

FREE CHEWING GUM FOR "MAGNET" READERS!

(See Page 17 of this issue.)

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The Magnet

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EVERY MONDAY.



A BOOT FOR BILLY BUNTER!

(A diverting incident in this week's grand school story of Harry Whurton & Co.—the Chums of Greyfriars.)

NERVE! Most fellows would fight shy of pulling the leg of such an august personage as a Form master merely in order to swank in front of their schoolfellows. But the Bounder of Greyfriars would pull the leg of the headmaster of Greyfriars himself if it suited him, for he has unlimited nerve!

Smithy's Way!



A New Long Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co., with the Bounder of Greyfriars filling the principal role.

By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Trouble Ahead!

"SMITHY says—"
"Dry up, Bunter."
"But Smithy says—"

Harry Wharton laid down his pen and picked up the inkpot. And Billy Bunter, after one startled blink, departed from the doorway of Study No. 1 in the Remove, with his news untold.

Wharton rose from the table, to kick the door shut after the fat junior. Then he resumed his seat, with a dark frown on his brow. Frank Nugent glanced at him across the study table and opened his lips to speak, but closed them again.

Nugent had finished his prep, and he was waiting in the study for his chum to finish. Most of the Remove fellows had gone down to the Rag. Harry Wharton was working, but his thoughts were not in his work. Never had the classical tongue of Horace and Cicero appealed to him less. With an angry gesture, at last, he threw down his pen and pushed his books aside.

"Bother it! That will have to do," he grunted.

There was a tap at the door of the study, and it half-opened. Skinner of the Remove looked in, with a smile.

"Smithy—" he began.

"Shut up!"

"Wha-a-t?"

"Shut up and get out!"

Skinner stared at the captain of the

Remove. Skinner was never welcome in Study No. 1, but it was unusual for the most unwelcome caller there to get a reception like this. Obviously Harry Wharton's temper was very considerably on edge.

"Keep your wool on, old bean," said Skinner amicably. "I was only goin' to mention that Smithy—"

"I don't want to hear anything about Smithy. Shut the door after you," snapped Wharton.

Skinner shut the door after him with a slam.

"I'm getting fed with this," growled Wharton. "I've a jolly good mind to go down to the Rag now and put Smithy through it."

"Gently does it, old chap," muttered Nugent.

Wharton compressed his lips.

"The cheeky cad's in the Rag now, swanking," he grunted. "He's told the whole Form that he's going to cut games practice to-morrow—on a compulsory day. He's told me so, too. Last Saturday Wingate of the Sixth jawed me before a whole mob of fellows because Smithy didn't turn up. The Bounder's out to make all the trouble he can for me. I'd go down now and mop up the Rag with him, only—only—"

"Only that's just what Vernon-Smith wants," said Frank quietly. "He would like to turn it into a personal quarrel."

"I know."

"You can't do anything till to-morrow," said Nugent. "Your duty as

a Form captain doesn't begin till three o'clock on Little Side. If Smithy's not there then, you can deal with him—in fact, you'll have to."

"And until then I've got to let him swank."

"Well, his swank will look pretty cheap when he turns up for games practice, after all," said Nugent. "He's bound to do that, with all his gas. Let him throw his weight about in the Rag, if he likes, if it amuses him."

Wharton grunted. His expression indicated that he was very reluctant to let Herbert Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, throw his weight about, as Nugent expressed it.

"What about a game of chess?" asked Frank, as the captain of the Remove rose from the table.

"Let's go down to the Rag."

"I'd like chess, if—"

"Oh, bosh!" said Wharton. "You mean you want to keep me away from a row with the Bounder. A pretty ass I should look, staying in my study because he's swanking in the Rag. I'm going down."

"I'll come, then," said Frank. "But, for goodness' sake, keep your temper. You're an ass if you let the Bounder draw you."

Wharton nodded curtly, and the chums of the Remove left the study. On the Remove landing they passed Bolsover major and Tom Brown and Hazeldene.

"I say, Wharton——" called out Bolsover.

Wharton stopped.

"Well?"

"Smithy's saying——"

"Hang Smithy!"

Wharton went on down the staircase without waiting for any more. Bolsover major stared after him, and Hazel chuckled.

"Wharton's got his rag out," he remarked.

"Smithy's silly gas is enough to get any fellow's rag out," said Tom Brown. "I wouldn't stand it if I were captain of the Form."

"Let's go down," said Bolsover major. "Looks like a row. I'd like to see some of Wharton's conceit knocked out of him."

"Hear, hear!" grinned Hazel.

"Rot!" said Tom Brown; but he followed the other two juniors down the stairs in the wake of Wharton and Nugent. If there was going to be trouble between the captain of the Form and so hefty a fighting-man as Herbert Vernon-Smith it was likely to be worth watching.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry was in the doorway of the Rag, with Johnny Bull and Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "Here you are, you fellows! I say, Smithy's going strong."

"Give us a rest about Smithy!" snapped Wharton.

"Eh, what?" ejaculated Bob. "Don't snap a fellow's head off."

"I'm fed-up!"

Bob looked at him.

"I dare say you're fed-up, old bean," he said quietly. "But you might express your feelings a bit more civilly, all the same."

"Just what I was going to say," remarked Johnny Bull, with a nod.

Wharton's eyes glinted.

"My esteemed chums," murmured Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "The fed-upfulness of the excellent and ridiculous Wharton is probably terrific, and in the execrable circumstances the snapfulness of a pal's devoted head is excusable and laudable."

Bob Cherry chuckled, and Wharton's clouded face broke into a grin. The remarkable English which Hurree Janset Ram Singh had learned from the wisest moonshee in Bhanipur had the effect of oil poured upon the troubled waters.

"Sorry, Bob," said Wharton. "But Smithy's getting on my nerves a bit."

"All serene, old scout. What about sticking his head into the coal-locker?" asked Bob.

Harry Wharton laughed, and the Famous Five went into the Rag together. There was a squeak from Billy Bunter.

"I say, you fellows, here's Wharton! Look out, Smithy!"

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

"Stick It, Smithy!"

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH was lounging against the mantel-piece in the Rag, with his hands in his trousers-pockets and a smile on his face. There were half a dozen fellows round him—Skinner and Snoop and Stott, and Fish and two more of the slackers of the Remove. The attitude taken up of late by the Bouncer was immensely popular with the black sheep of the Form. Games were not in their line; and as they never played games if they could help it, they objected strongly to games practice. Smoking surreptitious cigarettes behind the wood-shed appealed

more to Skinner and his friends than fagging at the nets. It was not quite so good for them, perhaps, but they did not worry about that.

Smithy, himself, certainly, was anything but a slacker. But now that he was barred from Remove cricket, with many grievances, real or fancied, to avenge, he was "up against" the captain of the Form in every way. And Skinner & Co. spurred him on as hard as they could. Not that they expected that he would "get away with it," so to speak. Smithy might talk as he liked in the Rag, but when the time came he had to toe the line like any other fellow. But the Bouncer was a fellow of endless resource, and if he did succeed in "getting away with it," Skinner & Co. were prepared to applaud rapturously. And in the meantime it was "pie" to Skinner & Co. to note how the Bouncer's defiance irritated the captain of the Remove.

The Bouncer glanced at the Famous Five for a moment, as they came in together. Then he gave them no further heed. But his voice, as he went on speaking to Skinner, was quite audible to Harry Wharton & Co.

"Comin' on Wednesday, Skinner?"

"Hem!" murmured Skinner. "You goin' out of gates, Smithy?"

"I think so. It's a half-holiday, you know. But I don't want to go alone," drawled the Bouncer. "You comin'?"

"What about games practice, though?" asked Snoop, with one eye on the captain of the Remove. "It's a compulsory day, Smithy."

Vernon-Smith snapped his fingers. "That for games practice," he answered.

"You're really cutting it?" asked Stott.

"I've said so."

"I seem to remember lots of fellows sayin' somethin' of the sort," said Skinner reminiscently. "But they generally turned up."

Some of the juniors laughed.

"I sha'n't turn up," said Vernon-Smith.

"Careful, old bean! Our respected Form captain can hear you," said Skinner.

"I want him to hear."

"Oh, cheese it, Smithy!" said Squiff. "What a fellow you are for hunting trouble!"

The Bouncer raised his eyebrows.

"I'm not hunting trouble," he said mildly. "I'm simply statin' a fact. I'm cuttin' games practice Wednesday, because I don't choose to turn up."

All eyes were on Harry Wharton.

The Remove knew—they had nearly all been present—how Wingate of the Sixth had "slanged" Wharton a few days before, for letting off the slackers of the Form. The Head of the Games had talked in very plain English, and it had been extremely uncomfortable for the Form captain. It was quite certain that Wharton would not face another slanging like that; on the next occasion he was sure to do his duty very carefully. And his duty was to see that Herbert Vernon-Smith did not do what he was now boasting that he would do.

Wharton's position was far from pleasant. But he was determined not to be drawn into an altercation if he could help it. He sat down at a chess-table with Frank Nugent, his friends standing round to look on at the game, and turned a deaf ear to the Bouncer. But the Remove fellows could see the red deepening in his cheeks.

"I don't choose to turn up," repeated the Bouncer deliberately.

Still the captain of the Remove did not turn his head.

"You'll be reported to the Head of the Games!" said Peter Todd. "That means six."

"Who cares for Wingate?"

"Well, I do, for one!" grinned Toddy. "I hate the ashplant at close quarters. Six from Wingate is six too many for me. And you'll feel the same, when the time comes, Smithy, for all your tall talk!"

Vernon-Smith shrugged his shoulders. "I'm open to bet ten to one in dough-nuts that I don't turn up for games practice to-morrow," he said.

"Done!" said Toddy at once.

"Good! Don't forget you owe me a dough-nut."

"Don't forget you owe me ten."

"I say, you fellows, if Smithy doesn't turn up, I sha'n't turn up," said Billy Bunter. "I jolly well wish Smithy was Form captain. Wharton's a back number, really."

"One of the has-beens," remarked Snoop.

"Well, I've said it, and I mean it," said Vernon-Smith. "And if there's any fellow here who thinks he can stop me doin' exactly as I choose, let him get up on his hind legs and say so!"

Again the general eye of the Remove was fixed on Harry Wharton. But he did not look round. He seemed immersed in chess.

"It's up to you now, Wharton," said Skinner, determined to bring matters to a head if he could.

Wharton seemed deaf.

"Are you taking all that lying down, Wharton?" bawled Bolsover major.

No answer.

"Well, if I were captain of the Form a fellow wouldn't talk like that to me," snorted Bolsover.

Wharton moved his queen, and his chums smiled to one another. They had not expected Harry to keep his temper so equably, but they were very glad to see it.

"Your move, Frank," said Wharton cheerfully.

The Bouncer gave a loud, contemptuous laugh, and threw himself into a chair, and took up a book. Evidently the captain of the Remove was not to be drawn; and Smithy gave it up at last.

A few minutes before dawn the chess finished, and Wharton rose to his feet. Then he walked across to the Bouncer; and every occupation in the Rag was suspended at once. It was coming now!

"Vernon-Smith!"

Wharton's tone was quite calm.

The Bouncer looked up with an insolent smile.

"Hallo!"

"You've been gassing about cutting cricket to-morrow."

"Not at all. Statin' a fact."

"You'll turn up at Little Side at three."

"Rats!"

Wharton glanced round.

"Any fellow not turning up on time will have his name taken down, to be reported to the Head of the Games," he said. "Nobody's let off."

"Free list entirely suspended!" remarked Peter Todd; and there was a chuckle.

Wharton fixed his eyes on the Bouncer again.

"As for you, Vernon-Smith——"

"Well, as for me?" mocked the Bouncer.

"I shall see that you turn up. If you try to get out of gates, you'll be

stopped. If you don't walk down to Little Side, you'll be carried. If you give any trouble, you'll be thrashed. That's all."

And with that, and without waiting for a reply, the captain of the Remove turned his back on Herbert Vernon-Smith, and walked out of the Rag. His friends followed him; and the other fellows were left in an excited buzz. The Bounder, for a moment, breathed hard. But he smiled.

"It's up to me now," he said coolly.

"Stick to it, Smithy," said Skinner.

"I mean to."

"Wharton means business," said Squiff.

"So do I!"

"Then you're an ass. If the captain of the Form gives the order, I'll lend a hand fast enough to yank you along to Little Side," said the Australian junior.

"Same here," said Tom Brown, with equal emphasis.

"Thanks all round," said the Bounder imperturbably. "All the same, I'm cutting games practice tomorrow, and if you see me on Little Side you can use my head for a football!"

Wingate of the Sixth looked in at the doorway, and there was a general movement of the Lower Fourth. In the Remove dormitory there was a buzz of discussion. It looked like war to the knife, now, between the Form captain and the rebel of the Remove.

The fellows knew that Wharton did not mean to yield an inch, now that the matter had come to the test; and the Bounder's obstinacy was well known. Indeed, after all his "tall talk," the Bounder could not surrender without covering himself with ridicule. And in the Remove there was breathless anticipation of what was to happen on the morrow.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Too Good to be True!

MR. QUELCH glanced at Vernon-Smith rather expressively when the Remove came into their Form-room the following morning. It was not only among the Remove fellows that the Bounder had been hunting for trouble of late. All through the term he had given his Form master all the trouble he could; and in the rather curious contest between master and pupil Mr. Quelch had not always come off best. But Henry Samuel Quelch was not a gentleman to be trifled with, and he had made up his mind to deal shortly and sharply with the Bounder.

Smithy was one of the cleverest fellows in the Form, and could have been a credit to it had he chosen. If he did not choose, Mr. Quelch could not help it; but at least he could make an example of a fellow who set up as a rebel against authority, and a centre of insubordination in the Form. And that morning, Mr. Quelch's expressive look at the Bounder showed that he meant business. If Smithy had neglected his prep, if he failed to render a passable construe, if he passed some jest along the Form that caused subdued laughter, Mr. Quelch was ready for him. He was so ready, in fact, that he was rather liable to "jump" on Smithy, even if the rebel of the Remove gave no offence. Smithy had irritated his Form master to such an extent that he was, as Skinner expressed it, ready to bite at sight.

Many of the fellows, noticing Mr. The Magnet Library.—No. 1,013.

Quelch's expressive looks, expected to see Vernon-Smith in trouble in class that morning, as he very frequently was.

To their surprise, and certainly to Mr. Quelch's surprise, the Bounder seemed totally to have forgotten that he was a rebel, with a reputation for ragging in Form.

"Vernon-Smith!"

The juniors had barely taken their seats when the Form master started.

"Yes, sir?" said Smithy respectfully, and not at all in the tone of veiled impertinence that the fellows anticipated.

"Take that flower out of your jacket."

"Oh, certainly, sir!"

"You are very well aware, Vernon-Smith, that you should not come into the Form-room with a flower in your coat."

"I'm sorry, sir; I'd forgotten!"

"You should not have forgotten!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "Throw it into the waste-paper basket."

He returned to his place with meek gravity. He did not wink at anybody, or make any comic grimace to send some thoughtless fellow into an involuntary fit of laughter. He acted like a model pupil, in whose mouth butter would hardly melt.

Mr. Quelch eyed him suspiciously.

If this serious respect was genuine, so much to the good. But Mr. Quelch did not trust Smithy. When Smithy was grave and respectful, it was only too probable that he was scheming some "rag." Mr. Quelch, in dealing with the respectful Bounder, felt somewhat like the ancient Trojan gentleman who feared the Greeks when they brought gifts.

Vernon-Smith was called upon to construe, and there was quite a glint in Mr. Quelch's eyes as he listened. But the glint faded away, and the Remove master looked pleased. He really could not help it. Smithy's "con" that morning was absolutely faultless, and proved that he must have been very painstaking indeed in preparing the lesson. There were some pupils in Mr. Quelch's Form who always pleased him; but they were few. Youthful heads, as a rule, did not take kindly to Latin, and that admirable language had to be driven into them, almost like nails into wood. Certainly, the Bounder could always have handed out a good con if he had liked; but he seldom liked. Now it pleased him to draw a commendation from his Form-master.

"Very good, Vernon-Smith, very good indeed!" said Mr. Quelch, all the clouds gone from his brow.

"Thank you, sir!" said the Bounder.

It was quite painful for Mr. Quelch to pass from Smithy to Billy Bunter—from a faultless con to an example of laziness, slovenliness, and obtuseness. Even Wharton, that morning, showed up rather badly in comparison with Smithy.

Skinner & Co. did not know what to make of it. Apparently the rebel of the Remove was "out" to win his Form-master's good opinion—upon which he had never seemed to set the slightest value before. Skinner concluded that the Bounder had realised that he was getting near the limit, and had judiciously decided to draw in his horns a little. He tried to catch Smithy's eye more than once, but failed all the time. Smithy was not to be drawn into any of his usual little games in class.

In second lesson, the Bounder continued to be a model of propriety and respectful attention. Mr. Quelch had quite forgotten that he had been angry with the Bounder, by the time the class was dismissed for morning break. Skinner & Co. gathered round Vernon-

Smith, as the juniors went down the Form-room passage.

"What's the game, Smithy?" inquired Skinner.

"Game?" repeated Vernon-Smith vaguely.

"Yes. What are you pulling Quelch's leg for?"

The Bounder smiled.

With the tail of his eye, as it were, he observed Mr. Quelch leaving the Form-room. In a moment more the Remove master would be within hearing of the group of juniors. The Bounder went on to speak, his back partly turned towards Mr. Quelch, and giving no sign that he observed the Form-master coming along.

"The fact is, Skinner, I've rather been playing the fool this term, and I've been thinking over it a bit. Ragging is all very well, but a fellow doesn't want to waste all his time, if you come to that. The pater's written to say that he hopes I shall get a good report this term. Well, the way I've been goin' on, it doesn't look like it. After all, a fellow's pater is his pater, and I don't see why I shouldn't try to please my father. He's jolly decent to me."

Skinner's eyes opened so wide that he really looked as if he would never get them shut again. Stott and Snoop stared blankly. These excellent sentiments were about the last they had ever expected to hear from Herbert Vernon-Smith.

Mr. Quelch rustled by.

He did not glance at the group of juniors, or speak to them; he was gone in a few moments. But Skinner & Co., as they saw him, understood all of a sudden.

"My only hat!" breathed Skinner. "You're about as deep as they make them, Smithy!"

"Eh?"

"You knew Quelch would hear you—you knew he was buzzing along."

The Bounder winked.

Then he strolled on to the quad, leaving Skinner & Co. almost in convulsions.

In third lesson that morning, Mr. Quelch might have been seen, as a novelist would say, to bestow a benignant glance upon Herbert Vernon-Smith. Skinner winked at Snoop. It was obvious that Mr. Quelch had overheard those excellent sentiments uttered in the corridor, without guessing that they had been intended for his ears.

If a fellow who had been careless and slack chose to pull up, and work hard for a good report, Mr. Quelch was just the man to meet him half-way, and help him on all he could. Evidently, that was Mr. Quelch's opinion of the Bounder now, and he meant to give his most troublesome pupil every chance to make good.

After third lesson, Vernon-Smith lingered when the rest of the Remove went out. He stopped at the Form master's desk, and waited till Mr. Quelch looked up from the papers he was scanning.

"Well, Vernon-Smith," said the Remove master kindly, "do you wish to speak to me?"

"Yes, sir, if you'll allow me," said the Bounder diffidently.

"Certainly, my boy."

"I—I should like to say, sir, that I'm sorry for having wasted a lot of time this term. I'm not excusing myself, sir, but I should like to say that I've been thinking it over, and I mean to do better," said Vernon-Smith hesitatingly.

"I am very glad to hear you say so, Vernon-Smith," said Mr. Quelch, quite heartily. "It is in your power, my boy, to be a credit to your Form. You have not done yourself justice."



Harry Wharton walked across to the Bounder, and every occupation in the Rag was suspended at once. "Vernon-Smith!" Wharton's tone was quite calm. "You've been gassing about cutting the cricket to-morrow!" "Not at all," said the Bounder, with an insolent smile. "Statin' a fact!" "You'll turn up on Little Side at three!" went on Wharton. "Rats!" retorted the Bounder. (See Chapter 2.)

"You're very kind to say so, sir. If you would let me ask your advice——"

"Undoubtedly."

"I'd like to enter for the Head's Latin prize, sir. It's open to Remove fellows. If you approve——"

Mr. Quelch could not help being surprised. But certainly he was as pleased as he was surprised.

"I approve with all my heart, Vernon-Smith. But I must warn you that you have selected a very difficult examination. It is open to the Upper Fourth and the Shell, and you will have to compete with boys older than yourself, and higher in the school. It will mean hard work for you."

"I'm not really slack, sir, though I'm afraid I've given you reason to think so," said Vernon-Smith, with humility. "I was thinking of the Craven, but that's a money prize, and I don't care to enter for it. Mark Linley's going in for that, and I shouldn't like to stand in his light. He needs the money, and I don't. The Head's Latin prize is only a medal."

"Very proper indeed, Vernon-Smith," said Mr. Quelch. "Linley has an excellent chance for the Craven; but if you tried hard, I have no doubt that you would run him very close. You are aware that it is a more difficult examination for the Head's medal?"

"Yes, sir. But I don't mind that if

you think I'd have a chance, and shouldn't merely be making myself look foolish by entering."

"My dear Vernon-Smith, you have quite a good chance, if you try. And I should be delighted to see the Head's medal awarded to a member of my Form," said Mr. Quelch, full of approval. "I shall be very pleased, if you are in earnest, to give you any help in my power. You must be prepared for hard work for some weeks!"

"I'm prepared for that, sir!"

"Very good! You will require to study certain books that are not used in the Remove. These books I can lend you, and I shall be glad to indicate certain lines of study. If you are prepared to take extra tuition when I can spare the time, I am at your service."

Mr. Quelch gave the Bounder a very keen look as he said that. He was pleased with Vernon-Smith, and his suspicions were disarmed. But some slight distrust perhaps lingered. If, however, the Bounder was, in fact, pulling his leg, the offer of "extra toot" was an acid test. If the Bounder accepted that offer, and gave up leisure time to extra work, it had to be taken as a proof that he was in earnest. "Extra toot" was a thing from which Greyfriars fellows, as a rule, fled as from the plague.

But the Bounder, so far from drawing back, looked relieved.

"That's very kind of you, sir!" he said at once. "I shouldn't have dared to ask you, because I know jolly well that I've given you a lot of trouble this term. I suppose you couldn't spare me some time this afternoon, sir?"

Mr. Quelch considered a few moments. The Bounder watched him anxiously. But the Form master nodded.

"Certainly, Vernon-Smith. Since you are making an effort to repair former faults, it is my duty to aid you in every way, and I shall be very pleased to do so. It was my intention to mark the Form prose papers this afternoon; but——" Mr. Quelch considered again. "You are prepared to give up your half-holiday?"

"Certainly, sir! That's nothing."

"The right spirit," said Mr. Quelch approvingly. "Very well. Come to my study at half-past two, and I will give you as long as I can—and at least an hour."

The Bounder's eyes danced. His satisfaction was so obvious that Mr. Quelch could not fail to see it; obviously, there was no acting there. The Form-master smiled very genially. Apparently, this troublesome junior had turned over a complete new leaf, and

was becoming a pupil after Mr. Quelch's own heart.

"Oh, sir, I don't know how to thank you!" exclaimed Vernon-Smith.

"Not at all, my boy, not at all," said Mr. Quelch kindly.

And the Bounder left the Form-room. And not till he was out of sight of Henry Samuel Quelch did he wink.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Bounder Keeps His Word!

BILLY BUNTER blinked along the Remove table at dinner to assure himself, by the evidence of his eyes and his big spectacles, that the Bounder was there. He was there with the rest of the Form, his manner calm and casual. He seemed unconscious of the throbbing excitement in the Remove, of which he was the cause.

Whether the Bounder would be as good as his word, whether he would cut games practice, whether Wharton would let him, what would happen, anyhow—these were burning questions in the Lower Fourth. The trouble between the Bounder and his Form captain was coming to a head now, and the clash of two proud and determined natures could not fail to interest the fellows deeply and keenly. Most of the juniors believed that Smithy would, at least, make an attempt to make good his boast. And if he did, he was quite certain to find himself in immediate conflict with Wharton.

Some fellows had opined that he would cut "tiffin" in order to get clear early; hence Bunter's anxious blink along the dining-table. Cutting tiffin was a serious matter for anybody at Greyfriars below the Sixth; but the Bounder was capable of that or of any other recklessness. But he was there—cool and casual, and eating his dinner with his customary good appetite.

Mr. Quelch, at the head of the table, was aware of some suppressed excitement among the juniors. But he did not know the cause. The matter that excited the Remove was quite out of the Form-master's province. He had nothing to do with the school games; though on great occasions he would sometimes walk down to the cricket field and look on. Games practice was compulsory twice a week at Greyfriars; but it was a matter dealt with by the Form captains and by the captain of the school.

After dinner, Herbert Vernon-Smith sauntered into the quad, the cynosure of all eyes in the Remove. Harry Wharton & Co., however, took no heed of him. Wharton had delivered his ultimatum to the Bounder the previous evening in the Rag, and he had meant every word he said. But there the matter dropped. Certainly he would have disdained to keep the Bounder under observation.

But if Smithy had made any attempt to "cut" by way of the school gates, a dozen fellows at least would have known it at once. It was not in his power to escape surreptitiously now that the matter had excited the interest of all the Remove.

Smithy, however, showed no desire to cut.

Apparently he was not going out of gates; apparently, he was going to loaf about the school till the hour struck for assembly on Little Side. And then, if he did not go down with the rest, the band would begin to play, as Skinner expressed it. Certainly, if the captain of the Remove gave instructions for the rebel to be marched down to Little Side

by force, there were plenty of fellows ready to carry out his instructions. Smithy could hardly expect to hold his own in such an event. What he did expect was rather a puzzle; but nobody believed that he intended to yield at the last moment.

At a quarter-past two the Bounder was seen—by a dozen pairs of eyes, at least—to walk back into the House.

"I say, you fellows, he's going to change for cricket, after all!" squeaked Billy Bunter.

"More likely going to dodge out of a back door," said Skinner, with a grin. "He did that last week when Wingate wanted him."

There was a rush of five or six fellows round the school buildings, to watch and ascertain whether the Bounder emerged by any egress that was not supposed to be used by Greyfriars fellows.

But he did not emerge.

Obviously, he was still in the House.

"Can't be goin' to lock himself in his study," said Snoop. "Wharton's the man to bash in the door if he did. Besides, they'd only have to call Wingate, and Smithy would have to let Wingate in."

"Blessed if I know his game at all!" confessed Skinner. "He's up to something, I know that!"

"Not hiding away in a box-room?" asked Bolsover major.

"He wouldn't do that."

"They'd root him out if he did," said Bolsover. "I'd take a hand in it myself if you come to that. Why shouldn't Smithy toe the line like the rest of us?"

"It beats me," said Skinner. "Let's go and see if he's in his study."

Skinner and Snoop went into the House and up to Study No. 4 in the Remove. The Bounder was not there.

It was past half-past two now, and Herbert Vernon-Smith, as a matter of fact, was in his Form-master's study. But, naturally, it never occurred to any Remove man that he was there. Mr. Quelch's study was about the last place any Remove man would have thought of.

Towards three o'clock the juniors had to give up the puzzle and get ready for cricket. Harry Wharton & Co. went down to Little Side. And as three chimed out from the clock-tower, Wharton glanced over the fellows who had assembled for games practice. All the Remove, excepting two, were on the ground; the exceptions being Herbert Vernon-Smith and William George Bunter. But Bunter was in the offing, rolling down to Little Side in a great hurry, puffing and blowing with his exertions.

"I say, you fellows, here I am!" gasped Bunter. "You're jolly well not going to report me, Wharton!"

"Fathead!" was Wharton's reply.

"Oh, really, old chap—"

"Shut up! Get ready, you fellows," said Harry.

"What about Smithy?" asked Skinner maliciously.

Smithy was not there; and if the captain of the Form intended to affect not to notice his absence, Skinner intended to remind him. If he shrank from open conflict with the Bounder, he was going to own up to it, Skinner was resolved on that.

Wharton did not answer him, or seem to hear him. But Bolsover major repeated the question in his loud voice.

"What about Smithy, Wharton? He's not here."

"Give him a chance," said Wharton quietly. "I dare say he's coming along."

"He said—"

"Never mind what he said; I don't want it at second-hand!"

Bolsover major snorted angrily. His impression, like Skinner's, was that the captain of the Remove was weakening, and seeking to avoid trouble with the rebel of the Form.

"Well, if you're letting Smithy off, after all your gas—"

"Cheese it!"

"I guess I don't see sticking here, if Smithy doesn't come," said Fisher T. Fish. "What's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. I guess if Smithy gives it a miss, I give it another miss—just a few!"

"Same here!" said Snoop.

Wharton did not heed.

But when several minutes had elapsed, and the Bounder did not put in an appearance, it was clear to him that Vernon-Smith was not merely late. He was not coming.

"Bob!" called out Wharton.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"You and Squiff go back to the House and bring Vernon-Smith here."

"Right-ho!"

The two juniors departed. Games practice started, but in a very desultory way. All the fellows were thinking of the rebel. Unless Smithy had cleared off, or hidden himself very effectually, he had to come now. Either Bob or Squiff was quite capable of handling the Bounder on his own; and in the hands of the two of them, Smithy had no chance. And they went to the House quite determined to carry out their Form captain's order.

Ten minutes later they came back, without the Bounder. Wharton was busy at that moment, in a rather hopeless attempt to instruct William George Bunter how to bowl without braining fellows standing behind him. But after a minute or so he looked round.

"Can't find him," said Bob.

"Vanished!" said Squiff.

Wharton knitted his brows.

"Very well; you carry on here, Bob, while I go and look for him."

"Right-ho!"

"Like a man to come with you?" asked Johnny Bull.

"No; that's all right."

Wharton walked away to the House.

"Oh, my hat!" said Ogilvy. "It's rotten to stay here and miss the circus. I told you fellows that Wharton meant business."

Harry Wharton went into the House, with his lips set and his eyes glinting. The hour had come now, when he had to put the Bounder in his place, or allow the rebel of the Remove to "get away with it." He was in a grim mood as he went to the Bounder's study. That study was vacant; and there was no sign of Smithy in the Remove passage. It was almost impossible to suppose that the Bounder was hiding in a box-room like a scared fag; Wharton did not think so for a moment. The only conclusion to be drawn was that the Bounder had somehow got out of the school unseen, and was out of reach till lock-up.

Wharton left the House again, his face pale with anger.

The drastic treatment intended for the rebel could not be meted-out to him now. All that remained was to report his absence to the Head of the Games.

Wharton returned to the junior cricket ground, and all eyes turned upon him as he arrived there. He did not fail to see the grin that was reflected from face to face as the fellows noted that he came back alone. Skinner murmured to Snoop that it was first round

to the Bounder, and Sidney James Snoop chuckled. Wharton's chums glanced at him inquiringly; but he did not speak. A little later Wingate of the Sixth came along.

"All here to-day, what?" he asked a little grimly.

"No," said Harry.

"Who's missing?"

"Vernon-Smith."

Wingate knitted his brows.

"Vernon-Smith again! He had better be fetched here."

"I've looked for him."

"Do you mean that he's gone out of gates?"

"He must have, I suppose; he can't be found."

"Very well; I'll deal with Vernon-Smith!" said the captain of Greyfriars. And the matter dropped.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Getting Away With It!

MR. QUELCH'S usually severe countenance wore its most genial expression. The Remove master had seldom been so pleased.

Promptly at half-past two the Bounder of Greyfriars had arrived in his Form master's study. Mr. Quelch, perhaps, would not have been surprised if he had failed to come.

The change in the Bounder, from a long course of rebellious slacking, to a sudden devotion to study, was very gratifying; but it was certainly very unexpected and surprising, too. Mr. Quelch had been pleased, but some vague suspicion had lingered. But Vernon-Smith had arrived promptly, and he had arrived in his most studious mood. Obviously, he wanted to make the very most of his Form master's kind offer to help him prepare for a difficult examination.

Master and pupil settled down to work; and it was rather pleasure than work to Mr. Quelch. The Bounder was clever and quick, and when he was in the mood, he was a pupil that would have pleased the most exacting master. He was in the mood now. No fellow could have been more attentive, more painstaking, than Herbert Vernon-Smith that afternoon. Outside, the summer sun was shining, and a soft breeze from the sea stirred the foliage of the trees in the quad.

It was long since Mr. Quelch had been a schoolboy; but he had not forgotten how such a glorious summer's afternoon called to youth. The most studious "swot" in the school would have preferred to be out of doors that day. Yet the Bounder, under no compulsion whatever, was sitting in the dusky study, concentrating all his powers upon the classics, in preparation for a difficult examination which he had taken on of his own free will! No wonder the Remove master was in his most genial humour.

The time passed quickly enough to the pleased Form master; not so quickly, perhaps, to the Bounder. But he was concentrating on his work, and seemingly living and breathing Latin. Mr. Quelch had engaged to give him an hour, and more if possible. The Bounder was so evidently keen to keep on that the Remove master felt it incumbent upon him to encourage so promising a pupil, who was striving so meritoriously to make up for lost time and earlier faults. Three hours passed, and even then the Bounder

would have gone on; but Mr. Quelch rose from the table.

"You are tired, my boy," he said kindly.

"Oh, no, sir," said the Bounder.

"We must not overdo it, Vernon-Smith," said Mr. Quelch, with a smile.

"You have done remarkably well; and if you continue like this, my boy, I have very little doubt that the Head's Latin medal will be won by my Form."

"It's very kind of you to encourage me, sir," said the Bounder meekly.

"Not at all, Vernon-Smith; I mean all I say," said Mr. Quelch. "Now, I will select some books that you may take away with you."

And the Bounder went to the door with a couple of Latin volumes under his arm.

At the door he turned back, as if struck by a sudden thought.

"I—I'd forgotten, sir—"

"Yes, what is it, Vernon-Smith?" asked the Remove master, as the junior paused.

"I think it was games practice this afternoon, sir," said Vernon-Smith diffidently. "I suppose it will be all right if I mention to Wingate that I have been with you, sir."

"Quite," said Mr. Quelch.

"Of course, sir," said the Bounder, with an air of great frankness, "I don't want Wingate to be down on me for slacking at games practice. But as it's only three weeks to the Head's exam, I want to put in all the work I can. When you are able to give me any of your time, sir, I suppose Wingate wouldn't mind letting me off games."

"Undoubtedly," said Mr. Quelch. "Any boy preparing for an examination may be excused games practice, with his Form master's approval. That is a rule of the school, Vernon-Smith."

Vernon-Smith knew that quite as well as Mr. Quelch. It was, indeed, the foundation of all his recent proceedings.

"Then if you approve, sir—"

"Certainly I do," said the Remove master. "I should not like to see any boy in my Form becoming what the juniors, I believe, call a 'swot,' and neglecting healthy exercise. But you would not do that. On the occasions when I can find time to give you extra tuition, Vernon-Smith, you will be excused from games practice. In order to avoid any misunderstanding, I will give you a note to take to Wingate."

"Thank you, sir!" said the Bounder, hardly able to keep the note of triumph out of his voice.

Mr. Quelch wrote a brief note and handed it to his promising pupil, and the Bounder left the study.

In the passage he laughed silently.

But his face was serious when he presented himself at Wingate's study in the Sixth Form passage.

Wingate was there, with Gwynne of the Sixth; and the two seniors were at tea when the Bounder came in.

"Oh! You!" said Wingate, with a grim look at Vernon-Smith. "It seems that you've cut games practice again this afternoon, Vernon-Smith."

"I've a note from

Mr. Quelch," said the Bounder meekly.

"Oh!"

Wingate held out his hand for the note, read it, and then fixed a very penetrating look on the Bounder.

"So you're in for the Head's exam?"

"Yes, Wingate."

"That's rather stiff for a Remove kid," said Gwynne, looking curiously at the Removeite.

"My Form master thinks I have a chance," said the Bounder simply. "Remove are allowed to enter, though I think I'm the only chap in my Form who's gone in for it."

"Is your name down?" demanded Wingate.

"Yes; Mr. Quelch has spoken to the Head."

Wingate paused.

"Well, I suppose it's all right" he said at last. He was not wholly satisfied; but there was the note from Mr. Quelch, and everything was in order. "You should have told Wharton you were working with your Form master this afternoon, though."

"You see, I wasn't sure that Mr. Quelch would be able to spare the time," explained the Bounder. "He's a busy man; but naturally if he could give me an hour or two, I jumped at the chance, with the Head's exam before me. Did Wharton want to know?"

"He thought you were cutting games practice, as you did last week, without any excuse but slacking or impudence."

"I don't see why it should matter, as all he has to do is to report to you when a fellow is absent."

"Well, yes, it's all right," said Wingate. "You can cut."

And the Bounder cut.

He strolled away to the Rag with a smile on his face. There were a good many fellows in the Rag, and a shout went up as the Bounder was seen.

"Here's Smithy!"

"Where have you been, Smithy?"

"I say, Wharton's got his rag out."

"You're for six, old bean."

"Dear me!" said the Bounder.

"What about tea, Skinner? It's close on tea-time, and I'm rather peckish. Coming up to the study?"

"Here's Wharton!" murmured Bolsover major.

Harry Wharton looked into the Rag. "Vernon-Smith!"

"Hallo!"

"You cut games practice this afternoon."

"Guilty, my lord!" said the Bounder, and there was a laugh.

"You wouldn't have cut if I could have found you," said the captain of the Remove, with a darkening brow.

"Dear me! Did you look for me!" drawled the Bounder. "What a

(Continued on next page.)



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"SMITHY'S WAY!"*(Continued from previous page.)*

shockin' waste of an important person's valuable time!"

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

"You're to go to Wingate's study," said Wharton curtly.

"I'm going up to tea."

Wharton turned away without heeding that. All eyes were on the Bounder. He had "got away with it," so far; but, after all, he had to turn up in the Greyfriars captain's study and take his swishing. At least, so it seemed to the Remove fellows, who knew nothing of the peculiar game the Bounder had been playing that day.

"Coming up to tea, Skinner?" yawned the Bounder.

"You've got to go to Wingate, and you know it, you swanking ass!" said Peter Todd.

"I'm not keen on Sixth Form society. They rather bore me," said the Bounder. "Come on, Skinner."

"But—" said Skinner.

"Oh, come on; I want my tea!"

Skinner went up to the Remove with the Bounder. A dozen fellows followed them up. Herbert Vernon-Smith went into Study No. 4 with Skinner, evidently thinking of the tea and nothing else. Several fellows looked into the study.

"If you don't go to Wingate, he will come up after you, Smithy," warned Bolsover major.

"Think so?"

"Well, you know he will."

"If he does, I'll ask him to tea," said the Bounder airily.

Snoop and Stott came into the study, to join the Bounder at tea, and the door was closed. Most of the Remove fellows expected to hear the heavy tread of Wingate of the Sixth every passing moment. But the captain of the school did not come.

Skinner & Co. were completely puzzled. So far as they could see, the rebel of the Remove was able to carry on his defiance up to a certain point; but at that point he had to go before the head prefect and "bend over" like any other fellow who kicked over the traces. But the Bounder, evidently, was not alarmed; and for some inexplicable reason Wingate was not on his track.

"Mean to say you're getting off, Smithy?" asked Skinner at last.

"I think so."

"Wingate knows you cut games practice?"

"Oh, yes!"

"Then he's bound to lick you."

"Do you think I should be playing this game if it were going to end in bending over in Wingate's study?" jeered the Bounder. "The laugh wouldn't be on my side in that case."

"Well, if you get away with it, I'm blessed if I understand," said Sidney James Snoop.

"Lots of things you don't understand, old bean."

"But how have you worked it?" yelled Skinner. "It's some sort of a trick, but it beats me."

"No sort of a trick that I know of," yawned the Bounder. "A fellow who's working for an exam can get off games practice by getting a note from his Form master to show to the Head of the Games. Linley's done that often enough; and so did Cherry, that time he was swotting. Why not little me?"

Skinner & Co. gazed at the Bounder blankly.

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"Working for an exam—you!" said Skinner. "Mean to say that you've pulled Quelchy's leg to that extent, and made use of him in giving Wharton a fall! Oh, crikey! Ha, ha, ha!"

Skinner roared.

"What exam?" stammered Snoop.

"Head's medal."

"Gammon!"

"I may not keep on with it," yawned Smithy. "May find it too hard, and retire from the giddy contest. In fact, I think it very likely indeed that I shan't keep on with it."

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked Skinner & Co.

"Quelchy—a downy old bird like Quelchy—pulling his jolly old leg and makin' use of him!" gasped Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The uproarious merriment from Study No. 4 was heard along the Remove passage. The Remove fellows understood that it meant that the Bounder had somehow "got away with it," though they did not even yet guess how. Certainly all the fellows knew that no punishment had followed the Bounder's defiance of authority; he had made his boast good and had not suffered for it. And the Remove fellows wondered blankly how the Bounder had worked it.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.**Bunter, Too!**

"IT'S the jolly old limit!"

Bob Cherry made that remark the following day.

He glanced at the Bounder, who was chatting and laughing in the quad with half a dozen of the Remove.

Wingate of the Sixth came along and passed the Bounder, but gave him no attention.

"It's the limit," repeated Bob. "I'm blessed if I catch on to it! Smithy's prestige has gone up no end!"

"How did he work it?" asked Nugent.

"Ask me another!"

"The esteemed Wingate seems to have forgotten his honourable existence," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Can't have forgotten," said Johnny Bull. "But he's letting the Bounder slide. It's not treating Wharton decently. Only last week he ragged and slanged Wharton before a mob of fellows for letting the Bounder off. Now Smithy's cut again, and Wingate knows, and he's taking no notice. It's not cricket."

Harry Wharton came out of the House, looking for his chums. His face was rather sombre.

The Co. ceased the discussion at once, as Wharton joined them. They knew that it would not fail to be a sore subject with the captain of the Remove.

Wharton's glance fell on the Bounder at a little distance, and he knitted his brows. Smithy, perhaps by chance, glanced in his direction and met his eyes and smiled ironically. There was triumph and mockery in the Bounder's smile. He had scored all along the line; he had boasted that he would set the Form captain's orders at naught, and he had made good his boast. There was no doubt that the rebel's prestige was very considerably enhanced by the episode.

Wharton could not help feeling sore.

He had no desire whatever to interfere with the Bounder—the less he saw of the fellow at games practice, or anywhere else, the better he liked it. Until that Wednesday he had taken no heed of the Bounder's disregard of the rules, and the Head of the Games had

"slanged" him in public for neglect of duty. Now he had done his duty and the Head of the Games had failed to back him up, and Wharton was only too conscious of the fact that he had been made to look foolish.

Certainly he could have asked Wingate for an explanation; but that he disdained to do. Smithy had been reported, and that should have been enough. Wharton did not want to seem anxious to get a fellow punished, especially as he was not anxious for anything of the sort. He only wondered, with deep resentment, why Wingate had ragged him for letting Vernon-Smith off if he had no intention of calling Smithy to order himself when the next delinquency was duly made known to him.

Wharton was proud—perhaps a little too much so. He had not wanted to exercise his authority in the Bounder's case; he had been forced to exercise it. The Bounder had coolly defied it and got off scot-free. It was a blow to the pride of the captain of the Remove, and he knew that it placed him in a ridiculous position.

His eyes glinted as they dwelt on the mocking Bounder. His chums read in his face the thought that was in his mind.

"Come on! Let's trot round the quad before dinner!" said Bob Cherry hastily. Fisticuffs with the Bounder would not have improved matters, as all the Co. knew.

It was later in the day that the story leaked out of how the Bounder had "worked it." The jest was too good to keep, and Skinner & Co. had told other fellows, who told others, and there was much merriment in the Remove on the subject. It reached the ears of the Famous Five at last. The Bounder's nerve in playing such a game amazed the fellows, well as they knew him. That he had no intention whatever of working for such a difficult exam as that for the Head's Latin medal, all the Remove fellows knew; he had not the remotest idea of going in for the exam or preparing for it. He had simply humbugged Mr. Quelch on the subject in order to make good his boast and score over the captain of the Remove.

All the Remove knew it and marvelled at his nerve. What Mr. Quelch's feelings would be like if he learned the truth could hardly be imagined. And with the topic endlessly discussed up and down the Form it was quite likely to reach the Form master. That risk Smithy was taking with his usual reckless audacity.

"Well, the Bounder's got a nerve on him!" Bob Cherry remarked at tea in Study No. 1. "He can't be going in for the exam really. Quelchy would be as mad as a hatter if he knew how he's been made use of."

Harry Wharton shrugged his shoulders.

"Of course he's not going in for the exam. It's only a trick. He put in some work with Quelchy to give colour to it. He doesn't really intend to put in any more. He did it to make me look a fool to all the Remove, and he has succeeded. There's games practice again on Friday—and he will have a note from Quelchy to show Wingate. Well, let him; it will be a relief not to have him on Little Side, anyway."

Billy Bunter blinked into the study.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, hook it, Bunter!"

"But, I say, Smithy says—"

"Get out!"

"Smithy says he's cutting games practice again on Friday," said Bunter.



As Bunter rolled into the study, Mr. Quelch fixed an impatient stare on him. "Well, what is it, Bunter?" "If—if you please, sir——" stammered Bunter. "Be brief!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "Oh, certainly, sir! The fact is, I—I want you to put my name down for the Head's Latin medal, sir!" "WHAT!" ejaculated Mr. Quelch. (See Chapter 7.)

"I want you to let me off, too, Wharton."

"Travel, fathead!"

"Now, look here!" said the Owl of the Remove impressively. "I want fair play. Understand that! I'm not a slacker, I hope—but I don't need all the practice you fellows do——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at. If Smithy cuts on Friday, I'm going to cut on Friday, Wharton. Fair's fair!"

"Smithy's working for an exam," grinned Johnny Bull. "You'd better try your luck pulling Quelch's leg in the same way, Bunter."

"Oh!" ejaculated Bunter.

That was a new idea to the Owl of the Remove. But the fat grin on his face showed that it took his fancy at once.

"By gum, that's a jolly good wheeze!" said Bunter. "If Smithy goes in for the Head's medal, why shouldn't I? I can put my name down and get off games for extra study, and all that, same as Smithy. Do you really think it would work, Bull?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Better not try it," duckled Nugent. "Quekhy is a downy bird."

"But Smithy got away with it," argued Bunter.

"The esteemed stitch in time does not strike twice in the same place, as the proverb says," remarked Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"Look here, Wharton! Are you letting me off on Friday?" demanded Bunter.

"No, fathead!"

"Then I shall jolly well go in for the Head's medal, same as Smithy!"

And William George Bunter rolled away from Study No. 1 with his fat mind evidently made up.

There was a roar of laughter in the study. Mr. Quelch had been taken in by the Bounder, but he was not likely to be taken in by the laziest and most obtuse member of his Form. Bob Cherry, with a good-natured impulse to save the fat Owl from his obtuse folly, stepped to the door of the study and bawled after him.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Bunter!"

The fat junior blinked round through his big spectacles.

"Don't do it, ass!" said Bob. "Understand? You'll give yourself away first shot! You'll get a licking! Keep off the grass!"

"Yah!" was Bunter's elegant and grateful reply to that excellent advice.

He proceeded downstairs, to head for Mr. Quelch's study with the idea of striking the iron while it was hot. He found the Bounder and his friends talking in the lower passage, and rolled up to them.

"Quelch hasn't found out your little game yet, Smithy?" he asked.

The Bounder laughed.

"It's as safe as houses, isn't it?" asked Bunter.

"Looks like it."

"If you got away with it, why shouldn't I?" argued Bunter. "I'm going to ask Quelch to put my name down for the Head's medal."

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Skinner.

The Bounder's laughing face had become suddenly very serious.

"You fat idiot!" he exclaimed.

"Quelch will know at once that you are spoofing."

"Eh? You spoofed him all right," said Bunter. "I suppose I can tell the tale as well as you can."

"You unspeakable idiot!"

"Oh, really, Smithy——"

"Keep away from Mr. Quelch!" said the Bounder, with an angry frown.

"Rats!" retorted Bunter independently.

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"Look here—"
"Rubbish!"

Billy Bunter rolled off to his Form-master's study. Herbert Vernon-Smith stared after him, extremely disconcerted. Skinner & Co. exchanged glances and grinned. But it was not a grinning matter for the Bounder.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Not a Success!

"COME in!"

Mr. Quelch rapped out the words rather sharply, as a tap came to his study door.

The Remove master was busy.

Mr. Quelch generally had plenty to do; and the three hours he had given Vernon-Smith the previous afternoon had left a good deal of his work undone. Mr. Quelch did not regret that; he was only too pleased to make some little sacrifices to help on an eager and promising pupil. Still, the fact remained that he had leeway to make up; and that day, instead of the usual chat in Masters' Common-room after tea with the other members of the staff, Mr. Quelch had the leeway on his hands. He was going through Latin prose papers at rather high pressure, when William George Bunter arrived.

His voice did not sound encouraging; but Bunter rolled in. Mr. Quelch fastened an impatient stare on him.

"Well, what is it, Bunter?"

"If—if you please, sir—" stammered Bunter.

"Be brief!" snapped Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, certainly, sir! The fact is, I—I want you to put my name down for the Head's Latin medal, sir."

"WHAT!"

If Trotter, the page, or Gosling, the porter, had made that request, Mr. Quelch could hardly have been more astonished. He fairly blinked at the happy Owl of the Remove. Bunter, whose construe was a jest in the Remove—Bunter, who had difficulties with Eutropius—Bunter, who never did any work if he could help it—Bunter, the laziest, slackest, and densest fellow in the Form, was asking to have his name put down for a difficult examination, which entailed hard swotting for the next three weeks. Mr. Quelch was not likely to take such a request seriously. Yet he could hardly suppose that Bunter had walked into his study to make fun of him. So he was simply astounded.

"I'm going in for it, sir," said Bunter. "I'm going to swot at Latin to-morrow after class, sir, while the other fellows are at games practice."

"What?" repeated Mr. Quelch.

"I—I suppose I may enter for the exam, sir," said Bunter, rather discouraged by his Form master's look. "It's open to the Remove, sir."

"Are you speaking seriously, Bunter?" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, yes, sir!"

"Do you suppose that you are equal to such an examination, when you cannot construe the simplest verse in Virgil without an error?"

"I—I'm going to buck up, sir!" stammered Bunter. "I'm going to swot instead of wasting my time at games practice."

"Oh!" said Mr. Quelch, beginning to understand.

"I'm beginning to-morrow, sir. If you'll be so kind as to give me a note to show Wingate, sir."

"A note to show Wingate?"

"Yes, sir, same as you did Smithy."

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Otherwise I shall get six for not showing up on Little Side."

"Bless-my soul!"

Mr. Quelch gazed at Bunter. Bunter did not see any reason why he should not get away with it as successfully as the Bounder. There were, however, a good many reasons, though the Owl of the Remove could not see them.

The fat Owl's motive would have been transparent enough to a less keen-eyed gentleman than Henry Samuel Quelch.

"Upon my word," said Mr. Quelch, at last, "I scarcely know how to deal with you, Bunter. Such obtuseness!"

"Oh, really, sir!"

"Such impudence!"

"Oh!"

"Such insolence!" roared Mr. Quelch. Bunter's fat knees knocked together. Apparently he was not getting away with it.

Mr. Quelch rose to his feet.

"No, Bunter, I will not allow you to enter for the Head's Latin medal. I will not allow you to make an examination an excuse for avoiding the healthy exercise which you need more than any other boy in the Remove. I shall cane you for your impertinence."

"Oh, lor'!" gasped Bunter.

"Do not utter ridiculous ejaculations in my presence, Bunter!" hooted the Remove master.

"Oh, dear! I—I say, I—I mean it, sir!" stammered Bunter. "I'm awfully keen on—on exams, sir! I'm frightfully keen on—on Latin medals and—and things! I really mean to work like—like anything, sir!"

Mr. Quelch selected a cane.

"I—I—I'm in dead earnest, sir!" babbled Bunter. "I wasn't thinking of cheeking Wharton and pulling your leg like Smithy, sir."

"What?" roared Mr. Quelch.

"I wasn't really, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I wouldn't do it. I—I respect you too much, sir, I do really!"

Mr. Quelch's face was a study.

"Bunter!" he gasped.

"C-c-can I go now, sir?" mumbled Bunter.

"No," thundered Mr. Quelch, "you may not, Bunter! You will bend over that chair."

"Oh, lor'! I—I say, sir—"

"Silence! Bend over that chair at once!"

Bunter groaned dismally as he bent over the chair. Why Mr. Quelch had gone off at the deep end like this, he could not guess; but he could see that he was "for it."

Swish, swish, swish!

The cane fairly rang on Bunter's tight trousers.

"Yaroooh! Yoop! Ow! Oh! Ow!" roared Bunter.

Swish, swish, swish!

The yells of William George Bunter rang out far beyond the Form master's study.

"Now, Bunter—" said Mr. Quelch, laying down the cane.

"Yarooooooop!"

"You may go."

"Yow-ow-ow-ow-ow!"

Bunter went.

Mr. Quelch sat down at his table again, with a corrugated brow. He did not turn immediately to the Latin prose papers, though he still had plenty of work on his hands. He was deep in thought—painful thought. William George Bunter had inadvertently let in a flood of light upon the surprising reform of the Bounder. Mr. Quelch's suspicions in that direction had been lulled to sleep. Now they had re-awakened with full force.

The bare thought that the Bounder had taken him in, as Bunter had

obviously tried to do, made Mr. Quelch turn quite cold with anger.

But he was a just gentleman. He would not allow himself to be too deeply swayed by what was, after all, only a suspicion. If the Bounder was reforming in earnest, he should be given every chance. But if he was not—if it was an audacious deception—The mere thought of that made Mr. Quelch's face assume an expression that the fabled Gorgon might have envied.

William George Bunter rolled dolorously away from the Remove master's study. His groans were heard by the tea-party in Study No. 1 as he came rolling dismally back to the Remove passage.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry. "How did it work?"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"Licked?" chuckled Johnny Bull.

"Ow! Six! Wow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the whole study.

"Tain't fair play!" groaned Bunter. "Smithy pulled the old brute's leg and got away with it. But he jumped on me at once. He seemed to smell a rat somehow."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

And Bunter rolled on dismally to his own study, and for quite a long time deep and dolorous groans were heard proceeding from Study No. 7.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Mr. Quelch Looks In!

"NECK!" said Skinner with deep and heartfelt admiration.

"Takes the whole giddy cake!" said Snoop.

"It does!" agreed Stott.

Skinner & Co. were lost in admiration. The other Remove fellows could not help admiring the Bounder's nerve, at least, if they did not admire his trickery.

It was Friday, and there was compulsory games practice in the afternoon. Smithy was excused.

Mr. Quelch had set him certain exercises, by way of a preparation for the exam which the Bounder had not the slightest intention of entering. These exercises Smithy was to work through in his study while the other fellows were on the cricket ground.

Harry Wharton gave the rebel of the Remove no heed, though undoubtedly he was still feeling sore and irritated. But the matter was now no business of his. If Mr. Quelch gave the Bounder a note of excuse to the Head of the Games the affair was quite in order, and there was nothing for the captain of the Remove to worry about. Certainly it was impossible for him even to think of giving away the Bounder's trickery to the Form master. Yet that trickery was being carried on for the sole purpose of flouting him as Form captain. He had declared that the Bounder should toe the line; the Bounder had stated that he never would toe the line, and he was keeping his word, and making his peace with the powers by a trick which was known to the whole Form.

A word from Wharton to the Remove master would doubtless have dished the Bounder at once. He was not likely to utter that word. Indeed, the Bounder would have been glad had he done so—the whole Form would have condemned such an act as betrayal. Remove men were not expected to give one another away, whether they were friends or foes. But if the Bounder hoped to exasperate the captain of the Form into

"sneaking," he was certain to be disappointed.

Wharton, indeed, was very elaborately taking no heed of the Bounder at all. He did not and could not forget that he had been defeated in a conflict in which the Bounder was flagrantly in the wrong, and which the Bounder had deliberately provoked for the single purpose of giving him a "falk." But he was silent on the subject and he made no sign. That was a disappointment to Skinner & Co.; they would have rejoiced to see him in a rage. He was not likely to gratify them to that extent.

But he was not feeling comfortable.

The Bounder had made him look ridiculous, but he was making Mr. Quelch look still more ridiculous. All the Form had seen Smithy take his special Latin exercises from Mr. Quelch after class in the Form-room; all the Form knew that Smithy had not the slightest intention of even touching those exercises, let alone working them out. The Bounder made no secret of his intentions. He was going out of gates during that games practice; he was going to play billiards with Mr. Joe Banks at the Cross Keys. Mr. Quelch, of course, would expect to see the exercises. The Bounder was going to spin a yarn of an accident.

"Neck!" said Skinner, wishing that he had the "neck" to play such a game himself. But he hadn't; probably the Bounder was the only fellow in the Remove who had.

The Bounder was loafing outside the House when Harry Wharton & Co. started for Little Sidé. He was there specially to see them as they started. His mocking grin brought a glint to Wharton's eyes, but the captain of the Remove walked on with his friends. Bob Cherry, however, stopped to speak to Vernon-Smith.

"Slacking again to-day, what?" he asked.

"Oh, rats!" grunted the Bounder. He was no slacker, and he did not like being considered one.

"What's the good of it, Smithy?" asked Bob good-naturedly. "You'll land yourself in the soup in the long run. Quelch isn't the man to be played with like this, you know."

The Bounder shrugged his shoulders.

"And you're not really a loafing slacker like Skinner," went on Bob. "You'd rather play cricket than billiards; if you owned up to the truth. Why not do the decent thing and chuck up this rot?"

The Bounder opened his lips to make a sneering answer, but closed them again. As a matter of fact, Bob's good-natured words rather impressed him. The green playing fields did, in point of fact, appeal to him more than the dingy billiards-room at the Cross Keys.

But he shook his head.

"I'm out of the games," he said sourly. "What's the good of slogging at practice when I'm barred from matches?"

"Well, that was your own fault, you know. You asked for that," said Bob. "But nobody wants to keep up a quarrel for ever. But I put it to you, Smithy—is this the way to set yourself right with the cricketers?"

"Perhaps not," said the Bounder, with a grin. "But it's the way to show your precious captain that he isn't monarch of all he surveys, and that there's one fellow in the Remove who doesn't care a hang for him. I've said that I won't take orders from Wharton—and I won't! So that's that!"

"Well, you're playing the goat," said Bob.

"I know that."

"Oh, you know it?" exclaimed Bob.

"Certainly! But if I choose to play the goat, no fellow at Greyfriars is goin' to stop me," said the Bounder coolly. "And it's rather amusin' to get Wharton's rag out and make him understand that he isn't the little tin god he fancies he is."

"Oh, rats!" grunted Bob. And he walked away after his friends.

Vernon-Smith shrugged his shoulders

and gave a quiet, searching glance in the direction of Mr. Quelch's study window. That window was open, and it was quite probable that if the Bounder went out of gates his Form master's eye might fall upon him. That would not have suited Vernon-Smith at all; he realised very clearly that in playing with Mr. Quelch he was playing with edged tools.

The Bounder went into the House.

He did not, however, go to his study. By way of the Fifth Form passage he reached a back staircase and quitted the House by a door the juniors were not supposed to use, and left the school precincts by dropping over a wall behind the old chapel. He strolled away across the fields, whistling.

It was a quarter of an hour later that Mr. Quelch, leaving his study, proceeded to the Remove passage.

That passage was quite deserted now, and would remain so until the games practice was over.

Only Herbert Vernon-Smith was supposed to be in his study, at work on the special Latin exercises which Mr. Quelch, at very considerable trouble to himself, had set him.

Mr. Quelch tapped at the door of Study No. 4 and entered.

He was a just man, and, though his suspicions had been awakened, he would not allow himself to be swayed by them. He hoped—and, indeed, expected—to find Vernon-Smith at work in his study, according to arrangement. He had been given leave from games practice for that purpose. If he was there, as Mr. Quelch hoped, the Remove master's misgivings would be allayed at once; and he intended to remain and give the Bounder some assistance—which would have been very useful to a fellow who was genuinely working for a difficult exam.

The Bounder was not there.

On the table lay the Latin exercises—untouched. Mr. Quelch looked at them and breathed hard and deep.

Still he resolved to give the delinquent every chance. He sat down in the Bounder's armchair, and waited. If the junior had been called away for a few minutes he would return. If, indeed, he was not guilty of a deception, the mere thought of which made Mr. Quelch bristle, he would come to the study to work out those exercises.

He did not come.

Mr. Quelch waited ten minutes, and after that lapse of time he could scarcely have any further doubts.

Games practice that afternoon was only for an hour, and already half that space of time had elapsed. Obviously, Vernon-Smith was not putting in that hour at extra study, as he had undertaken to do, and as Mr. Quelch would have believed unsuspectingly that he had done, had not the fatuous Owl of the Remove unintentionally warned him that he was being hoodwinked.

The Remove master rose and left the Remove quarters with compressed lips. He had been made a fool of, he knew that now. Bunter knew it—doubtless all the Lower Fourth knew it. Bunter had made a fatuous attempt to imitate the deception which, in the Bounder's case, had been successful. Mr. Quelch's anger was deep. He had been made to believe that Vernon-Smith was desirous of working hard, to make up for former errors; he had given up a great deal of his scanty leisure to help him, and all the while the young rascal had been laughing in his sleeve, and most of the Remove had been laughing with him. The whole thing was simply an

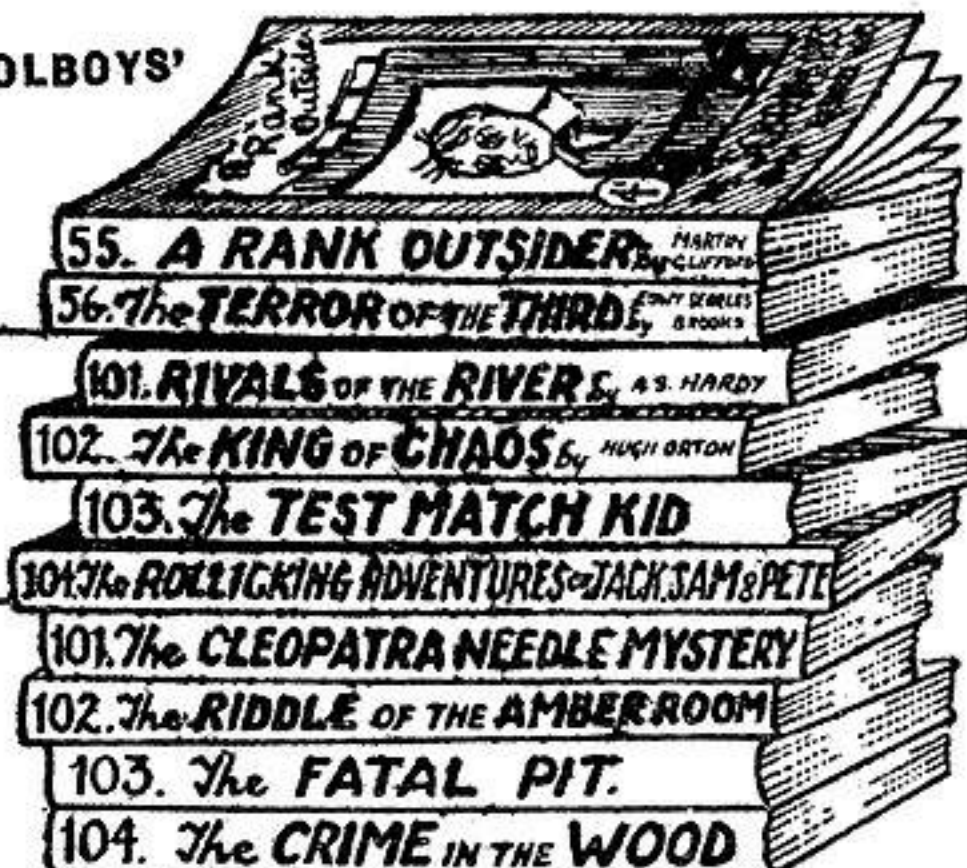
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impudent trick to dodge games practice.

Mr. Quelch returned to his study.

He was still wondering what explanation the Bounder would make for not having worked out the exercises. They were to be shown to him when completed. His eyes were opened now, and he was intensely angry. But he resolved to hear the Bounder's explanation before he took any steps; perhaps with a faint, lingering hope that Vernon-Smith might have some good explanation to give.

Games practice was over, and Skinner was in Study No. 4 when Herbert Vernon-Smith returned, by the way he had gone. He strolled into Study No. 4 and nodded smilingly to Skinner.

"Enjoyed your cricket?" he asked.

"Blow the cricket!" growled Skinner.

"Enjoyed your billiards?"

"Top-hole," said the Bounder.

"What about those giddy exercises?"

The Bounder laughed.

"Light the fire with them," he said.

"We don't want a fire on a blazing afternoon, fathead! I'm going to boil the kettle on the spirit-stove."

"Dear man! You'll boil the kettle on a fire, and use those exercises by accident, not knowing that I wanted to show them up to Mr. Quelch."

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Skinner.

He chuckled and crumpled up the sheets of Latin exercises which Mr. Quelch had so kindly and carefully prepared, and jammed them into the grate. They were soon blazing under a stack of sticks, and the kettle boiled merrily on them.

Vernon-Smith sat down to tea with Skinner in a cheery mood. After tea he rose and yawned, to go to Mr. Quelch's study. He was supposed to show up those exercises after tea, when Mr. Quelch was to comment upon his work and give him further sage counsel. He strolled away, Skinner looking after him with envious admiration.

"If a fellow only had the nerve!" sighed Skinner.

From the bottom of his heart Skinner wished that he had the nerve to play the Bounder's game. He was shortly to learn that he was rather fortunate that matters were otherwise.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

"For It!"

"VERNON-SMITH! Come in," said Mr. Quelch quietly.

The Bounder entered his Form master's study.

"You have finished your exercises, Vernon-Smith?"

"Yes, sir."

"You do not seem to have brought them to me."

"No, sir, I'm sorry. Skinner didn't know they were any good, and he used them for lighting the study fire. He thought they were some old exercises. I've had a lot about my study lately."

Mr. Quelch did not speak.

It was a blow to him to find any boy in his Form capable of such deception as this.

"It was frightfully careless of Skinner, because I've asked him to be careful with my papers, sir," said Vernon-Smith glibly.

"It would be a matter of little moment, Vernon-Smith, if you had done the exercises."

"They were done, sir."

"Am I to understand, Vernon-Smith, that you spent the allotted time in your study working on those Latin exercises?"

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"Certainly, sir!"

The Bounder's heart beat rather fast; he recognised the danger-signals. But he had left himself no retreat now, and he answered without hesitation.

Mr. Quelch looked at him long and hard.

The Bounder met his gaze steadily.

Something had gone wrong, the Bounder knew that. All the fellows had told him that he was playing a risky game; that pulling Mr. Quelch's leg was an amusement somewhat akin to twisting a tiger's tail. Of old the Remove knew Henry Samuel Quelch as a downy bird. In those moments, meeting Mr. Quelch's searching eyes with brazen hardihood, the Bounder realised that his Form master saw through him and his deception. How, he did not know, but the fact leaped to his consciousness.

The Remove master rose to his feet.

"Follow me, Vernon-Smith," he said quietly.

"Yes, sir."

Mr. Quelch left the study, and the Bounder, puzzled and alarmed, followed him. It was in the direction of the Head's study that Mr. Quelch proceeded. Vernon-Smith shut his lips hard. His Form master was taking him to the Head of Greyfriars.

Three or four fellows spotted him on his way and stared and whispered. Mr. Quelch's face was set grimly. The Bounder's betrayed only too clearly his deep disquietude.

"Smithy's for it!" murmured Bol-sover major.

"Quelch's found him out!" grinned Hazeldene. "Well, he can't say no wasn't warned. Every fellow in the Remove tipped him to chuck it."

The Head's door closed behind Smithy and Mr. Quelch. Word passed in the Remove like wildfire that Smithy was up before the Beak.

Dr. Locke, deep in Sixth Form Greek papers, looked up in some surprise as the Remove master entered with Smithy.

"Mr. Quelch: What—"

"Sir," said Mr. Quelch, his voice almost trembling. "I place this boy in your hands."

The Bounder breathed hard.

"What has Vernon-Smith done, Mr. Quelch?" asked Dr. Locke, his brow darkening in a deep frown. Mr. Quelch's looks indicated only too plainly that the offence was serious, and the Bounder had offended often of late.

"He has deceived me, sir, to such an extent that I do not care to deal with the matter personally. This boy, sir, made a pretence of desiring to enter for the Medal examination, and succeeded in making me believe that he was in earnest. It transpired that the whole thing was a trick, apparently for no object but to elude games practice on the occasions when it is compulsory. For so paltry an object, so base an object, this boy has deceived me and uttered barefaced falsehoods."

"Bless my soul!" said the Head, greatly shocked.

"He was excused from attendance on the cricket-ground this afternoon for the purpose of working through some exercises in his study, which I had set him specially. He did not touch those exercises, and he came to me with a tale that his study-mate had accidentally destroyed them after he had finished them. He has deceived me most unscrupulously."

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

The Bounder pulled himself together. "Yes, sir. Mr. Quelch is—is mistaken. I worked at the exercises in my

study while the other fellows were at games practice. The papers were destroyed by a sheer accident."

The Head smiled.

"Is it absolutely certain, Mr. Quelch, that this boy is speaking untruthfully?" he asked.

"Absolutely, sir. You have heard him state that he worked at the exercises in his study while the other juniors were on the cricket ground."

"I did!" said the Bounder doggedly.

"You did not, Vernon-Smith!" breathed the Remove master.

"You're mistaken, sir—I did."

"Owing to some foolish talk of a junior, sir, my suspicions were aroused," said Mr. Quelch. "I went to Vernon-Smith's study, at the time he should have been engaged upon the exercises there. I waited for him ten minutes. He was not there—he did not come in. The exercises were on the table, untouched."

The Bounder's jaw dropped.

Dr. Locke fixed his eyes on the Bounder. For once, the coolest-headed fellow in the Remove was utterly taken aback. He had not even suspected that the Remove master had visited his study during his absence. He realised that it was a complete exposure. He had stated that he had been in his study, working at the Latin exercises; at the time when Mr. Quelch was sitting there waiting for him. The case could scarcely have been more complete.

"Have you anything further to say, Vernon-Smith?" asked the Head, in a deep voice.

The Bounder was silent. Further falsehoods would have cost him nothing, but they were futile.

His face set doggedly.

There was nothing for it now but to face the trouble he had brought upon himself by his tortuous scheming. He had, at least, the courage for that.

"Mr. Quelch, I am not surprised that you are shocked and pained," said the Head. "Vernon-Smith will be severely flogged. Will you have the kindness to send Gosling here?"

Mr. Quelch left the study. Fifty pairs of eyes were on him as he rustled down the passage; the news had spread far and wide by this time that the Bounder had been bowled out, and was "for it."

When Gosling came along to the Head's study, all the fellows knew that it was a flogging.

At the corner of Head's Corridor the crowd was thick, and there was a murmur of excited whisperings. From the study there came the sound of the swishing birch, audible to all ears.

"My hat! The old sport's going it!" murmured Hazeldene.

Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish!

"Smithy's standing it well!" said Skinner.

There was no sound from the Bounder. Gosling had "hoisted" him, and the birch was falling with severe and incessant lashes. But the Bounder's teeth were shut hard.

The juniors listened as the swishing went on. It was a flogging of uncommon severity. Few fellows could have endured it in silence; yet no sound came from the rebel of the Remove.

The swishing ceased at last.

The Head's door opened, and the Bounder came out. He came unsteadily along the corridor, his face as white as chalk, his eyes burning like flames from its dead whiteness.

All eyes were fixed on him.

Some fellows who had intended to chip him on this outcome of his little game, forbore to do so when they saw



"Follow me, Vernon-Smith!" commanded Mr. Quelch. "Yes, sir," answered the Bounder, and he followed his Form-master, not a little puzzled and alarmed. It was in the direction of the Head's study that Mr. Quelch proceeded. Three or four fellows spotted the Bounder on his way, and they stared and whispered. "Smithy's for it!" murmured Bolsover major. "Quelch's found him out!" (See Chapter 9.)

his face. The Bounder passed through the crowd in a deep silence.

Without a look to right or left, he passed on, went up the staircase, and the door of No. 4 in the Remove closed on him.

Bob Cherry drew a deep breath.

"Well," he said, "that's the finish of Smithy's little game. Poor old Smithy!"

"He asked for it," said Skinner, with a cheery smile. "Never saw a fellow beg for it as Smithy did."

Snoop giggled.

"I'm not keen on games practice," he remarked, "but I think I prefer it to a Head's licking!"

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

Skinner strolled away to No. 4 in the Remove to offer his condolences. Probably Skinner's condolences had an unpleasant edge to them. A crash was heard in the Remove passage, and the door of No. 4 slammed after Skinner. After that the Bounder was left severely alone.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Up Against It!

THE Bounder was not seen in the Rag that evening.

Neither was he seen in his study, for that matter. Skinner did not care to return there in the

Bounder's present mood; he did his prep in Snoop's study. No one else looked in on the Bounder. Some fellows, passing No. 4, heard the sound of pacing feet, restlessly moving about the room, and they told other fellows that Smithy didn't seem to want to sit down. Until dawn the Bounder was not seen again.

In the privacy of his study he hid his rage and chagrin from all eyes; knowing only too well, however, that he was being discussed by all the Form, and guessing only too easily that he was discussed with laughter. Most of the fellows sympathised with him about the flogging. Whether it was deserved or not, a Head's flogging was a severe infliction, and the recipient thereof was considered a proper object of sympathy. But that disastrous end of the Bounder's cunning scheming undoubtedly caused a great deal of mocking merriment in the Remove.

The Bounder had not, after all, "got away with it." His trickery had been found out, he had been severely punished, and the game was up. Next time compulsory games came round he had to toe the line with the rest, in spite of all his tall talk. Certainly Mr. Quelch would acquaint Wingate with the state of affairs, and the head of the games would see that Vernon-Smith was very carefully looked after now. The Bounder had, indeed, taken on an impossible task in setting up as a rebel

against all authority. Luck had favoured him for a time, but the end had been certain. Nevertheless, his defeat was bitter and humiliating. Worst of all was the mockery of the other fellows and the triumph of the captain of the Remove. Not that Wharton had the slightest desire to triumph over the defeated rebel. But his triumph was there all the same, even if he ignored it. That was the bitterest blow of all to the Bounder.

Not till the Remove went to their dormitory was the Bounder seen, and then he found himself the cynosure of all eyes. Most of the fellows smiled as they looked at him. The complete and ignominious collapse of his campaign had its comic side, from the point of view of the other fellows. Harry Wharton did not look at him; he had a very clear idea of what the Bounder was feeling like, and he had no desire to "rub it in." He felt the Bounder's eyes upon him, but gave no glance in return.

The juniors smiled, but the Bounder's look did not invite chipping, and they left him alone. Only Billy Bunter disregarded the danger-signals in the Bounder's black and bitter face. It sometimes seemed to be Bunter's mission in life to exemplify the truth of the

(Continued on page 16.)



(Continued from page 13.)

proverb that fools rush in where angels fear to tread.

"I say, Smithy!" squeaked the Owl of the Remove.

Smithy did not seem to hear.

"I say, Smithy, are you turning up for games practice next time? He, he, he!" chortled Bunter.

The Bounder, sitting on the side of his bed, was taking off his boots. Still he paid no heed to Bunter.

"Shut up, you fat owl!" said Peter Todd.

"Oh, really, Toddy—"

"Cheese it, Bunter!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Rats!" retorted Bunter. "Can't I ask a man a question if I like? I say, Smithy, are you deaf?"

Whiz!

A boot flew through the air and caught Billy Bunter on his fat chin. There was a roar as Bunter sat down on the floor of the Remove dormitory.

"Yarooop!"

"Will you have the other boot?" asked the Bounder.

"Yow-ow! Keep off, you beast! Wow!"

Bunter did not ask Vernon-Smith any more questions. He rubbed his fat chin and turned into bed.

Wingate came in for lights-out. He came across to the Bounder's bed, and stood looking down grimly at the sullen face there.

"Mr. Quelch has spoken to me, Vernon-Smith," said the captain of Greyfriars quietly. "I understand the game you've been playing. As you've had a Head's flogging, I'll say no more about it. But don't let there be any more of it, or you'll find yourself in serious trouble, that's all."

"That's enough, too," said the Bounder.

"What?"

"More than enough," said the Bounder.

Wingate looked at him steadily.

"I won't lick you now, Vernon-Smith," he said. "You've had enough for to-day. Come to my study after class to-morrow."

With that, Wingate of the Sixth put out the light and left the Remove dormitory.

"Some fellows never know when they've had enough!" remarked Bolsover major, and there was a chuckle along the beds.

The Bounder lay silent.

Long after the rest of the Remove had fallen asleep the Bounder was still awake, restless, still aching from the severe flogging he had received. Bitterness and resentment and hatred ran riot in his breast.

He slept at last unasily.

The next morning, however, Herbert Vernon-Smith was himself again. He came down with the Remove looking his usual self. At breakfast, Mr. Quelch,

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at the head of the Remove table, gave Vernon Smith an expressive glance. The Bounder met his eyes coolly and fearlessly. He was in his Form master's black books once more, and he knew what to expect in the Form-room. The Remove master was not likely to forget or forgive the trickery of which he had been the victim, and which he more than suspected had been a great jest in the Form.

That morning, in class, the Bounder had Mr. Quelch's very particular attention. He had done no prep after his flogging—and in other circumstances the Form master would have made allowances. But the rebel of the Form had dropped back at once into his old ways. He affected not to hear when his name was called, and Mr. Quelch had to address him twice. He yawned aloud when he was told to construe, heedless of the warning glint in Mr. Quelch's eyes. And his "con" made the whole Remove gasp as he rendered "Conticure omnes" into "the whole mob cheesed it." There was a chuckle along the desks, which died away at once as Mr. Quelch glanced round.

"What did you say, Vernon-Smith?" asked Mr. Quelch in an ominously quiet tone.

"The whole mob cheesed it," repeated the Bounder, unmoved; which was a way of rendering "all were silent" that was certainly not suitable for a Form-room at Greyfriars.

"Is that what you consider a proper rendering, Vernon-Smith?"

"I can do it better, sir."

"I warn you to do it better, Vernon-Smith!"

"Everybody chucked chin-wag!" said the Bounder. "Is that all right, sir?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" hooted Mr. Quelch.

He fixed his eyes on the Bounder.

"You will find, Vernon-Smith, that the Form-room is not the place for insolence," he said. "You will be detained this afternoon, and will translate Virgil in this room from three o'clock till six."

"Thank you, sir!" said the Bounder imperturbably.

"Another word, Vernon-Smith, and I shall cane you!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "You will go on, Wharton."

After morning class, as it was Saturday, the Remove were done with lessons for the day, excepting the Bounder. He had an afternoon's detention before him. After class, too, he was due in Wingate's study. He did not proceed there, however, and if the captain of Greyfriars expected him, he was disappointed. Just before dinner, Wingate of the Sixth, looking for the Bounder with his ashplant under his arm found him in the quad with Skinner and Snoop.

"You were told to come to my study after class, Vernon-Smith," said the prefect, slipping the ashplant down into his hand.

"That's so."

"You did not come."

"No."

"I was going to give you two."

"Thanks!"

"Now I shall make it six."

"You're awfully good!" said the Bounder. "Sure you won't be over-exertin' yourself, Wingate?"

Skinner grinned, and Wingate frowned.

"Bend over that bench, Vernon-Smith."

After the infliction was over, Wingate tucked his ashplant under his arm and walked away. Skinner and Snoop exchanged a grin. They walked away as the Bounder's evil, bitter look was

turned upon them. Harry Wharton & Co., sauntering along the path under the elms, came on the Bounder as he stood leaning on an elm, with a pale and furious face.

The Famous Five would have passed unheeding, but the Bounder stepped out into their way.

"Wharton, you cur!"

Wharton stopped.

"Better language, please!" he said quietly.

"Put up your hands, you rotter!" said the Bounder thickly; and scarcely giving the captain of the Remove time to do so, he rushed on him, hitting out right and left.

Wharton's hands came up promptly enough.

He had carefully avoided the Bounder, seeking no further trouble with him; but he had no choice in the matter now.

"Smithy, you silly chump—" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Mind your own business!"

"Oh, let him come on!" said Wharton, between his teeth. "It was bound to come to this sooner or later. Come on, you cad!"

The Bounder was coming on, hard and fast. There was a rush of Remove fellows to the spot to see the fight. Round the combatants the juniors formed a crowded ring. There were no rounds in that furious fight; the Bounder, his savage temper now completely out of control, was in no mood for either rounds or gloves. He attacked savagely, so savagely and furiously that the captain of the Remove was forced to give ground.

But he rallied immediately, and attacked in his turn. There was a crash as the Bounder went down.

"Man down!" chirruped Bob Cherry.

The Bounder lay gasping for some moments.

"What about the gloves?" said Peter Todd. "Dash it all, we don't want a prize fight here!"

Vernon-Smith sprang to his feet again and rushed on. But Wharton did not yield ground again. He was cool and steady—much cooler and steadier than the enraged Bounder. It was doubtful whether Smithy, at his best, could have defeated the captain of the Remove; but in his reckless fury he was giving away his chances. Wharton's face was set and grim as he stood up to his adversary, and he put in at least two blows to Vernon-Smith's one, and every drive had all his strength behind it.

The Bounder went down again, panting.

He tried to rise, and fell back again. Harry Wharton waited quietly. The Bounder sat up dizzily.

"I'm done if you are, Smithy!" said the captain of the Remove quietly.

"You rotter!" panted the Bounder.

"I'll lick you!"

"Call it a draw."

"What's the good of calling it a draw when it's a licking?" grunted Johnny Bull.

The Bounder staggered up. He was beaten, and he knew it, but he would not give in.

He came on fiercely, only to fall again before a drive straight from the shoulder. This time he did not rise.

"Out!" said Bob Cherry.

Harry Wharton waited a few minutes, but the fight was over. He walked away with his friends. Skinner, with a wink at Snoop, helped the exhausted Bounder to his feet.

"Hard cheese, old man!" murmured Skinner. "You really tackled a job rather too big for you, you know."

The Bounder shoved him savagely aside and walked away by himself.

That afternoon, when Mr. Quelch came into the Form-room to set Vernon-Smith his detention task, he stared at the Bounder. The signs of damage in Herbert Vernon-Smith's face could not be hidden.

"You have been fighting, Vernon-Smith?"

"Yes, sir!"

"With whom?"

"Wharton."

"I hardly need to ask who was to blame," said the Remove master.

"Not at all," said the Bounder bitterly. "Your favourite is never to blame, I know that."

There was a short silence, during which Mr. Quelch looked hard at the sullen face before him.

"This cannot continue, Vernon-Smith," he said at length, in a very quiet tone. "I should cane you for such insolence, but punishment appears to have no effect upon you. You were flogged yesterday and caned to-day by a prefect. There is a limit to the efficacy of such punishment!"

The Bounder sneered.

"I shall only give you a warning," went on Mr. Quelch. "You must alter your ways, Vernon-Smith, or leave Greyfriars. All through this term you have set yourself against authority and have gone from bad to worse. It is becoming clear to me that this school is no place for you. Unless you alter, Vernon-Smith, and alter very considerably, you will be expelled. I warn you to reflect upon this."

Mr. Quelch said no more. But the Bounder of Greyfriars had ample food for thought when he was left in the Form-room.

he's drawing in his horns. But you mark my words, my infants, there's lots more trouble to come. The Bounder ain't the man to take a beating and smile."

Games practice was on that afternoon, and the Bounder, in flannels, was going down to Little Side.

On that subject, at least, the Bounder had had to admit a beating.

Most of the fellows were glad to see him doing the sensible thing, and had no desire to chip him or rub in his defeat. He had bitten off more than he could chew and had given up the attempt, and it showed his sense. But the sage opinion of Harold Skinner was that Smithy was lying low, looking for another chance.

But even Skinner did not dream of the dark thoughts that were passing in the Bounder's mind these days.

The rebel of the Remove had realised that it was time to call a halt. Mr. Quelch's last words to him had sunk deep into his mind. He had been heading for the "sack," and the sack would not have suited the Bounder's book at all. But his rage and resentment, which he had to suppress, gnawed the deeper into his heart for that reason, and all his malevolence now was centred on the captain of the Remove.

Mr. Quelch, during those days, had nothing more to complain of, for the simple reason that Smithy knew that he would have done something much more drastic than complaining. Wingate of the Sixth, who was keeping an eye on the Bounder, concluded that the ashlant had done him good. Harry Wharton had as little to do with the Bounder as he could, but he was not unaware of the bitterness with which Smithy regarded him, though he certainly did not suspect its depth.

Wharton had half-expected Smithy to renew the fight which had ended so badly for him, and he was glad that the Bounder showed no disposition to do so. But it was that final defeat in a fistical encounter that had filled the Bounder's cup of bitterness to overflowing. He was beaten all along the line, and even the poor satisfaction of "knocking out" the fellow he regarded as his enemy was denied him. And while he went about his daily avocations with a subdued quietness, the

Bounder's black thoughts ran wholly upon vengeance.

He did not confide his thoughts to Skinner, however. What he was thinking of now was too dark and dangerous to be confided to anyone. He nursed his sense of injury and kept his own counsel. Skinner, convinced that the black sheep of Greyfriars was only lying low and waiting for another chance, watched eagerly for the next outbreak. But there came no sign of it.

"You're letting Wharton rip, what?" Skinner asked at tea in Study No. 4 the following week. He was getting impatient.

Vernon-Smith looked at him. "Naturally," he answered. "What else can a fellow do? Isn't he our lord and master?"

Skinner grinned. "The fellows jeer a good bit when they see you walking down to games practice like a good, obedient kid, Smithy."

"I know which fellows jeer," assented the Bounder, with a glance that made Harold Skinner feel rather uncomfortable. "Let them!"

"Some of the chaps thought you'd take Wharton on again, with the gloves in the gym," said Skinner. "You'd have a good chance, Smithy. After all, he's not really above your weight."

"Ho is, and you know it!" answered the Bounder curtly.

"Well, it isn't like you to take a licking lying down, anyhow."

The Bounder's lip curled bitterly.

"My dear man, I've been thrashed and put in my place, and I have to take my Form captain's orders," he said. "What's the good of kicking over the traces? I've had to give Wharton best. There's nothin' doin'."

His eyes burned as he spoke, and Skinner, watching him, started a little. He let the subject drop at once. He realised very clearly that the Bounder was scheming revenge, and it occurred to him that it would be safer for his worthy self to know nothing about it. He remembered the Bounder's feud with Dallas earlier in the term, and realised that Smithy's confidences might be dangerous. If the Bounder was thinking of some wild and reckless scheme of vengeance Harold Skinner

(Continued on next page.)

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Nothing Doing!

"SMITHY'S lying low."

Skinner made that sage remark to his friends a few days later.

"About time he did!" remarked Snoop, with a grin.

"Even Smithy's had about as much trouble as he can digest, I fancy," said Stott. "He was heading for the sack."

Skinner nodded.

"He knows that," he remarked, "and



CHEWING GUM FREE!

ALL readers should know that at the principal seaside resorts this summer, special representatives of the MAGNET will be on the look-out for readers. Once a MAGNET reader is "spotted" by a representative, he will be given Free a packet of Wrigley's Spearmint Chewing Gum! How's that? All you fellows have to do when you're at the seaside this summer is to display prominently your copy of the MAGNET. Directly our representatives catch sight of the MAGNET they'll know that there's a MAGNET chum ready to receive his Free Gift. Nothing very difficult about that, is there, chums? No forms to fill up, no questions to be answered—just show your copy of the MAGNET. Our representatives will do the rest. They are on the look-out for MAGNET readers now, and will continue to be on the look-out daily throughout the season. Don't forget this, chums, when you're at the seaside this year. 'Nuff said!

CIGARETTE BOXES!

A Derbyshire reader has made a hobby of collecting cigarette boxes, and he tells me that he now has in his possession fifty different kinds. Next he asks me if I know how many different kinds of boxes there are in existence. I'm afraid my correspondent has got me there. There must be hundreds, surely. Can any reader supply further information on this subject?

Next Monday's Programme:

"BUNTER, THE BAD LAD!"

By Frank Richards.

This is a splendid extra-long complete story of Harry Wharton & Co., at Greyfriars, with the fat and fatuous Billy Bunter well in the limelight. Don't miss this peach of a yarn, whatever you do, boys!

"THE CURSE OF LHASA!"

There will be another long instalment of this popular mystery story featuring Ferrers Locke, the detective, and his sturdy boy assistant, Jack Drake. Mind you read it, Cheerio, chums!

YOUR EDITOR.

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most assuredly did not want to be mixed up in it.

Harry Wharton had not spoken to the Bounder since the first fight under the elm; but on Wednesday that week, rather to Smithy's surprise, the captain of the Remove joined him when the Form came out of class. Wharton had been in consultation with his chums several times of late, and that interview was the outcome.

"Hold on a minute, Smithy!" said Wharton amicably. "I'd like to speak to you!"

The Bounder stopped at once. "At your orders," he said sarcastically.

Wharton coloured. "Nothing of the sort," he said. "Don't get your back up before I've spoken a word."

"Aren't you satisfied with me?" asked the Bounder in the same tone. "I'm quite at your disposal, of course. Like me to fag for you?"

"I'm going to speak about the cricket," said Harry. "There's a Form match this afternoon. I think—and most of the fellows think—that this trouble has gone on long enough. You know why you were barred from Remove games and we needn't go into that. But if you care to let bygones be bygones and make a fresh start, there's nothing to stop you."

"You want a batsman now Dallas has left?"

"I'd like to see you taking your old place in Remove cricket. As it happens, I've got to stand out of the game this afternoon. I've spoken to the fellows about it, and if you care to take my place you're welcome to it."

It was the olive branch, if the Bounder had cared to take it. But he was in no mood for friendly advances. The bitterness of defeat had gone too deep for that.

"The fellows will welcome you, Smithy, if you'll chuck up this old grudge and play for the Form," said Harry.

"Hang the fellows!" "I've got to go to Lantham for the afternoon. I'd be glad to know you were playing for the Remove while I'm gone."

Wharton's manner was frank and friendly. Perhaps for a moment the Bounder hesitated. If so, his hesitation was brief.

"Go and eat coke!" was his answer, and he turned his back on the captain of the Remove and walked away.

Wharton was left with the crimson in his cheeks, looking after him. He was greatly tempted to follow the Bounder and repeat what had happened under the elms a week before. He resisted that temptation, however, and turned away. He had done his best, and if the Bounder chose to keep up the grudge it couldn't be helped.

"Smithy playing?" asked Bob Cherry, coming along and joining the captain of the Remove.

Wharton shook his head. "More fool he!" said Bob. "Cricket's better than mooching about nursing grudges."

"Smithy doesn't seem to think so," said Harry, with a smile. "I'm sorry. He could have helped you beat the Shell."

"Oh, we'll beat them without Smithy's help if he's still got his jolly old back up!" said Bob cheerily.

"The beatfulness will be terrific," said Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "Let the esteemed and disgusting Smithy mooch grudgefully as long as he likes."

"He can't get over that licking,"

said Bob. "It's rot—a fellow ought to be able to take a licking, especially when he asks for it. The silly ass ought to play."

"We shall beat the ludicrous Shell," said the nabob. "But it is very unfortunate that Wharton's honourable and ridiculous uncle has called him away to-day. But what cannot be cured by a stitch in time must be endured while the pitcher goes to the well, as the English proverb says."

And the chums of the Remove chuckled over the English proverb, and dismissed the Bounder from their minds.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Vengeance!

HERBERT VERNON - SMITH stood among a group of other Remove fellows, when the Form match began on Little Side, looking on.

The Remove were batting first, and Bob Cherry had opened the innings with Mark Linley. The Bounder watched idly for some minutes, and then walked slowly away. He was thinking deeply, and the expression on his face showed that his thoughts were not pleasant ones. Skinner joined him as he was going down to the gates.

"Going out, old fellow?" he asked.

"Yes—alone." And the Bounder walked on, leaving Skinner biting his lip.

With his hands in his pockets, the Bounder strolled towards Friardale, by the field paths. His eyes were on the ground, his brow black with bitter thoughts. A vague scheme that had been forming in his mind for days had come to a head now. After what Wharton had said to him, the Bounder had asked a few questions in the Remove, and he knew what were Harry's plans for the afternoon. Colonel Wharton was at Lantham that day, and he had asked his nephew to go over to the town to meet him there, as he had no time to come on to Greyfriars. It was not an uncommon occurrence; but the Bounder was thinking over it deeply. He seemed to see in this the chance for which he had been waiting and scheming.

Wharton had leave to return late; he was to dine with his uncle at Lantham. He was to take the eight-thirty from Lantham home, and that would land him at Friardale some minutes after nine. It was a good walk from the village to the school by the road; but by the short cut through the wood it was not a great distance, and Wharton naturally intended to take the short cut. That would bring him to Greyfriars in plenty of time for dormitory at half-past nine. Billy Bunter had reminded him that a footpad had once been seen in Friardale Wood, and had offered to accompany him to protect him on the way home—an offer which Wharton had declined without thanks. The Owl of the Remove had probably been thinking chiefly of a feed at Lantham.

Vernon-Smith had taken care to learn what he could of Wharton's intentions. That was not difficult, as there was, of course, no secret about the matter, as

the captain of the Remove had leave from his Form master to stay out after lock-up. The Bounder, as he tramped along the field-paths, was thinking—thinking of the chance that had come at last, which had been sure to come, if he waited patiently for it. Before his eyes was a picture of his enemy following the lonely footpath, under the shadowy trees—unsuspicious of danger, lonely, and far from help. His eyes glinted as he thought of it; and he passed his hand over his face, still marked by the blows he had received in the fight under the elms.

All that was evil in the Bounder's nature was uppermost now. All other thoughts were lost in the thought of revenge. And yet, at the back of his mind, there was a horror of what he was planning, the voice of conscience trying to make itself heard. To that voice Herbert Vernon-Smith would not listen; and yet, even when he arrived at the Cross Keys in Friardale, he had not decided on what he would do—or thought he had not decided.

Mr. Joseph Banks was loafing in the veranda at the back of the disreputable inn, smoking a rank cigar. His podgy face brightened at sight of the Bounder.

"Afternoon, sir!" he said, in his most affable manner.

Vernon-Smith dropped into a seat. The billiards sharper passed a box of cigarettes across to him, and the Bounder selected one and lighted it.

"A 'undred up, what?" said Mr. Banks, eyeing the junior's gloomy face.

Vernon-Smith shook his head.

"I haven't come here to play the fool!" he said harshly.

Mr. Banks blinked at him. If the black sheep of Greyfriars had not come there to play the fool, Mr. Banks wondered why he was there at all.

"I want you to do something for me," said the Bounder at last, breaking his moody silence.

"Anything to oblige a gentleman like you, sir," said Mr. Banks.

The Bounder glanced round and lowered his voice.

"I've got it in for a fellow," said Vernon-Smith. "Never mind who it is—he's done me a bad turn, and I want to make him sit up. He will be going along the footpath in Friardale Wood soon after nine to-night."

Mr. Banks stared.

"My eye!" he murmured.

"I want him thrashed!"

"Oh!" "I'm not askin' you to do it," said the Bounder sarcastically. "I don't suppose you could, if you come to that. But you know plenty of the racing roughs over at Wapshot. You know a couple of men who would take on a job like that for a quid each."

"Course I do," said Mr. Banks.

"But—but—" "Some of your friends make money on race days, by knocking out mugs, and taking their watches and chains," said the Bounder, with a sneer. "A job like this would be pie to that sort."

"Easy as winking," said Mr. Banks.

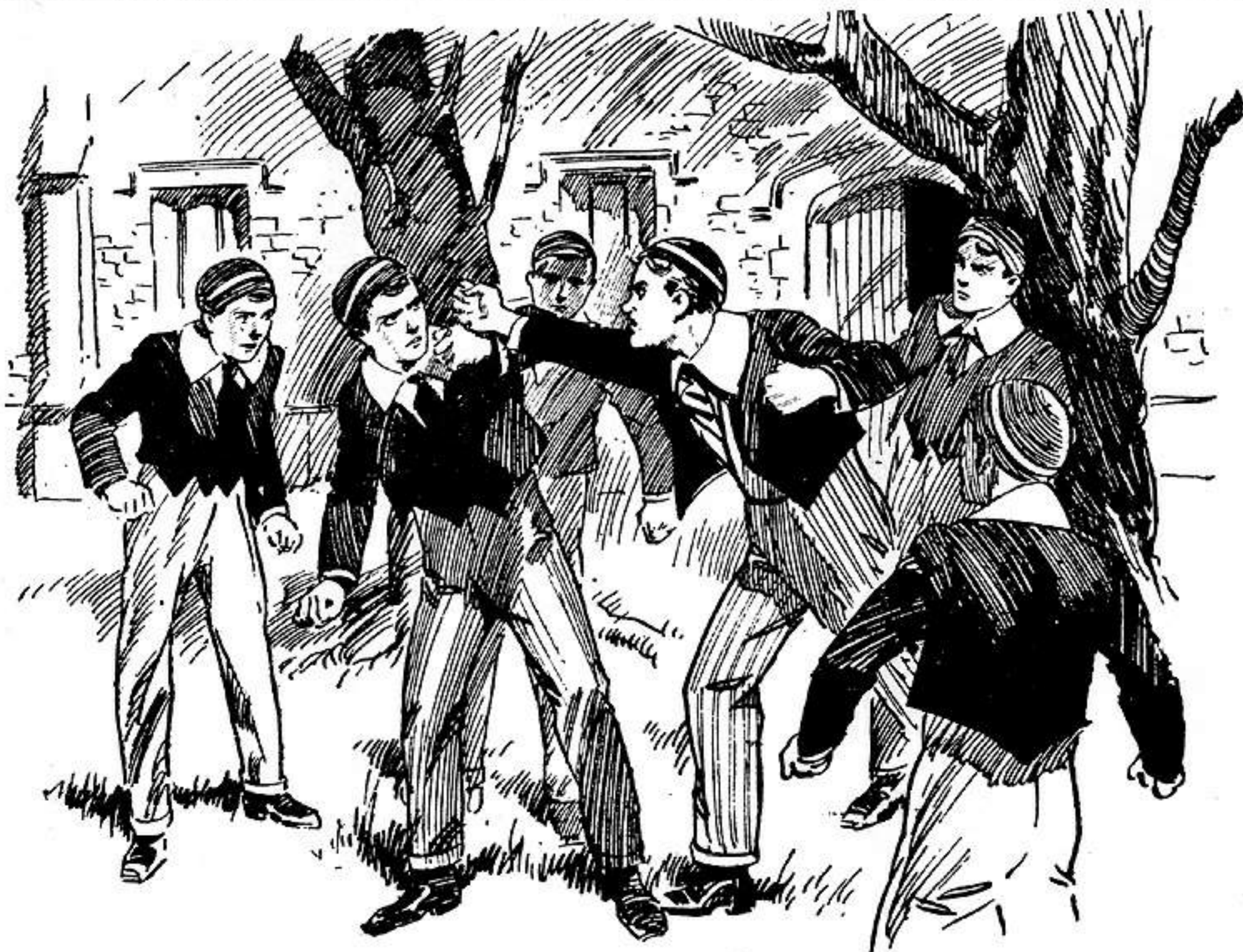
"But—" He hesitated.

"Don't be a fool!" said the Bounder irritably. "The fellow's not to be hurt. They'll collar him on the footpath, and thrash him—soundly. That's all. If they did him any real harm, I'd be the first to set the police after them. I suppose they know how to thrash a fellow without laying him out. That's what I want done, and I want you to fix it."

Mr. Banks smiled.

"I'm in touch with jest the boys you want," he said. "Slim Jim and Jerry the Pug will take it on, and be thankful. Leave it all to me, Master

ANSWERS
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As the Famous Five came along the Bounder stepped out into their way. "Wharton, you cur!" he hissed. "Better language, please," said Wharton quietly. "Put up your hands, you rotter!" said the Bounder thickly; and scarcely giving the captain of the Remove time to do so, he rushed on him, hitting out right and left! (See Chapter 10.)

Vernon-Smith; and that bloke what has punched you will be sorry 'e ever raised a 'and to you."

The Bounder started.

"How do you know—"

"Your figgerhead looks a little damaged, sir," chuckled Mr. Banks. "Feller rather over your weight, what?"

"Mind your own business," said the Bounder savagely. "Look here, I haven't come here to jaw. I'll tell you all you need to know, and leave you the money and clear."

Ten minutes later the Bounder was gone.

Mr. Banks took a pull at his cigar, and watched him out of sight. There was a sneering grin on his fat face.

"Precious young rascal!" muttered Mr. Banks. "Cheeky young 'ound and precious young rascal! I fancy the stone jug will be the place for him, one of these 'ere fine days. As for the bloke what thrashed him, I 'ope he hit him hard—looks as if he did. But business is business."

And Mr. Banks proceeded about that business, which was to enable Slim Jim and Jerry the Pug to turn an honest penny, and, incidentally, to keep him in the good graces of the millionaire's son.

Herbert Vernon-Smith walked back to Greyfriars. His face was set and resolved.

Still at the back of his mind was the still small voice to which he doggedly refused to listen. His enemy was in his hand now; he had been beaten and humiliated all along the line, covered

with humiliation as with a garment, but beaten and humiliated, he was yet dangerous. He had gone down defeated under Wharton's fists, and the memory of it rankled bitterly. It was his turn now.

The danger, if danger there had been, he would have disregarded. But there was no danger. Harry Wharton, on his homeward way, would be seized by the two roughs and savagely thrashed. Who was to suspect that the Bounder of Greyfriars had had any hand in the matter? Wharton himself would never dream of it. He would receive his punishment, and the Bounder would gloat in secret.

Vernon-Smith reached the school, and walked down to Little Side, where the Form match was still going on. He was quite composed when he went to his study for prep, and he put his mind into his prep; perhaps he wanted to keep his thoughts off other things.

"Swotting at it, what?" asked Skinner, with a grin.

The Bounder did not answer.

"Had a good time at the Cross Keys this afternoon?"

"Find out!"

"You're jolly civil!" sneered Skinner.

"Shut up and let a fellow work!"

"Keen on work now that Quelch is on the war-path, what?"

"Shut up, I tell you!" said the Bounder, with a look at Skinner that made him fall into uneasy silence. There was a burning gleam in Smithy's eyes that rather startled Skinner.

Prep was finished in Study No. 4 in

silence. When it was over Skinner went down to the Rag, leaving the Bounder alone in the study.

Vernon-Smith threw himself into the armchair and lighted a cigarette. But he threw the cigarette away half smoked. He rose from the chair and moved restlessly about the study. At last he left the study and followed Skinner down to the Rag. Whether he repented or not of his dastardly scheme of vengeance on the captain of the Remove, Vernon-Smith hardly knew. But he knew that he wanted to escape from solitude and his own thoughts.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Remorse!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"

Bob Cherry greeted the Bounder cheerily in the Rag. It was not like Vernon-Smith to show his feelings if he could help it; but there was a black depression in his heart that was, in spite of himself, reflected in his face, and more than one fellow noticed it.

"Feeling down, what, old bean?" asked Bob.

"No, you ass! Why should I?"

Bob chuckled.

"Well, you rather look it," he said. "You made a mistake this afternoon, Smithy; you shouldn't have done it, you know."

The Bounder started so suddenly that Bob stared at him in wonder. Smithy's

face became deadly pale, as if all the blood had been drained from it.

"What—what do you mean?" he stammered.

What he had done that afternoon was in the Bounder's mind, hard as he strove to dismiss it. He had not repented—or he would not admit to himself that he had repented. But the thought of what he had done was a torment to him, he hardly knew why. With that black knowledge uppermost in his mind, Bob's words came as a startling shock to him. For the moment he thought, absurdly, that Bob was alluding to his dastardly compact with the racing man at the Cross Keys.

"Smithy! What on earth— You're ill, old man!" stammered Bob, quite alarmed by the Bounder's look.

With an effort Smithy pulled himself together. Bob, of course, could know nothing. Was he growing frightened of shadows?

"Oh, don't be an ass!" he snapped. "What did you mean?"

"About the cricket, I meant—"

"Oh!" muttered the Bounder.

"You shouldn't have done it, Smithy," said Bob. "We'd all have been glad to have you in the team, and it was a ripping game. I noticed that you came along to watch the finish."

"Did you?" muttered the Bounder.

"We just beat the Shell," said Bob. "You noticed what a jolly close thing it was."

The Bounder did not answer. He had watched the game to a finish, but he realised that he had not noticed which side had won. Certainly he was not his usual cool and clear-headed self that day.

"We'd have been glad of you, Smithy, especially with Wharton away," went on Bob. "Look here, old man—why not chuck up playing the goat and make the best of things, instead of the worst?"

The Bounder muttered some unintelligible reply. He moved away from the cheery Bob.

"Nine o'clock," said Johnny Bull. "Wharton will be getting into Friardale now. I suppose it would be no good asking for leave to trot out and meet him."

Bob Cherry laughed.

"Not after lock-up," he said. "The old scout will be here in about twenty minutes now. What price mugging up a little supper in the study? He will come in hungry."

"Good egg!" said Nugent.

"The goodness of the esteemed egg is terrific," said Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "Let us kill the fatheaded calf for the prodigal."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come on!" said Bob.

The four juniors left the Rag and went up to the Remove passage. Vernon-Smith glanced after them and glanced at the clock.

It was past nine now; the train would be in at the local station at Friardale. Wharton would be leaving the station and starting on his walk back to the school.

In his mind's eye the Bounder could see him; the scene was as clear to his aching brain as a picture unrolling on the screen. The unsuspecting schoolboy leaving the village, trotting cheerily down the lane, and turning into the dark, shadowed footpath under the thick trees, and then—

The Bounder could see it all—the two racing toughs lurking on the shadowed path, the sudden rush of feet, the savage attack, and the brutal beating; and a bruised, dazed fellow lying on the grassy path after the ruffians had

finished with him, to crawl, exhausted, to the school, beaten and battered—

A sound came from the Bounder's pale lips that was like a groan, and two or three fellows near glanced at him oddly.

And another thought was in Smithy's tormented mind now. Wharton was not the fellow to take a beating quietly. He would resist, he would put up the best fight he could; he had no chance, but he would fight as long as he could stand. He would give a good account of himself, even against overwhelming odds. Two racing toughs, accustomed to brutality—how were they likely to handle him when he was hitting his hardest? It was only too likely that the beating would become a savage, brutal assault; that the schoolboy would be severely hurt—perhaps seriously injured and—

The Bounder rose from his chair and went to the window and stared out into the dusk to keep his face from observation; he knew that his looks were betraying him.

What had he done?

In his bitter rage and resentment he had planned that act of vengeance, carried on by passion till it was too late to retreat. But he knew now that he would have stopped at nothing to undo what he had done. The voice of conscience, stifled until it was too late, was loud and insistent now, and would not be silenced. What had he done?

These fellows chatting round him—what would they think if they knew? They could hardly feel more horror at his act than he felt himself now that the scales seemed to have fallen from his eyes. What had he done? Had he been out of his senses?

And now it was too late.

With a face that was white as chalk, Vernon-Smith stared into the shadowy quadrangle.

Too late—too late! He pictured a battered, bruised figure lying senseless in the dusk of the trees; a white, up-turned face—

Was it too late?

Too late or not, the Bounder could bear no more. He turned from the window and hurried across to the door of the Rag.

"Smithy!" called out Skinner.

The Bounder did not heed or hear. He hurried out of the Rag and up the staircase. The great door of the House was closed; there was no egress that way. He reached the Remove passage, where a cheery light shone from the open doorway of Study No. 1. Bob Cherry and his friends were busy there, turning out a study supper for Wharton when he came in. The Bounder ran along the Remove passage to the box-room at the end—the lower box-room—from the window of which he had lowered himself more than once on his wild escapades.

He tore the window open and jumped out on the leads. He left the window wide—he cared nothing for discovery now. He was not thinking of that. From the leads he reached the ground, and in a minute more he was dropping over the school wall.

Too late—too late! He knew that it was too late! Wharton must be entering the woodland path from the other end at those very moments. The Bounder broke into a desperate run; hatless, white-faced, panting, he sped along the dusky lanes.

To reach the spot of the ambush—to stop the roughs before it was too late—that was his only thought. Yet he knew that it was too late. The rascals did not even know him; he did not know them. If he came up they were more likely than not to turn on him if he

interfered. He knew it and cared nothing.

His feet seemed scarcely to touch the ground as he raced along—breathless, panting, unconscious of fatigue.

He was in the footpath now, with great old trees shadowing him—darkness round him, darkness and silence. He ran on and on, desperately. He listened as he ran—no sound—nothing but the sigh of the wind from the sea in the heavy foliage. Was he, after all, in time?

A shout in the deep silence—another shout—and the sounds of conflict, far in the distance and the darkness ahead. Too late! Too late! A hoarse cry came from Herbert Vernon-Smith's white, set lips, and he tore desperately on.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

True Blue I

HARRY WHARTON stepped from the train at Friardale Station, and walked cheerily along the platform. He had spent a pleasant afternoon in Lantham with his uncle, and the colonel had seen him into the train when they parted. He was thinking now chiefly of the cricket match, and wondering whether his comrades had beaten the Shell. He left the station, and walked down the old High Street of Friardale to the lane, and turned into the footpath through the shadowy woods. It was a pleasant walk, in the summer evening. The path was lonely after nightfall; but Wharton gave no thought to that; the possibility of danger did not enter his mind.

He went along the shadowy path at a trot.

A moving shadow, under the shadows of the trees, caught his eyes, and he slowed down—but before he had time to think there was a sudden rush.

"That's 'im!" came a husky voice.

Two dusky figures leaped from the shadows and rushed him down.

Wharton leaped back, and eluded the rush. He had not expected, or dreamed of any danger on the woodland path; but presence of mind was natural to him. He could only suppose that the men were footpads, and he was on his guard instantly.

"Keep off, you rotters!" he said, between his teeth.

They came on without a pause, and in the gloom he had a glimpse of two brutal, beery faces. His fist crashed into one of them, with all his strength behind the blow, and Slim Jim went down on his back with a heavy concussion. But the next instant, Wharton was struggling in the grasp of Jerry the Pug.

"Come on, Jim!" panted the ruffian, as Wharton fought fiercely. "He's like a blinking wild cat. Lend a 'and!"

Slim Jim scrambled furiously to his feet, with a string of savage oaths.

"Help!" shouted Wharton. "Help!"

He had only time for that shout. Slim Jim had hold of him in a moment more, and he was dragged down into the grass.

As he sprawled in the grass, in the grasp of the roughs, he drove his fist under Jerry the Pug's jaw, and there was a gasp of anguish from the pug. The Greyfriars fellow was outmatched and overwhelmed, but he was fighting hard.

A brutal fist crashed into his face, and his senses swam for a moment. Another blow—and another!

Wharton was still fighting. In his desperate struggle, he dragged the two ruffians who were clinging to him over on the ground, and his elbow jabbed



"Smash him!" panted Slim Jim. "Beat 'im to a jelly!" Wharton faced the two roughs, fighting furiously. But a few moments more would have seen him at their mercy. Suddenly there came a rush of footsteps. "Buck up!" came the Bounder's panting voice. Crash! A clenched fist dashed into Slim Jim's face, and the ruffian went over as if a bullet had struck him. Then the Bounder turned on the other ruffian. (See Chapter 14.)

into Slim Jim's stomach. The rough collapsed in the grass, gasping and spluttering, and the junior fought fiercely with the other. So fierce was his resistance, that he dragged himself loose and sprang to his feet, his brain reeling from the blows he had received.

He sprang away, panting, and backed against a big oak, as the two roughs closed in on him again. With savage, furious faces they closed on him, enraged by his resistance and the hefty blows he had given.

"Smash him!" panted Slim Jim. "Beat 'im to a jelly!"

The Greyfriars junior faced them, still fighting. But a few moments more would have seen him in the grass, at the mercy of the roughs.

From the darkness came a rush of footsteps. A white face and two blazing eyes flashed suddenly from the shadows.

"Buck up!" came a panting voice.

Crash!
A clenched fist that seemed as hard as iron dashed into Slim Jim's face, and the ruffian went over as if a bullet had struck him.

The Bounder turned on the other ruffian. Jerry the Pug had to release his grip on Wharton, to turn on his new assailant.

Harry Wharton reeled against the oak, panting, exhausted for the moment. But he pulled himself together desperately, as the two roughs closed on his unexpected rescuer.

He did not know who it was, though he could see that it was a hatless fellow

in Etons, and guessed him to be a Greyfriars man. The Bounder was fighting like a tiger, receiving without heeding savage blows, and hitting back with furious strength. Wharton sprang to his aid, and rolled on the grass in a grip with Jerry the Pug, hammering the ruffian furiously. The rough tore himself loose, and bounded away, and his retreating footsteps were heard on the shadowy path. Probably, he supposed, or feared, that other rescuers were at hand. He fled into the night, and Slim Jim made an effort to follow him, but the Bounder drove blow after blow at him, and it was some minutes before the rascal could get clear and dash away after his confederate.

Wharton stood unsteadily. The fleeing footsteps of the two roughs died away in the wood.

"Hurt?"

It was the Bounder's voice.

"Smithy!" gasped Wharton.

"Are you hurt?" snapped the Bounder.

"Yes, no—a few knocks—it's all right! How the thump did you come here, Smithy?"

"Let's get out of this! They may come back if they tumble to it that there's nobody else near."

Wharton nodded, and picked up his cap, and hurried up the path with the Bounder. They did not pause or speak till they reached the end of the footpath and were out into open road, in sight of the roofs and tower of Greyfriars School. Then the captain of the Remove

stopped. He peered curiously at Vernon-Smith in the gloom.

"Smithy, old man!"

The Bounder was panting.

"Lucky for me you came along, Smithy. Those brutes meant to hurt me," said Harry. "I can't make it out. They didn't seem to be going to rob me—they just went for me."

The Bounder laughed harshly.

"But how did you get there, Smithy?" asked Wharton, greatly puzzled. "It's close on dorm at the school. What the thump were you doing out of bounds at this hour?"

"I came to help you."

"But—but I don't catch on." Wharton stared at the Bounder in amazement. "You couldn't have known anything at the school. What do you mean, Smithy?"

"You can't guess?" asked Smithy.

"Not in the least."

"Suppose I knew that a Greyfriars man had put up those roughs to lay you out as you came home?"

"Rubbish!"

"You wouldn't believe it?"

"No."

The Bounder looked at him curiously. "Well, that was it," he said. "A Greyfriars man was at the bottom of it. Those two brutes didn't know you from Adam, and didn't care. They were put up to lay for you on the footpath to-night."

"Good heavens!" breathed Wharton.

(Continued on page 27.)

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WANTED—A LEADER! For years now the peasants of Tibet have been ground down under the merciless yoke of the priests of Buddha. But beneath the outward show of servility of these down-trodden peasants there is the smouldering spark of hate and rebellion, which but awaits the man and the moment ere it develops into a fierce, unquenchable flame. The man arrives—a detective from England! The moment is not far distant!

THE CURSE OF LHASA!



A grand story of mystery and intrigue, featuring **FERRERS LOCKE**, the Famous Detective, and his plucky boy assistant, **JACK DRAKE**.

The Inn!

FERRERS LOCKE turned to the Tomo, who was standing stolidly by.

"What know you of that monastery?" he asked.

The Tomo looked at him sharply. Then he turned his eyes towards the gaunt building.

"White man," he said in a low voice, "that is a monastery of ill-repute indeed. It is whispered that in that monastery of Salai there rules one who is even greater than the Grand Lama! Ay, it is whispered in the villages, in the hills, to the frontiers themselves, that even the Council of Death are ruled by he who rules in Salai!"

He paused, then went on:

"He who rules in Salai is older than the hills themselves. I, miserable outcast that I am, have heard that some day he will lead the peoples of Tibet to war against the peoples who dwell far beyond the frontiers. Who he is I know not, but this I know: The black-robed ones, the cursed priests of Buddha, he holds in the hollow of his hand!"

"But is not the Grand Lama, the Dalai Lama who rules in the palace of the Potala, not greater than he?"

"I tell ye, no! The Grand Lama rules, but he who dwells in Salai is more powerful than the Grand Lama!"

"And has anyone seen the face of this powerful one who rules in Salai and prepares the people of Tibet for war?"

"They say that no one has ever looked upon his sacred person, but that some day he will reveal himself!"

"When?"

"When he rides through holy Lhasa as master of the lands and peoples of the earth. I but tell ye what I have heard over many camp-fires and in many villages. It is on many tongues; but all know a little, yet none know much!"

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Ferrers Locke nodded. Upwards, from the grim Salai monastery, came stealing the muffled notes of a tolling bell. Ferrers Locke stood for a few moments in thoughtful silence, then, turning abruptly on his heel, he led the way downwards to where the mules were tethered.

The detective and his two companions rode into Lhasa an hour later. The narrow streets were squalid and filthy, the houses covered with dust and dirt. Dogs prowled everywhere, some snarling and fighting, others dying or dead. And great evil-looking ravens were feasting upon both the dying and the dead.

Monks, pilgrims, peasants, and city dwellers of Lhasa thronged the narrow streets. Soldiers in mail mingled with the crowd, and here and there were the flowing white robes of some wild, turbaned hillmen.

The Tomo led the way to a long, low-roofed inn. The mules were stabled at the rear in filthy, unwashed stalls. The main room of the inn was full of a miscellaneous humanity. A long table ran down the centre, and the floor was of trodden earth, hard as stone.

Upstairs a long, dormitory-like room with plank beds provided the only sleeping accommodation.

"We will find out if any of the priests of Salai visit Lhasa," said Ferrers Locke to Jack, after they had eaten a good repast of bread and fruit. "If they do so, then that will, at least, be some connecting link between here and Salai!"

The Tomo, who had been mingling with the crowd, joined them.

"Let us walk through the streets," he muttered, "for we are as safe there as we are here. This cursed place was safe once for those who would avoid the hatchet-faced ones, but now—I will talk outside!"

Ferrers Locke knew that there was little danger of he and Jack being

apprehended in the jostling, busy crowd of the streets, unless they came face to face with some priest who knew their features well. Their faces were dirty and unwashed, and their clothes almost in tatters. They had passed muster on the road to Lhasa, and he was fairly confident of passing muster in Lhasa, unless some ill-chance overtook them.

"They seek not only ye," said the Tomo, when they had passed out of the inn, "they seek the one who allowed ye to slip through his fingers! Spies are everywhere, and they say he is in Lhasa."

"Kala Dului!" said Ferrers Locke softly.

"That is the name of the accursed priest!" snarled the Tomo. "By the beardless Buddha, I know him well. He was of the Patong Lamasery, that one! Oh, but that I could smell him out! Would I not set the hounds of Buddha on him, the cursed, treacherous, suivel-ling dog!"

His voice was shaking with passion. Ferrers Locke glanced at him, pity in his eyes.

"He was the one—" he suggested quietly.

"Yes, the one who slew my son! Oh, may Buddha curse him and his very soul! But they seek him—ay, even as they seek ye. He vanished when ye were not found the night that ye escaped from the Karo la. He was wise, that black-robed one, for he knew his hour had come!"

"And they say he has reached Lhasa?"

"Yes, and is hiding in this city. As for ye, they think ye must have perished in the hills, or still be hiding. But the search for ye has not ended, and will not end till thy bones are discovered. This Kala Dului vowed ye had gone back from the Karo la, and he sent the black-robed ones that way. Some did guard the road to Lhasa, as we know, but none that knew ye by sight."

"So Kala Dului is now the hunted and not the hunter?" murmured Ferrers Locke. "I trust he appreciates the change of role!"

Only Jack caught the words, and he, too, wondered how the hawk-faced priest was enjoying the role of fugitive.

Later in the day they returned to the inn, and, leaving Jack with the Tomo, Ferrers Locke sallied forth to seek some information in the city as to the habits of the monks of Salai. There was little danger of his curiosity getting him into trouble, for the city dwellers were used to being questioned by gaping, inquisitive peasants from outlying districts.

Night had fallen before he retraced his steps to the inn. Jack was waiting for him, anxious and expectant. There was little of privacy in the inn, but, leading the way upstairs to the long dormitory, Ferrers Locke spoke to Jack.

"We will have to lie very low, Jack," he said. "I came face to face in a narrow street with that gaunt monk with whom I fought just before our escape from the Karo la. I cannot think that he recognised me, else he would have raised the alarm then and there. I shuffled past him with bowed head and bent shoulders, but I know he was staring after me."

"He did not follow you?"

"No, he did not. Of that I am sure! But I am not so sure that I have not been followed."

"You think this fellow might have been set on your track by the monk?"

"Yes, we must take that view of it. We are tolerably safe here, however. According to the Tomo, this inn is a sort of sanctuary for criminals and fugitives. More than one black-robed one, venturing across the threshold, has mysteriously disappeared. We must be extremely careful and—"

He broke off, as the Tomo came hastily into the room. The man's face showed signs of fear, and there was something approaching panic in his eyes.

"The inn is surrounded by the soldiers of the Dalai Lama!" he gasped. "They search for someone! Whether it be us I know not! By the beardless Buddha, if it be ye, then we are indeed lost. I have ridden with ye, and they will find that out—if they know it not already. I will die with ye!"

"It is impossible that, even if I have been followed here, the alarm can have been given so quickly!" said Ferrers Locke. "Let us go downstairs and show a bold face!"

He led the way down into the main room. It was crowded with woolly Lepchas, squat Tibetans, men of the hills and plains, with here and there a scared-looking Bhutanese. They were talking excitedly, with much gesticulation, and at any other time Jack would have wondered at the extraordinary jargon of speech.

Scarcely had he, Ferrers Locke, and the Tomo entered the room than a black-robed monk, wearing mail beneath his robes, appeared in the doorway. Behind him, bodyguard and escort, loomed a dozen soldiers, clad in mail and carrying paladin swords and shields.

"Let none think to escape!" said the monk harshly. "We seek here a one-time priest of Buddha, and this building is surrounded!"

He rapped out an order and the soldiers filed into the room. Behind them came two shaven monks. At another harsh order the inmates of the

room were formed into four lines, which stretched from one end of the room to the other. Ferrers Locke, Jack, and the Tomo stood side by side in the second line.

Then slowly and in silence the mailed monk, followed by his two shaven brethren and the soldiers, commenced to move down the front line, scanning each man's face carefully. They commenced on the second line, and then came a sudden interruption. Two soldiers appeared in the doorway, dragging between them a screaming figure clad in the dingy white robes of a hillman.

The mailed monk wheeled sharply.

"We found this one, O master," said one of the soldiers, "hiding in the straw in the stables behind the building!"

"Bring him here!" said the leader harshly; and as the soldiers dragged forward their shrieking, writhing captive Jack's hands clenched tightly.

The man was Kala Dului!

The Rescue of the Tomo!

THE wretched priest was dragged into the room. His face was livid and his fear pitiable.

"Mercy!" he screamed.

"Mercy, for the fault was not mine!" Then he fell to moaning and groaning: The mailed monk turned to the two shaven priests, who stood watching in grim silence.

"Is this he? Is this the accursed dog Kala Dului of the Patong Lamasery?"

The monks nodded; and, with super-human strength, Kala Dului tore himself free from his captors and threw himself face downwards on the earthen floor.

"Mercy!" he shrieked, grovelling at the feet of the mailed monk. "Mercy, for I have served Buddha well! Stay thy hand that I may yet seek out those cursed violators of Buddha's holy shrines! Mercy that I—"

"Silence, dog!" said the monk harshly. "Thou hast incurred the wrath of the Chosen of Buddha, and there can be no mercy shown to thee!"

Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake knew that they were in deadly peril. If Kala Dului saw them and recognised them

THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

Prompted by the murderous activities of the all-powerful

KANG PU, the self-styled Chosen of Buddha and fanatic who, to satisfy his own monstrous ambitions, would set the whole world ablaze with war,

FERRERS LOCKE, the famous Baker Street detective, accompanied by his plucky young assistant,

JACK DRAKE, leaves England for Tibet, determined to discover the fate of an expedition led by

MAJOR BEVERLEY, which is believed to have fallen into Kang Pu's clutches. At the outset of their journey Locke and Drake come up against

KALA DULUI, a priest and one of the zealous agents of Kang Pu. But they manage to give him the slip. Then, led by a

TOMO, an outcast, the twin arrive eventually at the Seven Monasteries. In one of these Locke and Drake find Kala Dului exhorting a number of the priests of Buddha to prepare for war. Locke exposes the trickery Kala Dului has employed, and in consequence of this both he and Drake are made prisoners and escorted to the Chamber of Death. Luckily, however, they gain their freedom, and aided by the Tomo, whom they meet again, they win their way to Lhasa, wherein is situated the Salai Monastery—the stronghold of Kang Pu. Now is the time to discover the fate of the expedition led by Major Beverley.

"If ye are cautious," says Ferrers Locke, "I feel sure success will be ours!"

(Now read on.)

he would instantly denounce them, and thereby perhaps save his own life.

The mailed monk made a sign. The soldiers pounced on the grovelling priest and hauled him to his feet. The Tomo chuckled hoarsely. Then, before either Ferrers Locke or Jack could stop him, he rushed forward out of the line.

"Ah, ye cursed priest of Buddha!" he shouted, pointing a shaking finger at Kala Dului. "Ye who slew my son! Death looms close to ye, and in that death will come my vengeance! Curse ye, ye priest of Patong—"

He got no further. At a word from the mailed monk half a dozen soldiers sprang forward and seized him. Ferrers Locke and Jack were aghast at this madness on the part of Tomo, but the hate-filled mind of the man had driven him to vent his triumph over the murderer of his son.

Kala Dului, held between his guards, glared at the Tomo through wild eyes, then for the fractional part of a second his glance wandered past him. And in that instant of time his eyes met those of Ferrers Locke.

"The infidels!" he screamed. "O Buddha, the desecrators of thy shrine! There they stand! There—there—there!"

His voice rose in a wild shriek and he struggled to tear himself loose from his captors.

Ferrers Locke realised that they were indeed undone should they remain there a moment longer.

"Follow me!" he said quickly.

And together he and Jack dashed for the stairs which led to the room above. In an instant the main room became a seething, struggling mass of men. The soldiers, dashing in pursuit, found no eager participants in the chase in the sullen men who for long years had been terrorised by the black-robed priests and their satellites. Rather the reverse, for the habitues of the inn held no liking for the soldiers and priests of Buddha. Their sympathies were with the two fugitives.

Ferrers Locke and Jack reached the long dormitory. There was a wooden bar on the inside of the door, which kept it shut, and the detective dropped it into its socket. The room was lit by means of a large flat oil-lamp. It was the work of a moment to extinguish the light. The soldiers were hammering on the door and it was creaking ominously.

A small square opening in the wall served for window and ventilation.

"Quick, Jack, it is our only chance!" said Ferrers Locke grimly. "It is not a big drop!"

Jack clambered on to the sill, then, grasping it with his hands, swung himself outwards, and dropped down into the courtyard below. Next moment Ferrers Locke joined him.

The darkness was their salvation. Two soldiers stepped forward to bar their passage, but they charged them with lowered heads. The next minute they had gained the street and were in the midst of a seething, excited crowd.

Keeping close together they fought their way through. From the inn came excited shouts. Soldiers were trying to drive the crowd back, but were hopelessly outnumbered.

"We must not leave the Tomo in their clutches!" said Ferrers Locke. "He was a fool to act as he did, but he has been a good friend to us!"

In the centre of the crowd he and Jack came to a halt. A huge bearded hillman elbowed his way past them.

"'Tis the black-robed ones!" he

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growled. "Curse them and their butchers! What seek they here? By the teeth of Buddha, but they will find trouble—"

Growling, he passed on; but his words had given Ferrers Locke his cue. Opposite where he stood was a house with a low stone balcony. Pushing his way towards it, with Jack at his heels, the detective gripped the bottom coping and swung himself up.

"Hark ye, ye peoples!" he shouted; and at his words fully a score of faces were turned towards him. "Hark ye! Are these priests of Buddha to quit their temples and come amongst us with their soldiers, seeking whom they might put to the sword? Are those the teachings of Buddha, whose first law is, 'Ye shall not kill!'? How long are ye to be ground down beneath the heel of the black-robed ones? How long, ye peoples, are thy sons and daughters to be put to the sword by these hatchet-faced ones?"

He had by now an excited and angry audience. Standing on the balcony, he harangued them with wildly waving arms. Not one man in the crowd but thought he was one of themselves—one who had suffered at the hands of the black-robed priests. And his words were received with assenting growls.

"Are they, then, to invade our very houses and drag us to be slaughtered at the altars of Buddha? Is it for that, that ye pay your tithes; that these black-robed ones may become so powerful that no man may call his soul his own? Who are these priests to take unto themselves the power of the Dalai Lama and his Council of Five?"

A shout of approval greeted the words. Ferrers Locke had long realised that the peoples of Tibet were kept under heel by a system of terrorisation and oppression, carried out by the monks in the name of Buddha. Given some bold spirit to show them a lead, then it was possible that the people might find a vent for the pent-up hatred of their oppressors.

"'Tis I they seek!" he went on. "And I defy them to lay their hands on me here in thy midst! Listen, ye peoples! One they have, a prisoner in that inn, whose only crime is that he laughed at a malignant priest who is about to meet his death. And that priest slew his son!"

An ominous growl came from hundreds of throats.

"Are ye going to let him be dragged through the streets of Lhasa that these black-robed ones may find sport in his death agony? It is his turn to-day, your turn to-morrow! Let us show these black-robed ones, I say, that we are men and not just carrion! Day by day they grow more bold. And who can say what the end will be?"

"Then show us the way, ye stranger," shouted a voice, "and we will follow ye!"

A thunderous shout of assent echoed the words. Ferrers Locke dropped down from the balcony. With Jack at his side, he strode through the crowd, a lane opening for him. Grim-faced and tight-lipped, he went on till he came to the entrance of the inn.

Grouped about the doorway was the small company of soldiers, forming a shield round the mailed monk. By the side of the latter cowered the two shaven-headed ones, panic in their eyes. The Tomo and Kala Dului were roped together and stood in the midst of the soldiers.

"Release thy prisoners, thou priest of Buddha," said Ferrers Locke sternly, "and go thy way in peace with thy soldiers!"

"I have heard thy words, thou insolent dog!" replied the monk harshly. "The words which thou spoked to the base-born scum which stands behind thee! I know thee now, for none but thee would dare to have spoken so in holy Lhasa! Thou shalt die a thousand hideous deaths for this night's work!"

"I have heard that threat before, thou priest of Buddha, but still I live. Release thy prisoners and depart!"

"And if I refuse, thou cur?"

"Then we shall take them from you by force. Dare thou tempt the people further, thou arrogant priest?"

The monk stood silent, his cold eyes fastened on Ferrers Locke.

"Many crimes are written against thy name, thou dog," he said, "but maybe none so great as this! Thou art in Lhasa, and from Lhasa thou shalt not escape! That I swear, by the great Buddha against whom thou hast set thy face. Thy hour will come!"

"Have done, thou priest, and release the prisoners!" replied the detective sharply.

"Ay, curb thy long tongue, thou snivelling chanter of mantras!" growled the hillman, ranging himself by Ferrers Locke. "Else I be tempted to set my men upon thee and cut it out by the roots! A fitting present for thine abbot, I vow!"

The monk hesitated a moment. Then, turning to the soldiers, he rapped out an order. Kala Dului and the Tomo were pushed forward.

"Hast men here, ye say?" inquired Ferrers Locke of the hillman.

"Ay. More than a score!"

"Then will ye let them mount guard over these two men, for one must not escape!"

The hillman glanced at him sharply. "As ye will, stranger," he replied. "Ye have some reason which, later, ye will tell to me?"

Ferrers Locke nodded.

The hillman turned and growled an order. Four men moved from out of the crowd and ranged themselves about the Tomo and Kala Dului.

"Now get thee to thy temple, ye priest, and take thy soldiers with thee," said Ferrers Locke. "Get thee gone before worse befall!"

The monk stared at him steadily, then allowed his gaze to sweep the sullen crowd.

"Ye scum!" he cried. "Ye fools to let this glib-tongued infidel lead ye to this defiance of the great Buddha! Grim will be the reckoning, and this street of Lhasa will flow with blood!"

A growl, almost akin to a snarl, rose from the crowd, and they pressed forward menacingly.

"Master, master," whined one of the shaven monks, "let us begone before they rend us limb from limb!"

"Ay. Heed the advice of yon snivelling acolyte!" cried the hillman. "Go, before these men that ye call scum force the words down thy cursed throat and stifle the breath in thy long body! Little more and they will be on ye!"

The monk hesitated no longer. No one but a fool could have failed to have read the signs. The crowd were ripe for trouble, having found a leader in this bold-tongued infidel. Revolt against the tyranny of the black-robed ones had been brewing for a long time, and now this might well be the spark which would fire the train.

"Open, then, for me a passage, ye scum!" he cried. "And hide thee in thy hovels, for every man of ye shall hang for this night's work!"

Ferrers Locke turned to the crowd. He knew intuitively that they would obey him. They were dominated by his personality and ready to acclaim him as their leader.

"Make passage for the priest and his shavelings!" he cried. "Make passage that he may retreat to the security of his temple. He will walk no more this way unless he desires to make the acquaintance with that death which he and his brethren have so often brought to thee and thine!"

The growling, muttering crowd opened to give passage. The soldiers formed themselves about the mailed monk, who snarled at Ferrers Locke and then passed on.

Revolt!

"AND now, stranger," growled the hillman, looking at Ferrers Locke with appraising eyes, "best tell these dogs to either hide, or arm themselves and band together! The black-robed ones will be here before the dawn, and blood will be spilt this night in Lhasa!"

"The black-robed ones have ruled too long," replied Ferrers Locke, "and it is time that the people throw off the yoke! If these men can arm, then gladly will I lead them against the priests of Buddha! Better that they should die in clean fight than live hunted like rats from hole to hole. And that, as ye well know, is how they live to-day!"

"Brave words these!" cried the hillman. "Ye are indeed a man after my own heart. I am from the hills, where only the snow and the cold wind rules. No man do I call master. But Lhasa is not safe for us with but this handful of dogs to lead!"

"Yét I cannot leave them thus to be slaughtered in cold blood," said Ferrers Locke. "I will bid them arm themselves and gather here with as many comrades as they can find!"

He turned to the crowd, who were seething excitedly in the narrow street.

"Hark ye to me!" he cried. "There are amongst ye many broken men, victims of these priests of Buddha. This night's work is like to cost ye dear, for ye heard the words which fell from the lips of yon mailed monk. Are ye then to be hunted through the streets of Lhasa and slain, in that ye rescued a poor unfortunate from yon monk's clutches? Are ye to continue to live like



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CHUMS

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Kala Dului's eyes suddenly met those of Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake. "The infidels!" he screamed. "O, Buddha, the desecrators of thy shrine! There they stand! There—there—there!" His voice rose in a wild shriek, and he struggled to tear himself loose from his captors. (See page 23.)

slinking curs, dreading what each hour might bring? Arm, I say, arm, and gather here, and this night we will march from Lhasa.

"In some fertile valley amongst the hills, far from this stronghold of the black-robed priests; ye will find a new life awaiting ye. Is theirs the power of life and death, that they may lord it over ye and drag thy sons and daughters to be slaughtered in their temples to the glory of Buddha?"

A thunderous shout rose from the crowd.

"No! Lead, and we will follow!" they roared. "And not a cursed priest will stay our way!"

"Then arm," cried Ferrers Locke—"and do so with dispatch. The black-robed ones will be here soon, on vengeance bent. Bring all who care to march with us, and a new life will be yours!"

The crowd commenced to disperse, and Ferrers Locke turned to the hillman.

"Let us talk in the inn," he said, "for there is much to be arranged. Let your men release that Tomo, but keep the white-robed one safely guarded!"

The Tomo's bonds were cut, and he rushed forward. Dropping on his knees in front of Ferrers Locke, he clutched at the latter's peasant blouse.

"I thank ye for what ye have saved me from," he cried, tears in his eyes, "and I beg of ye to give that cursed priest of Patong to me. He slew my son, the dog, and the spirit of my boy calls loud to me to avenge his foul death!"

Gently, Ferrers Locke raised the man to his feet.

"Justice will be meted out to that priest!" he said. "I give you my word on that. But there is much to be done, so put from ye feelings of vengeance and join us in our council!"

The Tomo bowed his head in assent. Ever since he had heard of the fight in the Karo la, he had admired the infidel. And that admiration had grown through the days that had passed.

Ferrers Locke, with Jack at his side, led the way into the inn. Seating themselves at the head of the table with the hillman and the Tomo, they settled down to a council of war. And outside, through the streets of Lhasa, spread the news that a section of the populace had found a leader and had risen against the rule of the black-robed ones.

"Surely, now ye hate these priests of Buddha!" said the hillman, with a side-long glance at Ferrers Locke.

There was a question in the words. The detective did not answer at once. He was turning over in his mind just how far to take this bearded fellow into his confidence.

"I hate them, in that they hold three of my comrades as prisoners in the monastery of Salai!" he said slowly. "I have vowed a rescue, and to teach that Abbot of Salai a lesson which he will not forget!"

"The name of this abbot?"

"Kang Pu!"

The hillman drew in his breath sharply. Spreading his arms akimbo on the table, he leaned forward and peered into the detective's face.

"Ye are no peasant," he said softly—

"ye that would beard this Kang Pu in his stronghold of Salai!"

"I have heard much of this Kang Pu," retorted Ferrers Locke, "and, those who speak his name, do so with bated breath and fearful glance. Is he then so powerful that his very name instils fear into the people?"

"Ay, that he is!" replied the hillman gruffly.

"There was a man slain by Kang Pu, and that man was my comrade," said Locke gravely. "As he lay dying, I gave him my word that I would seek out his murderer, and there lies my path, which I, in honour and duty bound, must follow!"

"Gallant stranger, say but the word and I will join ye!" said the hillman. "For I confess to a liking to feast my eyes on the sacred person of this Kang Pu!"

"I thank ye for that; but who will lead those wretched dogs outside, to the safety of the hills? Dost want those men? I vow they will make good fighters!"

The hillman laughed.

"Stranger," he replied, "far beyond the Phenpu Pass, northwards from this cursed city, there is a fertile valley guarded by a narrow pass which four men could hold against a mighty army. That is my stronghold, and there I dwell with my band. But with a following such as ye have raised this night in the streets of Lhasa, I shall be powerful indeed. I question none who join me, and all I ask is swift obedience to my orders. If we can win clear from

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,013!

Lhasa, through the barriers of the black-robed priests, then all who care to take service under me can do so for the asking!"

"That is good. And who knows but what thy small band may be the seed from which a great army will spring, an army which will break for all time the tyrannous rule of these murderous priests?"

"Dreams indeed!" replied the hillman softly. "But, by the teeth of Buddha, the dreams of a man!"

His eyes kindled and his great hand closed on that of Ferrers Locke's.

"And always, stranger, will there be a welcome for ye in that valley beyond the Phembu Pass. Now, by the noise outside, the poor soulless dogs are gathering. The black-robed ones will be here soon with their soldiers. But what are our plans?"

"I say, let us march through the city towards the northern gate. A courageous bearing may well bring many hesitants to our ranks. Let us keep to the main streets and show these priests that we fear no man!"

"Good words! I have thirty of my men, trained fighters every one, and they shall form a front and rear guard. The rabble who march with us can be depended to hew and slash to save their miserable souls should we be sore pressed in an attack!"

Ferrers Locke signified his agreement. "And if we win safely through I shall part company with ye beyond the northern gate and make my way back to Salai," he said. "Now let us see what is afoot outside!"

The Voice!

A JOSTLING, excited crowd was gathered outside the inn. In the forefront were about fifty men, all armed. Some carried rusty swords of various shapes and sizes, others had knives, whilst one or two were armed with stout cudgels.

Some little distance away the white-robed band of hillmen sat erect in the saddles of their wiry mountain ponies. In their hands were great scimitars, ready for instant use.

"Join those mounted men, all who march with us!" cried Ferrers Locke.

The fifty who had chosen to arm themselves shuffled forward. Others, lacking the courage to thus ally themselves against the priests, looked on with half-fearful, half-longing eyes.

Ferrers Locke, Jack, and the Tomo were provided with swords and ponies by the leader of the hillmen, who had spare mounts stabled in the rear of the inn buildings.

Then, leaving a message with the crafty-looking innkeeper that the mules upon which they had ridden into Lhasa were to be kept till the arrival of the pilgrims, Ferrers Locke and his companions mounted.

By dint of much shouting and pushing they managed to form their fifty new followers into some semblance of marching order. Fifteen of the hillmen took up their position in the rear, others rode on each side of the men on foot, whilst Ferrers Locke, Jack, the Tomo, and the leader of the hillmen rode in front, followed closely by six huge, bearded Mongolians. These latter were the very pick of the fighting men.

At a word of command the cavalcade moved forward. The crowd surged back to let them pass, then closed in and followed at their heels. Through the lighted bazaars they marched, stared

at by pale-faced Nuwaris and sullen Cashmiri, who wondered audibly what strange thing was this that had come to pass in holy Lhasa. But no sign of a priest did they see, and as they rode the eyes of the leader became more grim.

"I like this not!" he growled. "Where are the cursed black-robed ones?"

Both Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake felt that mischief was brewing somewhere, for never would the priests of Lhasa allow the defiant ones to pass out of the city unmolested.

The cavalcade passed under the shadow of the Ramo-che and the Moru temples.

"Now devil's work goes on within those walls!" grunted the leader, jerking his head towards Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake. "They raise therein the spirits of the dead. 'Tis sorcery most dread, and no voice is ever raised save in the chant of spells and curses!"

The streets through which they rode after leaving the bazaars were narrow and full of shadows. An ambushade would have been easy, but no sign of an armed monk did they see. The crowd, pressing at the heels of the cavalcade had grown denser. Above the tramp of marching feet sounded the roar of lusty voices, singing marching songs.

At last a sudden bend in the street through which they were passing brought them in sight of the northern gate. It was lit by huge flares, and ranged across the roadway was rank on rank of soldiers and mailed monks.

In the forefront stood a motionless, black-robed figure, his hands crossed on the hilt of a long two-edged sword, the point of which rested on the ground.

The hillman roared out an order to halt. Then, with Ferrers Locke and Jack on either side of him, he rode forward, reining in his mount when within a yard of the motionless monk.

Stroking his long beard, he surveyed the priest grimly.

"Art going to let us pass in peace?" he demanded.

"That is as ye wish!" replied the monk harshly. "The Dalai Lama does not wish that blood should be spilt in the streets of Lhasa. Give us the two who ride with ye and the prisoner, Kala Dului, then ye may go in peace and take what scum ye like with ye!"

"Ho, now curse thee for a lying, crafty priest!" roared the hillman.

"Shall I read thy words anew? Thou art afraid these two who ride with me will be killed in the fight! And if I hand them over, then, when thou hast them safe, thy soldiers will fall on us!"

The priest raised one hand above his head in an angry gesture.

"Now curse ye!" he cried. "May the curse of Buddha and of holy Lhasa rest on ye!"

"Keep thy curses for those that—" began the hillman, then broke off.

From somewhere near at hand came the tolling of a bell, borne towards them on the night breeze. It died away, and Jack felt a stirring at his scalp, as there came a voice seemingly from space itself.

"I am Kang Pu, the Chosen of Buddha, the lord of life and death. In Salai, where I have dwelt through the ages that are gone, I watch how ye, my priests, acquit thyself this night! Before ye stand the infidels who have defiled the holy shrines of Buddha. The curse of Lhasa hangs heavy over them and their hour is near!"

The voice died away. With a shout the monk swung his sword above his head.

"Ye have heard the words of Kang Pu!" he screamed. "Forward, ye priests, and hew down the carrion that have defied us this night!"

The Fight at the Northern Gate!

THE hillman rose in his stirrups, waving his sword above his head.

"To me!" he cried to his men. "And let any dog who fears the issue flee to hiding!"

Realising that there was little danger of an attack from the rear the mounted hillmen who had formed the rearguard swept forward with their companions to the aid of their leader.

At the same instant the black-robed monks and soldiers came on with a rush. The opposing parties met, and Ferrers Locke and Jack were surrounded by a turbulent sea of shouting, struggling men. They and their party had the advantage in that they were mounted, whilst the monks and soldiers were afoot.

One helmeted soldier slashed savagely at Jack with a short, curved sword. Loth to deliberately take life Jack crashed the hilt of his sword full between the man's eyes, and the fellow went down, to be trampled underfoot by the surging, struggling mob.

And above all the tumult of hoarse shouting and clash of steel on steel sounded the bellowing, roaring voice of the leader of the hillmen. His great bearded face was aglow with the lust of battle, his sword slashed and hewed, and his well-trained pony, veteran of a hundred fights, roared and plunged as though to prevent its rider from being rushed and torn from the saddle.

"By the teeth of Buddha!" roared the thunderous voice. "That for thee, thou snivelling priest!"—and a shaven monk reeled backwards, his skull split open.

Ferrers Locke and Jack fought desperately to prevent themselves from being pulled from the saddle. Now that battle had come, a few of the fifty who had dreamed of a new life outside the city turned and fled. The others came on, and many a long-nursed grudge and long-standing debt against the priests was paid with interest.

The hillmen formed themselves into a wedge-shaped formation, with Ferrers Locke, Jack, and their leader at the apex. In their midst, roped to a plunging, rearing pony, was Kala Dului, his hawk-like face pale beneath its tan and his eyes watching the surge of battle in terror and affright. No matter which side won, there was little hope for him should the infidels escape. Should he be rescued by the monks, then it would be but a prolonging of his ultimate fate, for from them he could expect no mercy.

Slowly, slowly, fighting, hacking, slashing, the hillmen forced their way through the frenzied mob of monks and soldiers, drawing closer and closer towards the gate. One or two monks were mounted on ponies now from which they had dragged the riders. One of these mounted priests bored in on Ferrers Locke, his sword raised for a downward, skull-splitting slash!

(Make sure you read the continuation of this thrilling story in next week's bumper issue, chums.)

"SMITHY'S WAY!"

(Continued page 21.)

"I wouldn't have believed it, only you must have known somehow, as you came along. But—but who was it? What vile scoundrel—"

The Bounder laughed.

"Call him any names you like," he said. "You can't call him any worse than he's called himself. But he has just a rag of decency left; somehow, he couldn't let it go through, after planning it all. He had to come along at the last minute and help you out!"

Wharton started.

"Smithy, do you know what you're saying?"

"Quite!"

"It was—you?"

"Yes."

"Good heavens!" said Wharton again.

He stared hard at the Bounder. His brain was in a whirl.

"Let's get on," said Vernon-Smith coolly. "I got out of the box-room window, and I shall have to get in the same way—before dorm. You'd better go to the Head."

"To the Head!" stammered Wharton. "Why?"

"To tell him the whole story and get me sacked. Come on!"

"I'm not likely to do that," said Harry quietly. "You've done an awful thing, Smithy—"

"I know that."

"But—but you couldn't have meant it. I should have been knocked out by those rascals if you hadn't chipped in. You've tried to act like a villain, Smithy, but it's not in you—a Greyfriars man couldn't fall so low as that. You thought you could do it, but you couldn't. Not a word about this at Greyfriars."

The Bounder shrugged his shoulders.

"More fool you!" he said.

"I was attacked by two roughs I'd never seen before, that's all I need explain," said Wharton quietly. "What you've told me is a secret, and I shall forget it as soon as I can. And, look here, Smithy." The captain of the Remove paused.

"Well?"

"Can't we be friends?" said Harry.

"After what I've done?"

"Because of what you've done," said

Harry. "Never mind what you thought of doing, it's what you did that counts. That's all I'm going to remember. Let bygones be bygones, and let's try to be friends."

The Bounder was silent for a moment. His voice was a little husky when he spoke again.

"You're a good sort, Wharton. I was in the wrong. I knew I was, and didn't care. But I'm sorry. I must have been a little out of my senses, I think, when I fixed that up. But I'll tell you this—when I thought it was too late to stop it, I'd have died to undo what I'd done."

"Wash it out," said Harry. "We don't pull well together, Smithy, but let's try at any rate, to be friends."

The Bounder nodded.

"We'll try!" he said.

And the two juniors, more amicable in those moments than they had ever been before, hurried on to Greyfriars.

THE END.

(Now look out for next week's magnificent extra-long yarn of Harry Wharton & Co., entitled: "Bunter, The Bad Lad!" A peach of a yarn this, chums, and one you cannot afford to miss.)



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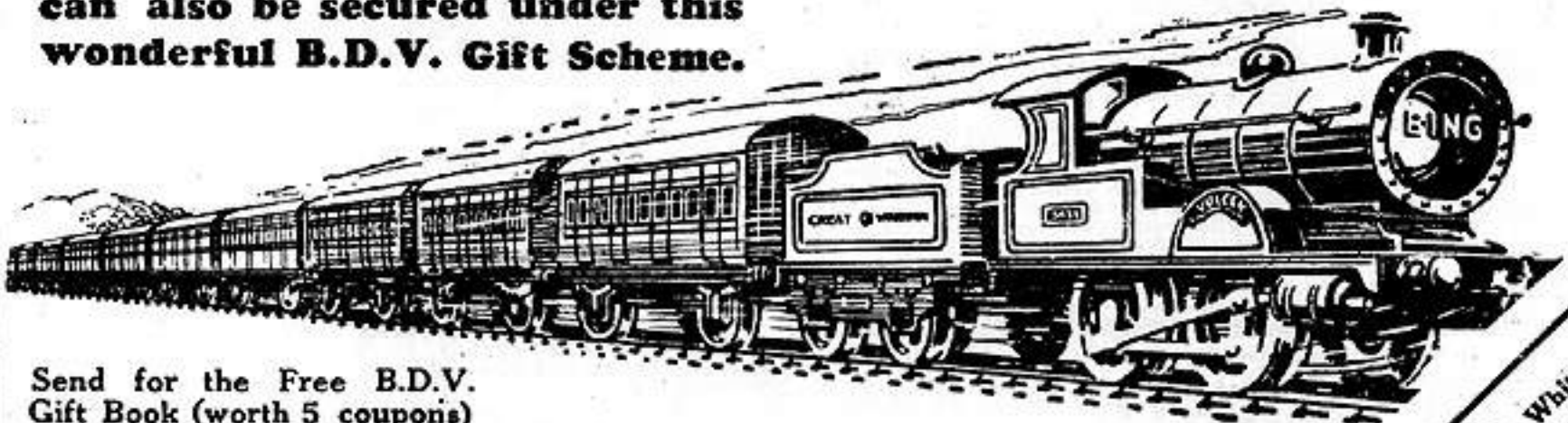
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By Luck & Puck!
—By Dicky Nugent—

BELAY there, you lazy lubber!" Jack Jolly gave a violent start. He was leaning over the railing of the Red Rover, sighting for a glimpse of the whitewashed shores of Old England, when that stern voice broke in upon his reflections.

Turning, Jack Jolly found himself confronted by the Head. Doctor Birchmell looked a stily different from usual. There was nothing skollery or classic about him now. He had "suffered a sea-change, into something new and strange." He was garbed in the gawdy costume of a pirate, for he was now second-in-command on board the Red Rover. His face was tanned from exposure to wind and sun; his ears were adorned with gold earrings. From one side of his waste hung a jooled dagger; from the other side, a cutlass; and from the other side, a brace of pistols. The Head looked no end of a sea-dog as he stood there, glaring at Jack Jolly.

"I ordered you to swab the decks, Jolly!" he thundered. "The pools of gore from our last sea-fight are still lying about. And instead of being on your hands and knees, wedding a scrubbing-brush, I find you leaning over the taffrail, dreaming of England, Home, and Booby! To your task, you lazy dog! If there is any more slacking, I'll give you a thousand lines—I mean, I'll make you walk the plank!"

Jack Jolly glared defiantly at Doctor Pirate Birchmell. "Sir," he cried, "I'm fed-up with life aboard this ship! I'm sick of sea-fights and swabbing decks and wheeling all whelms! Show me the way to go home!"

The Head scowled. He looked a very irate pirate. "This is meeting, Jolly!" he cried sternly. "I don't care!" egg-splained the junior. "I'm fed-up, I tell you, and so are my pals! We're not at St. Sam's now, and we're not going to take your orders!"

"What! What!" The Head fairly danced with rage. "This is gross dishonour, Jolly! I have a good mind to report you to Captain Blood!"

"Report, and be blowed!" he said. "We cannot respect you any longer, Doctor Birchmell, after throwing in your lot with that double-die scoundrel. Personally, I would have died first!"

"Ah!" sneered the Head. "But, then, my life is too valuable to be thrown away in a display of silly heroics. I had the choice of turning pirate, or being fed to the sharks, and chose wisely."

"Rats! If you had any sense of honour and decency, you would have preferred death to dishonour!" Jack Jolly's stinging taunt goaded the Head to fury. Stepping forward, he seized the junior by the scruff of the neck and shook him like a terrier shakes a rat.

But Jack Jolly's blood was up. Lowering his head, he charged at Doctor Pirate Birchmell like a mad bull, butting him in the middle. The Head sat down suddenly on the deck, making a noise like a punctured football. He looked a very undignified pirate as he sprawled there, pumping in breath.

"Help!" shouted the Head, as soon as he had found his voice. "Help! Mewiny!"

Instantly there was a rush of feet, and Captain Blood, with a pack of bludhisty pirates at his heels, swarmed on to the deck. "Ho, ho!" roared the chief of the pirates. "Mewiny aboard my ship—hey! Seeo that young spitter!"

A number of boery ruffans flung themselves upon Jack Jolly and hurled him to the deck and sat on him. The plucky junior egg-splained a sense of suffocation. "What are you going to do with him, captain?" asked the Head, scrambling to his feet.

"He shall die!" said Captain Blood fiercely. "He shall walk the plank! Tie his fists together and blindfold him! Hoist the plank, you lubbers!"

The dreaded plank was hoisted into position, and Jack Jolly was hauled to his feet. His fists were strung together and a hangerkeef was bound tightly around his head. Then, under Captain Blood's direction, he was guided to the plank and ordered to walk.

Slowly—foot by foot—inch by inch—milymeter by milymeter—the gallant junior tottered to his doom. After what seemed an eternity, he reached the end of the swaying plank, and his feet trod the empty air. Then—down he went, down, down, down—through what seemed an affinity of space!

Before a hand could be shot out to restrain him, Frank had lept nimbly over the taffrail; and then, as gracefully as a bird, he dived to the rescue of his chum. "Jamme!" cried Captain Blood. "There's pluck for you!"

And a mermer of admiration ran round the crew. The Head, who had watched that thrilling dive, rung his hands. "The intrepid young fool!" he groaned. "He will be drowned!"

"Or gobloled up by the shark," said Captain Blood. "But—sedath! What magnificent curridge! Siffie! I've never seen the like!"

Frank Fearless was now engaged in a grim fight for life—his own life, and Jack Jolly's. With one arm, he supported Jack Jolly round the waste; with the other, he fought a fierce shark that came towards him with snapping jaws. Biff!

Frank Fearless shot out his fist, and the ravenous broot lost several of its front teeth. With an angry snarl, it came at Frank Fearless again. This time Frank gripped the monster by the throat and, slowly, but surely, he started to squeeze the life out of it.

The frenzid shark lashed the water into foam with its tale. Its hideous face grew purple as Frank Fearless tightened his stranglehold. At last, with all the broth choked out of its body, the horrid sea monster fell back lifeless and sank like a plummet.

There was a loud cheer from the deck above. There was also a shout of warning, for another shark, bigger and more ferocious than its fellow, now thrashed its way towards Frank Fearless with a gleom of yellow fangs.

"Quick, Frank!" panted Jack Jolly. Frank Fearless drew a dagger from his belt and waited till the shark came alongside. Then, with a swift, dexteros movement, he plunged the weppon to the hilt in the monster's side.

The water was died crimson, and the shark died, too. With a last defiant kick of its tale, the grate broot sank beneath the surface. "Siffie!" cried Captain Blood. "I cannot allow that brave youngster to be torn him from him! Lower a boat and reskow the pair of them!"

what they had witnessed, carried the juniors quite tenderly up the ladder. "It's a brave lad you are!" cried Captain Blood, ringing Frank Fearless by the hand. "It's a pity you will not agree to join my merry band of pirates, and serve under me. You would be a grate ingestion to me!"

He ordered Jack Jolly to be disblinded, and to have his fists severed. And Jack, turning to his gallent reskewer, poured out his hart in grateitude. "The more we are together, the merrier we'll be!"

The jollist band of buccaners' That sales the jolly old sea! Iying in their hanks on the quarter-deck, Jack Jolly & Co. listened to the sounds of revelry from below.

"Now's our chance to escape!" cried Jack Jolly. "While these prestins skoundrels are in their cups, let's lower the log-boart and make a get-away!"

"What about the watch?" asked Merry. "There's only one ruffian on watch," was the reply. "We'll pounce upon him and gag him before he can give the alarm. Turn out, you fellows!"

Grately egg-splained, the juniors scrambled into their clothes. Then, led by Jack Jolly, they tiptoed softly along the deck. It was deserted, save for a dark figger that stood leaning over the taffrail, sillocted against the minuite sky.

"The watch!" whispered Jack Jolly. "Me and Frank Fearless will deal with the skoundrel, while you others lower the boat in roddness for our escape!"

Merry and Bright hurried away to lower the boat; and Jack Jolly and Frank Fearless flung themselves upon the watch. They bore him, struggling, to the deck; and not until they had fattened him out did they recognise the swarthy-faced skoundrel by his beard. It was the Head!

Doctor Birchmell, being a strict teetotaler, was taking no part in the carozing; and he had volunteered to keep watch. He was startled to find himself on his back, blinking up into the grim faces of Jack Jolly and Frank Fearless. "Jolly! Fearless!" panted the Head. "It is jolly fearless of you to attack me like this; but it will mean a ship's flogging for both of you! As soon as I give the alarm—"

Now that they were within hale of their native land, the juniors took things easy; and it was breakfast-time when they paddled lezurely into Winklesa Harbor.

The St. Sam's fellows were in camp at Winklesa; and grate was the egg-stemment when the wanders returned.

The spectacle of the Head, decked out as a pirate, fairly staggered the masters and boys.

Doctor Birchmell turned to his companions. "My boys!" he muttered. "When you are asked to describe your adventures, I trust you will say nothing about my having joined the pirates, and taken part in sea-fights, and so fourth. I only did it to passify Captain Blood, and to save your own lives."

"My hat!"

"Mum's the word!" said the Head, with a sly wink. "When they ask me what I am doing in the garb of a pirate, I shall egg-splain that I have been taking part in Gilbert and Sullivan's opera, 'The Pirates of Penzance.' I shall egg-spect you boys to bear out my story. If you don't, I'll hurrh you black and blew! Hallo, my dear Lickham! How the merry dickers are you, old nut?"

The Head broke off to greet the master of the Fourth. As for Jack Jolly & Co, they were surrounded by a swarm of their school-fellows, who fairly bombarded them with questions. To the majority, they simply said what the Head had told them to say; but to their own intimate chums in the Fourth they told the amazing story of their adventures.

"The Head pretended that he only joined the pirates to save us from Captain Blood's wrath," said Jolly Jack. "But don't you believe it! The old lubber thruthfully enjoyed being a pirate. You ought to have seen him in that sea-fight, mowing down the Spaniards with his cutlass! He's as blud-thirsty as Captain Blood himself; and he's not at all pleased to be back in England."

Which was quite true. During the next few days the Head went about with a face as long as a fiddle. He was sighing for a site of the Spanish Main once more, and for the heckick life of a bold, bad buccanier!



"England!" cried the Head hoarsely. "The whitewashed shores of England! I had never hoped to feast my eyes upon those shores again!"



Lowering his head, Jack Jolly charged at Dr. Birchmell like a mad bull. The Head set down suddenly on the deck, making a noise like a punctured football. "Help!" Mewiny!"