

YELLOW RACES v. WHITE!

Read the sensational story of
Ferrers Locke, Detective, in this issue.



AFTER THE BANK RAID—WHAT THE BOUNDER SAW!

The ... Conclusion.
Trail of Adventure!
 By LIONEL DAY.

RED in the face, Jack Horner borrowed that pound off his grandmother, but he insisted on it being a loan, and Mary was detailed to get a post-office order with the money. Those two letters were addressed to the "Monkey Boat Emerald, Limehouse Dock, Limehouse, London, E.," and were duly delivered the following morning. Bill, who had begun to believe that Jack would never be found, gave a shout of joy.

"Mother, listen to this—Jack's found! He's written me a letter—listen!"

But Mrs. Bowker didn't listen. She merely snatched the letter from Bill's hand and read it herself. Then she got up and began to put on her best clothes.

"You look sharp, Bill. We've got to catch the next train. I ain't going to have anybody nursing my Jack except myself. There's no one understands his constitution as I do. They'll be giving him messy things that don't agree with him."

Jim Snow, who had never received a letter before in his life, was like one dazed.

"And he wants me to come, too, Mrs. Bowker!" he exclaimed jubilantly. "Crikey! He sent me a whole bloomin' quid!"

Jim dashed off to the post-office to cash the postal-order, and, meeting Dirk on the way, told him the news.

It was a party of four who got out at Weald Station that summer morning.

Bill Bowker asked the ticket collector the nearest way.

"Know a place called the Dower 'Ouse, mate?" he said. "Be a sort of doss or 'orspital likely!"

"The only place called the Dower 'Ouse is in Weald Park, my man!" retorted the collector in a superior tone.

Bill Bowker looked at Dirk and winked solemnly.

"That there collar round his neck is a-chokin' 'im, Dirk—stopping the blood from circulating proper to his brain. That's why 'e thinks I'm 'is man!"

The party found their way at last to the Dower House. But when they saw the place they were one and all seized with a fit of shyness. It didn't look a bit like a superior doss-house or even a hospital. But the difficulties were settled for them by the sight of Jack himself. He was walking in the garden.

It was Mrs. Bowker who saw him first. She forgot all her qualms instantly. Flinging the gate open, she rushed down the gravelled drive, and took Jack Horner in her arms, covering his face with kisses, while Squall gambolled delightedly about the two men and Jim Snow.

"But, Jack, how grand you look!" Mrs. Bowker exclaimed presently. "Where ever did you get them clothes from?"

Before Jack could reply, however, a stately old lady came down the drive towards them.

"This is my grandmother?" Jack whispered. "She found me quite by chance. I do hope you'll like her, Mrs. Bowker. She's really most awfully nice!"

That was the first hint Mrs. Bowker had had that she had lost Jack for good and all—lost him, at any rate, as the boy who was to fill the place of the son she had never had. She looked at the old lady with every intention of disliking her, but even she melted under the friendly kindness of the other's tone.

"Jack has told me of all your kindness to him, Mrs. Bowker," said Lady Horner, "and I feel I can never repay

all your goodness to my grandson. And I know you, Mr. Bowker. Jack has never stopped telling me stories about all you did for him. And this is Dirk. And you are Jim Snow, the boy who risked his life to save my grandson."

Each one of the party was a little awed by the old lady, but they shook her hand heartily, and afterwards, at her suggestion, followed in silence into the house. It was only when they reached the morning-room that Bill exploded.

"Gad, Jack, but is this 'ere a fairy tale? What are you, anyway?"

"I'm afraid I'm a baronet, Mr. Bowker. But please don't be angry about it. I'd much sooner be your boy on the Emerald."

There is a skipper of a canal monkey boat who is regarded by his brother skippers as suffering from a rather swollen head. He is always talking about his "old pal, Sir John Horner"; but as they know he's only "Jack" that was, they don't very much mind. He has a handsome annuity settled on him which allows him to make the journey past Weald Park whenever he chooses; and he always moors his monkey boat there at the foot of the park, where he is visited by Sir John who has now got into the habit of calling Mrs. Bowker "mother."

Jim Snow is at a good school, and going ahead like a house on fire. His mother no longer lives in Coram Alley, but in a cottage on the Weald estate. Dirk is a frequent visitor to the Hall, but, if the truth must be told, he is fonder of the kitchen entrance. But then there is Mary there. From all accounts, it won't be long before their banns are announced in the parish church.

Squall lies in the sunshipe on the terrace, but only when Jack is occupied on business in the house. At all other times he stalks like a grey shadow at his heels, with his long, gaunt wolf-like body ready, as in less happy times, to give his life, if need be, for his master.

THE END.

(Now turn to page 23 and read the opening chapters of "THE CURSE OF LHASA!"—the greatest story of the year.)

NEXT MONDAY'S PROGRAMME.

PUNISHED FOR SPEAKING THE TRUTH.

IT isn't often, fortunately, that headmasters punish their pupils for speaking the truth, yet in next week's MAGNET Frank Richards shows old Dr. Locke punishing Herbert Vernon-Smith for this "offence." That's a staggerer, isn't it? The Bounder is in the unhappy position of knowing that his headmaster's guest is a thorough scoundrel, and when questioned on this point Smithy simply states the facts as he encountered them. The Head doesn't believe him—in fact, he gets into a rare bate and regards Smithy's story as a "malicious slander." Rather hard lines on Smirby, that, but he sticks to his

story, although there's not a fellow in the school who believes it. What the outcome of this extraordinary position is you will learn from next week's fine story of Greyfriars, which is entitled:

"ONE AGAINST THE SCHOOL!"

Don't miss this treat, chums, or you will be missing one of the grandest yarns that Mr. Frank Richards has ever written.

"THE CURSE OF LHASA!"

Now that you have before you the opening chapters of this new story featuring Ferrers Locke, the detective, and our old friend Jack Drake, you will be able to judge for yourselves if it's as good as I have said in previous chats. Tibet is thousands of miles away, but the author of this "thriller" has entered into the writing of this story with such heart and soul that Tibet, with all its colour and mystery, is brought right within our mental vision.

And it must be mentioned, too, that as the yarn progresses the interest increases. Magnetites would be well advised to give a standing order for their copy of the MAGNET—it would be a rare pity to miss a single instalment of this novel tec story.

"A SLEUTH ON THE TRAIL!"

By Dicky Nugent.

That's the next "shocker" featuring Dr. Birchmell & Co. of St. Sam's. You'll laugh till your sides ache over it, I'll wager. And while I remember it, there will be two new numbers of the "Schoolboys' Own Library" on sale Friday. No. 53 is entitled "Driven from School!" and it deals with the adventures and misadventures of Bob Cherry of Greyfriars. No. 54—"Buying the Remove!"—is an excellent tale of the heroes of St. Frank's. Both these volumes are well worth reading, chums. Cheerio!

YOUR EDITOR.

HIS MOST TROUBLESOME PUPIL! *There's not a good word Mr. Quelch can say in favour of Herbert Vernon-Smith these days, for the Bounder is the type of fellow who delights in breaking every school rule that was ever made. But even "Quelch's troublesome pupil" has his uses in this world, as Dr. Locke and Mr. Quelch discover in circumstances that are, to say the least, most unexpected and certainly dramatic!*

The Bounder's Win!



A Novel, Long Complete
Story of the Chums of
Greyfriars, with the reckless
hardheaded junior known as
the "Bounder" in the
limelight.

By Frank Richards

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Asking For It!

"**V**ERNON-SMITH!"

Mr. Quelch's voice was sharp and acid.

Herbert Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, smiled sarcastically.

He was "for it" again; his Form master's voice and look left no doubt on that point.

It was third lesson in the Remove Form room at Greyfriars. The Remove were all in their places, after morning break, when Mr. Quelch rustled in. One glimpse of Mr. Quelch's face was enough to warn the Removites that there was trouble in the air.

Sometimes Mr. Quelch smiled, though not frequently. Oftener, he frowned. But on the present occasion his frown was portentous.

Many of the fellows glanced at the Bounder as the Remove master addressed him. They were not surprised that Smithy was "for it" again. All that term the Bounder had been in trouble of one kind or another; and he had tested Mr. Quelch's patience almost to breaking-point. It seemed to be the Bounder's object to give his Form master as much trouble as he possibly could; and certainly he succeeded in giving Mr. Quelch a great deal. But he did not escape scatheless in the process; lines and lickings fell to Smithy's share as thick as leaves in Vallombrosa of old.

"Vernon-Smith!"

"Yes, sir!" drawled the Bounder.

"Step out before the class."

"Certainly."

The Bounder moved out of his place with leisurely deliberation. If it was his object to fan the flames of Mr. Quelch's wrath, he was successful. The Form master's eyes glinted under his knitted brows.

Vernon-Smith stood before him, calm and cool. He met Mr. Quelch's eyes with an air of unconcern.

The Remove fellows watched with keen interest. What the Bounder had

done this time they did not know. But evidently he had done something. Some of the fellows grinned; others looked grave. The Bounder was not popular in his Form; but there were some who were sorry to see him continually "up against it."

"Vernon-Smith!" Mr. Quelch's voice was very deep. "I have had reason to keep you under observation for some time."

"Thank you, sir!"

"What? What?"

"It's very kind of you, sir," said the Bounder, unmoved.

"I say, you fellows, Smithy's asking for it!" murmured Billy Bunter, with a fat grin.

"Silence in the class!" hooted Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, yes, sir! I didn't speak!" exclaimed Bunter in a great hurry. "I never opened my lips, sir. I only said to Cherry—"

"Take a hundred lines, Bunter!"

"Oh lor'!"

Billy Bunter relapsed into silence. Nobody else in the Remove had ventured even upon a whisper. They knew better than to whisper when Mr. Quelch had that expression on his face.

The Remove master turned his attention to Herbert Vernon-Smith again.

"You are impertinent, Vernon-Smith," he said. "But let that pass. I repeat that I have kept you under some observation. You are not a boy I can trust. I have good reason to believe that you break many of the rules of the school, and only a few minutes ago I received proof of the fact."

"Indeed, sir!" said the Bounder.

The Removites listened with redoubled attention now.

There were few in the Remove who did not know the kind of fellow the Bounder was, and what his manners and customs were. Especially since his former friend, Redwing, had left Greyfriars the Bounder had gone downhill. If his wild ways had been discovered there was no doubt that the matter was serious; if Mr. Quelch had learned that

Smithy crept out of school bounds after lights-out and sneaked in at the back door of the Cross Keys on half-holidays; that he smoked and played banker in his study. Less than that was needed to cause a Greyfriars man to be "bunked."

But the Bounder did not seem concerned.

He only raised his eyebrows a little and waited for the Remove master to proceed. There was no doubt that the Bounder of Greyfriars had plenty of nerve.

"A few minutes ago," continued Mr. Quelch, "I was in my study. I saw you in the quadrangle, Vernon-Smith. You were speaking to Skinner."

Harold Skinner shifted uncomfortably in his seat.

"I often speak to Skinner, sir," said the Bounder. "Skinner's my study-mate in No. 4. Is there anything wrong in speakin' to Skinner, sir?"

"This insolence will not profit you, Vernon-Smith," rapped out Mr. Quelch. "Under my eyes, as I looked from my study window you took a packet from your pocket and showed it to Skinner. It was a packet of playing-cards. I saw it distinctly."

"Oh!" murmured the Remove.

The juniors were not surprised to hear that the Bounder had cards in his possession. Most of them knew that already. But they were distinctly surprised to hear that he had displayed them where a Form master's eyes might fall upon him. That was far beyond the Bounder's usual recklessness.

"This packet you replaced in your pocket," said Mr. Quelch. "Doubtless it is there now."

"Probably," said the Bounder.

"As for Skinner—"

"I was not to blame, sir," said Skinner, looking very alarmed. "I can't help a fellow coming up to me in the quad, sir, and showing me something. It wasn't my fault. I never asked Smithy to show me the cards; I never knew he had them. He never opened the case, sir. I didn't—"

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"You may be silent, Skinner. I was about to say that I do not blame you in this matter."

"Oh!" gasped Skinner. He was exceedingly glad to hear that, at all events.

"Vernon-Smith, you replaced that packet in an inside pocket, under my eyes. Take it out."

"Yes, sir."

Smithy slid his hand into his pocket and drew out a little cardboard case. It was such as playing-cards are often kept in, the inner case containing the cards sliding into the outer case. On the outside appeared the printed words, "De la Blue's Pneumatic-backed Playing Cards"; quite expensive cards; the Bouncer "did himself" well in these little matters. Smithy held up the cardboard case.

"Is that it, sir?"

"That is it, Vernon-Smith."

The Bouncer waited with irritating calmness.

"I have had cause to punish you very severely of late, and very frequently, Vernon-Smith," said Mr. Quelch. "On this occasion I shall send you to your headmaster."

To the amazement of the Remove, and of Mr. Quelch, the Bouncer grinned. The Form master breathed hard.

"You will go to Dr. Locke's study now, Vernon-Smith, before he goes to the Sixth Form-room," said Mr. Quelch. "You will place that packet in his hands and tell him that I request him to deal with the matter."

"Very well, sir."

"Go!" snapped Mr. Quelch.

And the Bouncer went. He winked at the Remove as he departed, with the eye that was farthest from Mr. Quelch. He left the whole Form astonished. A caning from Mr. Quelch would have been severe enough; but a report to the Head meant a flogging. Like Bellerophon of old, the Bouncer carried with him his own sentence. But his manner was entirely unconcerned as he swung out of the Form-room.

"Well," murmured Bob Cherry, "Smithy's got a nerve!"

Harry Wharton nodded. He could not understand the Bouncer asking for trouble in this way.

Mr. Quelch's eyes glinted over the class, and there was silence. Third lesson commenced in the Remove-room in an electric atmosphere.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Not a Licking!

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH strolled along the passages with a smile on his face. He was heading for Dr. Locke's study, but he was in no hurry to arrive there.

He seemed to be in a cheery humour as he went. Wingate of the Sixth, on his way to the Sixth Form-room, spotted him idling along, and called to him. It was past time for all the Lower School to be in class, and the captain of Greyfriars was surprised to see a Remove fellow idling about the passages.

"Vernon-Smith! Why aren't you in your Form-room?"

The Bouncer glanced round coolly.

"My Form master's sent me to the Head, Wingate," he answered.

"You don't seem in a hurry to get there."

"A fellow never is in a hurry to get to the Head when he's sent to him, Wingate."

"Well, get a move on," said Wingate, with a rather curious look at the

Bouncer. "Mr. Prout's with the Head now, but I suppose you must go if you're sent by your Form master."

"I'm not keen. I'll take a stroll in the quad if you think I'd better not interrupt the Head and Mr. Prout," suggested the Bouncer.

Wingate stared at him and then laughed.

"Cut on, and don't be cheeky," he said.

"Right-ho! Any old thing."

And the Bouncer, quickening his pace a trifle, proceeded to the Head's study. The door of that apartment was open. The bulky figure of Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth, was visible there. Mr. Prout was standing with his back to the open doorway, in talk with the Head, who was invisible to Vernon-Smith as he came up. Mr. Prout's ample form almost blocked the doorway. Mr. Prout's rich and fruity voice was going strong. There was only one pair of ears at Greyfriars that never tired of Mr. Prout's sonorous voice. They were Mr. Prout's own ears.

The Fifth Form-master did not hear the Bouncer approach, and the junior could not very well push by him, or poke him in the back as a hint to move. So Smithy stopped. He was not sorry to linger; all the time he spent away from third lesson was so much to the good, from his own point of view.

"I shall be very pleased, sir," Mr. Prout was saying. "It will be a pleasure, Dr. Locke."

"As you mentioned that you intended to walk down to Courtfield this afternoon, Mr. Prout—" came the Head's quiet voice.

"Quite so, sir! It will be no trouble at all to call at the station and meet Mr. Spencer."

"Captain Spencer."

"Quite so. It will be a pleasure, sir, to show any little polite attention to your guest, sir."

"Thank you, Mr. Prout!"

"Not at all, sir—not at all! And the train?"

"Captain Spencer arrives at Courtfield by the five o'clock express, Mr. Prout. I should go myself, but Mrs. Locke desires me to accompany her to the vicarage, and therefore—"

"It will be a pleasure to me, sir. I presume I shall have no difficulty in recognising the young man?"

"No more than I should have, I think, as I have not seen him for very many years. I informed him in my letter that he would be met at the station, so there should be no difficulty. Moreover, Captain Spencer, I understand, still has a limp, the result of a wound received in the War, and so—"

"The matter will be quite simple, sir." Mr. Prout seldom allowed an interlocutor to complete a sentence. Even the Head himself was not safe from Mr. Prout's desire to dominate a conversation with his own powerful voice. "I will meet Captain Spencer and accompany him to Greyfriars. I—"

"I think I am due in the Sixth Form-room now, Mr. Prout," said the Head gently.

The Bouncer understood, if Mr. Prout did not, that Dr. Locke had heard the Fifth Form-master's ponderous voice for a sufficient length of time. He grinned behind Mr. Prout's portly back.

"Quite so, sir!" said Mr. Prout, and he made a movement at last. Then he became aware of Vernon-Smith.

He blinked at him.

"Boy, what are you doing here?"

"Mr. Quelch sent me to the Head, sir," said the Bouncer, cheerfully.

"Oh, very good!"

Mr. Prout vacated the doorway, and the Bouncer was able to enter the study.

"What is it, Vernon-Smith?" asked the Head, looking at the Bouncer over his glasses a little impatiently. The Sixth were waiting for the Head now. Having been relieved of the ponderous Mr. Prout, he did not want to waste further time on a junior schoolboy.

"Mr. Quelch sent me, sir," said the Bouncer demurely. "He told me to hand you this, sir."

Smithy took the card-box from his pocket and laid it on the Head's writing-table.

Dr. Locke looked at it in astonishment.

"A box of playing-cards!" he said. "I do not understand. Why has Mr. Quelch sent this to me, Vernon-Smith?" Then the Head frowned. "Do you mean that these playing-cards were found in possession of a member of the Remove?"

"Mr. Quelch saw me show the box to Skinner, sir, and he ordered me to bring it to you and ask you to deal with the matter," said the Bouncer meekly.

"Hand me that cane, Vernon-Smith!"

"Yes, sir."

The Bouncer picked up the cane and passed it to the Head, who rose to his feet.

"I shall punish you very severely, Vernon-Smith. Bend over that chair."

"May I ask, sir, why I am to be punished?" asked the Bouncer.

"What? You are perfectly well aware, Vernon-Smith, that no Greyfriars boy is allowed to have playing-cards in his possession," exclaimed the Head sharply.

"I know, sir. But I have nothing of the kind."

"What?"

"If you will kindly open the box, sir."

The Head looked at the Bouncer, and then picked up the box and slid out the inner case. That case, which was made for containing a pack of playing-cards, contained nothing of the kind now. It contained a number of small pieces of cardboard, upon which were very carefully written notes of Latin conjugations. The Head looked at the top card and read a few words. He turned to the next, and read: "Ablative absolute—example, Horace: Teucro duce et auspice Teucro." On the third was written "sto, steti, statum," etc. With more and more surprise in his face, the Head glanced through the dozen or so little cards.

"Bless my soul!" he said at last. "What—what does this mean, Vernon-Smith? This is your handwriting?"

"Yes, sir," said Vernon-Smith. "Mr. Quelch has found fault with my Latin, sir, so I wrote out those exercises to keep about me. They're useful to refer to at odd times, sir."

"Very commendable indeed!" said the Head. "I did not know you were so studious, Vernon-Smith."

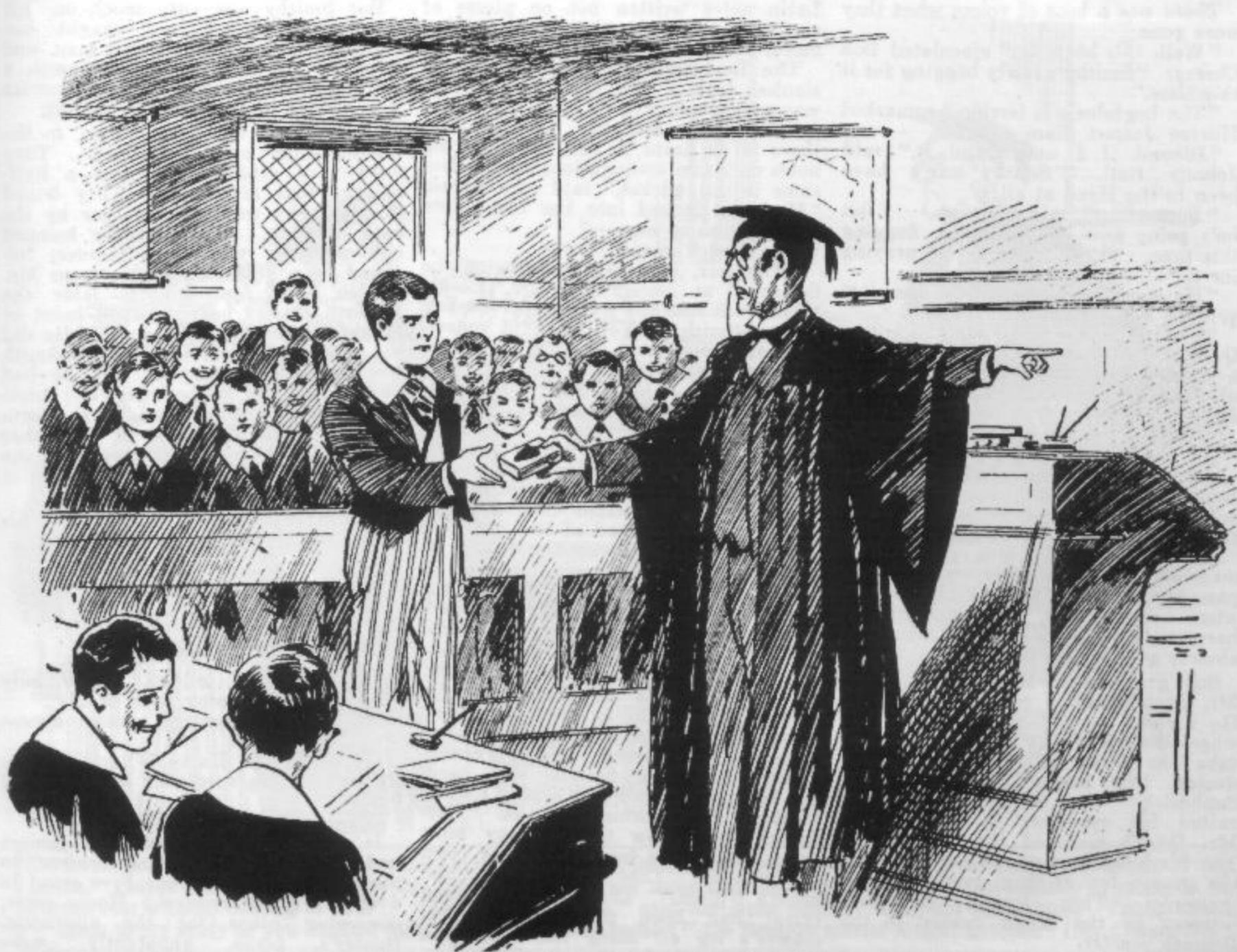
"I'm afraid, sir, that I've been a little slack this term, and I was trying to pull up," said the Bouncer. "I should like to get a higher place in class, and there are the exams coming on, too, sir."

"Very true," said the Head, "but I am sure your Form-master would not find fault with such a commendable desire. Has Mr. Quelch seen these notes?"

"He did not open the case, sir."

"Then no doubt he concluded that it contained playing-cards, which was its original purpose," said the Head. "I must ask you, Vernon-Smith, where you obtained this case, which undoubtedly at one time contained cards."

"I picked it up, sir," said the



"You will go to Dr. Locke's study now, Vernon-Smith, before he goes to the Sixth Form-room," said Mr. Quelch severely. "You will place that packet of cards in his hands and tell him that I request him to deal with the matter." "Very well, sir," said Vernon-Smith, grinning inwardly. "Go!" snapped Mr. Quelch. (See Chapter 1.)

Bounder, calmly. "I happened to see it and thought it would be useful to keep my notes in."

"Dear me!" said the Head.

He paused.

Certainly there was no blame to be attached to a junior schoolboy who, desirous of improving his Latin, carried a bundle of notes about him, to refer to at odd times. Neither could the junior be blamed for picking up an old card-box to carry his notes in. Obviously, Mr. Quelch had taken a hasty view, and condemned this junior without investigation. Certainly he should have examined the contents of the box before sending Vernon-Smith to his headmaster with it. Mr. Quelch had made a mistake; the kind of mistake that a Form-master ought not to make.

"Mr. Quelch undoubtedly drew a false impression from—from the nature of this box, and the printed words on it," said the Head, at last. "You should have explained to him at once, Vernon-Smith."

"Mr. Quelch did not ask me, sir. I did not understand why he was so angry," said Smithy innocently.

The Head pursed his lips.

"Well, well, it is a—a—a misapprehension, and you are not to blame in the matter. You may return to your Form-room, Vernon-Smith."

"May I take my notes, sir?" asked the Bounder demurely. "It's a half-holiday to-day, and I was thinking of going through them, sir, when I'm out for a walk this afternoon."

"Assuredly!" said the Head.

He replaced the cards in the box, and handed it back to Smithy.

"I advise you, however, to find some other box for keeping your notes in, Vernon-Smith. This is liable to cause misapprehensions, if seen."

"I will throw it away, sir, and buy a new box in Courtfield this afternoon," said the Bounder.

"Very good. You may go."

And the Bounder went.

He winked into space as he sauntered down the passage.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Not Guilty!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. looked at the Bounder as he came back into the Remove room.

Third lesson was half-over when he reappeared. The Removites expected to see the Bounder come in wriggling after a severe application of the Head's cane. Instead of which, the Bounder walked into the room in quite a careless and casual manner; and, still more surprising, the offending card-box was in his hand.

Mr. Quelch's gimlet-eyes were on him at once.

"Vernon-Smith."

"Yes, sir."

"You have been to your headmaster?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did you hand him that box as I instructed you?"

"Certainly, sir."

"I am forced to doubt your statement, Vernon-Smith, as I see that the box is still in your possession," rapped out Mr. Quelch.

"The Head told me I might keep it, sir!"

"What! What?"

"Dr. Locke told me that I might keep it, sir."

"How dare you say so?" thundered Mr. Quelch. "It is quite obvious to me, too, that you have not been punished, Vernon-Smith."

"That is correct, sir! The Head did not see any reason for punishing me," said the Bounder calmly.

The Removites gasped, and Mr. Quelch's eyes seemed almost to start from his head.

"You—you unscrupulous, untruthful young rascal!" spluttered Mr. Quelch. "How dare you say anything of the kind. You have not been to the headmaster at all. You are speaking falsely."

Mr. Quelch threw down his book, strode towards the Bounder, and grasped him by the shoulder.

"I shall take you to Dr. Locke myself, Vernon-Smith. Wharton, you will keep order in this Form-room while I am absent."

And with an iron grip on Smithy's shoulder, Mr. Quelch marched him out of the Form-room.

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There was a buzz of voices when they were gone.

"Well, this beats it!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "Smithy's fairly begging for it this time."

"The begfulness is terrific," remarked Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"Blessed if I understand it," said Johnny Bull. "Smithy can't have been to the Head at all."

"Impossible," said Nugent. "But he's going now. It will be a flogging this time. The Bounder's just praying for it."

"He won't be happy till he gets it!" grinned Peter Todd.

"I—I suppose he isn't pulling Quelch's leg somehow," said Bob, with a puzzled look. "He seems quite sure of himself. Somebody cut along and see what happens."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

All the Remove were keen to know what was happening; but even Billy Bunter did not feel disposed to follow on and watch. That would have been rather too dangerous a proceeding.

Mr. Quelch, with a wrathful face, marched the Bounder along the passages to the Head's study. But when he got there, the cupboard was bare, so to speak. Dr. Locke had already gone to the Sixth Form-room.

Still gripping the Bounder's shoulder, Mr. Quelch started on a fresh voyage. He arrived at the Sixth Form-room, where the Head was just beginning to take the Sixth on a personally-conducted tour among the delights of Sophocles. Dr. Locke paused, and raised his eyebrows in surprise, as Mr. Quelch marched the Bounder in. The Sixth, at least, were not sorry for the pause; few of them really enjoyed Sophocles. They looked on with interest as the Head turned to the Remove master.

"Dr. Locke," gasped Mr. Quelch, "I am sorry—exceedingly sorry—to interrupt. But I must tell you that I sent this junior to your study some time ago, and he has had the audacity to return to the Form-room without coming to you."

"Really, Mr. Quelch, I do not quite understand. Vernon-Smith came to my study as you directed him."

"He—he—he came——" the Remove master almost babbled.

"Certainly."

"Then he did not hand you that box, as I commanded him—the box the boy now has in his hand——"

"Certainly he did."

"Dr. Locke! I—I am quite amazed! You have seen the contents of that box, and yet you allow this wretched boy to keep it in his possession!" stuttered Mr. Quelch.

"There is a mistake in the matter, sir," said the Head coldly. "The contents of that box are quite harmless."

"Playing-cards——"

"The box does not contain playing-cards."

"What! What?"

"Vernon-Smith, you should have shown Mr. Quelch the contents of the box. Open the box at once."

Vernon-Smith calmly opened the box. Mr. Quelch's face, as he looked at Smith's precious Latin notes, was a study in scarlet. His expression was, as Walker of the Sixth told Loder afterwards, worth a guinea a box. The Remove master could scarcely believe his eyes. He fumbled at the cards, looking at them, blinking at them. But any amount of looking, and fumbling, and blinking, could not turn them into playing-cards. They were a set of

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Latin notes written out on pieces of cardboard; merely that and nothing more.

The Bounder stood with an expressionless face. But Mr. Quelch's face was very expressive.

"You will see, Mr. Quelch, that there is no harm in this boy carrying notes on Latin conjugations and declensions in his pocket," said the Head. "Had you looked into the box before sending him to me——"

Mr. Quelch gasped.

"The box, however, had better be destroyed at once," said Dr. Locke. "Throw it into the waste-paper basket, Vernon-Smith. You may, of course, keep the notes."

"Very well, sir."

"If there is anything more, Mr. Quelch——" said the Head, in a tone of somewhat frigid politeness.

There was nothing more! Mr. Quelch, with a crimson face, almost tottered from the Sixth Form-room. He was only too conscious of the broad grin from end to end of the Sixth.

The Bounder followed him out.

Mr. Quelch did not speak to him, or glance at him, on the way back to the Remove room. The Form-master's feelings were much too deep for words.

He had been made to look utterly and hopelessly ridiculous. He knew, though the Head did not, that the astute Bounder had planned the whole thing. It had not been by chance, or through recklessness, that Vernon-Smith had shown Skinner that cardboard in sight of his Form master's study window in morning break. Mr. Quelch knew now that Smithy must have known that he was looking from the window. The whole thing had been a "plant." The audacious young rascal had been pulling his Form master's leg all along the line, with the deliberate intention of making him look ridiculous.

In sending Smithy to the Head, Mr. Quelch had played into his hands even more thoroughly than the Bounder had ventured to expect. He had intended to make Mr. Quelch look a fool to the Remove. By Mr. Quelch's unintentional aid he had made him look a fool not only to the Remove, but to the Sixth and the Head as well.

Mr. Quelch breathed hard and deep as he rustled back to his own Form-room. Vernon-Smith followed him in demurely, and went quietly to his place. The incident was closed. The Bounder had committed no offence. Mr. Quelch could not punish him for his own misapprehension. Never had he more fervently desired to punish any junior. But it was not possible in the circumstances. If the Head saw no harm in what Vernon-Smith had done, it was not for Mr. Quelch to punish him—on the mere suspicion that he had been "had" by the unscrupulous Bounder.

During the remainder of the third lesson the Remove were on their very best behaviour. The glinting of Mr. Quelch's eyes warned them to be good—very, very good. But their unaccustomed goodness did not save them. Lord Mauleverer's first yawn was the signal for a hundred lines, Bunter received two hundred more for whispering in class, Bob Cherry had a hundred for shuffling his feet, Bolsover major was caned for a slight mistake, and Harry Wharton given three minutes of an acid tongue for a wrong answer. The Bounder, however, came in for Mr. Quelch's special and particular attention. It was obvious to all the Remove that the Form master was trying to catch Smithy out.

But Smithy was very much on his guard, and he was not caught out once. Mr. Quelch was a just man, and he could not and would not punish a pupil without reason. The Bounder was careful to give him no reason.

Third lesson was over at last, to the intense relief of the Remove. They were very glad that it was a half-holiday that afternoon. They hoped that Quelch would feel better by the next morning. The Bounder lounged out carelessly with the Remove, followed by a glittering glance from Mr. Quelch. A few minutes later the Remove master heard a loud burst of laughter from the quadrangle. He did not need to be told that Vernon-Smith was telling the story of how he had pulled his Form master's leg, and made him look a fool in the Sixth Form room. It was the kind of joke that would appeal to the Remove, and the roars of laughter showed how much it did appeal to them.

Mr. Quelch rustled away to his study, almost at boiling point.

— — —

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Detained!

"I SAY, you fellows, you're jolly well not going with Mauly!" Billy Bunter spoke almost accusingly.

He blinked at Harry Wharton & Co. through his big spectacles with a severe blink.

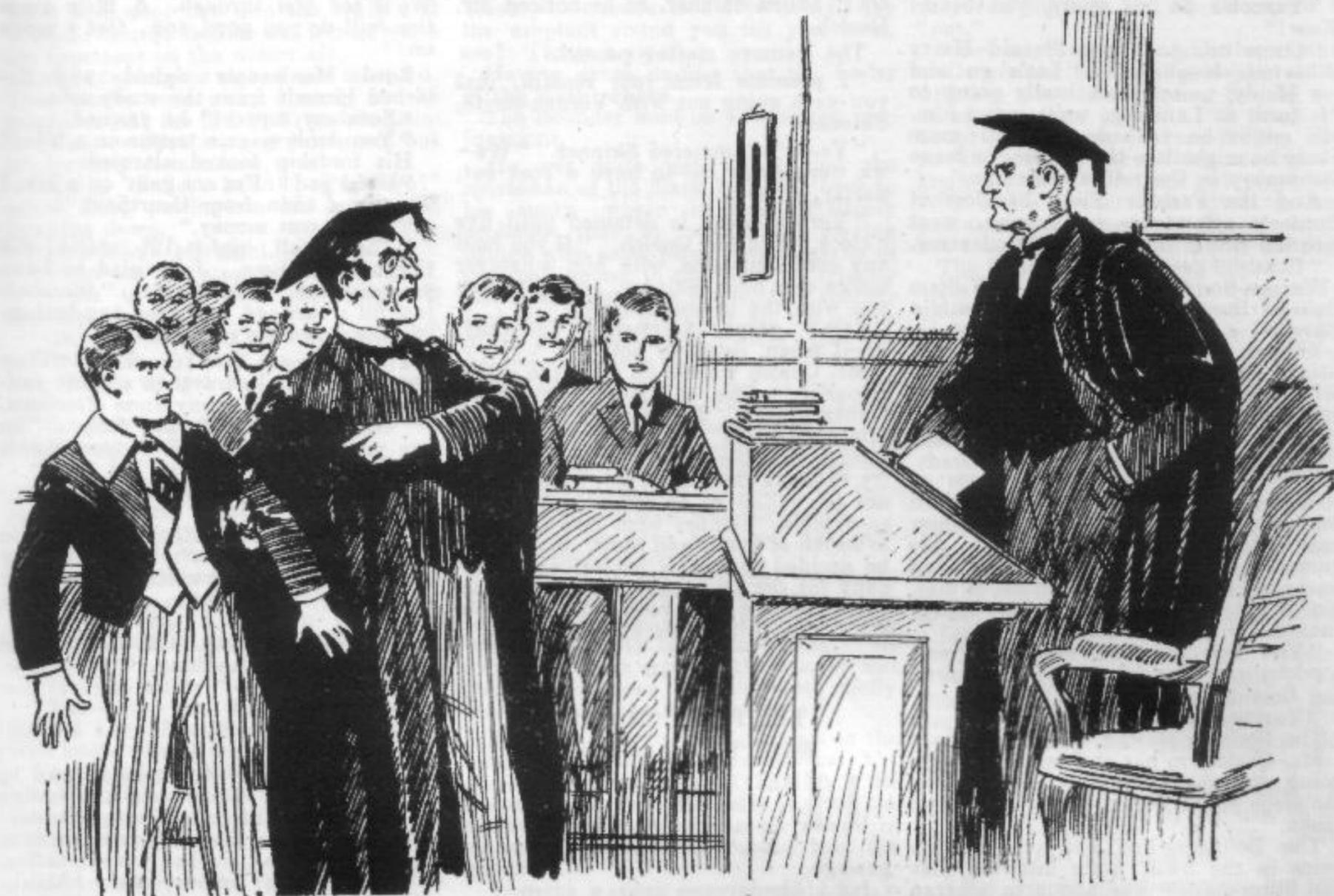
"Mauly!" repeated Wharton.

It was after dinner, and the juniors had the bright June afternoon to themselves. The Famous Five stood in a cheery group near the House steps, discussing plans for the afternoon. Bunter's plans, apparently, were already made, and involved Lord Mauleverer, the dandy of the Remove.

Herbert Vernon-Smith stood lounging against a buttress at a little distance, his hands in his pockets, a cynical smile on his face. There was no match on that day, and the Famous Five were thinking of taking a spin on their bicycles. That healthy and harmless recreation did not appeal to the Bounder, and the discussion, which reached his ears, drew the cynical grin to his hard face.

Yet the Bounder, at the bottom of his heart, was not satisfied with the scheme he had mapped out for that half-holiday. He was going out of bounds with Skinner, and there was to be a spread and smokes and a game of billiards, at a safe distance from the school. Skinner was delighted. He was envied by Snoop and Stott because he was the Bounder's chosen comrade on that excursion. The Bounder was not delighted by any means. Had his former chum, Redwing, been still at Greyfriars, Smithy knew that he would have liked a spin with him much better than the shady expedition with Skinner.

But Tom Redwing was gone, and it was largely the Bounder's fault that he was gone. The Bounder tried to dismiss his lost chum from his mind, and succeeded fairly well. But he had never thought of making another chum now that Redwing was gone. Only once had anything like real friendship softened the Bounder's hard heart, and that was over now. He was friends with Skinner, but they liked one another little, if at all, and trusted one another less. "He travels farthest who travels alone," sings a bad poet. The Bounder was travelling alone now,



Dr. Locke paused and raised his eyebrows in surprise when Mr. Quelch marched the Bounder into the Sixth Form-room. "Dr. Locke," gasped Mr. Quelch, "I sent this junior to your study some time ago, and he has had the audacity to return to the Form-room without coming to you." "Really, Mr. Quelch," said the Head testily, "I do not understand. Vernon-Smith came to my study as you directed him." "He—he—he came!" the Remove master almost babbled. (See Chapter 3.)

and travelling downhill about as fast as he could travel.

Harry Wharton & Co. did not heed the mocking grin on the face of the Bounder, though they saw him loafing there near them. They had little to do with Vernon-Smith in these days. Billy Bunter heeded him still less. Bunter had much more important matters to think of. Bunter knew what had been in a letter that had arrived for Lord Mauleverer that morning. That was a circumstance that transcended in importance all other things in the wide universe. For there had been a cheque in Mauly's letter, a cheque from one of his lordship's indulgent uncles. Mauly was the only fellow in the Remove, doubtless the only fellow at Greyfriars, who received a tip from a kind relative in the form of a cheque. Not that the slacker of the Remove was as pleased to receive a cheque as any other fellow would have been. A cheque necessitated a visit to the bank to collect the cash, and Mauly hated exertion. Mauly had been known to carry a cheque in his pocket for weeks, to use it as a bookmark, and to drop it about his study.

The Famous Five had decided on the bikes for the afternoon, but had not yet decided on the route. But they broke off the discussion as Bunter addressed them. His words rather surprised them. Not possessing Billy Bunter's great gift of knowing everything that did not concern him, they were quite unaware of the whacking remittance that had arrived for Lord Mauleverer, and would not have been much interested, anyway.

"You're jolly well not going with Mauly!" repeated William George

Bunter, as five pairs of surprised eyes were turned on him. "I'm going with Mauly. Mauly's a pal of mine. You can't say he's a pal of yours. You let him alone."

"What is this fat idiot burbling about?" asked Bob Cherry, addressing space.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"We're going to Lantham!" said Nugent.

"You're not!" roared Bunter.

"And why the thump shouldn't we?" demanded Harry Wharton, in amazement.

"I tell you I'm not going to have it!" howled Bunter. "You let Mauly alone! I'm going with him to Lantham."

"Mauly going to Lantham!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "Why, it's ten miles. Mauly would perish on the way!"

"The perishfulness of the lazy and esteemed Mauly would be terrific!" grinned Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"Oh, come off!" snapped Bunter.

"Mauly can't cash the cheque without going to Lantham, as it's drawn on a Lantham bank. And I'm going with him to—to see that he gets the money safe home—see?"

"To see that he blows some of it in the Lantham bunshop, you mean!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"I disdain to take any notice of that insinuation, Cherry," said the Owl of the Remove, with a great deal of dignity. "As Mauly's friend, I'm going to see him through. You fellows can keep off the grass. Sickening, I call it, flocking round my pal Mauly just because he's got a cheque from his uncle. You keep clear—see?"

"Bump him!" said Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"You fat idiot!" said Harry Wharton, in measured tones. "This is the first we've heard of Mauly's cheque."

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"But if Mauly's really going to Lantham, we'll take him along with us. If he's going to carry money about he'll be safer with us. Where is he?"

"Why, you—you beast—"

"Where's Mauly?" demanded Bob Cherry.

"I—I say, you fellows, Mauly hasn't really got a cheque!" gasped Bunter, his fat brain assimilating the knowledge that he had said too much. "I—I thought you were fixing it up to go with Mauly when I heard you mention Lantham. There isn't any cheque—"

"You said there was."

"Only a—a joke—pulling your leg, you know," said Bunter, with a feeble chuckle. "Mauly hasn't had a letter from his uncle, and I didn't watch him open it, and there wasn't a cheque in it drawn on the Lantham and County Bank."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I suppose you fellows can take my word!" said Bunter. "The cheque wasn't for twenty pounds!" he added, by way of clinching matters.

"Where's Mauly?" demanded the captain of the Remove.

"He's gone home for the afternoon. Yaroooh! Leggo my ear, Bob Cherry, you beast!"

"Where's Mauly?" grinned Bob.

"He's ill—gone to bed because he feels seedy! Yooooop! Leggo!"

"Where's Mauly?"

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"Yarrah! In his study, you beast! Wow!"

"Come on, you chaps!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Let's go and see Mauly, and if he's really going to the bank at Lantham, we'll escort him. He might be robbed—and still more likely he might lose the cheque, or leave the money in the railway-carriage."

And the Famous Five, heedless of Bunter's spluttering indignation, went into the House to find Lord Mauleverer.

"Beasts!" gasped Bunter. Vernon-Smith chuckled. William George Bunter turned on him with a glare.

"What are you cackling at, you cheeky rotter? Yah, you'd grin the other side of your face if Quelch knew your little game this afternoon."

"Shut up, you fat fool!" snapped the Bounder.

"You let Quelch get a chance at you, and you'll come a cropper!" jeered Bunter. "Think he doesn't know how you pulled his leg this morning. He knows it all right, and knows you worked it all out to make an ass of him. You'll get it hot when you give him a chance."

"You can go and eat coke, and Quelch can do the same!" answered the Bounder carelessly.

"Vernon-Smith!"

The Bounder started, and bit his lip. Mr. Quelch, in hat and coat, evidently going out that afternoon, came down the steps of the School-House as Smithy spoke.

The Bounder had not subdued his voice in the least, quite unaware that his Form-master was about to emerge from the House.

Mr. Quelch turned on him, fixing his eyes on the Bounder with a deadly glint in them.

Mr. Quelch was still sore and savage over his experience during third lesson that morning. Being a just man, he could not punish the Bounder without actual offence given. But the Bounder had done it now. The mildest-tempered Form master would have become irate at hearing a junior state that he could go and eat coke.

Billy Bunter, with a fat grin, turned and rolled away. His opinion was that Smithy was "for it," and he was right.

The Bounder looked sullenly at his Form master. He had given Mr. Quelch the chance for which he knew the Form master had been watching. That chance was not to be let slip.

"I heard your words, Vernon-Smith," said Mr. Quelch, with ominous calmness. "I know now the way you speak of your Form master: Go into the House!"

The Bounder breathed hard. "It's a half-holiday, sir!" he muttered. "You are detained for the afternoon."

Smithy's eyes glittered.

"You will go into the Form-room," said Mr. Quelch. "You will occupy yourself until five o'clock in writing out Latin conjugations—an occupation which will be quite to your taste, according to the story you told Dr. Locke this morning," added the Remove master bitterly. "Go in at once. As I cannot trust you not to break detention while I am absent, I shall request Loder, of the Sixth, to keep you under observation."

The Bounder did not stir.

"Do you hear me, Vernon-Smith?" Slowly, reluctantly, the Bounder obeyed. Mr. Quelch grimly followed him in. Inside the House they came on Skinner, who called to Vernon-Smith.

"Ready when you are, Smithy!"

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Oh!" added Skinner, as he noticed Mr. Quelch.

The Remove master paused.

"I presume from your remark, that you were going out with Vernon-Smith, Skinner."

"Ye-es," stammered Skinner. "We—we were going to—to have a boat out, sir."

"Vernon-Smith is detained until five o'clock," said Mr. Quelch. "If you hold any communication with him whatever before that hour, Skinner, I shall punish you with the utmost severity."

"Oh!" gasped Skinner. "Certainly, sir—I mean, certainly not."

Mr. Quelch walked on after the sullen Bounder. Skinner looked after them, rather glumly. The excursion for that afternoon was off. It was likely enough that the reckless Bounder would try to break detention; but Skinner was not the fellow to be mixed up in such an exploit. Skinner went into the quad in search of Snoop and Stott, upon whom he decided to bestow his valuable company for the afternoon. Vernon-Smith went into the Form-room, and sat down at his desk with a black brow.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Mauly Decides to Bike It!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry's voice boomed in at the doorway of Study No. 12 in the Remove passage.

Lord Mauleverer gave a jump.

His lazy lordship was stretched on the study sofa, with his hands behind his head, contemplating the blue sky through the window. Mauly was thinking of going over to Lantham that afternoon, to cash his uncle's cheque at the bank there. He had been thinking of it for some time; and he was still thinking. Uninterrupted, it was probable that Mauly would have gone on thinking of it till tea-time, if slumber had not intervened and stopped his thinking.

He was interrupted now. "Falling asleep?" demanded Bob. "Yaas!"

"According to Bunter, you've got a cheque from your uncle."

"Yaas."

"Going over to Lantham to cash it?"

"Yaas."

"We're going. Come with us."

"You're awfully good!" said Lord Mauleverer. "I—I—I wasn't thinkin' of startin' just yet, though."

"Then it's time you did," said Nugent, laughing. "It's a good step to Lantham, and you want to get back for call-over, Mauly."

"Yaas."

"Come on, then!" said Johnny Bull. "We'll see that you don't lose the money, Mauly, or get held up by a footpad, or leave the currency notes strewn around the countryside."

"Thanks no end, old bean!" said Lord Mauleverer, sitting up on the sofa.

"But I've been wonderin' whether I wouldn't ask Mr. Quelch to cash the cheque, after all."

"And send it back to your uncle?" grinned Bob. "Quelch doesn't approve of kids having large amounts of pocket-money."

"But it isn't a large amount," said his lordship innocently.

"Bunter said it was twenty pounds."

"Yaas."

"Well, I think Mr. Quelch would think that a large amount, if you don't, Mauly," chuckled Bob. "Come on!

We'll see you through. A little exertion will do you good, too. Get a move on!"

Lord Mauleverer sighed, and detached himself from the study sofa.

"Seen my topper?" he yawned.

"You don't want a topper on a bike." His lordship looked alarmed.

"Good gad! I'm not goin' on a bike! There's a train from Courtfield."

"Trains cost money."

"That's all right—I'll stand the tickets, dear boys. Jolly glad to have you with me," said Mauly. "We shall just fill a carriage, and keep any botherin' outsiders from gettin' in."

The Famous Five chuckled. They were not likely to travel in a stuffy railway carriage that sunny June afternoon.

"We're biking it," said Bob. "So are you, Mauly. It will do you worlds of good."

"I—I—say—"

"Come on."

"But—"

Lord Mauleverer got no further than "but." Bob Cherry grasped his arm and waltzed him out of the study. His lordship gasped as he went.

"Here's your cap, old bean," said Harry Wharton, laughing.

"But—I say—" stuttered his dismayed lordship.

"Get a move on!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Lord Mauleverer was walked down to the bicycle shed. On the way the juniors encountered William George Bunter.

The Owl of the Remove gave them a glare that almost cracked his spectacles.

"I say, you fellows, leave Mauly alone! You're not going with those rotters on a bike, are you, Mauly?"

"No!" gasped Mauleverer.

"Come on!" grinned Bob.

Lord Mauleverer was assisted to the bike-shed. There his handsome jigger was lifted off the stand for him, and the Famous Five took down their machines.

Billy Bunter stood in the doorway with a fat face purple with indignation.

"Look here, you beasts!" he bawled. "You let Mauly alone. Mauly doesn't want to bike it."

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"I'm standing by my pal Mauly!" hooted Bunter. "You'd rather go by train, wouldn't you, Mauly?"

"Yaas!" gasped Mauly.

"I'll come with you if you go by train, old chap."

"Oh, will you, by gad?"

"Certainly, old fellow!"

"That's a lot of trouble for you, Bunter."

"I don't mind the trouble, Mauly, old fellow. I'd do more than that to oblige a pal," said Bunter affectionately.

Lord Mauleverer blinked at him.

"Look here, Bunter, if I go by train, are you really comin'?"

"Yes, rather!"

"Oh dear! I think I'll bike it after all, you chaps," said Lord Mauleverer.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why you—you—you—you cheeky beast!" spluttered Bunter.

The juniors chuckled as they wheeled out the machines. The prospect of Bunter's company on a long railway journey had quite reconciled Lord Mauleverer to the exertion of biking it.

"This way!" grinned Bob. "Good-bye, Bunter!"

"I—I—I'll bike it, too!" gasped Bunter. "One of you fellows can lend me a bike and stay behind—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, you rotters—" roared Bunter.

But the chums of the Remove did not look there. They wheeled on their

bikes and went out into the road, and William George Bunter was left to waste his sweetness on the desert air.

Lord Mauleverer sighed and mounted. The juniors rode away cheerily in the sunshine. At the hill in Friardale Lane the Famous Five were grinding on, but his lordship dismounted.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Puncture?" asked Bob, putting on his brake and jumping down.

"No; bike's all right."

"What are you stopping for, then?"

"Walk up the hill," explained his lordship.

"Oh, my hat! Call this a hill?" snorted Bob. "There are a dozen like this before we get to Lantham. Jump on."

"Suppose you give me a tow up the hill?" suggested Mauly.

"Glad to," answered Bob.

He wheeled his bike nearer, lifted his right foot, and planted it forcibly on Mauly's elegant trousers. There was a yell from his lordship.

"Yaroo! Wharrer you at, you silly ass?"

"Giving you a toe up the hill," answered Bob in surprise. "Didn't you ask me to?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you—you dangerous maniac!" gasped Lord Mauleverer. "You jolly well know what I mean!"

"And I jolly well know what I mean!" chuckled Bob. "That's the kind of toe I shall give you, Mauly, if you don't get into the saddle!"

"Oh dear!"

Lord Mauleverer remounted. The cyclists rode on cheerily; and even the slacker of the Remove, now that he was fairly going, found that he was enjoying the rapid spin by the roads and lanes through green fields and deep, shadowy woods.

Mile after mile glided under the wheels. Only at one hill—a real hill—was Mauly allowed to dismount and push his bike, the Famous Five doing the same. The rest of the way he spent in the saddle; and rather to his surprise, arrived at last at Lantham feeling none the worse for it.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

A Hot Chase!

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH rose from his desk in the Remove room, with a black scowl on his face.

Mr. Quelch was gone out; the Bounder had watched him go, from the Form-room window. Loder of the Sixth had glanced into the room, and found the Bounder at his task, Latin conjugations reeling from his pen. Loder was not looking amiable. He had his own occupations for the afternoon, and he had not been at all pleased by Mr. Quelch's request that he should keep an observant eye open for a rebellious Remove junior. But the position of prefect had duties as well as privileges attached to it, and Gerald Loder had not been able to refuse.

Loder had no intention, however, of wasting time in keeping an eye on the Bounder. He frowned in at the doorway.

"Oh, you're here!" he grunted.

The Bounder looked up.

"Yes, Loder. I'm detained," he said meekly.

"Your Form master seems to think you might bolt," grunted Loder.

"What a suspicious mind!"

"Eh—what? Well, I'm seeing that you don't bolt," said Loder. "I'm keeping an eye on this Form-room, and if

I see you outside it I'll jolly well lay the asphalt round you till you howl, see? That's a tip!"

Having given Smithy that tip, Loder of the Sixth retired.

The Bounder went on writing out conjugations.

He was quite well aware that the sportsman of the Sixth had gone back to his study, where it was extremely probable that he would be playing bridge with some other choice spirits of the sporting set in the Sixth. Certainly Loder was not likely to give him another look-in. Loder exercised all the rights of his prefectship, and a little over; but he took the duties lightly.

The Bounder left his task at last. Mr. Quelch was out of the school, and Loder was unlikely to trouble about him further. Only one consideration could prevent the Bounder from clearing off. The punishment was certain to be very severe if his truancy was discovered.

But the Bounder, as usual, was reckless of consequences.

It was quite probable that he would be able to get back into the Form-room unnoticed later on; and at all events, he was prepared to take the chance. As soon as he was satisfied that Loder was quite off the scene, Vernon-Smith coolly walked out of the Form-room.

He did not venture to go down to the gates. He was fairly certain that Mr. Quelch had spoken to Gosling, the porter. Smithy strolled away to the Cloisters, and clambered over a wall in a secluded spot and dropped into the road.

Then he walked away towards Friardale.

But his luck was out. Hardly fifty yards from the school, he came face to face with Wingate of the Sixth. Wingate was on his bicycle, but he jumped down at once.

"Vernon-Smith! Stop!"

The Bounder stopped, his teeth coming together hard.

"You're detained this afternoon, Vernon-Smith," said the head prefect of Greyfriars. "Mr. Quelch told me so specially."

The Bounder did not answer, but his look was bitter.

Obviously, Mr. Quelch had passed the word round among the prefects that Smithy was under detention that afternoon, more than suspecting the Bounder of intending to "bolt."

It was not much use eluding Loder of the Sixth if all the other Sixth Form prefects had an eye open for him.

"Get back!" snapped Wingate.

The Bounder's eyes glittered. It was in his mind to disobey and chance the consequences. Detention was bad enough in itself, but to be marched back to the Form-room by a prefect, under the eyes of scores of fellows, was a humiliation that seemed to the angry Bounder intolerable. But disobedience was scarcely practicable, for Wingate would have run him down in a

very few minutes had he attempted to "cut."

"Get a move on!" said the captain of Greyfriars, walking his bicycle along, with the intention of seeing Smithy safe in at the gates again. "I think I'd better warn you, Vernon-Smith, that you're heading for serious trouble. I know all about the trick you played on your Form master this morning, and you ought to know that Mr. Quelch is not a master to be treated like that."

The Bounder scowled sullenly.

He was still thinking of bolting, and a gleam came into his eyes at the sight of Ogilvy of the Remove at a little distance ahead, standing with his hand carelessly on the handle-bars of his bicycle while he talked to Peter Todd in the road. With a good bike under him, the Bounder was in the mood to take the chances of a race with Wingate.

"He, he, he!"

Billy Bunter's fat chuckle came to Smithy's ears. The Owl of the Remove was seated on a fence beside the lane, and he seemed greatly entertained by the sight of Smithy being marched back to the school. Vernon-Smith gave him a fierce look.

"He, he, he!" chortled Bunter. "You've broken bounds, Smithy! I'm shocked at you! You're a bad hat, Smithy! No wonder Mr. Quelch is down on you! Are you going to lick him, Wingate?"

Wingate made no reply to that; he walked his bicycle on by the side of the scowling Bounder. Bunter yelled cheerily after Vernon-Smith.

"Put some exercise-books in your bags, Smithy! He, he, he!"

The Bounder set his teeth.

Ogilvy of the Remove, apparently interested in his discussion with Peter Todd, had leaned his machine against a tree by the roadside. Smithy's eyes were on that machine. If he could get a start—

He was utterly reckless now. He would not and he could not be marched in across the quad by the head prefect, under grinning glances from all the fellows who saw him. Ogilvy and Toddy sighted him and turned their eyes on him and smiled. The Bounder gave them a savage look in reply for their smile, and they smiled more broadly.

A moment later Smithy had acted with



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a suddenness that took Wingate of the Sixth quite by surprise. Certainly the Greyfriars captain never would have anticipated a junior bolting when once in his official custody, so he was quite unprepared for the Bounder's move.

With a sudden rush Vernon-Smith reached Ogilvy's bicycle, dragged it away from the tree, and threw his leg across it.

An instant more and he was pedalling away desperately up the road.

Wingate stood petrified for a moment or two. Peter Todd stared, and Ogilvy roared indignantly.

"My bike! You cheeky rotter! Bring my bike back!"

The Bounder was already almost beyond the sound of his voice—not that he would have heeded it. The pedals fairly flew under his grinding feet. He raced along the high-road at a lightning speed. It was fortunate that the road was clear ahead!

"Vernon-Smith!" roared Wingate.

The captain of Greyfriars stared blankly for some seconds, taken utterly by surprise. Then he mounted his bicycle and pedalled in pursuit, his ragged face crimson with anger.

"My only hat!" ejaculated Peter Todd. "What a nerve! Smithy seems bent on asking for trouble these times!"

"My bike!" stuttered Ogilvy. "He's got my bike! The cheeky outsider! My bike!"

"Wingate's bound to run him down," said Toddy. "He's twice Smithy's form on a jigger, and he's got a much higher gear. That race won't last three hundred yards!"

The Bounder was as well aware of that as Peter. He knew that he had no chance in a cycle race with the hefty captain of Greyfriars. On the level road it was only a matter of minutes before the big Sixth-Former should run down any junior, howsoever desperately he pedalled. But Smithy knew what he was about. He flew past the school buildings in the direction of Courtfield and vanished round a bend in the road. Once round the bend, he jammed on the brakes with a suddenness that almost made the bicycle dance, and leaped off. With frantic speed he dragged the machine and himself over a stile that gave access to a footpath. He did not mount there; he knew he would be in sight if he did as Wingate passed. He dragged the machine into the trees and remained there, breathing in great gasps.

Less than a minute later Wingate came racing round the bend in the road, and shot past the end of the footpath towards Courtfield.

Through the trees the Bounder watched him go, with a breathless grin.

As soon as Wingate was past he drew the bike into the footpath and mounted and rode on through the leafy wood.

He had gained a start and he made the most of it. The bicycle raced along the grassy footpath. Cycling was forbidden on the woodland paths, but the reckless Bounder cared little for that. By the woodland path he would escape into the Lantham high-road, and, once there, he had a dozen turnings to choose from to elude pursuit.

Meanwhile, Wingate of the Sixth was pedalling on furiously towards Courtfield; but as he came out into a long straight stretch of road he realised that the fugitive was no longer ahead of him.

Wingate set his teeth as he realised what had happened. He remembered the stile and the footpath, which he had already left half a mile behind in his hurry. He whirled round in the road,

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and pedalled back faster than before. But he had lost time, and when he reached the stile the Bounder had long been out of sight through the wood.

Wingate paused a few moments.

The Bounder was gone, and if he was allowed to go free punishment awaited him when he came back to the school. The prefect was tempted to let it go at that. But the Bounder's reckless defiance had roused his deepest anger; he would not let the rebel have the afternoon free, in defiance of authority. He lifted his machine over the stile and remounted and pedalled along the footpath.

If the Bounder had dismounted and taken to the wood the pursuit was hopeless; but Wingate determined to ride at least as far as the Lantham road. He covered the ground rapidly, though he did not ride at full speed on the footpath, where there was danger of running down pedestrians. The Greyfriars captain could not afford to be so reckless as the rebel of the Remove.

For three miles he rode steadily, and then he jumped down at the stile on the Lantham road.

He lifted his machine in the road, and stood there looking about him. The Bounder was not in sight. But a road-mender was at work there, and Wingate called to him.

"Have you seen a schoolboy pass on a bicycle just lately?"

The man looked up.

"Yes, he came out of the footpath, sir."

"Which way did he go?"

"Straight on to Lantham."

"Thanks!"

Wingate mounted and pedalled on.

On the open road he could let himself go, and his machine fairly flew. The Bounder was heading for Lantham—a place at such a distance from the school that he would be safe from masters and prefects until he chose to return to Greyfriars. Not, however, if Wingate overtook him—and the Sixth-Former knew that he was making at least double the pace of the fugitive. If Vernon-Smith was keeping to the high-road it was only a matter of time before he was run down.

The miles flashed under the whirling wheels.

Vernon-Smith, in the meantime, had slackened speed a little. He was breathless and almost aching with his efforts. He was two-thirds of the way to Lantham, and some of the highest buildings in that town were in sight over the trees. Riding at a more leisurely pace, the Bounder looked back over his shoulder every few minutes, prepared to put it on again if he sighted pursuit.

Reckless as his conduct was, severe as his punishment was certain to be, Vernon-Smith was thoroughly enjoying the excitement of his escapade. There was a rebellious kink in the Bounder's nature which made any defiance of law and order a delight to him. Like most domineering natures, he could not tolerate domination. A rebel is generally a would-be tyrant, just as a tyrant is one who, in other circumstances, would be a rebel. The romantic rebel who seeks only to establish the reign of freedom and equality is an entertaining figure in fiction, but has very seldom existed outside fiction. Once in power, the rebel has always been found a sterner tyrant than one born in the purple. Had Herbert Vernon-Smith been a senior and captain of Greyfriars, nothing would have induced him to permit insubordination among the juniors. But as a junior, his whole nature inclined to reckless insubordination.

To lead the Greyfriars captain a dance, to defy authority as no other junior would have dreamed of defying it, to be pointed out in the quad as a fellow who cared not two straws for the prefects; that was meat and drink to the Bounder. Punishment was a slight thing in comparison. The Bounder's only thought, at the present time, was that he would not give in; nothing else mattered.

He grinned, as, glancing back once more, he sighted Wingate on the road behind him.

Wingate was still keeping it up, and he had seen the Bounder ahead now, and was coming on like lightning.

Vernon-Smith drove at the pedals again.

He passed rushing motor-cars, and dawdling market-carts like a flash he came round corners, often on the wrong side, with utter recklessness. His eyes were gleaming, and his heart beating fast. He was in his element now. He would not give in.

But the stalwart senior was coming up fast. Again and again the Bounder glanced back, and saw Wingate closer and closer.

Vernon-Smith set his teeth hard.

It was too late now to dodge into a turning and vanish. Wingate had him in sight, and would not have lost him again. But there were other ways.

A mile out of Lantham a path led up from the road into a thick wood. The Bounder turned into the path.

Wingate turned into it after him. He was not twenty yards behind the Remove now.

Smithy jumped off the machine.

If he had remained mounted, it was a matter now only of minutes. But he was very far from being at the end of his resources. Leaving Ogilvy's bicycle in the path, the Bounder plunged into the trees.

Wingate came up with a rush, and jumped down.

The Bounder had vanished.

Wingate stood, breathing hard and deep, his hand on his bicycle. He looked into the trees, but the underwoods were thick. Leaving his machine at last, the Sixth-Former plunged into the wood.

For half an hour he sought the elusive junior, his anger growing more and more bitter. Had he found him, Vernon-Smith's punishment would not have been left till he reached the school.

But he did not find him.

He returned to his machine at last, what time the Bounder, stretched on a leafy branch a score of feet above, watched him coolly through interstices in the foliage.

Wingate, in deep wrath and disappointment, mounted his machine again, taking Ogilvy's bicycle with him. Whether the Bounder had cleared off, or whether he was in hiding, Wingate did not know. It would be like the reckless young rascal to leave Ogilvy's machine abandoned there, at the mercy of the first tramp that passed. If, however, he was waiting for a chance to reclaim the abandoned bicycle, he would be disappointed. It was some satisfaction to the angry prefect to give him a long walk back to the school.

Wingate rode away, wheeling Ogilvy's bicycle with one hand, and disappeared from the Bounder's eyes.

Vernon-Smith shrugged his shoulders. He was left without a mount, nine or ten miles from Greyfriars, yet he cared little. But he did not immediately descend from the tree. It had occurred to his mind, always keen and suspicious, that Wingate's departure might be only



"Suppose you give me a tow up the hill," suggested Lord Mauleverer. "Glad to," answered Bob Cherry. He wheeled his bike nearer, lifted his right foot, and planted it forcibly on Mauly's elegant trousers. "Yaroooooh!" howled his lordship. "Wharrer you at?" "Giving you a toe up the hill," said Bob, cheerily. (See Chapter 5.)

a pretence, to induce him to show himself. If that was so, the Bounder was not the fellow to be trapped so easily. He settled himself comfortably in a fork of the high branches, and lighted a cigarette.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Hold-up at Lantham!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. dismounted at the railway-station in Lantham. The machines were to be put up at the station, while the chums of the Remove walked with Lord Mauleverer to the bank to cash the cheque which had so interested William George Bunter, and which was gone from Bunter's gaze like a beautiful dream. After the visit to the bank, the Famous Five intended to call in at the Lantham Ramblers' cricket ground to watch the game there; Lantham Ramblers being engaged with a county fixture that day. Lord Mauleverer did not object to watching the cricket so long as he was allowed to sit down while he watched it.

The bicycles having been disposed of, the six Removites walked cheerily along the old High Street of Lantham, towards the big stone corner building, where the Lantham and County Bank had its quarters.

They were near the bank, when Lord

Mauleverer began to feel in his pockets, with a perplexed expression on his noble face.

"Here we are!" announced Bob Cherry. "Shall we come in with you, Mauly, and help you carry out the loot?"

"I—I rather think I won't go in, after all," stammered Lord Mauleverer.

"Eh!"

"What?"

"You see——" began his lordship.

"Too tired to walk into the bank?" asked Bob Cherry sympathetically.

"All right, I'll give you a toe in——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Lord Mauleverer dodged hastily.

"Buck up, Mauly, old man," said Harry. "We want to see some of the cricket before we go back."

"Yaas; but——"

"Must do your banking business first, Mauly," said Nugent. "The bank will be closed when we come out of the Ramblers' ground. Banks close early, you know."

"Yaas, I know. But——"

"But what, fathead?" asked Johnny Bull.

"I can't cash the cheque to-day."

"Why not, ass?"

"Because—because I haven't got it with me."

"What!" roared the Famous Five, with one voice.

"You see——" stammered his lordship.

"You awful fathead!" roared Bob.

"The fatheadedness is terrific!"

"It's all your fault, really," said Lord Mauleverer dismally. "Horrid, isn't it? I've made this exhaustin' journey to cash the cheque, and the cheque's still in my study at Greyfriars. Oh dear!"

"Of all the blithering idiots——"

"Your fault, you know! You rushed me off so suddenly," complained Lord Mauleverer. "I've only just remembered that I put the cheque on the mantelpiece in No. 12."

"You left a cheque for twenty pounds on your study mantelpiece!" bawled Bob Cherry.

"I put a jar on it to keep it from blowing away. I'm always careful with money."

"Oh, my hat!"

"I should have remembered it; you know, if you hadn't rushed me off so quickly. Your fault!"

"Sure you didn't put it in your pocket again?" asked Bob. "You know what a howling ass you are, old chap!"

"I'm sure—almost sure, anyway."

"Well, make quite sure," said Bob. "Mind, if you've really left the cheque at home, we'll make you come over again on Saturday afternoon, and next time we'll make you walk it."

"Oh, good gad!"

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"So you'd better make sure, Mauly," said the captain of the Remove, laughing.

Lord Mauleverer proceeded to make sure. He went through one pocket after another meticulously. It was quite possible that his absent-minded lordship had the cheque about him, after all, and the prospect of a ten-mile walk next half-holiday was dismaying and terrifying to the slacker of the Remove.

As the group of juniors stood before the bank entrance, the Famous Five, with grinning faces, watching his lordship go through his pockets, a cyclist stopped at the pavement.

He dismounted from his machine, which he left lodged against the kerb, and came across to the big double doors of the bank.

The juniors were in the way, and as they were interested in watching Mauleverer they did not see the newcomer.

"Let me pass, please!"

"Oh! Sorry!" said Wharton, and he shifted out of the way at once to allow the stranger to pass into the building.

He glanced at the man carelessly as he passed. The man walked with a quick, springy step, like a young and active man, but in looks he was a man well on in middle life. He was dressed in black, and had a rather bulky figure, and his face was almost hidden by a grizzled beard, a thick grey moustache, and a pair of large horn-rimmed spectacles.

Wharton's glance was quite careless; he had never seen the man before, and took no interest in him. He was not likely to guess, at that moment, what an extremely interesting person the man in the horn-rimmed spectacles was to become in a few minutes.

The man passed into the bank, the swing door shut behind him, and the juniors forgot his existence.

Lord Mauleverer was still going through his pockets, with a lengthening face. Pocket after pocket had failed to yield the cheque.

"Oh, dear!" said his lordship. "It's not here, you men. I knew I'd left it in my study."

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"That's a nice walk for you next Saturday, Mauly," he said.

"My dear man—"

"That is, if Bunter doesn't find the cheque while you're out, old man, and

got Mrs. Mumble to change it for him," grinned Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, there's nothing doing here," said Wharton. "Let's get on to the Ramblers' ground."

"Let's!" assented the juniors.

And the Removites were on the point of turning away when from the bank building there came a sudden crash of sound.

Bang!

It was the report of a firearm.

It was followed by a loud and fearful cry.

"Why, what—what—" stuttered Bob Cherry.

The juniors, halting in their tracks, stood almost petrified. Someone had fired a pistol in the bank; someone had been hit. Such a happening, in the prosaic branch bank in the sleepy old market town, was amazing—in fact, unnerving.

"What—what on earth—" exclaimed Wharton.

"It was a pistol!"

"Somebody's hurt."

Two or three passers-by had heard the shot and stopped, and stood staring towards the bank entrance.

"Let's see!" exclaimed Bob.

He ran towards the entrance, his chums following him. Just as they reached it the swing doors were dashed violently open, and a man came running out.

It was the bearded man in the horn spectacles.

There was a little bag clutched in his hand. He came through the swing doors with a desperate rush and burst upon the juniors like a battering-ram. They went spinning right and left under the rush, and the spectacled man fled past.

"Stop him!" yelled Wharton, comprehending now what had happened. "It's a hold-up! Stop him!"

The spectacled man, in a breathless rush, had reached his bicycle. Before the words were out of Wharton's mouth he had mounted and was riding furiously up the street.

Bob Cherry picked himself up dazedly. The rush of the bank-robber had sent him sprawling on the pavement.

"A hold-up! It's a bank robber!" he gasped. "Stop him! After him!"

The juniors rushed into the road after the fleeing rider.

The suddenness of the tragic happening had almost dazed them, for some moments. They had read in the newspapers of the holding-up of banks by armed men, of cashiers shot over the bank counter, of robberies in broad daylight; but they had never dreamed of witnessing such an episode. But that was what had happened now. Inside the bank a man had been shot—left dead or wounded by the desperate man who was fleeing with his plunder—fleeing for his liberty, and perhaps for his life! The juniors, as they realised it, rushed in pursuit, and five or six passers-by joined in, and a constable, who had been on duty, not a dozen yards away, joined in the chase.

But the bank robber had a good start, and he was on a cycle. From the way he rode it was obvious that he was a young and athletic man, that the grey beard and moustache were a disguise. He rode like the wind, dashed across the market square, and flew down the farther street towards the open country.

"After him!" panted Bob.

But the reckless rider was already out of sight. The old, sleepy streets of Lantham resounded with shouts. In a few minutes a dozen cyclists had joined in the hunt, and two or three horsemen,

and five or six cars. The chase swept out on the Lantham road, and the Greyfriars juniors, breathless, stopped.

"Nothing doing on foot," said Wharton, with a gasp. "If we'd had our bikes we might have got him."

"Might have got something," said Johnny Bull. "That rotter's got loaded firearms about him. We might have got more than we bargained for."

"They'll get him all right," said Bob. "The cars will run him down if he keeps to the road."

"He won't, unless he wants to be caught," said Nugent. "If he knows the country he will get clear by taking to the woods. He's got a start long enough to give him a chance. My hat! Fancy a hold-up in Lantham!"

"Even Lantham's moving with the times, at last!" grinned Bob. "We're getting quite up to date."

"The up to datefulness is too terrific," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "I hope they will catch that esteemed and ridiculous rotter. Let us go back-fully for the esteemed Mauly."

The chums of the Remove walked back. It was useless to take further part in the distant pursuit, and they were anxious to know what had happened at the bank. The desperate man had fired his revolver there, and a man had been hit; they knew that much. They found Lord Mauleverer resting against a buttress of the bank building. His lordship had started to run after the bank robber with his comrades, but perhaps he had realised the futility of it before they did, or perhaps he had tired. Anyhow, there he was, taking a much-needed rest.

"Catch him?" he inquired.

"No, ass! Why didn't you follow on?"

"Tired."

"Fathead!"

"The police are in the bank now," said Lord Mauleverer, with a nod towards the swing doors. "I believe they want to speak to anyone who saw that gun merchant. Did you fellows see him?"

"Didn't you, ass?"

"Well, not to notice, you know—sort of impression of a johnny in black, with goggles twice as big as Bunter's. They're saying that a man's wounded in the bank—not killed, luckily. Poor chap! It's frightfully excitin', isn't it?" yawned Mauleverer. "I used to think I'd like to be a bank manager; they have a cosy room, you know, with a settee, where a chap could go to sleep. But it seems to be a more excitin' life than it looks, these days. What about the cricket?"

"Blow the cricket, now!"

And the chums of the Remove joined the excited throng that was surging before the swing doors of the bank, where a constable stood on guard.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

What the Bounder Saw!

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH chuckled softly—very softly. He was careful not to make a sound—very careful indeed. He had remained in the thick branches of the oak, hidden by leafy foliage, with the suspicion in his mind that Wingate was not really gone at all, but was lying "doggo" and waiting for him to show up. The Bounder had no intention of falling into so simple a trap, if trap there was. He was quite comfortable in the fork of the thick branches, and he sat there and smoked a cigarette or two. But he did not smoke much; that bad habit of the Bounder's was more

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bravado than anything else, and he did not care for smoking where there was nobody to be shocked or annoyed thereby. He had a book in his pocket—a little volume which dealt with the enthralling subject of flat racing, with a history of the "form" of innumerable gee-gees, and he proceeded to study that little volume with more interest than he had ever accorded to his school books. And after he had been engaged for some little time he heard a rustling in the underwoods beneath him, and chuckled softly. His idea was that Wingate had been watching all the time, after a pretence of riding away with the two bicycles, and had now lost patience and was resuming his hunt for the elusive junior.

Smithy slipped the book into his pocket and leaned over the branch, and watched keenly through the foliage. The rustling of the underwoods came closer and clearer, and he knew that the unseen comer was approaching the big oak, in the branches of which he had taken refuge. So far, the newcomer was hidden from view, but Smithy had not the slightest doubt that it was Wingate, and he chuckled inaudibly over his own astuteness. He was quite invisible from below, and the Greyfriars captain might have rooted about in the wood for the remainder of the day without finding a trace of him. With a grinning face, the Bounder watched.

A game with a Homburg hat on it, came into his range of vision at last. The Bounder started a little.

Wingate of the Sixth did not wear a Homburg hat. It dawned on the Bounder that the newcomer was not Wingate at all. Wingate had not, as he had suspected, waited and watched for him.

In point of fact, Wingate was already back at Greyfriars, and had handed over Ogilvy's bike to that enraged junior, and gone in to report the affair to the Head.

The man in the Homburg hat had stopped under the wide-spreading branches of the oak.

Smithy knew now that it was not Wingate, but there was something so furtive, so stealthy, in the manner of the man below him, that his keenest interest was awakened. The man moved slowly, stealthily, and was evidently watching and listening as he came out into the clear space beneath the oak from the clinging underwoods. His whole manner was that of a fugitive who dreaded pursuit. From above, the Bounder could hear his panting breath. The Bounder did not need to be told, as he watched the man with a cynical eye, that he was a fugitive, that he had barely escaped some pursuit by vigorous exertions, and that he was fatigued, and had crept into the heart of the wood as a hiding-place.

Under the big oak the man stood still, turning his glance round him. He was watching and listening like a hunted animal in the wood. But it did not occur to him to glance upward into the leafy branches overhead, though he would not have seen the Bounder had he done so. The Removite of Greyfriars was completely hidden by thick foliage, only a narrow slit in the greenery giving him a view of the glade below. The Bounder made no sound. He was not a fellow given to fear, but he realised with absolute clearness that there would have been danger in making his presence known. There was something utterly desperate in the look and the manner of the man who had crept into the deep shadows of the wood, and the Bounder wondered, with a slight

throb at his heart, from what scene of crime the fugitive had fled.

He could see the man's face—a face almost hidden by greyish beard and moustaches, and large, horn-rimmed spectacles. The man stood still, and after a few minutes of deep silence he stirred, and leaned against the trunk of the oak, resting. Still his panting, laboured breath came up to the ears of the silent junior above.

For five minutes more the man stood there, till his breath grew more regular and calm. Then he moved again, and the Bounder, in tense silence, watched. He would have been glad to see the last of the unknown, but the man evidently did not intend to go yet. Vernon-Smith's eyes grew wider with surprise as he threw off the Homburg hat, and then removed the horn-rimmed glasses, the beard, and the moustache. The face that was revealed was that of a man little over thirty; a rather handsome, clear-cut face, a little hard in outline, but by no means displeasing. Vernon-Smith drew a deep breath as he looked down at him. The man had been in disguise—an impenetrable disguise. The spectacles were part of it, and obviously the frames were filled with plain glass; the man had no defect of eyesight. He had looked nearly sixty when the Bounder first saw him; now he looked hardly over thirty. Certainly no one who had seen him in his disguise would be likely to recognise him now. Indeed, the Bounder, who had watched the transformation, could hardly believe that it was the same man, so total was the change in his aspect.

But the strange man was not finished yet.

He proceeded to strip off the black suit of clothes he wore, which had looked bulky on him. The bulkiness was explained when they were off, for under them he wore a light tweed suit. The man who had looked fat and bulky was in reality slim and graceful and active!

"My hat!" murmured the Bounder inaudibly.

His interest in the stranger was intensely keen now; but keener still was his desire to remain undiscovered in his eyrie. For he knew that this was a desperate man—by no means some ordinary thief who had fled after picking a pocket or snatching from a shop. In changing his clothes the man had changed an automatic pistol from the outer suit's pocket to a pocket of the light tweeds. The automatic, and the deep disguise, proved clearly enough that the man was a desperate character. Vernon-Smith wondered whether, if he was discovered, a bullet might bring him tumbling down from his perch. He was not scared; the Bounder was almost incapable of fear. But he was very careful to make no movement or sound.

The man proceeded to kick off his boots, and to take off his collar and tie. He replaced the latter with a soft white collar, and a tie which the Bounder noticed had the Greyfriars colours. That, however, did not imply any necessary connection with Greyfriars; the Bounder was aware that in recent years public school ties could be bought at any hosier's; indeed, plenty of members of the public sported Greyfriars or Harrow or Eton colours without even being aware of the fact. From two pockets the man drew a couple of tan shoes, which he placed on his feet in lieu of the boots he had kicked off. From another pocket came a tweed cap.

He was finished now, apparently. But he was not going. He proceeded to roll the discarded clothes and boots into a bundle tightly, and with the

bundle in his hands he came closer to the trunk of the big oak. By doing so he passed out of the Bounder's range of vision, and Smithy wondered for a moment or two what he was doing. But a rubbing, scraping sound apprised him of the fact that the man was thrusting the bundle into a hollow of the tree trunk.

"By gum!" whispered the Bounder to himself.

He grinned into the foliage.

It was not by chance that the fugitive had reached that solitary spot in the wood. He knew the place; he knew that there was a hollow in the trunk of the big oak. He had come there to dispose of his disguise, now that he had finished with it. Whatever it was that he had done, he had taken all his measures beforehand for escape.

Vernon-Smith, with infinite precaution, shifted his position a little, so that he could get his eyes on the man again. If he made some slight sound, it was unnoticed; the wind was sighing in the branches, and countless birds twittering through the wood. Once more the Bounder's keen eyes were fixed on the man below, as he withdrew his arm from the narrow opening in the trunk.

The man in tweeds seemed to be hesitating. Once more he looked about him, listening intently and watching. Then the Bounder saw him open a little bag and glance into it. Then he set it on the ground beneath the tree and ran his fingers through bundle after bundle of crisp paper, and laughed softly. Smithy's heart gave a jump. That little bag was stacked with notes—currency notes and banknotes. It was from a robbery—an extensive robbery—that this strange man had fled. And the plunder was in his hands now, under the eyes of the Bounder of Greyfriars.

The man, after several minutes of hesitation, seemed to make up his mind. The notes were packed in again, and the little bag was thrust into the hollow of the trunk, after the bundle of clothes. Then, suddenly, swiftly, the man strode away. In a few seconds the woods swallowed him up, the last rustle died away, and Herbert Vernon-Smith, in the thick branches, was left wondering whether it was not all a dream.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The Head's Guest!

"LATE!" said Bob Cherry.

"The lateness is terrific." Harry Wharton & Co. came out of the police station at Lantham. The juniors had volunteered information to the police, and had accompanied the constable to the station, to have their statements taken down. They were able to give the inspector in charge a full description of the man who had "held up" the Lantham and County Bank; as it happened, it was the Greyfriars party that had seen most of him; others had had only a hurried glimpse of a man in black, fleeing recklessly on a madly-driven bicycle.

It was known now that the man had escaped. Half a mile out of the town, in a lonely lane, the pursuit had come up with the fugitive's bicycle, which he had evidently abandoned there. Some supposed that a confederate in a car had been waiting for him at that spot; others surmised that he had taken to the woods; while others, guessing that the bearded, spectacled man had been disguised, mooted the theory that he

(Continued on page 17.)



The Shaddow of Suspishun!

B DICKY NUGENT

"WHO PINCHED THE CUP?"

That's the question asked up and down St. Sam's, the famus seet of larning presided over by Dr. Birchemail, M.A.D., L.I.A.R., the biggest scoundrel who ever scoundrelled!

I.

"GOOD-MORNING, Jotson!" Herlock Sholmes, the imminent detective, greeted his friend, Doctor Jotson, cheerily, as they met in the sunny quadrangle at St. Sam's.

"Good-morning, my dear Sholmes!" said the stout little meddler man.

"You have already breakfasted, I perceive," said the famus slooth.

Doctor Jotson looked serprized.

"And how did you deduce that, pray?" he inquired.

Sholmes smiled.

"Quite simple, my dear Jotson—elementary, in fact! There are smears of jam on your cheek, and portions of the ruke of an egg on your lips. From these observations—cuppled with the fact that you are somewhat inflated in the region of your lower wastecost button—I deduced that you had just brekfasted."

"Marvelous!" cried Doctor Jotson.

"Really, Sholmes, you astound me!"

The grate detective reloaded his brace of pipes, and puffed at them plassidly, as he strolled with his friend in the sunshine.

"Ah," he said, halting suddenly.

"Here comes Doctor Birchemail."

The Head was coming towards the grate detective and his friend. His step wavered a little, and his face looked lagged in the morning light. The dark

rings round his eyes showed that the Head had not slept.

"G-g-good morning, Mr. Sholmes!" stammered Doctor Birchemail, his shifty eyes unable to meet the detective's pennytrating glance. "Have you discovered any cloos to the eyedentity of the person who stole the Silver Cup?"

"I have not, sir," said Herlock Sholmes, shaking his head.

"Oh, good!" gasped the Head in grate relief.

Sholmes stared at him.

"I beg your pardon, Doctor Birchemail! You observed—?"

"Nothing! Nothing, I assure you!" said the Head hastily. "I meerly coifed. So you have not yet picked up a cloo, Mr. Sholmes?"

The detective frowned.

"Cloos are not 'picked up,' Doctor Birchemail. They do not lie around as thickly as leaves in Vallombrosa. They have to be dilligently sought for. And I confess that, so far, I have sought in vane. But I am not dismayed. I shall pursoo my quest to the bitter end; and I hope very shortly to lay the skoundrelly thief by the heels!"

The Head trembled violently. Beads of inspiration broke out upon his brow.

"You are certain, Mr. Sholmes, that the guilty party is not Mr. Lickham, the master of the Fourth?"

"Certain!"

"He's an awful rotter, you know; just the sort of shady skoundrel—"

"Tut, tut! You seem determined, doctor, to try and fasten the blame upon Mr. Lickham; but I have interviewed him, and closely cross-eggsamined him; and I am satisfied that he is as innoent of the crime as you are—possibly more so!"

The Head winced. There was a very awkward paw.

"Mr. Sholmes!" cried the Head at length. "I have a wheeze!"

"In that case, sir, you should consult a doctor—not a detective. I am not an orthority on respiratory trubbles."

"I mean, I have a stunt!" said the Head.

"That, probably, is bekwase you smoke too many sigarettes. I suggest that you brake free at once from the tyranny of tobacco, and hand over your supply of sigarettes to Jotson and myself."

"An eggsellent plan!" cried Doctor Jotson, with enthusiasm.

The Head gave a snort.

"You misunderstand me, Mr. Sholmes. I have a brain-wave—"

"Ah! Now that you speak King's English, I can comprehend you," said the

detective. "But slang is repellent to me. Trot out your giddy brain-wave, doctor!"

"Very well. We must reluctantly assoom that Mr. Lickham is not guilty of



"Go!" shouted Doctor Birchemail, spr masters were scared out of their wite, wedd

the theft of the Silver Cup. Some other master, therefore—or else one of the boys—did the dasterdly deed. I can jolly soon find out who it was!"

"Then, why engage me to clear up the mistery?" asked Herlock Sholmes.

"I did not engage you, Mr. Sholmes. The School Guvvners did so. I was strongly opposed to the corse. I wanted them to engage Ferret Slooth, the blind detective."

"Ah!" mermered Sholmes with a knowing wink at Dr. Jotson. "But, since the Guvvners have reposed their confidence in me, I shall do all in my power to justify that confidence. I do not wish you to take my job out of my hands, Doctor Birchemail. You can keep off the grass!"

The Head scowled.

"I was only trying to help you," he said. "In the interests of justiss, you ought to be glad of my help. I am more anxious than anybody that this mizzerable affair should be cleared up. It is causing me sleepless nights. I shall not be happy until the thief is tracked down, and the stolen Cup restored."

"Nor I," said Herlock Sholmes, grimly,



When a possible flogging was on the tappis Mr. Tyzer's mottoe was: "Be prepared!"

with a piercing look before which the Head quailed. "What do you suggest should be done, doctor?"

"Simply this, Mr. Sholmes. Let me send for all the masters—barring Mr. Lickham—and then you put them through a severe cross-examination, in my prezzance. If the guilty party is among them, he is almost certain to betray himself, in some way or other. But if he brazens it out, in spite of your cross-examination, then I suggest that more drastick mezzures should be employed. Being a detective, Mr. Sholmes, you will have heard of the Third Degree?"

"Yes; but—"

"You twist a man's arms, and hack his shins, and pull his ears, and tweak his nose, and subject him to other mild forms of torcher, until a confession is eggstorted from him," said the Head.

"Yes," said Herlock Sholmes, agarst. "But surely you do not suggest applying Third Degree methods to your own staff?"

"Well, perhaps it would be a bit too thick," said the Head on reflection. "But there's no réezon why we shouldn't apply it to the boys! And in that way we ought soon to get at the trooth."

Herlock Sholmes shook his head.

"I do not approve of Third Degree methods—eggsept as a last resource," he



ly from his place of consealmnt. The ave fled, but for the fact that they were all rway.

said. "They are not British. They belong to a barbarrick age—to the time of the Spanish Acquisition. If it should become nessessary, we will try that plan; but I am hoping that jentler methods will produce the rezults we require. Kindly send for the masters first, Doctor Birchmall, that I may cross-eggssamine them."

"Righty-oh, old bean!" said the Head.

And he scuttled away to do the detec-tive's bidding.

"Which the 'Ead wants to see you, sir!"

Binding, the page, made that announce-ment as he poked his head round the door of Mr. Tyzer's study.

Mr. Chas. Tyzer was the master of the Third. He started up from his chair in alarm, at Binding's messidge.

"What does the Head want me for, Binding?"

"Dunno, sir."

"Is—is he looking waxy? Is there a birch-rod on his desk?"

"No, sir," said Binding, with a grin. "But there's a queer-lookin' sort of covey with the 'Ead, sir."

"Covey?" ekkoed Mr. Tyzer, in perpleximent. "What do you mean by that, Binding? A covey of partridges?"

"No, sir; a yewman covey—a hindividual, sir."

Mr. Tyzer frowned.

"How many times have I told you, Binding, not to use slang in my prezzance? There is no such being as a 'hindividual.' Doubtless you mean a 'bloke'?"

"That's it, sir!"

"Then why did you not say so in the first place? Give the Head my condiments, and tell him I will come at once."

"Werry good, sir," said Binding.

"One minnit!" said Mr. Tyzer. "Do you happen to know who this covey—I mean, bloke—is?"

"Don't know him from Adam, sir. Matter of fact, there's two blokes with the 'Ead—a fat bloke and a skinny bloke. But I dunno who neither of 'em are."

So saying, Binding withdrew, leaving Mr. Tyzer to rōominate in his mind why he was wanted, and what connection the fat bloke and the skinny bloke had with his summons to the Head's study.

Before obeying that summons, Mr. Tyzer slipped a bulky vollume into his trowsis at the back. It was just possible that there was a flogging on the tappis; and Mr. Tyzer's mottoe—he was a Scout-master in his spare time—was "Be Prepared." It was altogether unheard-of, and unpresidented, for a master to be flogged like a refractory fag; but the Headmaster of St. Sam's was always doing unheard-of and unpresidented things.

Mr. Tyzer waddled rather awkwardly into the masters' corridore, where he was joined by Mr. Justiss, the master of the Fifth; Mr. Swishingham, the master of the Second; Hair Otto Guggenheimer, the German master; and Monsure Froggay, the French master. All of them were looking very uneasy; and all of them, it appeared, had been sent for by the Head.

With quaking harts, the little party of masters made their way to the Head's study. They slunk along the Head's corridore like a procession of shame-faced fags, about to be licked for their misdeeds.

To their serprize, the Head's study door was a jar. It stood wide open, and the masters had a glimpse of the fat bloke and the skinny bloke mentioned by Birding, the page. Of the Head there was no sign.



With a whoop of joy Monsure Froggay embraced Herlock Sholmes like a long-lost brother.

Mr. Justiss turned to his colleegs. "Keep your peckers up, jentlemen!" he wispered. "Follow me!"

And the masters marched into the study. At the same instant, the Head suddenly sprang out from behind the door, where he had been lerking in consealmnt.

"Bo!" he shouted.

That shout, and the suddenness of the appyrition, caused the masters to jump back in alarm. They were as terrified as if they had seen a ghost.

"Mon Dew!" gasped Monsure Froggay.

"Donner and blitzen!" cried Hair Guggenheimer.

"Oh, my giddy aunt!" muttered Mr. Justiss.

The masters were scared out of their wits, and they would certainly have fled from the seen, but for the fact that they were all wedged in the doorway, and could not get clear.

The Head gave a mocking larf. Then he turned to Herlock Sholmes and Doctor Jotson.

"Jentlemen!" he cried. "My wheezo has worked wonderfully! At the first time of asking, we have discovered the culpritt!"

(Continued on next page.)



The Head's victims suffered in stoickal silence, determined not to confess to a crime they had never committed.

"And who is it, pray?" inquired Herlock Sholmes.

"All of them!" cried the Head, making a sweeping gesture towards the masters. "See how they cringe and cower! Gilt is registered in all their faces! Had their consciences been clear, Mr. Sholmes, they would have remained cool and calm and collected. All these masters were in a conspiracy together to steal the Silver Cup!"

"Good grashus!" gasped Herlock Sholmes.

"Having pinched the trofee," went on the Head, "they probably sold it to an old-iron merchant, and whacked out the proceeds between them! They are criminals all—roags and vaggabonds! They have fairly given themselves away by their demenner, and nothing now remains but to hand them over to justiss! I will tellyfone for the perlice!"

"One minnit, sir!" Herlock Sholmes threw out a restraining boot as the Head crossed to the telyfone. "I fear you are somewhat presippitat, Doctor Birchmall. There is not a tittle of evidence to show that these gentlemen stole the Cup. You are condemning them out of hand. Why, you have not even given me a chance to cross-eggsamine them! I wish to put a few impertinent—I mean, pertinent—questions to them."

The masters, now recovered from their fright, crowded back into the study. The Head's astounding accusation had fairly taken their breath away, and they glared at Doctor Birchmall as if they could cheerfully have linched him.

Herlock Sholmes replenished his brace of pipes from the opium jar on the mantle-piece, and puffed away furiously, sending a shower of sparks over the Head's carpet.

Then, with a lean fourfinger, the detective singled out Mr. Justiss.

"It was you!" he wrapped out sharply, "who stole the Silver Cup!"

Mr. Justiss staggered back with a horse cry.

"Neigh! Neigh! I assure you, sir, I had nothing to do with it!"

Herlock Sholmes nodded, and smiled.

"I axcept your assurance, Mr. Justiss," he said. "You must pardon me for putting my leading question in the form of an accusation; but I always work on the

prinsiple that every man is guilty until he is proved innozent. That is the law. So sinseer was your denial, however, that I am satisfied that your hands are clean." Mr. Justiss promptly thrust his ink-stained hands into his pockets. "You may go, sir!"

"And thank your lucky stars that you've got off so lightly!" growled the Head, as Mr. Justiss withdrew.

Herlock Sholmes then put his "leading question" to each of the masters in turn. He accused them, point-blank, of having stolen the Silver Cup. All of them—with one eggseption—hotly denied it, and Sholmes axcepted their denials, and let them go.

The eggseption was Monsure Froggay. The poor old French master got into such a pannick, with the detective's stealy green eyes fixed upon him, that he answered wildly, without realising what he was saying.

"It was you, Monsure Froggay," cried Herlock Sholmes, "who stole the Cup!"

"We! We!" muttered the distracted French master.

"That's French for 'Yes,'" cried the Head eagerly. "This is our man, Mr. Sholmes! He confesses!"

"Pray do not intrupt!" said the detective sternly. He turned again to Monsure Froggay, who was shaking from head to foot with nervus tremmers.

"You stole the key of the safe from the Head's pocket!" said Sholmes, in a rasping voice.

"I did-did-did-didn't!" faltered the French master.

The Head gave an important snort.

"Arrest him, and have done with it!" he growled. "He is waisting our valluable time. Undoubtedly the wretched man is guilty. He is simply cozing gilt! I'll grab his rists, while you put the darbies on him, Mr. Sholmes!"

But, to the Head's unspeakable chaggrin, the grate detective shook his head.

"Monsure is in a blue funk," he observed. "My riggerus cross-eggsamination has unmanned him, and he does not realise what he is saying. But he is not guilty, of that I am satisfied. You may go, Monsure. Your collar and cuffs, I notiss, are badly stained; but you will leave this study without a stain on your carracter!"

The little French master's face, which had been so woebegone a minnit before, now fairly beemed. With a whoop of joy and relief, he rushed towards Herlock Sholmes, and embraced him like a long-lost brother, and kissed him on the cheek with a resounding smack.

"Bong Amy, I tank you!" he cried fervently. And then he fairly danced out of the study.

Herlock Sholmes dabbed at his cheek with a silk hangkercheef.

"A charming man, Jotson," he observed, "but a little too—er—demonstrative. This is not the time or place for indulging in osculatory pracktisses."

The Head turned upon Herlock Sholmes with a savvidge glare.

"Bah! Call yourself a detective?" he cried skornfully. "You had the thief in your clutches—self-confessed and self-condemned—and you have let him go! I am positive that Monsure Froggay lifted the Silver Cup. I would bet on it!"

"In that case," said Sholmes, with one of his inscrootable smiles, "it will be no use my interviewing all the boys, and subjecting them to cross-eggsamination."

"Yes, yes!" cried the Head. "Interview the boys, by all means! We may be able, by employing Third Degree methods, to eggstort a confession from some poor innozent worm! I am anxious to get this matter cleared up with all possible speed."

"Quite so," said Herlock Sholmes. "Let the boys be sent for, in batches of a duzzen at a time."

Starting with the Sixth, and gradually working down to the fags, Herlock Sholmes dealt with the batches of boys who appeared before him.

The Head, frantically anxious to fix the gilt upon somebody, did his level best to obtain a confession and conviction. He twisted the arms of the fags until they squeeled. He tweeked their noses, and he pulled their ears, and he tickled them up with his birch; but all to no purrpuss. Although their shrieks and squeaks fairly raised the roof, the Head's victims suffered in stoickal silence. They were not going to confess to a crime they had never committed.

Herlock Sholmes was quite weary, by the time the afternoon came. As for the worthy Doctor Jotson, he had dozed off to sleep in the Head's armchair.

"No luck!" muttered the grate detective, at last. "I do not think much of your methods, Doctor Birchmall. There is a serious floor in them somewhere."

"But we're not floored yet!" cried the Head. "There are still eleven boys to be cross-eggsaminated. I refer to the members of the Fourth Form cricket team, who are playing a match. I feel sure we shall find the guilty party among their number. I will go and fetch the young bratts."

"Oh, all right," yawned Herlock Sholmes, wearily.

There was a very grim and sinnister look on the Head's face, as he hurried out of the study.

Meanwhile, Jack Jolly & Co., the heroes of the Fourth, were engaged in a feercely egg-siting cricket match with St. Bill's. Little did they dream, as they wielded the bat and fielded the ball, of the terrible ordeal that awaited them in the Head's study. As the poet remarks:

"Alas! regardless of their doom
The little victims play!"

There were brakers ahead for the Fourth Form eleven, and for Jack Jolly in partickular; for our hero—thanks to the cunning wiles of the Head—was shortly to find himself under the dark Shaddow of Suspishun!

THE END.

(There is another long laugh in next week's rollicking fine yarn: "A SLOOTH ON THE TRAIL!" Make sure you read it, chums!)

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(Continued from page 15.)

had simply taken off his disguise and walked home—indeed, possibly joined the crowd that was in pursuit of himself.

It was a thrilling occurrence for a sleepy little market town like Lantham, which was extremely slumberous on all days but market days, and on market days only half-awake. That one topic of the hold-up at the local bank, thrilled Lantham from end to end, and was likely to last as a topic for months, if not years. Whatever had become of the bank robber, there was no doubt that he had vanished, and the pursuit was dropped by all but the police, who were still keeping it up, though with little hope of success. The very daring and audacity of the bank-robber's deed had made it successful; before the happening, anybody in Lantham would have expected an air-raid as soon as a "hold-up."

He had escaped—leaving behind him only the description of his disguise, probably discarded long ago. All Lantham knew that the bank cashier had been taken to hospital, only slightly wounded as it turned out; indeed, it was guessed that the shot had been fired rather to frighten him than to hurt him. The wound was a superficial one, but it was not surprising that the cashier, hit by the bullet, had ducked down into cover and left the raider to his own devices. And the man had grabbed notes, slammed them into a bag, and fled.

It was a thrilling experience for the chums of the Remove—no end of a story to relate in the Rag at Greyfriars.

Unfortunately, so much time had been taken up, that it was now impossible to ride back to Greyfriars in time for call-over.

"It's all serene," said Harry, as they turned their steps in the direction of the railway station, where the bicycles had been left, "Quelchy won't rag us for being late when we explain about the giddy hold-up."

"The ragfulness will not be terrific," remarked Hurreo Jamsset Ram Singh. "The hopefulness is great that the esteemed Quelchy will give us time to explain before he starts in canefully."

"No good," said Lord Mauleverer. "You fellows may not mind bein' late for call-over, but I'm awf'ly particular about it."

"What?" ejaculated the Famous Five in chorus. This was the first time they had heard of Mauly being particular on such points.

His lordship nodded seriously.

"Disrespectful, and all that, for a man to be late for roll, if he can possibly help it," he said solemnly.

"But we can't help it," said Nugent. "We've got ten miles to go, and a good bit of uphill."

"What's the matter with the railway?"

"Oh!"

The juniors stared at Mauly for a moment, and then they burst into a laugh. Lord Mauleverer's particular desire not to be late for call-over—for

once—was explained now. He preferred a cushioned seat in a first-class carriage, to a ten-mile push on the bicycle.

"You old fraud!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, laughing. "A lot you care about calling-over. You want to slack."

"All the same, it's not a bad idea," remarked Nugent. "We've put in a rather strenuous afternoon, and I'm not yearning to push a bike for ten miles after it. There's an express to Courtfield—"

"Yaas," assented Lord Mauleverer, "I shall insist on standin' the tickets, as it's my wheeze. And we can get a taxi at Courtfield, see? Horrid to be late for call-over if we can possibly help it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But we've got our bikes with us," objected Johnny Bull.

"They can go in the guard's van."

"They'll have to be paid for then."

"Yaas—I believe there's a charge for transportin' bikes by railway," agreed Lord Mauleverer. "It's a mercenary world, and everybody expects everybody to pay for everythin'. But we can't alter that, old bean. It seems to be human nature."

"You silly ass, I mean—"

"Never mind what you mean, if we're goin' to catch the express for Courtfield," said Lord Mauleverer, quite briskly. "Come on."

It was but seldom that the noble Mauly exerted himself, but he was full of energy now. It was necessary to catch that train; the alternative being a ten miles' push on the bikes. It was a time for action, not words, and Mauly could be a man of action in such circumstances. He almost trotted towards the railway station, looking at his handsome gold tucker as he went.

"There's a train at five-thirty, gets to Courtfield at six," he said, "I came by it once after seein' my guardian here. We can catch that all right. Get a move on, you slackers. Don't slack about for goodness' sake, when we're in a hurry."

The Famous Five chuckled as they followed Mauleverer. It was something rather new for that noble youth to be urging the strenuous Co. not to slack. Still, they agreed with Mauly that it was a good idea to catch the express; after their exciting and busy afternoon, even the Famous Five were not keen on riding ten miles home.

So the six juniors walked into the railway station, retrieved the bicycles from the left luggage department, and Lord Mauleverer took a batch of tickets and the bikes were duly consigned to a porter to be placed in the guard's van. The express was signalled as the juniors came on the platform.

"Thank goodness, we're in time," said Lord Mauleverer, with a deep breath of relief.

"Saved!" exclaimed Bob Cherry dramatically, and the juniors chorled.

A young man in light tweeds strolled on the platform after the juniors, and glanced at them as he passed them. His glance rather lingered on them, as if he had seen them before; but the Greyfriars' fellows did not observe it; they did not even look at him.

The young man in tweeds lighted a cigarette, as he stood waiting for the train, evidently the same train that the schoolboys were to take. He stood at

a little distance from them, and a slight smile came over his face as he listened to their talk. They were speaking, as was natural, of their exciting experiences of the afternoon. Had they observed that young man in tweeds, they might have noticed that he was interested in the affair of the Lantham and County Bank.

"Here's the giddy train!" said Bob. "Lend a hand to chuck Mauly in—he's too tired to step in."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The express stopped, and Lord Mauleverer dodged away from Bob Cherry. He was tired, but he did not want to be helped into the carriage by the energetic Bob. Lord Mauleverer had taken first-class tickets, the expenditure of cash being a slight matter to the noble Mauly, and the six juniors filled a carriage by themselves. The young man in tweeds passed on to the next, being also a first-class passenger.

The express buzzed away from Lantham, and all the way to Courtfield the Famous Five found interest in the discussion of the hold-up—while Lord Mauleverer dozed placidly in a corner seat.

"Courtfield Junction!"

The express stopped.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Wake up, Mauly!"

"I'm not asleep—yaroooooh!" roared Lord Mauleverer. "Leggo my collar, you silly chump!"

"I'm waking you up, old bean."

"Whoop! Don't I keep on tellin' you I'm not asleep! Leggo!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Sure you're quite awake?"

"Ow! Yaas!" gasped Lord Mauleverer.

He jerked his collar away from Bob's helping hand, and descended to the platform. The Famous Five followed him, laughing.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There's Prouty!" said Bob.

Mr. Prout, the portly master of the Greyfriars Fifth, was adorning the Courtfield platform with his ample and important person.

He stood near the barrier, scanning the passengers that alighted from the train, evidently in the expectation of seeing someone in particular.

Harry Wharton & Co. went along to the guard's van for their bicycles. They got out their machines and wheeled them along to the barrier. By that time Mr. Prout had selected the passenger whom he had come to meet. The young man in tweeds sauntered along the platform on his way out, looking about him as if he expected to be met. Mr. Prout's eyes fixed on him, and he noticed that the young man limped slightly with his left leg. Mr. Prout made a step towards the young man, and raised his silk hat with elaborate politeness.

"Captain Spencer, I presume?" he asked in his deep, fruity voice.

The young man stopped.

"That is my name," he assented.

"And you—"

"Dr. Locke requested me to meet you here this afternoon, Captain Spencer. Pray allow me to introduce myself—"

Harry Wharton & Co. wheeled their bicycles out, and the rest was lost on them. They capped Mr. Prout respectfully as they passed; the Fifth Form master, however, being too busy with his elaborate courtesy to the young man in tweeds to acknowledge the salute.

"That's the chap who got in at Lantham," remarked Nugent, as the juniors came out of the station. "Looks like a

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ANSWERS
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visitor for Greyfriars, from Prouty being here to meet him. Jump on, and we shall get in for call-over all right."

"I say, we're taxyiu' from here!" protested Lord Mauleverer.

"Six fellows and six bikes on a taxi!" grinned Bob.

"Yaas! Let's take two taxies—"

"Make it three!" chuckled Bob.

"Yaas, all right!"

"Fathead! We're biking from Court-field. It's only a couple of miles, if we go across the common."

"Only!" groaned Lord Mauleverer.

"Jump on, you slacker!"

"I'll tell you what," said Mauly; "You fellows bike it, if you're keen on it, and I'll take a taxi. My bike will go on top."

"Bump him!" said Bob.

"Look here—"

"And your baggage, Captain Spencer?" It was Mr. Prout's fruity voice again, as he came out of the station with the Head's guest.

"A suitcase," said the young man in tweeds. "It was in the guard's van; it was rather too large for the carriage. Dear me! I had allowed it to slip my mind; pray excuse me for a few minutes."

Captain Spencer went back into the station, leaving Mr. Prout to adorn the landscape with his portly person. He went so quickly that the portly Form master had no chance of going with him, as he would certainly have done in his desire to show every possible attention to the Head's guest.

Harry Wharton glanced after him as he went.

At Lantham, the juniors had paid no special heed to the stranger, but they had seen him there, and he had had no suitcase or baggage of any kind with him.

Certainly he had not had a suitcase placed in the guard's van at Lantham, and certainly a suitcase had not been turned out of the train along with the bicycles. There had not been a suitcase in the luggage van on the express at all.

The circumstance struck Wharton as odd, but he gave it no thought, not being interested at all in Captain Spencer's affairs.

Mr. Prout, left alone for a few minutes, bestowed his portly attention upon the Removites.

"You boys have travelled by train with your bicycles?" he said.

"Yes, sir," answered Wharton politely, though he could not see that that was any affair of the Fifth Form master. But Mr. Prout had a little way of butting into affairs that were not his own.

"Your Form master would not approve of such extravagance," said Mr. Prout, with severity.

"Indeed, sir!" murmured Wharton.

"Yes, indeed," said Mr. Prout. "It is extremely thoughtless, to say the least, for you boys to cycle to such a distance that you are obliged to return by train."

The Famous Five smiled at Mr. Prout.

"So kind of you to tell us, sir," said Bob Cherry blandly.

"The kindness is terrific, esteemed sir."

"Moreover," said Mr. Prout, with deepening severity, "you should have made an effort to ride home, even if fatigued. You should not slack. I disapprove strongly of slacking."

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Bob Cherry in so surprising an imitation of the Head's voice that the juniors burst into a chuckle.

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Mr. Prout frowned portentously.

"I presume—" he began again.

"You do!" murmured Bob.

"What! What did you say?" exclaimed Mr. Prout.

"Hem!"

Mr. Prout had not meant that he was presumptuous; not at all. He gave Bob a glare and went on:

"I presume that you would have been late for call-over, if you had ridden back. No doubt that is the case. Is that the case, Wharton?"

"You've got it, sir," said the captain of the Remove.

"What—what?"

"You've got it, sir,"

"That is not the way to address a Form master, Wharton!" boomed Mr. Prout. "It is very thoughtless, indeed reckless, to ride so far that you are obliged to take a train home. It leads to a reckless expenditure of money which is bad—very bad—for junior schoolboys. Your Form master would not approve, and I do not approve. I trust that you will bear this in mind."

"I trust that you fellows will bear this in mind," said Harry Wharton, turning to his comrades.

"I trust that you will bear this in mind, Nugent," said Bob Cherry, with great gravity.

Nugent nodded and turned to Johnny Bull.

"I trust that you will bear this in mind, Bull!" he said.

Johnny Bull grinned.

"Inky, old man, I trust that you will bear this in mind," he said.

"The bearfulness will be terrific," said the Nabob of Bhanipur, with great solemnity. "I trust that you, Wharton, will also bear this in your esteemed mind."

Mr. Prout's complexion, always rich and rosy, was now like the complexion of a freshly boiled beetroot. Although not very quick on the uptake, Mr. Prout could discern that these impertinent juniors were making fun of him. At Greyfriars, as at other schools, a Form master was not supposed to deal out homilies to any Form but his own. Mr. Prout frequently transgressed that salutary rule; he did not keep all his eloquence for the Fifth—having, indeed, an inexhaustible supply of it, which was always liable to run over.

"You are impertinent!" he exclaimed.

"Oh, sir!" exclaimed Bob.

"Oh, sir!" ejaculated Wharton.

"Oh, sir!" gasped Nugent.

"Oh, sir!" murmured Johnny Bull.

"Oh, sir!" purred the Nabob of Bhanipur.

Mr. Prout took a business-like grasp on his umbrella. Really, he looked as if assault and battery would be the next item on the programme.

Fortunately, Captain Spencer came out at the moment with a large suitcase in his hand. Mr. Prout choked back his just wrath, and turned to the Head's guest with a resumption of portly and benevolent courtesy. And Harry Wharton & Co., relieved of Mr. Prout's kind attention, mounted their machines and rode away to the school.

The six juniors arrived at Greyfriars long before the taxi bore Mr. Prout and the Head's guest, and were in good time to join the rest of the school going in to call-over in Hall. Mr. Quelch took the roll, and there was one member of the Remove who failed to answer to his name—Herbert Vernon-Smith. And the expression on Mr. Quelch's face, as he marked Vernon-Smith absent, was an indication of what the rebel of the Remove had to expect when he should turn up late at Greyfriars.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Looting the Loot!

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH remained in the branches of the oak for a good quarter of an hour after the mysterious man below had gone.

The Bounder was in no hurry to descend.

After what he had seen, he knew the danger that would follow if the unknown fugitive discovered him. The sight of the automatic pistol had been more than enough to make the Bounder extremely cautious. The footsteps of the man who had undergone so strange a transformation in the lonely wood had long died away before the Bounder stirred.

He dropped from the tree at last.

The man was gone, probably very far away by that time. No sign remained in sight to show that he ever had been there. Indeed, so strange and mysterious was the occurrence that Vernon-Smith was almost inclined to believe that it was a waking dream. The Bounder stood under the oak, where the strange man had stood, thinking deeply. For the time, Smithy had quite forgotten his own escapade, and that calling-over at Greyfriars would soon be due.

The man he had seen was obviously a robber. He had committed some robbery in deep disguise, and had hidden both his disguise and his plunder in the hollow of the oak. In his present aspect he was safe from any possibility of suspicion. Even in case of suspicion, there was nothing on him to connect him with the robbery. No doubt he intended to wait till the affair, whatever it was, had blown over before he returned to the spot to take away his plunder. That might be days or weeks, or months for that matter. The hiding-place was a safe one. No one was ever likely to explore the hollow in the trunk of the old oak in the heart of the wood. But for what the Bounder had seen, the robber and his loot would have been absolutely secure.

The Bounder grinned at the thought.

The man's manner had shown that he was hunted, but he was hunted by those who were looking for a bearded, horn-spectacled man in black, a bulky-looking man of sixty. Even if the police guessed that the beard and the spectacles were a disguise, they were not likely to have the remotest idea of what the man looked like in his own proper person. But the Bounder held the clue.

Smithy had noted the man's face carefully, and he was quite certain that he would know it again if he saw it; that he could give an accurate description of it. He could describe every one of the hard, clear-cut features, he could give the man's height and size, and every visible detail of his clothing, even to the circumstance that he wore a tie of the Greyfriars colours. That might be a chance, but it was, nevertheless, possible that it indicated that he was an old Greyfriars man; and if that was the case the field of search would be very much narrowed down.

The Bounder, as he stood in thought under the oak, was wondering what he should do.

Obviously, it was his duty to inform the police of what he had seen. It was scarcely imaginable that the man's proceedings had been innocent. It was clear that he was a law-breaker who had escaped with his plunder. But as a schoolboy, it was more judicious for



"He, he, he!" Billy Bunter's fat chuckle came to Vernon-Smith's ears, as Wingate marched him back to school. The Bounder gave Bunter a fierce look. "He, he, he!" chortled Bunter. "You've broken bounds, Smithy. I'm shocked at you! You're a bad hat! No wonder Mr. Quelch is down on you. Yah!" (See Chapter 6.)

Smithy to speak to his Form master or headmaster before taking any other step. The Bounder was already realising how this might be turned to his advantage. He was booked for severe punishment when he returned to the school, after breaking detention, and leading the head prefect of Greyfriars on an unavailing chase. Certainly that meant a Head's flogging.

The Bounder was quite prepared to face the music, with cool hardihood, for what he had done. But he naturally preferred to escape scot-free if he could. If he turned up at Greyfriars with the thief's loot in his possession, to be handed back to the owner, the headmaster could scarcely reward him with a flogging. Smithy chuckled at the thought. It would be no end of a triumph to defy Mr. Quelch, to lead Wingate a dance, and then to escape all punishment for his rebellious audacity.

He laughed aloud as he thought of it. It would be a great score over Mr. Quelch.

He turned to the tree-trunk and examined the hollow into which the man had thrust his disguise and his plunder. It was a narrow opening, but evidently larger below, inside the old trunk, or it would not have contained the bundle the man had thrust in. That was another point the police would be glad to hear of. It proved that the robber was no stranger in the locality. Either he knew the country well, or else he had spent time in the locality, learning his way about, before he had ventured on the robbery.

Smithy thrust his arm into the opening and groped.

His hand came out with the little leather bag in it. He opened the bag, as the robber had done, and looked at the contents. The stack of money there

almost made him gasp, though the Bounder was used to money. There were rolls and rolls of pound notes and a wad of banknotes. At the very least there was the sum of eight hundred pounds in the Bounder's hands.

"My hat!" murmured the Bounder. "What a haul!"

The bag was too large for any of the Bounder's pockets. Certainly he would not have cared to leave the wood carrying it in his hand. The strange man's pursuers might know it by sight. Certainly the robber would have known it had Smithy chanced on him. Vernon-Smith proceeded to remove the wads of notes from the bag and stuff them separately into his pockets. Most of his pockets were bulging by the time he had finished. Then he dropped the empty bag back into the hollow of the oak.

He chuckled.

If the thief came back he would find his disguise and the bag, the latter empty. The Bounder would have liked to be on the spot to see his face when he found it.

Vernon-Smith walked away from the tree at last towards the footpath, scanning the locality carefully as he went, to make sure of being able to find the oak again.

He reached the footpath and walked away towards Lantham.

As he was on foot now he had to take the train to return to Greyfriars. Even so, he was certain to be late for call-over. A glance at his watch showed him that it was nearly six o'clock. The five-thirty from Lantham to Courtfield was gone, and the next express was six-thirty, at which time Greyfriars would be gathered in Big Hall for call-over. But the Bounder cared little. As well to be hung for a sheep

as a lamb, and he was fairly sure that he carried in his pockets the means of making his peace. There was no doubt that the Head would be greatly pleased to find that a Greyfriars boy was the means of restoring a large sum of money to the right owner.

The Bounder walked cheerily into Lantham, and went into the railway station, in good time for the next train.

He took his ticket and went on the platform, and he did not fail to observe that there was an air of excitement about the usually sleepy place. A dozen people were on the platform for the train, and they were all talking, and they had only one topic—the daring hold-up at the Lantham and County Bank.

In a very few minutes the Bounder knew where the money belonged that he had stuffed into his pockets.

The hold-up at the bank that afternoon and the hiding of the notes in the hollow tree in Lantham Chase could not be simply a singular coincidence. It was the bank robber whom Vernon-Smith had watched hiding his loot.

A plump, red-faced gentleman, who looked like a commercial traveller, was relating his experiences to several interested hearers while he waited for the express. He had seen the bank robber, and joined in the chase, and the Bounder, idling near at hand, listened intently to his description. He described the man as looking about sixty, with greyish beard and moustaches, and big, horn-rimmed spectacles and a Homburg hat, a fat man dressed in black. But the commercial gentleman gave the sage opinion that the beard and moustaches would have come off if they had been jerked, and

he doubted whether the horn-rimmed glasses would remain after the man had got away.

"Of course, he was disguised," said the commercial gentleman, "and he might look like anything or anybody with all that stuff off. Might be standing on this here platform at this very minute, and nobody would know him."

"And he got a big haul?" asked one of the interested hearers.

"They say a thousand pounds," answered the commercial gentleman. "He shot the cashier down, though it turns out that he was only slightly hurt, after all. Might have been killed. It's time the police did something to put down this hold-up business. Might as well be in America if this kind of thing is to go on. A regular gunman."

The Bounder breathed rather hard. He remembered the automatic pistol he had seen. That weapon had been fired at the bank cashier. It might have been fired at the Bounder had the robber discovered him in the wood. He had reason to be glad that he had kept so carefully "doggo."

The express came in at last, and the Bounder took his seat. There were other passengers in the carriage, and they talked of the hold-up all the way to Courtfield. By the time Vernon-Smith arrived at Courtfield he knew all the details of the affair that were known to the public, even to the detail that some schoolboys belonging to Greyfriars had been on the scene when the hold-up took place. He could guess who those schoolboys were. He knew that Harry Wharton & Co. had been going to Lantham that afternoon.

The Bounder got out at Courtfield, and took a taxi to the school.

He stepped from the taxi at the gates of Greyfriars, which were closed and locked. Smithy rang the bell.

Gosling came down to the gates, and gave the Bounder a grim look between the bars.

"Ho! You're back!" he said. "Nice goings hon."

Gosling slowly unlocked the gates. "Which you're to report to Mr. Quelch at once, Master Vernon-Smith," he granted. "Wot I says is this 'ere—"

"Can it!" interrupted the Bounder. And he walked on towards the School House, leaving William Gosling blinking with wrath.

"I say, you fellows! Here's Smithy!" It was an excited squeak from Billy Bunter, as the Bounder walked coolly into the House.

A dozen fellows stared round. The Bounder was the cynosure of all eyes at once. His escapade of the afternoon was the talk of the Lower School. Vernon-Smith glanced round, with a smiling face.

"Anything up?" he drawled. "He, he, he!" chortled Billy Bunter. "Wait till you see Quelchy."

"Has Quelchy come in?" "Long ago," grinned Bunter. "He's waiting for you, Smithy. You're for it. He, he, he!"

"You've asked for it this time, Smithy," said Peter Todd, with a curious look at the Bounder. "Wingate came back boiling. Did he follow you far?"

"Nearly to Lantham," said the Bounder. "I dodged him at the finish. I hope the exercise did him good."

Some of the juniors laughed. But the laugh died away as Mr. Quelch came out of his study with a grim brow.

"Vernon-Smith! You have returned?"

"Yes, sir."

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"Very well. I shall take you to your headmaster to be dealt with," said Mr. Quelch.

"Thank you, sir," said the Bounder imperturbably. "I want to see the Head."

"What! No more insolence, Vernon-Smith! Follow me at once!"

"Certainly, sir!"

The Remove master stalked away, and the Bounder lounged after him, bestowing a wink on the Remove fellows as he went.

"Well, Smithy's got a nerve!" remarked Bob Cherry.

"The beak will give him something to cure all that!" chuckled Bunter.

The door of the Head's study closed behind Mr. Quelch and the Bounder.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Bounder's Trump Card!

DR. LOCKE laid down his pen, and fixed his eyes upon Herbert Vernon-Smith, with a glance that made the Bounder feel a little uneasy, in spite of his nerve. The Head had received Wingate's report during the afternoon, and later, he had learned from Mr. Quelch that the Bounder had not been present at call-over. Now he had returned, long after the school gates had been locked, and the air of assurance with which he entered the headmaster's study added to his offence. There was thunder in the usually benevolent countenance of the Head. Smithy noticed that the birch lay on the table ready for use. His punishment had been already decided upon.

"So this rebellious boy has returned, Mr. Quelch?" said Dr. Locke.

"Yes, sir, and without, I fear, feeling any regret whatever for his disrespect and disobedience," said the Remove master.

"Vernon-Smith, you were detained this afternoon by your Form master. You went out in spite of your detention, and refused to return to the school when ordered by your head prefect."

"Yes, sir," said the Bounder. "You are now nearly an hour late for calling-over."

"I am sorry, sir." "I trust so!" said the Head grimly. "You understand, of course, that you will be severely flogged?"

"It was not really my fault that I came back late for call-over, sir," said the Bounder smoothly. "I was delayed by—"

"By what?" snapped the Head. "It matters little, in any case, as you had no right to be out of the school at all, in view of the fact that you were detained."

"There was a hold-up in Lantham this afternoon, sir—a bank was robbed."

The Head raised his eyebrows. "That does not concern the matter in hand, Vernon-Smith."

"It does, sir," said the Bounder. Dr. Locke glanced at the Remove master.

"You have told me, Mr. Quelch, of a statement made by some boys of your Form, that they were present in Lantham when the bank was robbed by some desperate character. Was Vernon-Smith with them?"

"Certainly not!" said Mr. Quelch. "Wharton and his friends came in for calling-over, and afterwards acquainted me with what had happened at Lantham. Vernon-Smith was not with them!"

"I was not there at the time of the hold-up, sir," said the Bounder. "I came on the bank-robber later."

The Head started, and Mr. Quelch gave a little exclamation. Smithy had expected that statement to startle the two masters, and undoubtedly it did so.

"What did you say, Vernon-Smith?" exclaimed the Head. "You came on the person who robbed the bank at Lantham?"

"Yes, sir. That is why I was late for call-over," said the Bounder calmly. "I thought I had better keep out of sight while he was around, sir, as he had an automatic pistol."

"Bless my soul!"

Dr. Locke blinked at the Bounder, and Mr. Quelch stared at him with grim, unbelieving eyes.

"That is a very strange statement, Vernon-Smith," said Dr. Locke at last. "Kindly tell me at once what has happened during your absence from the school."

"Certainly, sir. I intended to report to you as soon as I got back, as I want you to advise me whether to go to the police."

"Proceed!" said the Head curtly.

The Bounder proceeded to describe his adventure in the old oak in Lantham Chase. Dr. Locke and Mr. Quelch listened attentively, in silence, while Smithy gave a minute account of the whole affair, leaving out only one detail. He did not mention that he had taken the stolen banknotes from the tree-trunk.

The Head's expression was one of amazement; Mr. Quelch's of strong disbelief. It was easy to see that the Remove master, at least, believed that Smithy, having heard of the hold-up, was telling a fanciful story, in the hope of thereby dodging punishment. For that reason, the Bounder kept back that one little circumstance, and made no allusion whatever to the fact that he had the bank's money in his own pockets at that moment.

"Bless my soul!" said the Head at last. "This is a very strange story, Vernon-Smith. What do you think, Mr. Quelch?"

The Remove master set his lips. "I think that every word Vernon-Smith has uttered is a fabrication, sir," he answered deliberately. "He is not a truthful boy by any means. I believe he has invented this story in the hope of eluding a just punishment."

Vernon-Smith smiled inwardly. He had in his pockets the proof with which to overwhelm his Form master as soon as he chose. But he was in no hurry to produce it. He was, in fact, playing with Mr. Quelch like a cat with a mouse.

Dr. Locke gazed doubtfully at the Bounder.

"You assure me you have spoken the truth?" he asked.

"Every word, sir!"

"You would be able to find again this oak-tree of which you speak?"

"Well, oak-trees are much alike, sir, and Lantham Chase is very extensive," said the Bounder, with well-acted hesitation. "Of course, I hope I should be able to find it, sir. I would try."

"And if you fail to find it, Vernon-Smith," said Mr. Quelch in a grinding voice, "do you expect this incredible story to be believed?"

"Yes, sir."

"You will be disappointed, in that case. I do not believe a single word you have uttered."

"I am sorry for that, sir," said the Bounder meekly. "I can only repeat that I have stated the exact facts."

"Nonsense!"

"I fear, Vernon-Smith, that I must share your Form master's opinion," said the Head. "The story is, in fact, incredible."



Just as Harry Wharton & Co. reached the entrance to the bank, the swing doors were dashed violently open and a man came running out. It was the bearded man in the horn spectacles. He came down the steps with a desperate rush, and burst upon the juniors like a battering-ram. "Stop him!" yelled Wharton. "It's a hold-up! Stop him!" (See Chapter 7.)

"Vernon-Smith has evidently been to Lantham," said Mr. Quelch, with biting contempt. "He has heard there the story of the bank robbery, and upon it has founded this romance."

"It certainly would appear so," said Dr. Locke.

"With the object," continued Mr. Quelch, "of postponing or eluding punishment for his rebellious disrespect. No doubt he would be willing to cause his headmaster to communicate with the police, to obtain leave from lessons to accompany the constables in a search for a mythical hollow tree in Lantham Chase, with the pretext finally that he could not locate the tree. I believe he would have no scruple whatever in thus placing his headmaster in a false position."

"Bless my soul!" said Dr. Locke. "Certainly the position would be absolutely intolerable. I should be regarded as having wasted the time of the authorities by listening to a wild tale from a schoolboy. Vernon-Smith, you have added to your offence by telling me this incredible story."

"You do not believe me, sir?"

"I do not."

"Not one word!" said the Remove master harshly. "Not one syllable! I

am surprised, even in you, Vernon-Smith, at this audacity. Such a tale is an insult to the intelligence of your headmaster."

"Then you do not advise me to report to the police what I have seen?" said the Bounder, with great meekness.

"You have seen nothing of what you describe. I am sure that Dr. Locke will not allow you to attempt to delude the authorities with any such fanciful story."

"Certainly not!" said the Head.

"Very well, sir," said the Bounder, his calm face betraying no sign of his secret enjoyment. "But, at least, sir, you will advise me what to do with the money?"

"The—the what?" ejaculated the Head.

"The money!" repeated Mr. Quelch blankly.

"Yes, sir," said the Bounder demurely. "Knowing, sir, that the money had been stolen, and thinking that the thief might return for it, I thought it best, sir, to take it from the hollow tree."

"Bless my soul! Do you mean to say, Vernon-Smith, that the money taken from the bank at Lantham is now in

your actual possession?" stuttered the Head.

"Yes, sir!"

Mr. Quelch's face was a study.

"That alters the case—if true!" said Dr. Locke.

"If true!" said Mr. Quelch between his set lips. "If it is not one more impudent falsehood, sir."

"Where is this money, Vernon-Smith, which you state you took from the hiding-place in the oak?" demanded the Head.

"I put it in a safe place at once, sir," said Vernon-Smith, still bent on "drawing" the unfortunate Remove master.

He succeeded perfectly.

"No doubt!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "And this safe place, like the hollow oak, you will fail to find if called upon to do so. A still more audacious falsehood, in my opinion."

The Bounder had difficulty in suppressing a grin. Certainly he had his Form master "on toast" now, as he described it afterwards to Skinner.

"Oh, sir!" he said deprecatingly.

"We are wasting time, Dr. Locke, in listening to this audacious boy's impertinent fabrications," said the Remove master.

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"I agree with you, Mr. Quelch. Now, Vernon-Smith"—the Head paused a moment—"unless you can furnish immediate and complete proof of what you have stated—"

"Well, sir," said the Bounder, affecting to hesitate, "there's the money, sir—"

"You state that you put this money in a safe place?"

"Yes, sir."

"And the place?" asked the Head patiently, while Mr. Quelch fairly glared his disbelief.

"My pockets, sir," said the Bounder calmly.

"Your—your pockets!"

"Yes, sir!"

"Vernon-Smith! Is it your meaning that you have this money on your person at the present moment?"

"Yes, sir."

"Dear me!" said the Head.

"Produce it, then!" almost shouted Mr. Quelch. For the first time in his long career at Greyfriars, the Remove master lost his temper in the presence of his chief. "Impudent boy, if you are not, as I believe, lying with the most impudent effrontery, produce this money at once!"

"Certainly, sir!"

And the Bounder, to the amazement of the Head, and the complete stupefaction of Mr. Quelch, proceeded to turn out bundles of currency notes and bank-notes from his pockets.

The two masters watched him, as if in a trance, while he stacked the notes on the Head's writing-table.

Quietly, methodically, with the utmost coolness, Smithy emptied his pockets of the notes, stacking them up in order. Hundreds of pounds were represented by those little stacks of paper.

The Head found his voice at last.

"Upon my word! This is—is—is very—very extraordinary! Mr. Quelch, it—it would appear that Vernon-Smith has—has spoken the truth, after all!"

Mr. Quelch did not speak. He was gazing at the growing heaps of notes, as if unable to believe his eyes. Certainly he did not wish to believe them. He was exasperated almost to the limit of endurance. Only too well he knew that the Bounder had deliberately kept back this proof of his statement to the latest possible moment in order to overwhelm him with confusion.

"That is the lot, sir," said Vernon-Smith at last. "I haven't counted them, sir, but I think there is more than eight hundred pounds. I hope, sir, that you will take charge of them; they would not be safe in my pockets."

"Certainly I shall take charge of them!" gasped the Head. "The notes shall be locked in my safe till I can communicate with the bank and they can be returned. This is—is—is very extraordinary! Vernon-Smith, you have acted very badly and disrespectfully today, but it must be admitted that you have performed a public service in saving this large sum of money from the hands of a thief."

"Thank you, sir!" said the Bounder.

"I shall telephone to the police-station at Lantham, and ask them to send an official to take down your statement," said the Head. "Your description of the man will be most valuable; it may enable them to lay their hands on this scoundrel, who has only been seen in disguise by all other eyes. In the circumstances. I—I—" Dr. Locke hesitated. "Vernon-Smith, it would be painful to me to punish you, in view of these circumstances. Yet it is impossible for me to overlook your disrespect and disobedience to your Form master, THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1007.

whose authority you know it to be my duty to uphold. You have placed me in a very painful position, Vernon-Smith."

The Bounder smiled inwardly. Outwardly his face was serious and concerned.

"I am sorry, sir," he said. "I had no idea of getting out of my punishment. I felt it my duty to save this money from the thief, sir, and to help the authorities, if you approve, in finding the bank robber, sir. I apologise to Mr. Quelch, sir, for the trouble I have given him, and should like him to believe that I am very sorry indeed for having acted in a disrespectful manner."

The Head glanced at the Remove master expressively.

Mr. Quelch gulped.

He did not believe in the sincerity of the Bounder's apology; indeed, he regarded it as a piece more of the junior's impertinence. But he realised that he had to swallow the pill, bitter as it was. It was scarcely possible for the Head to flog a fellow who had saved a large sum of money from thievish hands, and who undoubtedly was to give immense assistance to the authorities in a difficult task, thus reflecting very considerable credit upon himself and his school. Obviously, the Head was extremely unwilling, in the peculiar circumstances, to administer any such punishment. Mr. Quelch realised that the Bounder had won the unspoken conflict; the struggle between a rebellious Remove boy and the Remove master had ended in favour of the rebel.

"What do you say, Mr. Quelch?" asked the Head, his tone indicating very clearly what he expected the Remove master to say.

"I can only agree with your views, sir," said Mr. Quelch painfully. "I—I accept Vernon-Smith's apology, and the matter closes so far as I am concerned."

"Thank you, Mr. Quelch. Vernon-Smith, I trust that you will attempt to show by your future conduct that you appreciate Mr. Quelch's kindness in thus pardoning your offence."

"I will try very hard, sir, to show Mr. Quelch exactly how I appreciate his kindness," said the Bounder.

"Very good," said the Head, blind to the double meaning of the Bounder's words, though it was not lost on Mr. Quelch. "You may go, Vernon-Smith. You will be called when the authorities desire to see you and take down your statement."

"Yes, sir."

And the Bounder walked out of the Head's study, and grinned mockingly as he went down the passage and strolled into the Rag.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

An Amazing Discovery!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"

"Licked?"

"Sacked?"

"How's it gone, Smithy?"

"I say, you fellows, he doesn't look licked!"

The Bounder laughed.

Nearly all the Remove were in the Rag, and it was obvious that they were waiting for the Bounder. For once, at least, the black sheep of the Remove filled the most prominent place in the eyes of his Form-fellows. Since he had entered upon his new career of recklessness, of tacit conflict with all authority in general, and that of his Form master in particular, the Bounder had drawn a good deal of attention to himself. If he was not popular, if he was not liked, at all events he had to be respected for

his courage and nerve, and at no time could he fail to inspire interest, at least. But on this special day interest in the Bounder's reckless course had culminated.

Fellows had broken detention before, though not in quite so reckless a fashion; but it was something new for a fellow to lead the head prefect of the school a dance, miles across country, and to send him home unsuccessful at the finish, and to follow up that proceeding by staying out an hour after roll-call. Everyone had expected the Bounder's exploits to wind up in a flogging, which, however, he would go through with iron hardihood, without a cry, his pluck and endurance extorting unwilling admiration even from those who most disapproved of his conduct.

But the climax came when it was seen that the Bounder was not even punished; that somehow or other, in some mysterious way, he had escaped the penalty of his many offences.

Obviously, as he sauntered into the Rag, with his hands in his pockets and a cool smile on his face, he had not been flogged, or sentenced to a flogging.

The Remove fellows simply could not understand it; but undoubtedly it enhanced the Bounder's prestige very considerably.

"I say, Smithy, how did you get off?" squeaked Billy Bunter in great excitement. "Have you pulled the Head's leg somehow?"

"Blessed if it doesn't seem like a giddy miracle," said Bob Cherry. "You're not licked, Smithy?"

"Licked? No!"

"You're not going to be bunked?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Do I look like it?" asked the Bounder, with a careless laugh.

"Well, no; but it beats me."

"The beatfulness is terrific," remarked Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh. "The gladfulness is great to see the esteemed Bounder escape Scotchfully free. But how do you work these ridiculous miracles, Smithy?"

"Spun the Head some yarn?" said Nugent.

The Bounder nodded.

"Just that!" he agreed.

Harry Wharton was looking very curiously at the Bounder. He was as astonished as the rest of the fellows. He was glad that Smithy had escaped punishment; although the differences between them were very wide now, the captain of the Remove was not without some regard for the fellow whose faults were redeemed by indomitable courage. But he could not understand. He had fully expected the Bounder to be flogged; he would not have been surprised had Smithy been expelled from Greyfriars. Neither had happened, and it was amazing.

"You've told the tale to the Head, somehow," said Squiff.

"You've got it," assented the Bounder.

"But what on earth did you tell him?" asked Peter Todd. "The Head's a downy bird."

"Oh, I don't mind telling you," said the Bounder negligently. "I dare say you fellows have heard that there was a hold-up at Lantham this afternoon—at the bank?"

"Yes, rather! We were on the spot," said Bob Cherry.

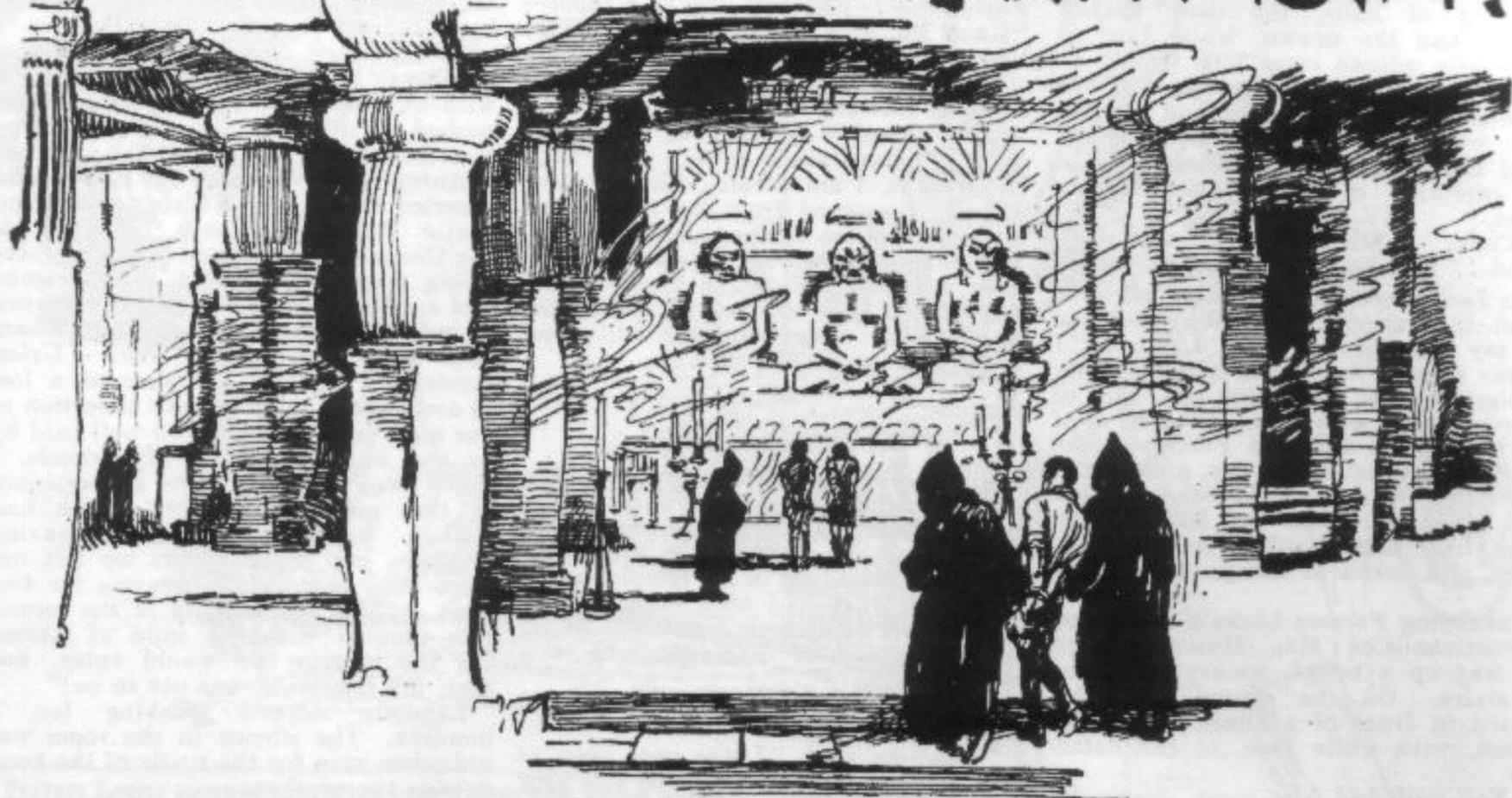
"Well, I told the Head a yarn about that," said the Bounder. "A really interestin' tale about meetin' the bank robber and getting the stolen money off him."

"Great pip!"

(Continued on page 26.)

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The Message from Lamonte!

“A NOTE for you, guv'nor! It's urgent!”

Ferrers Locke looked up quickly from his desk and took a plain grey envelope from the hand of his assistant—Jack Drake.

The envelope, heavily sealed, was addressed in a spidery scrawl to the famous detective at his Baker Street office. The word “Urgent” was heavily underlined in the top left-hand corner.

“Who brought this, Jack?” he inquired, ripping open the envelope and extracting the single sheet of grey notepaper which it contained.

“A liveried chauffeur! He's waiting for an answer.”

The detective nodded and turned his attention to the letter. He scanned it in silence, then, handing it to Jack, said gravely:

“Read it!”

The writing was the same spidery scrawl as on the envelope, and started off without any preamble:

“I implore you to come to me at once! There is more than life and death at stake. I will explain when I see you. I arrived in England last night, but it is essential that none know of my presence in this country. For the sake of humanity come to me at once! Civilization is threatened by a menace beyond the most fantastic imaginings. My chauffeur can be trusted and will bring you to me. One word more. You will find me much changed! Come at once! Every moment is precious!”

“JACQUES LAMONTE, M.D.”

“Well?”

The detective's voice was grim as Jack, having read the letter, laid it on the desk.

“It looks genuine enough, guv'nor. It's obviously been written by a man labouring under strong emotion.”

Ferrers Locke nodded.

“It is quite genuine!” he replied. “It is written by a man whom I know well. Dr. Lamonte, the medico, who accompanied Major Beverley's expedition into Tibet.”

Jack started.

“I remember now,” he said quickly. “It was in the newspapers. But wasn't it assumed that the whole party had perished, guv'nor? It must be more than a year since the outside world had news of them!”

“Yes,” replied Ferrers Locke. “It is eighteen months ago that Major Beverley led an expedition into Tibet. His object was to survey a possible trade route from India to China by way of Tibet. After leaving Gyantse the party was never heard of again. It was thought that they had either been massacred by some of the wild hillmen, or had perished in the mountain fastnesses. The most searching inquiries failed to throw the faintest light on the mystery. The whole party just vanished completely. The British authorities were powerless to move against the Tibetans as there was not the slightest evidence that the expedition had, in any way, suffered violence.”

“And—and now the doctor who accompanied them turns up in England.”

Jack could not suppress the quiver of excitement in his voice.

“Yes,” said Ferrers Locke slowly. “Dr. Lamonte has come back. Where from? I knew him, Jack, as a courageous and intelligent man. Yet the letter you have just read has been inspired by some strong emotion, as you said, and that emotion is fear. Something is amiss, something terrible must have happened.”

“He says he has much changed,” ventured Jack.

Ferrers Locke pushed back his chair and rose to his feet.

“We will see Dr. Lamonte,” he said. “Tell the chauffeur we will be ready to accompany him at once!”

The Victim of Kang Pu!

TEN minutes later Ferrers Locke and Jack were being whirled across London in the large, closed-in car which Dr. Lamonte had sent for them. Not for one moment did Ferrers Locke doubt the genuineness of the message. He knew Lamonte's spidery scrawl, and he was convinced the letter was not a forgery. If, by some chance, this latter was the case, then he was equally curious to find out what lay behind it.

“Any idea where we're heading, guv'nor?” inquired Jack.

“Dr. Lamonte has a house somewhere in Surrey,” replied the detective. “I have heard him speak of it, although he rarely used it. The chauffeur seems to be making for the Surrey side of the river, so is probably taking us to Lamonte's country house.”

Jack nodded, and there was silence for a while. Each was turning over in his mind the mysterious, urgent message from the man who had come back secretly from—where?

“Did you know Dr. Lamonte well?” asked Jack suddenly.

Ferrers Locke nodded.

“Yes, very well. I met him many times. He was intensely interested in criminal psychology. A fine figure of a man, tall, athletic, and intellectual.”

It was an hour later that the car swung off the Epsom road and purred up a gravel drive, to come to a halt at the front door of a large house standing well back from the road. Ferrers Locke and Jack alighted. One glance sufficed to show them that the blinds were drawn at all windows, with the exception of one on the second floor. The shrubs around the house were in an uncared-for condition. Grass was springing up here and there on the sweep of unranked gravel, and altogether an air of desertion and desolation brooded over the place.

The chauffeur rang a jangling peal on the old-fashioned bell which was let

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into the stonework at the side of the front door. Someone slip-slopped along the passageway inside, there came a creaking of bolts, the door opened slowly, and the drawn, white face of an elderly woman came into view.

She peered at the detective and his assistant through eyes red and swollen with weeping. Ferrers Locke recognised her as Mrs. Humphries, wife of the caretaker of Dr. Lamonte's town house.

"Come in, Mister Locke!" she whispered. "He—he is waiting for you."

To Jack there was something peculiar about that word "he." Why did she not say "master" or "Dr. Lamonte"? It was a small thing, but it seemed, unaccountably, to add to the air of mystery and gloom which pervaded the house. He followed Ferrers Locke into the uncarpeted hallway, and waited whilst the old dame locked the massive door and shot home the bolts. The place had that peculiar musty smell which is a token of dampness and disuse.

Unheeding Ferrers Locke's murmured conventionalities, Mrs. Humphries led the way up a broad, uncarpeted flight of stairs. On the second floor she paused in front of a closed door, and turned, with white face, to the detective.

"You will find him much changed," she said in a low voice, then knocked softly.

"Who is there?" demanded a harsh voice.

"Mrs. Humphries, sir! Mr. Locke is here!"

A chair scraped back and shuffling footsteps approached the door. A key turned in the lock, the steps retreated, and the harsh voice said:

"Come in, Ferrers Locke! Come in, my friend!"

Mrs. Humphries turned and moved away down the corridor.

"Wait here, Jack!" said the detective; and, turning the handle, he stepped quickly into the room, closing the door behind him.

But once inside he stopped short, his hands clenched, and a look of horror in his eyes.

Sitting huddled in a chair by the fire was a man—the hideous caricature of a man. Across his brow ran three wide red scars. His nose was broken and disfigured. His ears had been shorn off close to his head. A black patch covered one eye. His cheeks were sunken and hollow and scarred, as though pieces of the skin had been shaved off. His body was hunched, as if his spine was affected. The bandaged left hand which lay on his knee was void of fingers, the stumps protruding horribly through the white linen.

"Lamonte!"

Ferrers Locke's voice was hoarse. In two strides he crossed the room. Dropping on one knee, he put his arm round the broken man.

"Lamonte! Who did this?"

Lamonte was silent for a moment. When he spoke his voice was vibrant.

"You ask who used me so, my friend! And what shall I answer! Man, devil, or insane priest?"

He turned in his chair and stared at the detective through a bloodshot eye.

"Near the banks of the Kyi Chu, the holy river of Lhasa," he said, "there stands a monastery, its one-time greatness now submerged by the waves of time. And inside those thrice accursed walls sits Kang Pu, weaving the destinies of men and peoples! Kang Pu, the immortal! Kang Pu, whose

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foul soul can find no solace in death! Kang Pu, the living Buddha! Kang Pu, the uncrowned king of the eastern world, and"—his voice rose to a shout—"Kang Pu, who has vowed the annihilation of the English-speaking peoples!"

He broke off with a shudder and slumped forward in his chair.

"My friend," he said in a quieter voice, "I have much to tell you. Poor Beverley is, I am afraid, dead by now. Myself, I escaped from the nethermost pit in hell, from tortures indescribable! The shadow of Kang Pu hangs heavy over me, and I have not long to live. But when I have spoken you will understand and, understanding, will best know how to act!"

Dr. Lamonte's Story!

AT Ferrers Locke's request, Dr. Lamonte at once agreed that Jack should hear the story. The boy, on entering the room, felt the blood pounding in his temples as he looked at what had once been the upright figure of athletic manhood. What inhuman monster had wrought this terrible havoc?

Dr. Lamonte noticed his emotion and smiled mirthlessly.

"Yes," he said, "I was once even as you. One would not think that this poor body of mine had stroked Oxford to victory!"

He said this in no spirit of boasting, but as one merely stating a fact. He was silent for a moment, and then went on:

"But that was many years ago, when I was young and had the world before me. Now, you see in me a broken man waiting hourly for death!"

"Why speak of death?" said Ferrers Locke gently. "You have won through; you are home once more amongst friends!"

"And what will that avail me?" Lamonte's voice was sharp. "I have won through, and from the very bottom of my heart I thank God for it! It is not death from my mutilations that I await, it is the death that lurked ever by my side on my nightmare of a journey from Tibet. The death which lurks near me in this house, the death which will come to me quickly, suddenly, horribly! The death planned for me by Kang Pu!"

He shuddered and raised a bandaged, shaking hand to his brow.

"It is terrible," he whispered, "this waiting!" He turned his scarred face towards Ferrers Locke. "When I have told you my story," he said in a louder voice, "I want you to go straight from here to Sir Hylton Davies, of the India Office. He must be told—must be warned!"

Ferrers Locke nodded.

"Yes, he must be warned," repeated Lamonte slowly. "He may not believe and—"

He paused; then, pulling himself together with an obvious effort, continued:

"I waste time! Listen, my friends, and I will tell you the story of that ill-fated expedition into Tibet. You will forgive me if I dwell but briefly on our journey until we camped in the shadow of that sinister, long-forgotten monastery of Salai! After leaving Gyantse we pushed on towards Lhasa by way of the Karo Pass. The inhabitants of the villages through which we passed were sullen and unresponsive. It was as though they feared—not us—but feared to befriend us. Our native followers began to desert. At first singly, then by twos and threes. But Major Beverley

pushed on, and one afternoon we came to the banks of the Kyi Chu."

The speaker paused, and again passed his shaking, mutilated hand across his brow.

"We crossed that fast-flowing stream in canvas boats which we had brought with us, but it was a ticklish task. We pushed on till nightfall, and camped by a tributary of the Kyi Chu. When morning came, we found our natives had deserted to a man. There was left but Major Beverley, myself, Heyward, of the Geographical Survey, and Carstairs, a big game hunter and explorer who had accompanied us. We held a council of war and decided to push on to Lhasa and there attempt to refit. Grim, mysterious Lhasa! We were at a loss to account for the wholesale desertion of our men, for they had been well paid by us and kindly treated. My friends, I think even then we were all conscious of that malignant shadow which had stalked by our side since leaving Gyantse, but our thoughts we left unsaid. We made slow progress for two days, and on the evening of the second day camped within a mile of Lhasa. On the morrow we would enter, but alas, my friends, it was not to be!"

Lamonte stopped speaking for a moment. The silence in the room was unbroken save for the rustle of the trees outside the window.

"That evening, when the sun was setting," he went on, "Major Beverley and I climbed a rocky spur of hill and stood looking down on the Hidden City. Like burnished gold in the rays of the setting sun stood what we knew was the dome of Jokhang Cathedral. And as we watched the sun sank in red clouds, and its light was reflected over Lhasa like a blood-red pall. Was it an omen? In silence we returned to our camp. We had pitched it under the walls of what we took to be a deserted monastery. We turned in early. I am not a man of wild fancies, but that night I was acutely conscious of impending evil. How long I slept I cannot say."

He paused and drew breath.

"I awoke with a start, and put out my hand to feel the familiar canvas of my tent," he resumed. "My friends, I touched cold stone. I sat up in the inky darkness and attempted to fumble for my matches.

"Something clanked—something on my wrist. Then came the discovery that I was chained to a wall. A thousand questions flashed through my mind. I must get on, so I will spare you an account of the hours I spent in that pitch blackness. Once I shouted to find if my friends were near, but the answer was only—silence! Silence, deathly and unearthly, the silence of the tomb! I had no knowledge of how I had come where I was. I waited and waited whilst endless hours passed.

"No hint of daylight came to me. My matches, watch, revolver, all had gone. Then, after what seemed an eternity of time, a door creaked open, and four black-robed and hooded monks entered. By the light of a lantern which one of them carried I saw that I was imprisoned in a windowless cell. They strapped my hands behind my back before releasing me from my chains. No heed they took of me or my questions. They worked in silence. Then, when I was freed from my chains, they grouped themselves about me and indicated by gestures that I was to accompany them. I did so, and we traversed endless stone corridors lit eerily by the dancing light of the swinging lantern.

"At length we emerged into what I



Ferrers Locke stopped short, his hands clenched, and a look of horror in his eyes, for sitting huddled in a chair by the fire was a man—the hideous caricature of a man, bruised and disfigured almost beyond recognition. “Lamonte!” cried the detective, in a hoarse voice. “Who did this?”

(See page 24.)

knew was a huge inner temple. It was high roofed and stone floored. Golden lamps and candles but dimly illuminated that vast place. Then I saw my friends. Bound as I was, they were standing in front of the Buddhist trinity—three great images representing the Buddhas of the past, present, and future. I was placed in line with my friends and my escort withdrew. Somehow we did not speak. We waited—for what? My friends, I could have shrieked at the tension in the air. Then, as though far, far away, came a drone which grew in volume until it swelled into a thunderous chorus of thousands of voices. It was done, as I knew even then, by wonderful acoustics cunningly wrought in the building, but—it was horrible! It ceased suddenly, and, before its cadences had stopped ringing in our ears, we heard a voice speaking, a cold, emotionless voice. From whence it came we could not say, but I will repeat as well as my memory serves me the words it spoke to us.

“Listen, O white men, to the words of Kang Pu! By my hand hast thou been guided here, thou who wouldst bring thy Western caravans through this fair country of the sacred Lamas! Listen, for I am Kang Pu, the chosen of Buddha, the scourge by which he shall drive thee and all that speak thy accursed tongue from the face of the earth!

“The day is at hand when I, Kang Pu, shall ride triumphant through the Western world. The day is at hand when your lands and your cities shall be peopled by the peoples of the East! The day is at hand when Lhasa shall rule the world, and I, Kang Pu, shall rule in Lhasa, to the glory of the great Buddha! It is destiny, it is written, and what is written must transpire. Hark ye, O white men, I am immortal! For thousands of years, for ages untold, I have dwelt here in this temple of Buddha watching ye of the Western

world fashioning thy cities, thy armies, thy navies, and thy empires! Yea, I waited and I watched, and now the great Buddha has spoken! Lhasa, the cradle of the peoples of the earth, is about to take unto herself that world power which she is destined to hold. Lhasa shall rule the world, and I shall rule in Lhasa! I, Kang Pu!

“The voice ceased,” went on Lamonte, “and silence settled again. Our escort moved forward out of the shadows. We knew resistance was a futile thing. I was led back to my cell and left to the darkness and my thoughts. I did not doubt but that we were at the mercy of a crazy priest. I asked myself a thousand times in the weary, endless days which followed why we had not been slain outright. Then slowly, remorselessly, the horrible truth began to be forced in on me.”

Lamonte ceased speaking. Neither Ferrers Locke nor Jack attempted to break the silence. Turning to the detective, Lamonte continued earnestly:

“You knew me as a man normal and healthy in mind and body. Yet I, fighting with every atom of will power which I possessed, just escaped becoming the tool of Kang Pu. Every day the four of us were brought in front of the three great Buddhas. We saw ghastly and horrible things performed by dwarfish and grotesquely malformed priests. Of that I will not speak. But ever and always I found my will power being sapped, my ego being submerged. The horror with which at first I had recoiled from those terrible sacrifices performed in front of our eyes to the glory of Buddha became less and less acute. I felt as though my personality was being drained from me—that I was becoming a husk, a man who could not obey the dictates of his own brain because his brain was ceasing to function.

“Then, one day, whilst standing with my companions in front of the Buddha of the present, I felt more strongly than

ever before that my mind was being dominated by some sinister outside force. Hypnotism? Perhaps, but on a scale unknown to our Western world. I lifted my eyes with an effort. Two living eyes were staring at me through the eye sockets of that great metal god! Eyes which burned in the intensity of their glare. Eyes which held in them what seemed, to my bemused brain, the personification of all that is evil. With a despairing effort I called on all my faculties to help me break the spell which day by day was taking greater hold on me. With a shout I hurled myself forward. My hands were bound, but I kicked and raved at that hideous, bejewelled god. I spat, I went berserk. Then hands gripped me and pulled me away. Dimly I heard the cold voice, the floating voice of Kang Pu. He gave some order. I was dragged away. My friends, your eyes can see the result of the tortures they inflicted on me.

“The rest is soon told. I was a broken thing, near to death. The scars on my forehead were done by red-hot bars above a slowly-filling trough of water in which I was laid. To escape being drowned I had to raise my head and press it against the bars. I collapsed then, but they nursed me back to life to prolong the vengeance of Kang Pu, whom I had defied. I was in a cell then with windows. Every day a monk came to feed me and dress my wounds.

“Of my friends I could learn nothing. I simulated greater weakness than I felt. The attendant monk became somewhat careless, and one day I hurled myself on him, almost choking the life out of him. I donned his robes and hood, drawing them well about me. Boldly I traversed the corridors, my head bent. None spoke to me and I spoke to none. I came to a courtyard. The great gardens of the monastery

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opened off it, and I walked in them for a while, looking ever for a way of escape. I came at length to a gate in the wall. To my joy I saw it was ajar. I slipped through and found myself outside the walls of that cursed monastery.

"My friends, I could fill a volume with an account of my hidings and wanderings before eventually I joined an eastward caravan as a holy lama. I was tattered, weak, and ill; but the man in charge, a villainous Chinese, thought I was doing a penance to some distant tomb, and accepted me as such. I did not speak, pretending I was under a vow of silence. The caravan took me as far as Batang. From there I reached Hong-Kong, and last night I landed in England. But more than once, on my journeyings, have I escaped death by a hair. The hand of Kang Pu has reached out for me, and even here—here, behind locked doors, I am not safe!"

For the first time in his recital a note of fear crept into his voice. He looked around, and Jack, watching him, was in some way reminded of a hunted animal. Then, without warning, Dr. Lamonte slumped forward in his chair and became still.

"He's fainted!" said Ferrers Locke sharply, and, lifting Dr. Lamonte from his chair, he laid him on a settee by the wall.

Jack dashed off, and, without alarming Mrs. Humphries, returned with a glass of water. Under Ferrers Locke's expert ministrations Dr. Lamonte showed signs of returning consciousness, and at length, still very white, he sat up.

"Forgive me, my friends," he said huskily. "It was the reaction! I—I feel better now!"

He turned to the detective, and continued:

"You have heard my story. Sir Hylton Davies must be told. He is the one man in England to-day who will best be able to appreciate the full extent of the sinister forces at work. This Kang Pu is dangerous. In that monastery of Salai will be fired the spark which will set the world ablaze with war. The yellow races versus the white—think of it!"

"You do not think," Ferrers Locke's voice was quiet—"that Kang Pu is merely a villainous liar seeking cheap glory amongst his compatriots?"

"No!" shouted Lamonte. "A thousand times, No! Those eyes, those terrible, burning eyes, I can see them yet! That voice, cold enough to freeze the souls of men! Priest, liar, hypocrite, murderer, he is all that and more. But he is a dynamic force, and unless he is stopped he will set the eastern and western hemispheres at each other's throats!"

"I will see Sir Hylton Davies," replied the detective gravely.

"See him!" Lamonte's voice was almost hysterical. "See him! Bring him here to me! I will tell him, I will convince him! He will listen to me! A world at war—men, women, and children butchered by fanatical Eastern hordes—and behind it all those devilish, burning, watching eyes of Kang Pu—"

Lamonte's voice trailed away, and he sat, convulsive shudders racking his frame. No matter what Ferrers Locke and Jack thought, it was obvious that this man had no doubts as to the menace he foretold.

"There is a chance," he went on more quietly, "that I have shaken off those agents of Kang Pu who attempted my life more than once on my journey from Tibet. For that reason I shall not venture from this house. I am not afraid to die; but I am deadly afraid to die before I know that Britain is fully aware of the activities of that sinister priest! I won through from Tibet, kept going by the knowledge that Britain and the English-speaking peoples must be warned—must be made to realise the truth!"

"I will bring Sir Hylton Davies here," replied Ferrers Locke. "You, he, and I will evolve some plan to discover just what is taking place in the monastery of Salai, and we will also endeavour to ascertain the fate of Major Beverley and the rest of the party. Kang Pu will be severely punished for these outrages on British travellers!"

"Beverley is dead! I am convinced of that!"

"Then Kang Pu will die!" replied Ferrers Locke grimly.

(Ferrers Locke means every word he says, but he is destined to undergo many perilous adventures ere he brings the sinister Kang Pu to heel! Make sure you read next week's thrilling instalment of this great serial, chums!)

THE BOUNDER'S WIN

(Continued from page 22.)

"You had the nerve to tell the Head a yarn like that?" roared Bolsover major in amazement.

"Oh, I've got lots of nerve."

"But the Head didn't swallow it, surely?" exclaimed Skinner.

"Swallowed it whole."

"Gammon!" said Hazeldene.

Vernon-Smith laughed.

"Well, I look as if he swallowed it, don't I?" he asked. "The birch was all ready on the Beak's table. But I didn't sample it."

"Well, my hat!" said Hazel. "It beats me! The Head must be getting into his second childhood. I'll bet you Quelchy didn't swallow a tale like that."

"Well, no; not quite."

"Ha, ha, ha! Not Quelchy!"

"But I convinced him at last," said the Bounder calmly. "He didn't like it, but he took it down."

"You mean it, Smithy?" asked Wharton.

"Quite."

"But—but——" exclaimed Bob Cherry, "if you spun the Head a yarn like that, Smithy, he's bound to report it to the police."

"He's going to," assented the Bounder.

"Then the bobbies will want to see you about it."

"Quite."

"And what on earth are you going to tell them?"

"Oh, the same yarn," said the Bounder carelessly. "Why not? Bunter isn't the only fellow in the Remove who can tell the tale."

"Oh, really, Smithy——"

"Well, I don't think you'll get away with it," said Nugent.

"We shall see," said the Bounder.

The door of the Rag opened from without, and a deep, rich, fruity voice was heard; the voice of Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth.

"Probably you remember this room, Captain Spencer? I believe it was called by the same name in your time at Greyfriars."

"The Rag—yes," answered the pleasant voice.

"That's the Head's giddy guest," murmured Bob Cherry. "Prouty's showing him round the school. Seen him, Smithy?"

"Not yet," said the Bounder. "I remember hearing the Head speak to Prouty about him when I went to his study this morning."

"We came on the same train with him from Lantham," said Bob. "We didn't know then that he was the Head's giddy guest, though. He's got a limp left

over from the War. Decent sort of chap. Bit of a conjurer, too, I think."

"Eh, what?"

Bob grinned.

"Well, he got in at Lantham without any baggage, but at Courtfield he produced a big suitcase, like a conjurer producing a rabbit from a hat," he said. "I don't know how he did it."

"Might have come by an earlier train if he broke his journey at Lantham. He wouldn't trouble to take his baggage out."

"Oh, yes; very likely," assented Bob, who had not thought of that simple explanation—indeed, had hardly thought of the matter at all. "Only he spoke to Prouty as if his suitcase was on the same train. I wonder if he saw anything of the hold-up at Lantham?"

"Will you step in, Captain Spencer?" Mr. Prout's fruity voice was heard again. "The juniors use this room, as in your time at Greyfriars. Doubtless you remember it well."

"Oh, quite!" said Captain Spencer.

He stepped into the Rag with the Fifth Form master.

The juniors stood respectfully to attention. Captain Spencer bestowed a smile and a nod upon the assembly generally.

Vernon-Smith felt his heart give a wild throb as he looked at the handsome, clear-cut face.

For a full minute the Bounder stood stock still, wondering whether he was dreaming.

He almost rubbed his eyes.

Vernon-Smith had glanced carelessly at the young man in the first place, expecting to see a complete stranger in the Head's guest. But his glance became fixed, frozen.

He had told the Head that he would recognise again, anywhere, the man he had seen change his clothes under the old oak in Lantham Chase—the man who

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had hidden the disguise and the stolen notes in the hollow tree.

Now he recognised him. In blank, dumb amazement, the Bounder stared at Captain Spencer.

He had changed his clothes since coming to Greyfriars; he was no longer in tweeds. But the Bounder knew the slim, graceful, yet athletic figure, the clear-cut, handsome, rather hard face. There was no mistake—there was no possibility of a mistake. The Head's guest, the old Greyfriars man, was the bank robber of Lantham, the man who had held up the bank that afternoon, the man who had fled from a shouting crowd, the man who had crept into the depths of the wood to conceal his disguise and his plunder.

It was so amazing, so utterly unnerving a discovery, that the Bounder, usually so cool and self-possessed, was utterly dumbfounded. He could only stand rooted to the floor, gazing at the man who had held up the bank and fired on the cashier, and who was now the

guest of the headmaster of Greyfriars School. The Bounder's brain fairly swam.

Captain Spencer did not observe the Bounder's fixed stare; he did not notice him at all among so many juniors. He strolled round the Rag with Mr. Prout and exchanged a few words with Wharton, and with Temple of the Fourth, evidently interested in the old place, as any old boy of Greyfriars might naturally be expected to be. Unaware of the amazed stare, unaware of the amazed thoughts thronging in Vernon-Smith's dizzy brain, the Head's guest walked to the door again with Mr. Prout and proceeded on his way.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Gone to sleep, Smithy?" exclaimed Bob Cherry, clapping the Bounder on the shoulder.

Vernon-Smith came out of his maze of astounded thoughts with a start.

"Oh! That—that was Captain Spencer?" he gasped.

"Yes."

"The Head's guest!"

"Yes," repeated Bob. "What's up, Smithy? You look as if you'd seen a ghost!"

The Bounder did not answer, or heed Bob's curious look. He went out of the Rag, his brain still in a whirl. Captain Spencer was in the corridor with Mr. Prout, and the Bounder gave him another long, searching look as he passed him on his way to the stairs. There was no mistake—he knew that there was no mistake; yet he knew that if he stated what he knew to be true no one at Greyfriars—the Head least of all—would believe a word of it. Herbert Vernon-Smith went to his study, dazed by his amazing discovery, and for once at an utter loss to know what to do.

THE END.

(You must not miss the sequel to this rattling fine yarn, chums! Note the title: "ONE AGAINST THE SCHOOL!" You can only make sure of reading it by ordering your copy of the MAGNET well in advance!)

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