared Bolsover major, and he threw open the gate and tramped in. "We're doing no harm—let that rotter say what he likes!"

"Oh, come on!" exclaimed Squiff. "We're not chucking up! If Smithy can lead the way, we can follow."

Harry Wharton made up his mind, and, in any case, and, little wish as the Famous Five had to follow the Bounder's lead into reckless escapades, it was a point of honour for the pack to follow where the hares led.

to chance it! The trail leads across to that dugout. Smithy may have cut back to the road another way. Anyhow, we're going after him."

There was so sign of the hares to be seen. They had been well ahead—and the delay at the gates had given them time to get still farther ahead.

Whether they had crossed the field to the distant hedge at the back, or left Sea View at any other point, could only be discovered by picking up the trail—and the trail was not so clear as could have been wished, owing to the sea-wind having scattered a good many of the paper scraps.

The Famous Five led the way, putting on a good speed, hoping—



Harry Wharton jammed his foot against the door of the dugout. "Come on, you fellows!" he shouted. "Push!" Parker shoved frantically, but to no avail.

though with rather a faint hope—to avoid trouble with Mr. Parker.

Of Lamb's presence they knew nothing, and it did not cross their minds that he was nearer to them than Greyfriars School. That he would hear about it later, from Parker, they did not doubt—but that could not be helped; the wilful Bounder had landed them in that.

"Ere, you stop!" shouted Mr. Parker, cutting across from the house with a stick in his hand.

Mr. Parker looked as if he was going to use that stick. The Famous Five, unheeding, ran on towards the mound, the rest of the pack streaming after them. Mr. Parker, instead of following them round, cut round the other way to meet them face to face as they circled the air-raid shelter.

Harry Wharton & Co. followed the trail round the wide, grassy mound.

As they came round to the back, they glanced at the sunken, green-painted door—little guessing that only a few minutes ago it had closed behind the Pet Lamb.

"That's where Smithy saw Lamb with Parker, a week or two ago, from what he told us," said Bob Cherry.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Parker!" Mr. Parker came charging round the mound from the other end, meeting the Greyfriars fellows face to face.

"Look out!" exclaimed Nugent.

"Oh, my hat!" Mr. Parker did not pause, and he did not waste time in words. He ran

Bob went sprawling, half-stunned by the blow.

The next moment, Peter Todd went over, and after him, Johnny Bull.

Nobby was quite reckless in the use of that stick!

"Collar him!" shouted Harry Wharton, his eyes blazing.

"Scrag him!" yelled Squiff. Nobby lashed right and left. But five or six of the juniors rushed him down, heedless of the swiping stick, and Mr. Parker went over, rolling down the incline to the sunken door of the dugout, dropping his stick as he rolled.

He scrambled up, panting, at the green door. The whole pack gathered on the spot. Harry Wharton helped Bob to his feet. Bob stood dizzily, his hand to his head.

"Oh!" he gasped. "The rotten brute—oh! Oooh!" He fingered a big bruise that was forming under his mop of flaxen hair.

Harry Wharton set his lips. The hares and the paper-trail were forgotten for the moment.

Hurrec Janset Ram Singh pounced on Mr. Parker's stick, and snatched it up. "Give him a few!" shouted Harry Wharton.

"Yes, rather!" panted Nugent.

"I'm ratherfulness is terrific."

Mr. Parker glared up at the angry crowd of school-boys. He was going to get some of the same, and he did not like the prospect. He snatched a key from his pocket, and swiftly unlocked the green door.

"Bag him!" roared Johnny Bull, as Parker pushed open the door, and plunged into the dugout.

Harry Wharton made a rapid spring. He reached the green door before Parker could close it, and jammed his foot against it.

"Come on!" he shouted. "Push!"

The whole crowd of juniors rushed to back him up.

Inside the green door, Parker shoved frantically to get it shut, for the spring lock to snap and fasten. But Wharton's foot was in the way—and five or six fellows, gathering round him, pushed on the door.

Mr. Parker could not get it shut! Neither could he prevent the Greyfriars fellows from pushing it farther open.

The stocky man exerted all his strength. But the weight outside was irresistible, and the green door flew open at last, and a crowd of juniors rolled in over Mr. Parker.

There were loud yells from the Greyfriars fellows as they jumped and dodged to escape those savage swipes.

"Oh!" roared Bob Cherry, as the stick landed on the side of his head, in the other.

The kidnapped Greyfriars master was about to make coffee.

This was one of Mr. Queleh's few comforts in his weary imprisonment. In a dugout, he did not know where.

An electric light hung from the wooden ceiling of the dugout. In a corner was an electric kettle, near a tap. Whether that dugout had been designed for shelter in air raids or for the reception of a prisoner, it was well-equipped.

But Mr. Queleh paused and laid down kettle and coffee-pot, as there was a sound at the door of the room.

He heard a bolt withdrawn. That sound meant that his gaoler, by coming—accompanied, perhaps, by the man in the mask whom the Remove master knew to be Slim Jim, the cracksman.

Since he had been in his present quarters, the Remove master had seen his gaoler once or twice every day, and on three or four occasions he had seen the man in the mask.

He suspected that that air-raid shelter was not only used to keep him a prisoner, but that it was a hiding-place for Slim Jim's plunder, stowed there in secret till it could be disposed of. That was why the masked man came—though every time he came, he looked in on the kidnapped form-master to satisfy himself that his prisoner was still safe.

The door opened. It was the man in the mask who entered. The stocky man who acted as gaoler was not to be seen.

Mr. Queleh's eyes glistened at the man in the mask. Not since that night at Popper Court, long weeks ago, had he seen Slim Jim's face. But if the cracksman hoped that his memory of that face would grow dim, it was a delusive hope. Every feature of it was clearly imprinted on the Remove master's memory.

Once he was free—if ever he was free again—he would be able to identify the man as soon as his eyes fell upon him.

The masked man did not, for the moment, take heed of the kidnapped Greyfriars master. He stood in the open doorway, listening—perhaps for the expected step of his associate.

But he stepped in at last, leaving the door ajar. The eyes, from the eye-holes of the mask, fixed on Mr. Queleh.

"So you are here again!" said the Remove master, breathing hard. "Does that mean that another robbery has been perpetrated, and that you have lout to hide in this secret den?"

There was a laugh from under the mask. "You've guessed it, Mr. Queleh! But this time you will enjoy my company a little longer than usual. I shall have to wait here some minutes, at least."

The Remove master gave him a quick look. His one hope, in his weary captivity, was that Peter Locke, sooner or later, would get on the track of the elusive crook, and that the arrest of Slim Jim would lead to his own release.

"You are watched!" he exclaimed breathlessly.

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