

HERE'S THIS WEEK'S BEST BARGAIN, BOYS!

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# The Magnet

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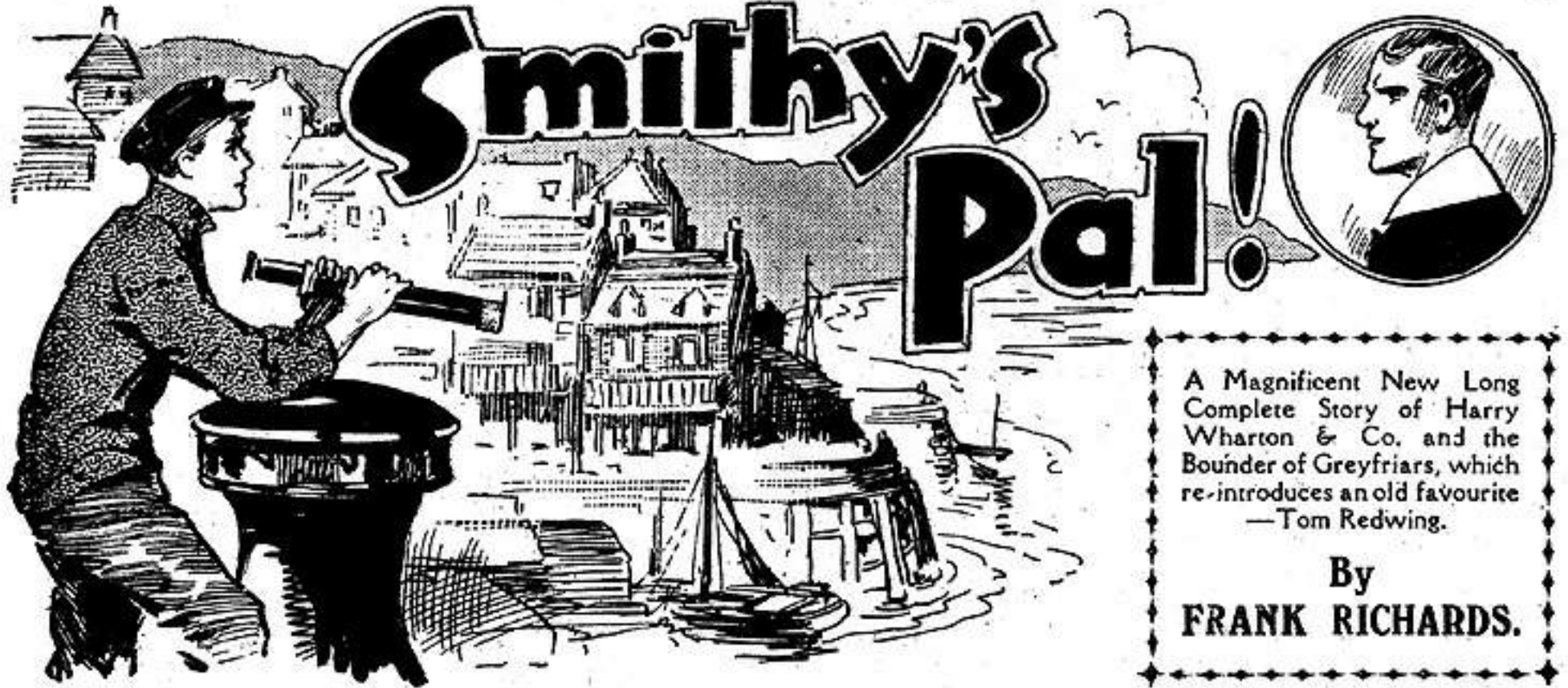


## THE WRONG VICTIM!

The booby trap was intended for Vernon-Smith, but fortunately for him he chose to enter the Form-room via the window. Mr. Quelch, however, was not quite so fortunate! (See the grand school story of the Greyfriars clams—inside.)



**THE PROOF!** The Bounder of Greyfriars is rolling in money; for he's the son of a millionaire, but that makes no difference in his friendship for Tom Redwing, who serves before the mast. To see Tom, to shake him by the hand again, the Bounder cuts detention and risks expulsion—sure proof that he thinks the world of the sailorman's son!



A Magnificent New Long Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co. and the Bounder of Greyfriars, which re-introduces an old favourite—Tom Redwing.

By  
**FRANK RICHARDS.**

### THE FIRST CHAPTER.

#### Smithy Asks For It!

**“YOU go on, Bunter!”**  
“Oh!” gasped Bunter.  
It was William George Bunter's unlucky morning.

Billy Bunter, of the Greyfriars Remove, had a happy way of neglecting his “prep,” and trusting to luck in the morning. Sometimes his luck was good. Sometimes it was not. On the present occasion it was not.

Mr. Quelch's gimlet-eye singled him out.

Bunter had hoped to escape that gimlet-eye. He had only the haziest idea of what the lesson was about. He had not even looked at the section of the “Æneid” which the Remove had to prepare the previous evening. Bunter had been too busy to bother about prep. Now that he was called upon to construe, he wished from the bottom of his fat heart that he had not been too busy.

“Bunter!” repeated Mr. Quelch.

“Oh! Yes, sir.”

“You are keeping me waiting, Bunter.”

“Oh dear!” murmured Bunter.

He blinked at the Latin before him with a despairing blink.

Herbert Vernon-Smith had been put on just before Bunter, and Smithy, who could have handed out as good a construe as any in the Remove, had deliberately handed out a very bad one, for the worthy purpose of irritating his Form master and making the other fellows grin.

Smithy had succeeded in both objects. The Removites had grinned and Mr. Quelch had been undoubtedly irritated—to the extent of giving Smithy fifty lines. Getting Quelch's “rag” out, however, was cheap at fifty lines, in the Bounder's opinion.

Now it was Bunter's turn; and the Remove master was in no mood to be lenient with a fellow who had been too busy for prep.

His eyes gleamed at Bunter, as the fat junior mumbled and hesitated.

“You are wasting my time, Bunter, and the time of the class.”

“Oh, sir!” gasped Bunter.

“Have you prepared this lesson, Bunter?”

“Oh, yes, sir!” Billy Bunter was

never trammelled by any undue regard for the truth. “I—I worked at it very hard last evening, sir. I—I had it all as—as pat as anything. I'm always very careful with my prep, sir. I—I rather enjoy it, sir.”

“I trust that your statement is correct, Bunter,” said Mr. Quelch grimly. “I shall judge by your construe. Proceed.”

Bunter would have been only too glad to proceed, if he had known how. The trouble was that he didn't know how.

“Urbs antiqua fuit!” he gasped.

“Construe!” snapped Mr. Quelch.

Bunter cast a despairing blink round, as if seeking inspiration in the grinning faces of his Form-fellows.

There was a whisper from Vernon-Smith—the faintest of whispers, which did not reach Mr. Quelch. It reached Bunter, who was near the Bounder.

“There were antiquated herbs!” whispered Smithy.

Some of the Removites, who overheard that whisper, almost exploded. But it came as a relief to Bunter. All Latin, in Bunter's valuable opinion, was footling bosh; and any rendering was good enough, so long as it kept Quelch quiet. Certainly that rendering was not likely to keep Mr. Quelch quiet; but Bunter was happily unconscious of that. In great relief he proceeded to construe.

“Urbs antiqua fuit—there were antiquated herbs!” announced Bunter.

Mr. Quelch jumped.

Mr. Quelch was an elderly gentleman, and his jumping days should have been over. But really that translation was enough to make any Form master jump on his hundredth birthday.

“What!” stuttered Mr. Quelch.

“Ha, ha, ha!” came in a howl from the Remove.

They could not help it. Bunter's “con” often added to the gaiety of existence in the Remove Form-room. But this was unusually rich, even for Billy Bunter.

“What!” repeated Mr. Quelch.

“Bunter, how dare you!”

Bunter gasped.

“Isn't that right, sir?”

“Right!” said Mr. Quelch dazedly.

“Are you in your senses, Bunter?”

“I—I hope so, sir!” stuttered Bunter.

“What a hopeful nature!” murmured Bob Cherry; and there was another chortle in the Remove.

“Silence!” hooted Mr. Quelch.

He picked up his cane.

“Bunter, you are the most obtuse boy in the Form—the laziest and stupidest boy it has ever been my misfortune to instruct—”

“Oh, really, sir—”

“But mere stupidity would not account for this!” hooted Mr. Quelch. “You have not prepared this lesson. You are proceeding by guesswork. You have no idea whatever of the correct translation of that passage, Bunter. How dare you!”

“I—I—I—” stuttered Bunter. “I—I thought that was right, sir.”

“You thought nothing of the kind, Bunter!” boomed Mr. Quelch. “If you had thought—if you were capable of thinking—you could not have uttered such an absurdity.”

“Oh, really, sir—”

“I shall cane you, Bunter.”

“Oh dear!”

“Step out before the class.”

“Oh, you beast, Smithy!” gasped Bunter, comprehending at last that his fat leg had been pulled.

Mr. Quelch jumped again.

“What? What? Did Vernon-Smith—”

“Pulling my leg!” gasped Bunter.

“I call it a rotten trick!”

“Shurrup, you ass!” whispered Harry Wharton.

“Shan't!” howled Bunter. “That beast Smithy was taking me in. I'm not going to be caned for Smithy's tricks!”

“Silence, Bunter! Vernon-Smith, did you speak to Bunter?” inquired the Remove master, with a grim look at the Bounder.

Smithy shrugged his shoulders. Perhaps he had not expected Bunter to give him away. Perhaps he had not cared. Certainly, now that he was called to account, he was ready to take the consequences with his usual cool hardihood.

“Answer me, Vernon-Smith!”

“Yes, sir,” said the Bounder.

“You are not an obtuse boy like Bunter, Vernon-Smith. You are perfectly well aware that ‘urbs antiqua fuit’ should be rendered, ‘There was an ancient city.’”

“Oh, quite, sir!” drawled the Bounder.

“Then you were deliberately deceiving that obtuse boy, in order to



cause unseemly merriment in the Form-room."

"I was pulling his silly leg, sir," said the Bounder coolly.

"And you think the Form-room is the proper place for such jests?" said Mr. Quelch, his eyes glinting.

"Yes, sir."

"What? What? How dare you say so, Vernon-Smith?"

"You asked me, sir."

The Remove almost gasped aloud at the Bounder's answer; but Smithy was as cool as the proverbial cucumber.

Mr. Quelch breathed hard and deep.

"Bunter, I shall not cane you. You will take a hundred lines for neglecting your preparation. Vernon-Smith, you will be caned, and you will be detained during morning break, and for the whole of the half-holiday to-day."

"Dear me!" said the Bounder, unmoved.

"Step out before the class, Vernon-Smith!"

The Bounder lounged out of his place.

"Bend over that desk!"

There was a mocking smile on the Bounder's face as he lounged out to receive his punishment. But the smile had quite vanished by the time the caning was over. Mr. Quelch had a heavy hand, and the Bounder's face was black and savage when the cane ceased to swish.

"Go back to your place!" said the Remove master harshly.

And the Bounder tramped sullenly back.

"Bull, you will go on!"

Johnny Bull proceeded with his con, very carefully indeed. In the present state of Mr. Quelch's temper, it behoved the Remove to be careful—very careful. The Bounder sat with a black brow.

When eleven boomed out from the clock tower, and the Remove were dismissed for "break," Herbert Vernon-Smith remained in his place, with a special task to occupy him till the Form reassembled for third lesson.

**THE SECOND CHAPTER.**

**A Letter for Smithy!**

"I SAY, you fellows!"

"Kick him!" said Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"Hard!" agreed Frank Nugent.

"Oh, really, Nugent——"

"Burst him!" suggested Johnny Bull.

Billy Bunter backed away in alarm. He did not want to be kicked, hard or otherwise; still less did he desire to burst.

"I say, you fellows, no larks!" he said. "There's a letter——"

"What did you give Smithy away for, you fat frog?" demanded Skinner.

"Blow Smithy!" said Bunter.

"You got him a licking and detention!" said Harry Wharton, with a frown.

"Well, you ass, do you think I was going to have the licking because Smithy was pulling my leg in class?" said Bunter warmly. "He shouldn't have told me that it meant antiquated herbs——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It was all Smithy's fault!" said Bunter. "Besides, I didn't mean to give him away to Quelchy; and he asked for it, and I should have got the licking if he hadn't! That would have been serious!"

"Better kick him!" said Johnny Bull.

"The kickfulness appears to my worthy self the proper caper, in the esteemed circumstances!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"I say, you fellows, don't play the goat!" urged Bunter. "I'm sorry Smithy's for it, of course, though it's his own fault! Look here, there's a letter——"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! One for me!" ejaculated Bob Cherry, as the juniors came up to the letter-rack, where they generally found their letters in morning break.

Bob took down his letter. He was the only member of the Co. for whom there was a letter that morning, but the other fellows noticed a letter addressed to Vernon-Smith in the rack. That, indeed, was the letter in which William George Bunter was interested.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Shut up, Bunter, while a fellow reads!" said Bob.

"I say, there's one for Smithy!"

"Poor old Smithy won't be out till after third lesson," said Skinner. "He does sit up and beg for trouble, and no mistake!"

"Nip into the Form-room with that letter for him," suggested Johnny Bull. "You're his pal, you know."

**FREE CHEWING GUM!**

When you're at the seaside this summer make a point of displaying prominently your copy of

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There's a special representative on the look-out for MAGNET readers, now and throughout the season, and every one he spots will receive free a Packet of Wrigley's Spearmint Chewing Gum. Don't forget—hold your MAGNET so that our representative can see it. He'll do the rest.—Ed.

Harold Skinner grinned.

"And get six from Quelchy for taking a letter to a detained chap!" he said.

"Thank you for nothing!"

And Skinner strolled out into the quad with Snoop and Stott. Skinner's idea of friendship did not include running any sort of risks for a pal.

"I say, you fellows——"

"None for you, Bunter?" asked Peter Todd. "Have your titled relations still forgotten your existence, old fat man? You should get the duke to buy those little pink books!"

"Oh, really, Toddy——"

"Memory systems are cheap nowadays!" said Peter. "Why not get the marquess to go in for one?"

"Look here——"

"The way the viscount keeps on forgetting you is really scandalous!" urged Peter.

"Yah!"

"How long is it since the earl last sent you a postal-order?" inquired Toddy.

"Oh, really, Toddy! Look here, there's that letter for Smithy!" said Bunter. "I dare say Smithy wants it. There may be a remittance in it. You know he gets whacking remittances! Well, if there's a remittance in that letter, it stands to reason that Smithy wants it. See?"

"Take it to him in the Form-room," grinned Peter.

"Think it would be safe?"

"Not at all. Quelchy might spot you, and if he did, he would give you six. But that would be all right."

"Eh?"

"Six would do you good!" explained Peter.

"Beast!"

Peter Todd walked away, smiling, and the Famous Five followed him into the quad. But Bunter remained at the letter-rack. The letter stuck up in the rack, which was addressed to Herbert Vernon-Smith, seemed to exercise a sort of fascination on the Owl of the Remove.

It was quite probable that a letter for Smithy contained a remittance. Smithy undoubtedly had "whacking" remittances at times, his father being a millionaire and a very indulgent parent. Smithy's remittances might not have been supposed to concern Bunter—by any fellow who did not know Bunter. As a matter of fact, Bunter was very deeply concerned indeed.

He blinked at the letter, and took it down from the rack, and turned it over in his fat fingers.

Smithy, being detained through morning break, could not receive his letter till the end of third lesson. Bunter felt that that was very hard on Smithy. He was bound to want his letter—at least, if there was a remittance in it. And if a fellow took the risk of conveying it to him while he was under detention, surely common gratitude would compel the Bounder to make that fellow a small loan—a merely temporary loan till a long-expected postal-order arrived!

Bunter felt that that was so. The difficulty was that he did not want to take the risk.

He slipped the letter into his pocket and rolled away up the Form-room passage, debating the matter in his fat mind.

The Form-room door was shut, and he was pretty certain that Mr. Quelch had left. To make quite sure before entering, the fat junior stopped at the Form-room door and blinked through the keyhole.

Precisely at the same moment the door opened from within.

Mr. Quelch had not left; but having set Smithy a task, he was just leaving. The door opened so suddenly that Bunter almost pitched into the room.

"Oh!" he gasped.

Mr. Quelch stared at him.

"Bunter!"

"Oh, yes, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I—I wasn't coming in, sir! I wasn't going to speak to Smithy!"

"What! You were about to speak to a boy under detention?" demanded Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, no, sir! I—I've just said I wasn't!" gasped Bunter. "Nothing of the kind, sir!"

"Then what were you doing here?"

"N-n-nothing, sir!"

"Bunter!"

"I—I mean, sir, I—I came back for a book!" stammered Bunter.

"You have just told me that you were not coming in!"

"Oh, I—I mean——"

"You need say no more. Bunter! You are a most untruthful boy!" said Mr. Quelch, frowning.

"Oh, no, sir! I—I really meant to say, sir, that—that—that——"

"Silence!"

Mr. Quelch stepped to his desk and picked up his cane.

"Hold out your hand, Bunter!"

"Oh, lor'!"

Swish!

"Yaroooh!"

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"Cease those ridiculous noises, Bunter, and go!"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

Bunter did not cease the ridiculous noises, but he went—he was glad to go. He rolled away in a great hurry, quite giving up his idea of conveying that letter to Smithy, remittance or no remittance.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER.

#### Who Cares!

"YOU fat bounder!"

Bunter jumped.

The Owl of the Remove had seated himself on a bench under an old elm in the quad. For some little time he had been busy squeezing the fat paw to which Mr. Quelch's cane had been applied. But as the pain wore off, the Owl of the Remove gave his attention once more to Smithy's letter. He drew that missive from his pocket, and blinked at it through his big spectacles, with the deepest interest. The thought that there might be a whacking remittance in that envelope haunted Bunter. He was not quite capable of opening another fellow's letter deliberately. But it was extremely probable that Smithy's letter would have come open by accident, had not Harry Wharton happened along just then.

The captain of the Remove stopped, with a frowning brow. Bunter had had no letter that morning; but Wharton remembered his deep interest in Smithy's letter; so he had no doubt as to the identity of the note now in the Owl's fat hands.

"You fat bounder, that's Smithy's letter!" exclaimed Wharton.

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Isn't it?" demanded the captain of the Remove.

"Certainly not. I hope you don't think I'd touch another fellow's letter!" said Bunter scornfully. "Besides, I was taking it to Smithy, only that beast Quelch butted in and stopped me."

"Oh, my hat!"

"I suppose I can take a letter to a pal if I like, without you butting in," said Bunter. "Besides, this isn't Smithy's letter at all—it's from one of my titled relations."

"You fat idiot, I can see Smithy's name on it!" said Harry, laughing. "You'd better put it back in the rack."

"Well, you see, Smithy may be anxious about it," said Bunter. "I could give it to him in third lesson. The fact is, I've been disappointed about a postal-order, old chap; and if Smithy's pater is sending him one of his whacking tips and— What are you staring at?"

Wharton's eyes were fixed on the envelope.

He had not noticed the letter specially when it was in the rack, not sharing Bunter's interest in matters that did not concern him. But now that his attention was drawn to it, he observed the handwriting, and recognised it.

"My hat!" he exclaimed. "That's from old Redwing!"

"What?" ejaculated Bunter.

"Redwing, who left last term," said Harry. "I know his fist well enough. I fancy Smithy will be jolly glad to get that letter."

"Redwing!" repeated Bunter blankly.

"Put it back in the rack at once!" said the captain of the Remove. "You ought to have more sense than to mess about with another fellow's letters, Bunter. Now, then, cut off!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Cut off!" repeated the captain of the

Remove. "Do you want me to kick you all the way to the House?"

"Beast! I'm just going!"

And Bunter rolled away towards the House.

Harry Wharton walked on, dismissing the Owl of the Remove from his mind. But William George Bunter did not keep on to the House. As soon as Wharton was gone, he stopped and blinked at the letter again, with an expression of deep disappointment and disgust on his fat face.

Now that he examined it attentively, he discerned that the address on it was not in the heavy, strongly-marked handwriting of the millionaire. It was addressed in a clear, steady, rather boyish hand, which Bunter had once known and had forgotten. But he knew now that it was the handwriting of Tom Redwing. Bunter had almost forgotten the existence of Tom Redwing, who had been the Bounder's best chum at Greyfriars, though it was owing to a quarrel with Vernon-Smith that he had left.

Bunter's feelings were really too deep for words as he blinked at the letter.

Redwing! That sailorman fellow, who had been at Greyfriars on a scholarship! Not likely to be anything of value in a letter from Tom Redwing! Bunter had bagged a "lick" of Mr. Quelch's cane, all on account of a letter from a fellow who had left Greyfriars, a fellow of absolutely no account at all, a fellow quite unworthy of Bunter's lofty notice. The Owl of the Remove was intensely annoyed. Indeed, he was tempted to throw that utterly worthless letter over the nearest wall, and have done with it.

Bunter did not go so far as that, however. But he did not take the trouble to return to the House and put the letter back in the rack. He slipped it into his pocket. He could give it to the Bounder when he saw him again after class—not that it mattered what became of the letter, in Bunter's valuable opinion.

That letter, once so deeply interesting to William George Bunter, was now without any interest whatever for him.

He rolled away to a shady seat, to spend the remainder of morning break resting there.

Not till the bell rang for third lesson did Bunter leave his shady seat, and by that time he had quite forgotten the absolutely unimportant letter in his pocket.

He rolled into the Form-room with the rest of the Remove.

The Bounder was in his place, with a black and scowling brow. Bunter blinked at him, and grinned. For the moment he remembered the letter in his pocket; but he could not hand it over to Vernon-Smith in the Form-room, under Mr. Quelch's eyes. Indeed, he did not think of doing so. The letter did not matter!

Third lesson dealt with geography, a subject upon which Billy Bunter's knowledge was peculiar, but not extensive. He was in trouble once or twice during the lesson, and once more the letter in his pocket faded utterly from his memory.

When the Remove were finally dismissed, the Bounder left the Form-room with the rest, scowling as he went out.

He had asked for his punishment that morning; but it was a rather heavy punishment, all the same. It was a sunny July day, and detention in the Form-room for the half-holiday was extremely unwelcome to any fellow. He gave Billy Bunter a kick as he passed him in the passage, and Bunter uttered a wild roar.

"You beast, Smithy! Yaroooh!"

He dodged away in haste.

The Bounder strode at him with a

savage brow. Bob Cherry strolled in between them.

"Cheese it, Smithy, old chap!" he said cheerily.

"That fat beast got me detained!" growled the Bounder.

"Well, it was really your own fault, you know. You jolly nearly got Bunter caned, old bean, pulling his leg over his construe."

"No bizney of yours, I suppose?" snapped the Bounder.

Bob's blue eyes glinted for a moment. "Cut off, Bunter!" he said.

Billy Bunter was already cutting off.

"I'm going to kick that fat cad!" snarled the Bounder.

"Well, you've kicked him!" said Bob. "One's enough."

"Look here—"

"Keep your temper, old bean! What's the good of rowing?" said Bob amicably.

The Bounder gave him a glare; but he controlled his savage temper, and swung away. When he came out into the quad, Billy Bunter was very careful to keep at a safe distance from him.

At dinner, Vernon-Smith was looking dark and sullen. He had "shown off" in the Form-room that morning, as a fellow who was ready to rag his Form-master, regardless of consequences. Now the consequences were coming home to him, and the Bounder did not like it. While all the other fellows were free for the afternoon, to play cricket or go on the river, Herbert Vernon-Smith was booked for detention. It was very unpleasant, though he could hardly have expected anything else.

After dinner, he went gloomily into the sunny quad. He was to go into detention at two; and the nearer it came, the more irksome it seemed. Mr. Quelch's eyes fell upon his sullen, depondent face, and after a moment's reflection, the Form master called to him.

"Vernon-Smith!"

The Bounder looked round sullenly. Mr. Quelch, standing on the House steps, signed to him to approach.

The Bounder came up slowly.

"You are detained this afternoon, Vernon-Smith!"

"I know that, sir."

"I very much regret, Vernon-Smith, that it is my duty to punish you so often!" said Mr. Quelch mildly.

The Bounder's lip curled.

Some of the Remove fellows, looking on, were rather surprised to hear the Form master speaking so kindly to the scapegrace of the Form. Certainly the Bounder had deserved little kindness at Mr. Quelch's hands.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Quelch had not so completely forgotten his own schooldays as his pupils supposed. The dejected look on Smithy's face had caught his attention and touched some chord in his memory, recalling some far-off episode in his own boyhood.

It came into Mr. Quelch's mind that he had, perhaps, been a little severe with the ragger in class. Ragging in class was a serious matter, from a Form master's point of view. Still, boys would be boys, and Mr. Quelch had been a boy once. The Remove master was obeying a kindly human impulse in speaking to the Bounder now.

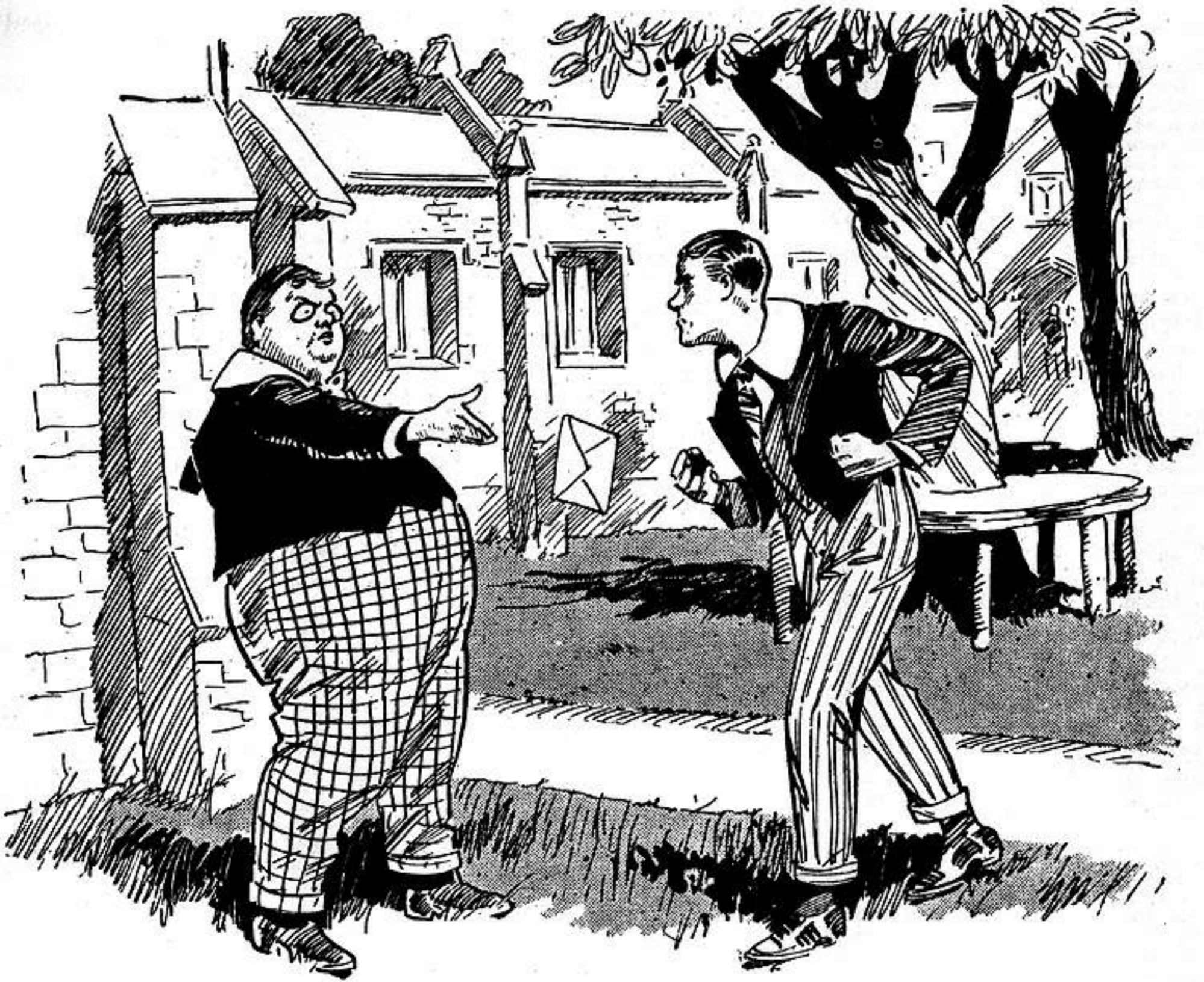
"You must be aware, Vernon-Smith, that you have tried my patience very severely!" said the Remove master.

Vernon-Smith was sulkily silent.

"I am sorry that you are detained for this half-holiday. If I thought that you regretted your impertinence, Vernon-Smith, I should be disposed to excuse you from detention to-day."

It was a chance for the Bounder,





"Give me my letter!" roared Vernon-Smith. "Catch me trying to oblige you again," said Billy Bunter. "The rotten letter doesn't matter—it's only from the scholarship cad, Redwing. There's your beastly letter, you beast!" The Owl of the Remove extracted the letter from his pocket and hurled it at the Bounder. (See Chapter 4.)

He knew, and the other fellows standing near him knew, that he had only to say frankly that he was sorry for his "cheek" in the Form-room that morning, and the detention would have been washed out.

For a moment the Bounder was moved by his Form master's kindness, and was about to speak as he knew he ought to have spoken.

But the perversity of his nature interposed.

He was not going to be "soft"; he was not going to let the fellows think him willing to ask favours.

"Indeed, sir!" he said, in his most sarcastic tone. "I haven't asked to be let off, that I know of!"

It was a rebuff that the kindest-hearted Form master could scarcely have tolerated with patience.

Mr. Quelch's face hardened grimly. "I am afraid, Vernon-Smith, that you are a hard-hearted and incorrigible boy," he said. "You will go into the Form-room at two o'clock, and I shall set you a Latin task."

"Thank you, sir!" said the Bounder in the same tone.

"You will remain in the Form-room till five o'clock."

"Thank you, sir!" repeated the Bounder.

Mr. Quelch breathed hard. "That will do, Vernon-Smith!" he said between his set lips. "Another

word of impertinence, and I shall take you to my study now and cane you!"

The Bounder was silent, but there was a mocking look on his face as the Remove master went back into the House.

"That's the stuff to give 'em!" grinned Skinner, when Mr. Quelch was gone. "You've got a nerve, Smithy, and no mistake!"

The Bounder shrugged his shoulders. "I think you're an ass, Smithy!" said Squiff. "Quelch would have let you off if you'd answered him decently."

"I'm not suckin' up to any dashed Form master!" sneered the Bounder.

"You're booked for an afternoon in the Form-room now, anyhow!" said Hazeldenc.

"Who cares?"

"I know I jolly well should!"

"Oh, rats!"

And the Bounder swung away whistling.

#### THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

##### Painful for Bunter!

"WHAT'S the news, Smithy?" Harry Wharton asked the question as he met the Bounder a little later in the quad. He was, in fact, looking for Vernon-Smith; being extremely interested in news of Tom Redwing. Redwing had been the Bounder's special

chum at Greyfriars, but he had been on very friendly terms with the Famous Five, and they had not forgotten him.

Vernon-Smith stopped with a look of surprise.

"News!" he repeated.

"Yes," said Harry.

"I don't catch on. I've no news that I know of!"

Wharton's cheery smile rather faded. "Oh, all serene," he said. "Just as you like. I suppose you don't think I'm butting into your private affairs, do you? No reason why I shouldn't ask how the chap's getting on, as you've had a letter from him. But just as you like, of course!"

And Wharton turned abruptly away. The Bounder stared after him.

"What the merry thump do you mean?" he exclaimed testily. "What chap are you speaking of? I've had no letter from anybody to-day!"

Wharton turned back at once. "Oh! I mean Redwing—"

Vernon-Smith started. "Redwing! What the deuce—"

"You've heard from him?"

"No. I haven't had a line from him since he left Greyfriars. We weren't on specially good terms when he left, and I don't expect to hear from him. What on earth are you driving at?" the Bounder exclaimed irritably. "You know jolly well that I treated



Redwing rottenly, and he got his back up. Are you trying to rub that in, confound you?"

"Keep your temper," said Wharton quietly. "I supposed you'd had the letter, of course, as it came for you this morning."

"A letter from Redwing?" said the Bounder, staring.

"Yes. I saw it and knew the fist," said Harry. "Mean to say you haven't taken it from the rack?"

"I think you're dreaming. I looked in the rack for letters after third lesson, and there was none for me."

Wharton uttered an exclamation.

"That fat idiot!"

"What the deuce——"

"Bunter took the letter to bring it to you, I suppose," said Harry. "It was in his paw that I saw it and recognised Redwing's fist. I told that fat duffer to put it back in the rack, and thought he had done so. He may have shoved it into his pocket and forgotten. Better ask him."

A savage look came over the Bounder's hard face.

"By gad! I'll teach that fat cad not to meddle with my letters!" he exclaimed. "Do you know where he is?"

Wharton shook his head.

"Thanks for telling me!" said the Bounder, as a sort of after-thought.

"I never knew there had been a letter for me. Might have lost it altogether if you hadn't mentioned it. By gad! I'll——" He broke off, and started in search of Bunter, with an expression on his face that boded no good to the Owl of the Remove.

It was getting near two o'clock now, almost time for the Bounder to go in to detention. But he was not thinking of that now.

He was anxious to see that letter from Tom Redwing, more anxious than any Remove fellow would have expected him to be, for news of his old chum.

Whether Smithy missed his friend since he had left, the Remove hardly knew; certainly Smithy never gave a sign of it, and never mentioned Redwing. But Smithy was not at any time a fellow to wear his heart on his sleeve.

As a matter of fact, he missed Redwing sorely; more sorely than he had

ever dreamed that he would miss him. He had never made any other chum at Greyfriars; the Bounder was not a fellow who made friends easily. Since Redwing had left, Smithy had gone steadily downhill now that the influence that had helped to keep him straight was withdrawn. His ungovernable temper had caused a breach that could not be healed. And if Redwing had forgiven his ungenerous taunts, he could not have forgotten them.

He had never expected to hear from the sailorman's son again; he knew that he did not deserve pardon for the offence he had given. Sometimes he told himself that he did not care; but he knew very well that he cared deeply.

Tom Redwing, he knew, had gone back to Hawkscliff after leaving the school, and had gone to sea with his father. A letter from him meant that he had returned from the sea; it might mean that he had forgiven old offences, and desired to see his old comrade again. No news could have been more welcome to Herbert Vernon-Smith than that.

Billy Bunter was loafing outside the school tuckshop when Vernon-Smith spotted him.

"Bunter!" called out the Bounder, hurrying towards him.

Bunter gave a startled blink round.

He gave only one blink, and then broke into flight. The look on the Bounder's face was enough for Bunter.

The Owl of the Remove had, as a matter of fact, utterly forgotten the letter that was still reposing in his pocket. He supposed that Smithy was "after him" again, on account of the incident in the Form-room that morning which had led to the Bounder's detention. He had had one kick from Smithy, and he did not want any more.

He ran for his life.

"Stop!" roared the Bounder.

Bunter panted on.

"You fat idiot—stop!" yelled Vernon-Smith, dashing in pursuit.

"Oh, lor'!" gasped Bunter.

The fat junior was no match for Smithy in a foot-race; but he did his best, and his best was very creditable, considering the weight he had to carry.

Right along the path under the elms went Bunter, puffing and blowing, his fat little legs fairly twinkling as he flew. After him rushed the Bounder, black with rage.

"Go it, Bunter!" yelled Bolsover major. "Ha, ha, ha! Put it on!"

"Put it on, Bunter!" shouted half a dozen fellows, much entertained by the race.

"Oh dear! Stop him, you fellows! Keep him off! Ow!"

"You fat idiot—stop!"

Bunter did not stop—he flew. Fear lent him wings, and he flew on desperately, amid shouts of encouragement and laughter.

Vernon-Smith put on a spurt, and overtook the fat junior at last. He grabbed Bunter by the collar and spun him round.

"Yaroooh! Keep off!" shrieked Bunter. "I'll tell Quelchy! Beast! Keep off! Help! Rescue! Yoop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Thump! Thump! Thump!

"Whoooooop!"

The enraged Bounder was thumping savagely. He had reason to be angry, and Bunter certainly deserved to be thumped. But Smithy's temper, as usual, got the better of him; and Bunter would have suffered much too severely for his sins had not other fellows been at hand. Johnny Bull and Bob Cherry ran up and grasped the Bounder and jerked him away from his victim.

Bunter staggered against the school wall, gasping and yelling.

"Ow—ow—ow! Oh! Ow!"

"Hands off, you fools!" shouted the Bounder.

"Easy does it!" said Johnny Bull. "Let Bunter alone!"

"You silly idiot, he's got my letter!"

"Eh?"

"What?"

"Give me my letter, you fat idiot!" yelled the Bounder.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "Blow your letter! Bother your silly letter! I'd forgotten all about your rotten letter! Hang you and your letter!"

"You've got a letter belonging to Smithy, you fat dummy?" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Ow—ow! Blow him and his letter!" gasped Bunter.

"Have you got Smithy's letter?" demanded Johnny Bull.

"Ow! Yes! I got it out of the rack to give to him, only I forgot!" gasped Bunter. "Catch me trying to oblige him again! Ow! The rotten letter doesn't matter—it's only from the scholarship cad, Redwing! There's your beastly letter, you beast!"

Bunter, having extracted the letter from his pocket, hurled it at the Bounder.

"A rotten letter from a rotten outsider like Redwing!" he snorted. "I jolly well think—— Yaroooooh!" Bunter wound up, as the Bounder smote him and he rolled to the ground.

Vernon-Smith strode away with the letter crumpled in his hand. Bunter sat up and roared.

"Yow-ow-ow-ow! I say, Bob, old chap, go after him and give him a licking! I'll hold your jacket!"

"You fat villain——"

"Oh, really, Cherry—grooogh!"

"What do you mean by meddling with a fellow's letters?" demanded Bob. "If I'd known you had Smithy's letter I'd have let him burst you!"

"Oh, really, you beast——"

"Bump him!" said Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really—— Yaroooooh!"

Bump!

"Yoop! Help! Murder! Fire!"

roared Bunter.

Bump!

"Yarooooooobooop!"

Bunter was left to roar.

## THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

### Parted Chums!

VERNON-SMITH hurried away, the letter in his hand, his brow black with anger and annoyance. No other letter could have been of as much interest to him as that from his estranged chum, whom he had never expected to see again or to hear from. And owing to Bunter's obtuse meddling, the letter had been kept back, and might have been lost altogether. It was that thought which had caused him to handle Bunter so roughly, and but for the intervention of the other fellows, he would have handled him more roughly still.

But the angry cloud faded from his face as he sat down on a bench in a quiet corner under the leafy elms and opened the letter. The mere sight of Tom Redwing's familiar hand on the envelope was enough to cool his rage and to clear his breast of bitter feelings. He opened the letter eagerly, and his hard face softened as he proceeded to read. Two o'clock was striking from the tower, but he did not even hear it.

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He had forgotten that he was under detention, and now due in the Form-room. Tom Redwing's letter claimed all his attention.

"Dear Smithy,—I don't know whether you want to hear from me again, but now I'm back at Hawkscliff I can't help sending you a line. I've been to sea for some weeks, on a coasting trip with my father. Dad's gone again now, but I shall be home for a few days.

"You were a good pal to me at Greyfriars, old chap, and though it ended as it did; I can't forget it. I'd like you to know that there are no bitter feelings on my side; and, I hope, none on yours. I never could quite make you out, Smithy—you're so different from me—and I can't feel sure now whether you'll be pleased to hear from me or whether you'll be annoyed. I can't help remembering that you're a public-school boy and a millionaire's son, and I'm going to be a sailor before the mast. The difference in our positions is too wide for friendship, or even acquaintance, as I know only too well. But, Smithy, old chap, do try to believe that I haven't any mean motive in writing this. To me you are only Smithy, the fellow who was my pal when I needed one badly, and I do not want anything from you except a friendly word, if you feel inclined to send one.

"I haven't forgotten that Wednesday is a half-holiday at the old school. You'll get this Wednesday morning, and if you feel inclined to see me again, come up to the cottage at Hawkscliff. I will stay in all the afternoon so that I shall not miss you if you come.

"But if you don't come, I shan't mind in the least. I only write this in case you should feel you'd like a jaw with a fellow who will always remember what a good pal you were.

"Yours always,  
"TOM REDWING."

The Bounder read the letter carefully through, and leaned back on the elm behind the bench, a strange expression on his face.

It was such a letter as he would have expected from his old friend, if Redwing wrote to him at all.

He had treated Redwing rottenly, as he had said to Wharton; he had taunted him bitterly and unfairly, in his anger; he had wounded him to the very heart. He had made it impossible for a proud and sensitive fellow to remain at the school on the scholarship which had been founded by Mr. Vernon-Smith. All Redwing's prospects in life had been darkened by that passionate outbreak of the Bounder's bitter temper, by the ungenerous words he had used—which he had repented soon enough, but which were never to be recalled.

He could read between the lines of Redwing's letter, his hesitation in writing at all, his fear of being misunderstood.

Even while he wrote, urged by a loyal affection that never wavered, in spite of all that had happened, he feared that the Bounder might misjudge him, might attribute to him motives of which he was incapable.

The Bounder knew that Redwing had hesitated to dispatch that letter, lest Smithy should suspect that it was his desire to "keep up" with the public-school boy, the millionaire's son, the fellow whose position in the world was so much more fortunate than his own.

The colour came into Smithy's cheeks as he thought of it.

He had given Redwing the right to

doubt him. He had made it inevitable that the sailorman's son should doubt and hesitate to trust him.

Tom Redwing was waiting in the cottage up at Hawkscliff that afternoon, hoping that his friend would come, yet prepared to learn that the millionaire's son looked upon his letter as an insidious appeal from a needy hanger-on!

Vernon-Smith felt a lump rise in his throat.

It was but seldom that the Bounder of Greyfriars, reckless, headstrong, purse-proud, disdainful, felt anything like a generous emotion. But his friendship with Tom Redwing had touched all that was best in his nature; and there was much good in Smithy, mingled with much evil.

Redwing doubted, as he could not help doubting.

But his doubts would soon be set at rest. He would see that Smithy was glad to see him again; he would see that Smithy could be loyal as well as himself; that in Tom Redwing's case, at least, he could trust whole-heartedly, and clear his mind of cynical suspicions.

The Bounder rose to his feet. His only thought was to answer his old chum's appeal at once, to get to Hawkscliff as fast as his bicycle would carry him. And then, as he saw the angular figure of Mr. Quelch bearing down upon him, he remembered that he was under detention. He could not go to Hawkscliff that afternoon; he could not see Tom Redwing; he could not stir a step outside the school gates.

"Vernon-Smith!"  
Mr. Quelch's voice was sharp and acid as he came up. His eyes glinted at the Bounder.

Vernon-Smith drew a deep breath.

He was detained. Mr. Quelch had given him a chance, and he had refused it with reckless impudence. But for Bunter's fatuous folly it would not have happened. Had he found Redwing's letter in the rack after third lesson he would have known, and he would have answered his Form master very differently. But he had not known—he had never dreamed of hearing from Redwing—and all the while the letter had been in Bunter's pocket. If he had only

known; if he had taken advantage of the kindness that had been offered—

It was too late now. The expression on Mr. Quelch's face was only too clear evidence of that.

"Vernon-Smith, you were ordered to go into the Form-room at two o'clock. It is now a quarter past two."

The Bounder opened his lips to speak. It was too late to make an appeal; yet he would have made it. But no doubt Mr. Quelch only expected further insolence from the rebel of the Remove, and he did not allow him to speak.

"You need say nothing, Vernon-Smith!" he said harshly. "You will be detained until six o'clock instead of five o'clock. Now follow me."

"If you please, sir—" The Bounder's tone was unusually submissive.

"Silence!"  
"But—"

"Silence, you impudent boy!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "Follow me at once!"

The Bounder breathed hard.

He followed the Remove master in silence. It was useless to make an appeal, and he knew it. But he did not intend to remain in the Form-room that afternoon. If he was flogged for it—if he was sacked for it—he would go to Hawkscliff.

But if he was to get away it was necessary to appear to submit, to avoid rousing his Form master's suspicions. Meek submission to authority was the Bounder's cue now—till he could get away.

Mr. Quelch, with a grim face, led him into the Remove Form-room. He signed to the Bounder to take his seat at his desk.

"I have prepared a task for you, Vernon-Smith," he said coldly.

The Bounder did not shrug his shoulders, or answer "Thank you!" in a sarcastic tone. He was silent.

"I shall return here at six o'clock to release you from detention," went on the Form master. "I shall judge by the progress you have made with your task whether you have wasted your time. I warn you that you will be panned severely if your task is neglected."

"Very well, sir."

Mr. Quelch glanced at him, perhaps a little surprised by his respectful tone.

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"On a late occasion," resumed the Form master, "you had the audacity, Vernon-Smith, to leave the Form-room while under detention. I trust that you will not think of repeating that audacity."

The Bounder was thinking of nothing else. But he was silent.

"Should you do so, Vernon-Smith," said Mr. Quelch grimly, "I shall request Dr. Locke very particularly to expel you from the school as an utterly incorrigible boy unsuitable for Greyfriars. Take that as a warning."

And, having delivered that weighty warning, the Remove master quitted the Form-room, and closed the door after him.

## THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

### Wanted—an Avenger!

"I'm hurt!"

"Good!"

"I'm fearfully hurt and injured."

"Fine!"

If Billy Bunter expected to receive sympathy from Peter Todd, Billy Bunter was disappointed.

So far from expressing sympathy, Peter seemed to receive the information as good and glad news.

Bunter blinked at him with deep indignation. His very spectacles gleamed with indignant wrath.

"Call yourself a pal!" he hooted. "I tell you that beast Smithy thumped me like—like a punch-ball!"

"Ripping!" said Todd heartily.

"I'm covered with awful bruises."

"Topping!"

"I've got a dozen aches at least—"

"Splendid!"

"I'm suffering all over—"

"Hurrah!"

It could not be called sympathetic.

Any fellow might have supposed that Peter was glad to hear it. Perhaps he was!

"You horrid beast!" said Bunter. "After all I've done for you, too! But it's always the same—ingratitude all round! Selfishness—selfishness all along the line. I begin to think, sometimes, that I shall grow selfish myself in the long run."

Peter Todd gasped.

"I really think so sometimes," said Bunter. "It's not easy for a fellow to keep up his frank, generous nature, surrounded by selfishness and ingratitude like this, you know. You ought to think of that, Peter."

"Fan me!" murmured Peter.

"Now, you could lick Smithy," said Bunter. "I could lick him myself, if it came to that. Now, look here, Peter, that cad Smithy has thumped me, and all because I was trying to do him a favour—getting his letter for him, you know, when Quelch kept him in. He got wild because I put it in my pocket and forgot it."

"Dear me!" said Peter.

"And he fairly pitched into me," said Bunter. "As my pal, you ought to lick him, Peter. You could, you know."

Bunter blinked seriously at his study-mate. Bunter was not at all sure, as a matter of fact, that Peter could have defeated the Bounder in a fistical combat. But he was willing to take the chance. Even if Peter was licked, Smithy would get some severe punishment in such a combat, and that would have satisfied Bunter. The punishment that Peter got would not have mattered—to Bunter.

But Peter evidently intended to be selfish and ungrateful. He had not the

remotest intention of avenging Bunter's wrongs and injuries. He actually seemed pleased to hear that the Bounder had thumped Bunter. He seemed to consider that the more Bunter was thumped, the better it was for all parties concerned.

"I hope you're not funky of Smithy, Peter," added Bunter.

"I hope not," agreed Peter.

"Then you'll lick him?"

"No, old fat man; I won't lick him. I'll lick you."

"Eh?"

"Wait a tick, till I get a stump."

Bunter did not wait. Like the guests at the banquet in "Macbeth," he stood not upon the order of his going, but went at once. He had melted into space before Peter could get hold of a cricket-stump.

Bunter rolled into the quad breathlessly, and more indignant than ever. He discerned the Famous Five there, but he realised bitterly that it was useless to retail his injuries to those beasts. They were quite likely to take the view that he deserved to be thumped for "pinching" Smithy's letter. But coming on Temple, Dabney & Co., of the Fourth Form, Bunter stopped to address them.

"I say, you fellows!"

Cecil Reginald Temple looked round.

"What on earth's that?" he exclaimed. "Dash it all, somebody ought to speak to the gardener about this! 'Tain't right to let fat snails crawl about the quad."

"Oh, rather!" chuckled Dabney.

"Tread on it, Dab!"

Bunter jumped back.

"Look here—" he roared.

"Well, my hat!" said Temple in surprise. "'Tain't a snail, it's Bunter, of the Remove! This is one of those cases of remarkable resemblances that you read about in the papers."

"Oh, really, Temple—"

"Roll away, barrel!" said Fry.

"I've got something to tell you, Temple," said Bunter. "You know Smithy, of my Form—"

"I don't know anybody in the Remove," said Temple calmly. "I believe there is such a Form at Greyfriars, but I don't know anything about it."

"Oh, don't swank, you know," said Bunter. "That's just what Smithy called you—a swanking ass!"

"Oh, did he?" exclaimed Temple, his lofty nonchalance and his disdain changing to wrath.

"Yes, and he said he doesn't really believe that your father is a baronet at all—"

"What?"

"He says that your pater keeps a pub—the Temple Arms," said Bunter cheerily. "He says he believes that you serve the beer in the holidays."

Temple crimsoned with rage.

"Why, I—I—I—" he stuttered.

"I—I'll—I'll—"

"My advice to you is to lick him for his cheek," said Bunter. "At least, if you couldn't lick him you could give him jip, while he was licking you, see."

Cecil Reginald Temple looked fixedly at Bunter. His first impulse, on hearing the fat Remove's statement, was to seek out Smithy and strew the quadrangle with his remains. But although Temple of the Fourth was a good deal of an ass, he was not quite such an ass as Bunter happily supposed. His second impulse was to deal, not with Smithy, but with Bunter. And that he proceeded to do.

He grabbed the Owl of the Remove by the collar and slewed him round.

"Here, I say—leggo!" roared Bunter. Thud!

Temple of the Fourth had an elegant and well-fitting boot. But it felt like the largest size in football boots to William George Bunter as it landed on him.

"Whoop!" roared Bunter.

He fairly flew.

"Ow-wow-wow!" spluttered Bunter, as he landed on his fat hands and knees. "Ow! Ooooch! Wooooch! Oooooh!"

"Have another with me?" asked Fry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yaroooh! Keep off, you beast!" roared Bunter.

Temple, Dabney & Co. strolled away smiling. Bunter picked himself up and glared after them through his big spectacles.

"Ow! Oh! Oh, dear!" mumbled Bunter. "Ow! Beasts! Wow!"

Bunter was feeling sorer than ever. Both physically and mentally he was feeling sore. His injuries, instead of being avenged, had been added unto. Peter Todd had failed him, and Temple of the Fourth had refused to take the bait. It dawned at length upon the Owl's fat brain that if his uncommon wrongs and grievances were to be avenged he would have to avenge them himself. But that was just the trouble. Had Bunter been a fighting man undoubtedly he would have given Smithy the time of his life. But he wasn't. He was anything but a fighting man. He did not want another thumping from the Bounder. He had had enough—more than enough. An avenger was wanted, but an avenger was not forthcoming. But Bunter, still aching from his thumping, was in a vengeful mood. Like the monkey in the story, he wanted somebody else's paw to pull his chestnuts out of the fire. And there was no catspaw to be had.

Bunter rolled sulkily into the House. Vernon-Smith was under detention in the Form-room; and at least he could look into the Form-room and "slang" the Bounder. He could call him all the names he fancied, through a half-open door, and bolt. The Bounder, being under detention, would not be able to pursue him; he could not leave the Form-room without incurring his Form master's wrath. It was little, but it was something. Bunter blinked round him cautiously, lest Mr. Quelch should be in the offing, and rolled along the Form-room passage.

Softly he opened the door of the Remove-room and blinked in.

"Smithy! You cad!"

There was no answer.

"Rotten cad!" went on Bunter. "You come out into the passage, you rotter, and I'll jolly well lick you. See?"

No reply.

"Yah! Funk!" hooted Bunter.

Still there was no answer. It was unlike the Bounder to receive such remarks in silence. But the reason of his silence was soon explained. He was not there.

The short-sighted Owl of the Remove had not observed, for the moment, that the Form-room was empty.

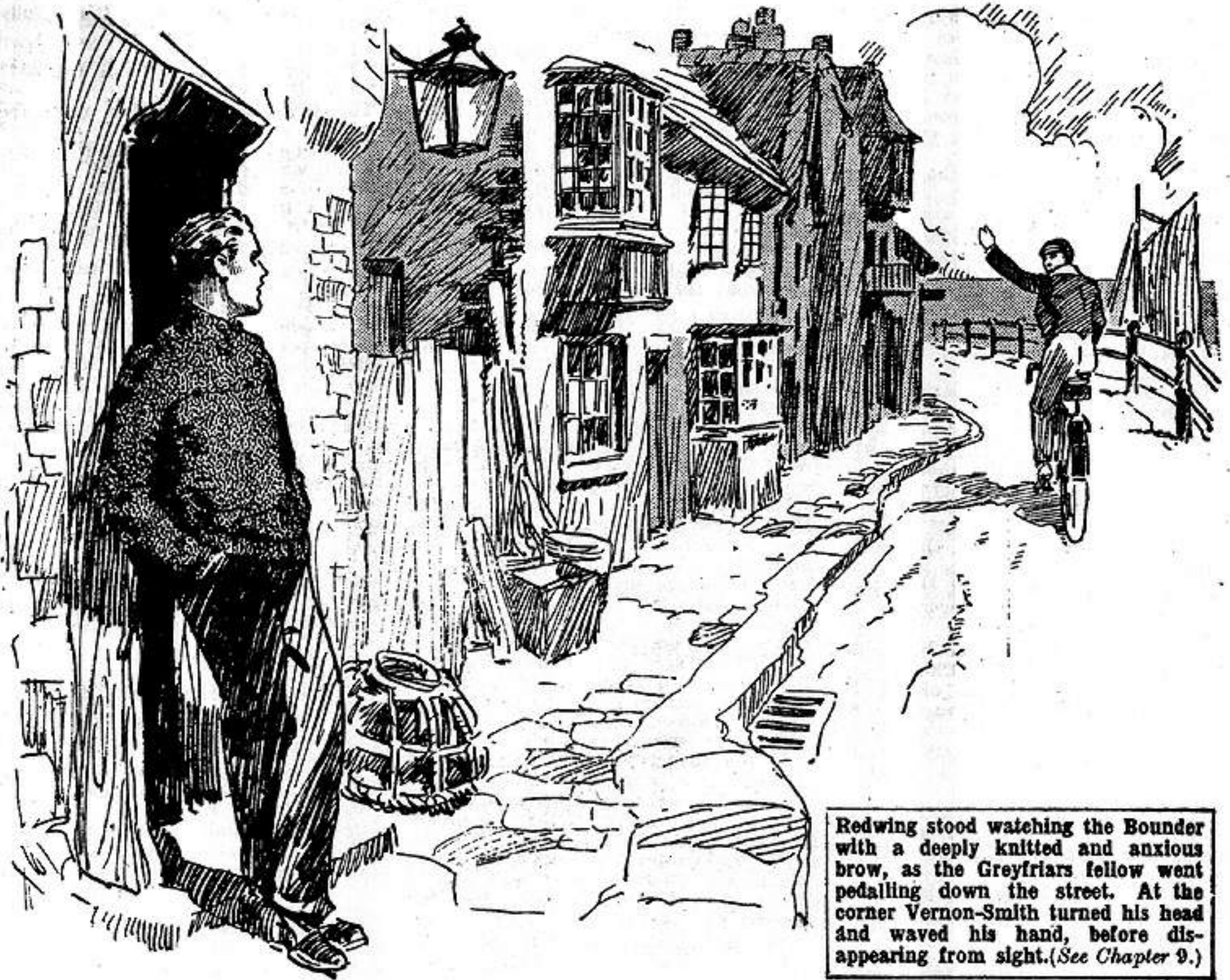
Now he blinked round in astonishment and rolled into the room and blinked round again.

The Bounder was under detention, and Bunter had had no doubt that he would find him there. But he was not there.

"My hat! He's gone!" gasped Bunter.

There was no doubt about it. Smithy was detained for the afternoon; a dozen fellows had seen Mr. Quelch march him





Redwing stood watching the Bounder with a deeply knitted and anxious brow, as the Greyfriars fellow went pedalling down the street. At the corner Vernon-Smith turned his head and waved his hand, before disappearing from sight. (See Chapter 9.)

off to the Remove-room for detention. But the Form-room was empty and the Bounder was gone!

## THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

### Smithy Chances It!

**V**ERNON-SMITH had remained about half an hour in the Form-room, after Mr. Quelch had left him there. He had no intention of remaining there for the afternoon; but he realised very clearly the necessity for caution. He was well aware that Mr. Quelch meant every word he had said. During that term the Bounder had given the Remove master incessant trouble, and he had no doubt that Mr. Quelch would have been quite pleased and relieved to see him dismissed from the school. He had been warned what to expect if he broke detention on this occasion, as he had done before.

Mr. Quelch's threat was not an empty one, and there was scarcely any doubt that the Head would take Mr. Quelch's view in the matter, and that an open act of defiance would be followed by the "sack" for the rebel of the Remove. The Remove master was, in fact, "fed-up" with the junior who gave him more trouble than all the rest of the Remove together. Herbert Vernon-Smith was determined to go up to Hawkscliff that afternoon at any risk. But he did not intend to run more risk than was unavoidable. He knew that Mr. Quelch was going out that afternoon with Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth, and he waited for the coast to be clear before he made a move.

From the Form-room window he saw, at last, the two masters walk down to the gates. The angular figure of Mr. Quelch, the portly form of Mr. Prout, disappeared from view. After that the Bounder lost no time.

It was likely to be some hours before the Remove master returned. If he found Vernon-Smith in the Form-room then he could not know that Smithy had been out of bounds. The detained junior's task would be undone; but that Mr. Quelch would set down to the obstinacy and perversity he expected from the Bounder. That meant a caning, for which Smithy cared little or nothing. It was the "sack" that Smithy was anxious to avoid, although he knew that he was taking a big risk of it. Mr. Quelch might return early, and in that case he would find the detained junior absent. Indeed, irritated and suspicious as he was, it was very probable that he would return intentionally early and look into the Form-room long before six o'clock, to see whether Vernon-Smith was still there. That was a risk that the Bounder had to take unless he gave up his expedition.

He did not think for a moment of giving it up.

It was not only that all the arrogant obstinacy of his nature was aroused, making him determined not to yield. He had good motives as well as bad ones for his resolution.

Redwing was waiting in the cottage up at Hawkscliff. If he did not come Redwing would believe that he had turned him down. It was easy to read in his letter that he doubted whether the Bounder would care to come. The

next day he might be gone. It was not likely that the sailorman's son, who had his bread to earn, would spend many idle days at home. If the Bounder turned him down now he was never likely to write again. Smithy had been an uncertain and unreliable friend, yet he valued his friendship with Tom Redwing more than anything else, more than even saving himself from the "sack" at his school. The thought of Tom Redwing, waiting up at Hawkscliff, with clouding face and sinking spirits as the afternoon passed and his former friend did not come, made the Bounder absolutely determined that he would not fail. At any cost he would go.

The Bounder had made up his mind, but he did not forget caution. His peculiar career as the worst fellow at Greyfriars, in constant danger from the prefects and the "beaks," had made caution second nature to him.

From the open window of the Form-room he watched the quadrangle after the two masters had gone out, and beckoned to a Remove fellow who strolled by at a distance. It was Hazeldene of the Remove, and he came up.

"Hazel, do me a favour," said the Bounder from the window.

Hazeldene stared at him.

"Give it a name," he answered, not very enthusiastically.

"Get my bike out of the shed."

"Eh?"

"Take it out on the road and leave it there for me."

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"What on earth for when you're detained?"

"I'm going to cut."

Hazel whistled.

"More fool you!" he said. "Quelchy is frightfully wild with you. He'll jump at a chance of taking you before the Head."

"I'm risking that," said the Bounder impatiently.

"Better stick where you are."

"Look here, that's my business! Will you do it for me?"

"Too jolly risky," said Hazel. "It means a flogging if it comes out, and it would. Ask me something else."

"You rotten funk—"

"Thanks!" said Hazel, and he walked away, laughing.

The Bounder cast a furious look after him. He was determined to go, but he could not get to Hawkscliff on foot. It was nearly ten miles from Greyfriars. Even by the shortest cuts it was over eight. But Vernon-Smith knew that he would have no chance to wheel his machine out himself. He had no doubt whatever that Mr. Quelch had informed the prefects that he was under detention, and once out of the House he would be liable to be seen and recaptured at any moment.

He waited with a savage brow, and his heart bounded as Bob Cherry came in sight. Bob was no pal of his, but he was not a fellow to care for risks. The Bounder gave a shrill whistle, and Bob looked round and sighted the Bounder's face and waving hand at the Form-room window.

Bob Cherry gave a quick glance round to make sure that no Sixth Form men were in sight and came up to the window.

"What is it, Smithy?" he asked, looking up.

"I'm going out—"

"Better not—"

"For goodness' sake don't waste time! I'm going out, and if I get my bike I may get back before Quelchy. Will you take my machine out into the road and leave it for me at the first corner?"

Bob Cherry's face was very grave.

"It means an awful row if you're spotted, Smithy," he said. "I'd help you with pleasure, but I don't think I ought to help you land yourself in trouble. Think it over again, old scout."

The Bounder gritted his teeth.

"I'm going, anyway. If you get the bike out for me I may get clear. If not I shall be spotted for sure, and it means the sack this time. Quelchy's told me so. Do you want to see me sacked?"

"You know I don't," said Bob quietly. "You've asked for it often enough, but I shouldn't like to see it happen. But for goodness' sake, Smithy, have a little sense. Can't you give up your shady blagging for once?"

"You fool! It's not that!" hissed the Bounder. "Do you think I'd take this risk to play billiards at the Cross Keys? Don't be an ass! I've had a letter from Redwing—"

"Oh!" said Bob.

"He's waiting to see me. If I don't go he'll think I've turned him down. Now do you understand?"

"I understand," said Bob. "But I—"

"Oh, cut it short!" exclaimed Vernon-Smith. "Will you do what I've asked? You're not afraid of risking it?"

"I wasn't thinking of that, Smithy. But—"

"I know. Will you do it?" breathed the Bounder. "I'm going to take the chance, anyhow. You can make it safer for me, that's all."

Bob Cherry nodded.

"I'll do it," he said. "But, look here, your bike might be missed from the shed. I'll take mine if you like, and when you get back you can leave it outside, and I'll collect it afterwards. May as well make the thing as safe as you can."

"By gad, you're a good chap, Cherry!" said the Bounder gratefully. "Do that for me and I shan't forget it."

"Ten minutes," said Bob. "First corner in Friardale Lane by the willows."

"Good!"

Bob Cherry walked away and the Bounder stepped down from the Form-room window. He knew that he could rely on Bob Cherry. The machine would be at the appointed place when he arrived there. The first difficulty was overcome, the second, and greater, was to get out of the school unobserved. To that the Bounder now gave his whole thought.

He approached the door of the Form-room, but stopped. To walk down the Form-room passage was to ask for capture. Any Sixth Form prefect who saw him would certainly stop him, and he might be seen before he had taken a dozen steps.

He went back to the open window.

In the distance he saw Wingate and Gwynne of the Sixth strolling by the path under the elms. They disappeared among the leafy trees. Temple, Dabney & Co. of the Fourth were in sight, and Hobson and Hoskins of the Shell, and Dicky Nugent and half a dozen Second Form fags. But the juniors and fags did not matter.

The Bounder set his teeth and swung himself from the window. He dropped lightly to the ground.

The next moment he was scuttling away round the buildings.

He had to take the risk of being observed now. There was no help for that. Temple, Dabney & Co. stared at him blankly, and then grinned at one another.

"Smithy's hooking it!" grinned Dabney.

"Cheeky fag!" said Temple loftily. The Bounder was gone the next moment.

Luck favoured him. In a couple of minutes he was in the old Cloisters, and as no one had shouted after him, he knew that his escape had not been witnessed by anyone in authority. At least, a dozen juniors had seen him, but they, of course, could be relied upon not to give him away.

The Bounder ran through the deserted Cloisters, climbed a wall with breathless haste, and dropped on the other side. A moment more and he was cutting across the fields, careful to keep off the open road.

At the corner of Redclyffe Lane, where it turned off the Friardale road, Bob Cherry was waiting with a bicycle, screened from the road by a bunch of willows. The Bounder came bursting through a hedge, and Bob started and stared round.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

The Bounder grinned breathlessly.

"Here I am. Hand over the jigger—quick!"

"Ready," said Bob.

Vernon-Smith grasped the bicycle.

"Cut it short, Smithy!" said Bob. "Get back as quick as you can, for

goodness' sake, old man! It's awfully risky!"

"I know."

"You got out without being spotted?"

"Yes—by the window."

The Bounder put a leg over the machine.

"Hold on a tick!" said Bob hurriedly. "You'll want a bunk up if you're going to get in again the same way. Leave the bike here when you get back; and you'll find me loafing under the Remove windows. Catch on?"

"Thanks, old man! I'll remember, you bet!"

And the Bounder drove at the pedals and vanished along Redclyffe Lane at a terrific speed on his way to Hawkscliff.

Bob Cherry stared after him and shook his head very doubtfully. He knew the risk the reckless Bounder was taking; the chances were a dozen to one, at least, that he would never get back into the Form-room undetected. But it was like Bob Cherry to help him all he could without thinking of the consequences to himself.

Bob walked back to the school and rejoined his friends in the quad, looking very dubious; while the Bounder, riding as if for his life, was placing mile after mile between himself and Greyfriars.

## THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

### Bunter on the War-Path!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

Billy Bunter rolled up to the Famous Five in the quad.

Harry Wharton & Co. had serious faces. Bob Cherry had just told his chums of Smithy's reckless escapade, and the juniors were discussing it when Bunter came along. They ceased to speak at once when the Owl of the Remove came within hearing; but, as a matter of fact, Bunter was in possession of the news already, and had come to impart it.

"I say, you fellows, Smithy's bolted!" announced Bunter breathlessly.

"How the thump do you know?" grunted Johnny Bull. "Can't anything happen at Greyfriars without you getting on to it?"

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Keep your mouth shut about it, Bunter," said the captain of the Remove curtly.

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"The esteemed Smithy will bag the sackfulness for this if it comes out," said Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh, with a shake of his dusky head. "He is a howling and ludicrous ass to risk it!"

Wharton knitted his brows.

"He can't expect Quelchy to go easy with him," he said. "It may mean the sack—it's quite likely. He's simply worn Quelchy's patience out this term. Only a few weeks ago he bunked out of detention, and led Wingate of the Sixth a dance across country after him; and now— It's too thick! He's fairly begging for it. I—I hope he'll pull through."

Bunter blinked at the chums of the Remove.

"I say, Wharton, I'm rather shocked at you!" he said severely.

"Eh? What do you mean, you fat dummy?"

"You needn't call me names because I'm shocked at you, Wharton," said Bunter, wagging a fat forefinger at the captain of the Remove. "I've said I'm shocked, and I repeat I'm shocked! You, head of the Remove, helping a fellow break detention! What would Quelchy say?"

"Oh, shut up!"



"And buzz off, you fat fly!" snapped Frank Nugent.

"Quelch's gone out," went on Bunter, unheeding. "But there's the Head. You ought to report this to the Head, Wharton!"

"Choose it, fathead!"  
"The beast thumped me!" said Bunter indignantly. "You fellows saw him thumping me. Now he's bolted out of detention. Don't you think he ought to be reported to a prefect at least, Wharton?"

"I think that if you sneak about Smithy you'll be scragged and ragged and sent to Coventry by all the Form!" said Harry sharply. "If you've got that idea in your fat head, chuck it, Bunter!"

"Some fellows have a sense of duty!" said Bunter loftily.

"Well, if your sense of duty leads you to sneak about a chap in the Remove, you'll wish you'd never developed it," said Bob Cherry. "Take a tip in time, Bunter; you'll be lynched if you give Smithy away."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"  
"Bump him!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Of—of course. I wouldn't give Smithy away!" said Bunter hastily. "I—I was only pointing out Wharton's duty to him as head boy of the Remove. See?"

"Well, now shut up and clear off!" snapped Wharton.

"The kickfulness is the proper caper," suggested Hurree Janiset Ram Singh, drawing back his boot.

William George Bunter faded away.

Harry Wharton & Co. continued to discuss the Bounder's escapade. They were concerned for the reckless fellow, and anxious about him. Had he broken detention for one of his shady excursions—such as a visit to the Cross Keys, or the Three Fishers—they would have been quite willing to leave him to take his chance, without troubling their heads about the matter. But the fact that he was gone to see Redwing, at Hawkscliff, made a great deal of difference. They had not known, indeed, that the Bounder remembered his former friend with affection; they had not supposed that he would trouble his head about Redwing, or take any risk on his account. They could not help thinking better of the Bounder for his loyalty.

The juniors did not blame the Bounder for his "bolt" in the circumstances; but they knew that the Remove master would accept no excuse, and listen to none. The Bounder had deserved detention; he had rudely and disrespectfully refused the Form master's offer to excuse him. After that Mr. Quelch was certain to be adamant. If he discovered the Bounder's bolt he would have no mercy on the rebel.

The chums of the Remove could not blame him for that. But they sincerely hoped that he would not make the discovery.

There was a chance that the Bounder would get back into the Form-room

before Mr. Quelch returned from his walk; and the Famous Five agreed unanimously that if they could help him to do so they would.

The Bounder had asked for it, as usual, But Harry Wharton & Co., in the peculiar circumstances, were very keen to save him from what he had asked for. And so a little excursion which the Famous Five had planned for that half-holiday was dropped by

life not worth living if he "sneaked" about the rebel of the Remove. So Bunter, greatly as he was tempted to drop a hint to Loder or Wingate of the Sixth, was very careful to refrain from doing so.

He rolled away to Study No. 7 in the Remove. Peter Todd was there, engaged upon what he was pleased to call his legal studies.

Peter was not pleased to see Bunter again. He waved him impatiently away as he put a fat face into Study No. 7.

"Hook it!" said Peter briefly.

"I say—"

"Don't!" interrupted Peter.

"Don't what, you ass?"

"Don't say! Just cut!"

"Look here, Peter, Smithy's bolted!"

"Let him bolt!" said Peter indifferently. "I'm not interested!"

"It's rather shocking for a fellow to—to disrespect our Form master as Smithy's doing, Peter. Don't you think he ought to be reported?"

"He will be if a prefect finds out that he's scooted."

"What about you, Peter?"

Peter Todd sat up and took notice, as it were.

"I? Are you suggesting that I should give Smithy away to the beaks? You fat villain! Take that!"

"That" was a cushion, which was fortunately ready in Peter's hand. It whizzed through the air, and Bunter took it—it came so suddenly that he could not help taking it.

He took it with his fat chin, and sat down in the doorway with a bump and a roar.

"Yaroo! Beast—"

"Wait a tick, and I'll let you have the inkpot!" said Peter, glaring at his fat study-mate.

"Beast!"

Bunter slammed the door and departed.

Catspaws seemed very hard to discover at Greyfriars that afternoon. Billy Bunter rolled away in a very indignant frame of mind. His sense of duty very nearly led him to the Sixth Form passage, to give information to a prefect. But he stopped short of that. Billy Bunter was not a pleasant character, but he was not a sneak. He would have been very pleased had another fellow given Smithy away; but he hesitated to do so himself. Probably fear of the consequences had as much to do with that as his fat cou-

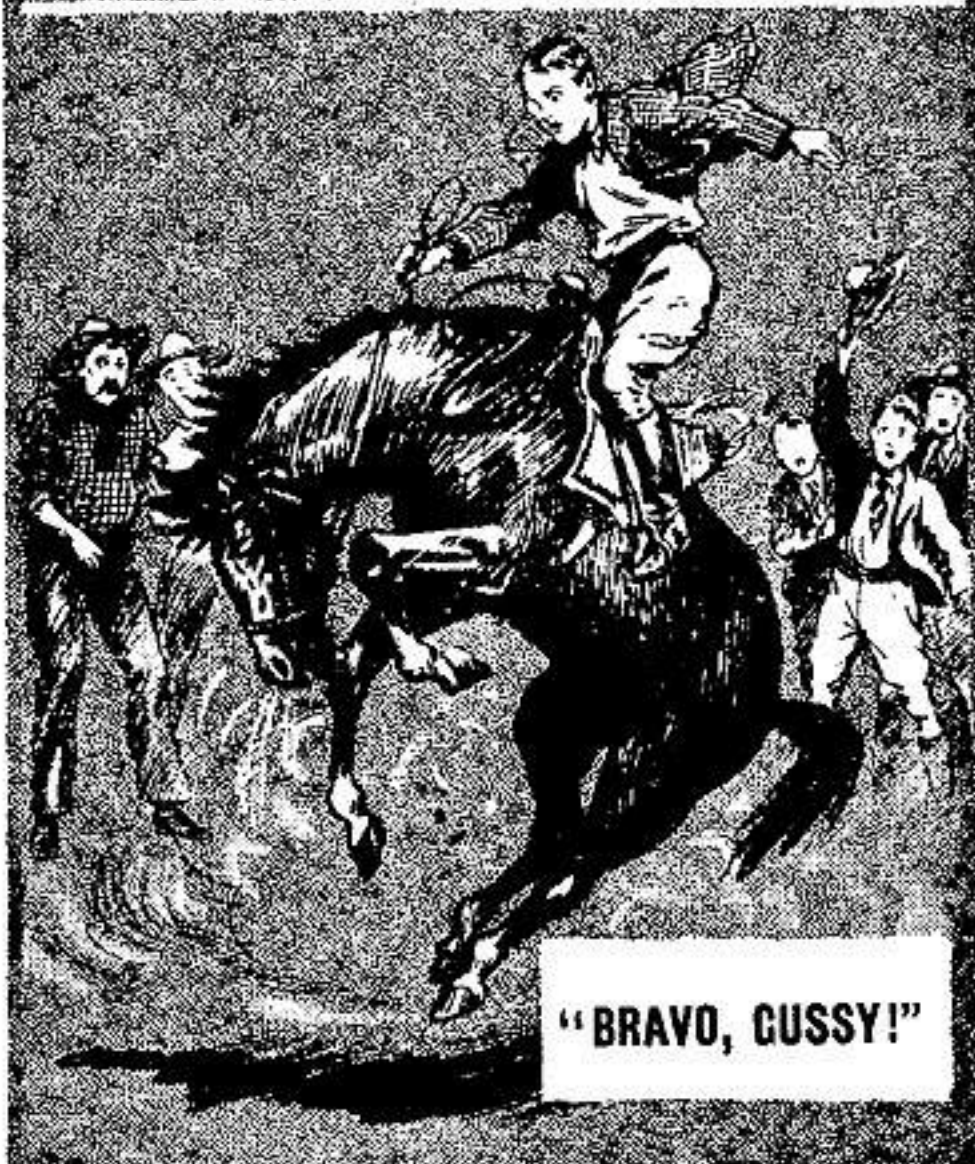
science. Sneaks were likely to receive short shift in the Greyfriars Remove. He rolled away to a window, and blinked out into the quad, in the hope of seeing Mr. Quelch returning. But there was no sign yet of the Remove master.

Bunter felt that it was hard. Severe punishment impended over Smithy's head—and Smithy had thumped Bunter. Obviously, a fellow who had thumped Bunter deserved the severest punishment that could possibly befall him. Yet all these beasts seemed to hope that

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common consent, and they agreed to remain on the scene, looking for a chance to help Smithy get through without being "nailed."

Billy Bunter was feeling very differently. He had been thumped, and he did not like being thumped. He was still feeling the painful effects of the thumping, which kept the matter fresh in his fat mind. His view was that Smithy ought to get what was coming to him, because he had thumped Bunter. Nobody in the Remove was likely to agree with Bunter on that point, but all were certain to agree to make his fat



Smithy would get off scot-free. They did not seem to think that the thumping of Bunter mattered at all. It was an incident which they passed by like the idle wind which they regarded not. Bunter could not view the matter in the same light. No doubt the fact that it was he who had had the thumping made a difference. Somehow or other, Smithy had to be made to "sit up" for that. Bunter concentrated his fat intellect upon that problem.

And suddenly a fat grin overspread his face.

"Got it!" he ejaculated.

And Bunter, looking quite cheery, rolled away to carry out the remarkable wheeze that had occurred to his podgy brain.

## THE NINTH CHAPTER.

### Old Pals!

**T**OM REDWING stood in the doorway of the little cottage at Hawkscliff, and looked out over the cliffs and the sea.

The sailorman's son did not look much like Redwing of the Greyfriars Remove now.

His pleasant, good-looking face was the same, only a little more tanned by sun and weather. But the Etons and the white collar had given place to rough, serviceable sailor clothes, the neat shoes to a pair of thick boots. He looked healthy and fit and cheerful. It had been a blow to Redwing to leave Greyfriars. He had worked for his scholarship there and won it fairly; he had been liked in the Remove, and had made many friends; he had been making good progress with his studies; and, with all the little ups and downs of school life, he had been happy at Greyfriars. At one fell swoop all had been taken away.

It was a heavy blow; but Tom was not the fellow to repine uselessly. He had learned very early in life to bear troubles as they came, without weak and futile complaints. Before that chance had come his way he had never expected to enter such a school as Greyfriars; and now that he had had to leave, he reflected that all that he had had was so much to the good. It had been, at least, a bright episode in his life; something to remember with pleasure when he went back to the sea.

Chiefly, he regretted parting with Smithy; though it was Smithy whose unreasonable temper had been the cause of his going. He did not regret having given it all up; the sailorman's son had a pride as high as any Greyfriars man, and when Smithy had taunted him, in his rage, with dependence, that had been the finish of the matter for Redwing. His resentment had faded away, and he remembered Smithy only with friendship and kindness; but nothing would have induced him to accept help from the Bounder or his father. That was impossible and unthinkable.

But he wanted to see Smithy again—if his former friend was willing. He doubted—he could not help doubting. There was so little in common between them that it was strange that they had ever become friends. The kinks in the Bounder's peculiar nature had made that strange friendship always uncertain. Redwing had forgiven, if he could not quite forget, all offences; but he was quite prepared to learn that Smithy had blotted him out of his mind, indeed forgotten his existence. He could not help fearing that it was possible that

his letter would awaken the Bounder's sardonic suspicion, and cause him to think that the sailorman's son was seeking to hang on to a wealthy connection. He knew that it would be like Smithy to suspect such a thing.

Yet he was glad that he had written.

If Vernon-Smith misjudged him, and turned him down, there was an end. The fault at least would not be his. In any case, they could meet but little—hardly from year's end to year's end. Tom's next voyage was likely to be a long one, and his stay in his old home was brief. But he longed, from the bottom of his simple and loyal heart, to see his friend once again before he sailed for foreign climes, and looked his last on England for many a long month.

Would Smithy come?

Tom looked at the sea and the cliffs shimmering in the blazing sun of July. He looked down the rugged street, rocky and unpaved, that wound irregularly away towards the distant fields and pastures inland. Would Smithy come?

He might not be able to come. He might be playing in a cricket match—he might be under detention—many things might prevent him from coming. In that case, he would send a message, if he still desired to be remembered by his old friend. But Tom Redwing hardly expected to see him, and hardly expected to receive even a message. He only hoped.

Suddenly his sunburnt face brightened wonderfully. There was the whir of a bicycle on the rugged street. A cyclist in Etons, bareheaded, came whizzing round a corner, and clattered up to the cottage. Herbert Vernon-Smith jumped off the bicycle as Tom ran forward to meet him.

"Smithy!"

"Redwing, old chap!"

Vernon-Smith gripped the hand of the sailorman's son.

"Redwing! You know I'd come?"

"I—I hoped you would, Smithy."

"You wanted to see me?"

Tom smiled.

"That's why I wrote, Smithy." He coloured. "Were you—were you glad to get my letter?"

"You're right not to trust me," said the Bounder. "But you can take my word for it that I was glad. Let's sit down. I've plugged all the way up here at record speed."

"Come in, old fellow."

Vernon-Smith stepped into the little cottage; poor enough, but neat and clean and tidy. He sat down on a bench and rubbed the perspiration from his brow. Hardy as the Bounder was, he was feeling the effects of that furious ride on a hilly road. Not for a second had he stopped, or even paused, on the long and rugged ride to Hawkscliff.

"I've got tea ready," said Redwing, rather shyly. "You'd like to have tea with me, Smithy. It's a bit of a change from the study at Greyfriars. But—"

"Just what I want."

"I won't keep you waiting a jiffy!"

The kettle was singing on the hob; the little table was spread for tea. Smithy sat and rested—he needed a rest—till tea was ready. Tom Redwing's bronzed face was very bright as he sat down with his friend. All his doubts were set at rest now. He had not lost his chum. Parting was inevitable; but friendship would remain.

Over tea the two talked cheerily of the old life at Greyfriars, and of Tom Redwing's coasting voyage. Not a suspicion crossed Redwing's mind of the circumstances in which Vernon-Smith

had left the school that afternoon. He knew that it was a half-holiday at Greyfriars, so there was no reason why Smithy should not come if he liked. Vernon-Smith did not refer to anything of the kind. Indeed, he had almost forgotten detention and Mr. Quelch, and the risk he was running in his delight at seeing his lost and estranged chum again and finding him unchanged.

After tea the two chums shifted to the bench outside the cottage door, where they sat in sight of the rolling sea and chatted on. The Bounder fell silent for some minutes, a moody look coming over his face, as he sat staring at the blue waters stretching away to the horizon.

He turned suddenly to Redwing.

"We're friends again, Reddy."

"Yes, rather," said Tom.

"I wish I could think that you'd forgotten the rotten things I said to you—that made you chuck your school up and quit."

"I've forgotten everything except that you were a good pal, Smithy."

"Then you'll come back?"

Redwing's face clouded.

"I couldn't come back, Smithy. I gave up my scholarship, as you know. I had to, old chap. It's gone now, even if I wanted to take it up again."

"And you don't want to?"

Redwing shook his head.

"It's impossible, Smithy!"

"My father will do anything that I ask. Money's nothing to him!" said the Bounder. "I could fix it quite easily for you to come back to Greyfriars if you chose."

A pained look came over Redwing's face. He shook his head again without speaking.

"You'd like to come back—if it were possible?"

"If it were possible—yes."

"Let me make it possible."

"Don't let's talk of that, Smithy."

The Bounder's moody look grew blacker and more bitter.

"You think that we'd have more rows, very likely?" he said, in a low voice. "You couldn't trust me not to throw it in your face, as I did before?"

"I couldn't give up my independence, Smithy. You'd despise me yourself in the long run. I should never have entered for the Memorial Scholarship when I did if I had known at the time that you persuaded your father to found it simply to give me a chance. It was ripping of you—splendid, old chap—and very kind of your father! But I could never have touched it if I'd known!"

"You'd never have known if I hadn't been cad enough to tell you in one of my rotten tempers!" muttered the Bounder. "I can't expect you to trust me again, I suppose."

"Don't put it like that, old fellow. I'd trust you with my life and anything else, but independence must come first. It's all a fellow has in my station in life," said Redwing, with a faint smile. "I had a good time at Greyfriars, and I like to think about it and remember it now it's all over. I owe it all to you. I shouldn't have let you help me as you did if I'd known, but I'm grateful all the same. A fellow never had such a pal as you've been to me!"

The Bounder stirred uneasily.

"There's a rotten kink in me!" he muttered. "I had to spoil it all. The fellows were right when they first called me a bounder! That's what I am—a bounder! I could never be a fellow like Wharton or Bob Cherry, and I don't even want to be. But—"

He broke off, and was moodily silent.





"Gerrouit!" "Oh, really, Skinner——" "Travel, you fat dummy!" Bunter's step outside the box-room had caused Skinner & Co. to jump in dire alarm. They were relieved, and at the same time exasperated, when the Owl of the Remove put his fat face in at the door. "Get out!" "Shan't!" retorted the Owl of the Remove independently. "Smoky cads! Yah!" (See Chapter 10.)

"You won't come back again, then?" he asked at last.

"It can't be done!"

"Quechy would be glad to have you back in the Remove. The Head would welcome you if you came."

"That's jolly good of them!"

"All the fellows would be glad."

"I believe they would," assented Redwing. "I've never forgotten how decent they were to me—nearly all."

"I want you to come back."

Redwing shook his head once more.

"Can't you stretch a point, for friendship's sake? I tell you, it's been rotten for me! I've been up against it ever since you left."

"I'm sorry to hear that, Smithy!"

"I've been near the sack—I'm jolly near it now. Lots of fellows expect to see me bunked."

Redwing's sunburnt face was deeply distressed. The Bounder was touching the right chord. If anything could have made the sailorman's son give up his independence, and return to Greyfriars on the millionaire's charity, it would have been the knowledge that his friend needed him.

But it could not be done. Even had it been possible otherwise, the Bounder's nature made it impossible. Sooner or later, as Redwing was only too well aware, Smithy's suspicious, sardonic

nature would have come to the fore, his doubting mind would have doubted again. Quite probably he would have come to suspect that Redwing had reopened communications with him for that very purpose, and his talk of independence, if he gave up his independence, would have seemed like the veriest humbug. Redwing knew that he could only keep his friend's faith in him by refusing what his friend asked.

"You're going to sea again?" asked Vernon-Smith, after a long silence.

"Yes."

"Coasting trip?"

"A deep-sea voyage," said Redwing.

"That means you'll be away a long time?"

"Yes, old chap."

"Working before the mast, when you might be a Greyfriars man with good prospects!" said the Bounder bitterly.

"It's what my father did before me, Smithy. And somebody must work before the mast," said Redwing, with a smile. "We can't all walk the quarter-deck. I'm not grumbling; I'm not afraid of work. A fellow likes to make himself useful in the world, too."

"Oh, rot!" muttered the Bounder irritably.

"Well, you see——"

"Rot, I tell you!"

Redwing was silent.

"You won't come back to Greyfriars because you can't trust me," said the Bounder. "I don't say you're wrong; but I'd do it for you if the case was reversed. I shouldn't be too particular about right and wrong in sticking to a pal."

"You would, old chap—I hope so, at least. It can only make matters worse if a fellow does what he thinks isn't right."

"Rot! Is it right, if you come to that, for me to have more money than is good for me while you pig in a fore-castle for a few pounds a month? I've no more right to be at Greyfriars than you have. An ass like Temple of the Fourth thinks he's a public-school boy because he's got some natural superiority. Do you think I'm that sort of a silly owl? He's there, and I'm there, because our people have got hold of the stuff. If your father had manufactured guns instead of handling them in the War he might have some of the stuff, too!"

"I'm glad to remember that he handled the guns instead of trying to make profits on them!" said Redwing, with a laugh.

"If we're pals, you can let me whack out with you," said Smithy. "If we

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(Continued from page 13.)

were both up against it, you'd share your last crust with me!"

"Of course I would!"

"Well, then, let me share with you."

"It sounds all right, old chap; but money can't pass between friends," said Redwing. "I don't quite know why, but there it is; any fellow feels that by instinct. Instinct's a safer guide than reason."

"The long and the short of it is that you won't come back."

"I can't."

The Bounder breathed hard.

"Well, I didn't come up here to row with you, Reddy," he said, after a pause, "but I feel jolly inclined to!"

"Don't, old fellow. We can't meet very often, but we can be friends all our lives if you choose. That's something."

"I don't want you to rough it while I'm living on the fat of the land."

"Roughing it doesn't hurt a chap, Smithy. It's better to rough it than to live soft, if a fellow only knew it."

"Then you'd advise me to chuck up Greyfriars and go to sea in an ocean tramp?" asked the Bounder sarcastically.

Redwing laughed.

"No, not quite," he said. "But I would advise you, Smithy, if you'd let me, not to live soft. Betting and smoking and such rot—keep clear of that. You can work hard and play hard and keep fit, even if you're born in the purple. You're not looking so fit as you used, Smithy; I couldn't help noticing that. I'd like to think of you keeping friendly with Wharton and his set, and not having too much to do with Skinner's crowd. And—and I hope you're not ragging in class and that kind of thing. Quelch is a good old sort if you treat him the right way."

"You're a thought-reader, Redwing!" said the Bounder. "How do you know I'm in trouble with Quelch?"

"Then you are?" asked Redwing anxiously.

"Oh, yes!" Smithy shrugged his shoulders. "What does it matter?"

Redwing gave him a very anxious look. There was much in the Bounder's face that troubled him. Apart from what Smithy had told him, he could see that the Bounder had been going downhill since their parting; there were many signs of it to eyes rendered keen by affection.

"Smithy, you had leave to come up here this afternoon?" he asked suddenly.

"It's a half-holiday."

"Yes; but Hawkscliff is miles out of bounds. I know Mr. Quelch would give you leave at once to come and see me if you asked him. I—I hope you asked him, Smithy?"

"Not exactly!" grinned the Bounder.

Redwing rose quickly from the bench.

"Then I've got you into more trouble asking you to come up here. Smithy, I wish you'd asked Mr. Quelch! Why didn't you?"

"I hardly think he would have given

me leave to go out of bounds, in the circumstances!" chuckled the Bounder.

Redwing's face clouded.

"You weren't under detention this afternoon, Smithy?"

Vernon-Smith made no reply.

"Smithy!"

"What does it matter?" yawned the Bounder. "If I get sacked from Greyfriars, perhaps I'll come and take a berth in your fore-castle. How would you like that?"

But Redwing did not smile. He was deeply disturbed and anxious.

"Smithy, I've got you into bad trouble by asking you to come here. I never thought—I thought you'd send a message if you couldn't come. You shouldn't have come, Smithy, if it means trouble with your Form master. You're detained."

"Yes," grunted the Bounder.

"Then you've bolted?"

"Naturally."

"It may mean a flogging."

The Bounder laughed rather harshly.

"Worse than that?" said Tom Redwing. "Oh, Smithy, I shall never forgive myself if I've brought trouble on you."

"Rot! I've cleared out of detention before now, for less reason. Hang detention, and hang Quelch!"

"You must get back at once, Smithy."

"You're tired of my company?" asked the Bounder sarcastically.

"Don't be an ass, old chap! I'm frightfully anxious about you," said Redwing. "Smithy, old man, can't you imagine what I shall feel like, if trouble comes on you through my having written? I'm sorry I wrote now—only I—I've missed you so much since I left—and—and—but never mind all that—for goodness' sake, get back. You may not have been missed yet. Is there a chance of that?"

"Lots! Quelch's gone out rambling with old Prout."

"Then get back before he comes in." Redwing drew the bicycle from the wall.

"Don't waste a second, Smithy! Jump on, and clear. Quick!"

The Bounder rose to his feet.

"Shall I see you again before you go to sea?"

"I don't know—never mind now."

"But I do mind," said the Bounder coolly. "I've chanced the sack, in coming up here to see you to-day. You don't trust me, but that ought to show you that I'm sticking to you, Reddy. When shall I see you again?"

Redwing was almost panting with haste and anxiety. But he could see that the Bounder would not go without an answer.

"I can stay here over Saturday, Smithy—that's another half-holiday. There will be time to write. Now hurry."

"You'll be here on Saturday?"

"Yes. Now—"

"That's a promise?" persisted the Bounder.

"Yes, yes, yes! Now hurry, hurry!" exclaimed Redwing. "If you don't want to make me thoroughly miserable, Smithy, get back to Greyfriars as quick as you can, and don't be caught out."

"Any old thing!" said the Bounder.

"Quick!"

Redwing stood watching the Bounder, with a deeply knitted and anxious brow, as the Greyfriars' fellow went pedalling down the rugged street. At the corner, Vernon-Smith turned his head and waved his hand; then he disappeared from sight.

## THE TENTH CHAPTER.

### Bunter's Booby Trap!

"GERROUT!"

"Oh, really, Skinner—"

"Travel, you fat dummy!"

Harold Skinner, of the Remove, did not seem pleased to see Bunter.

Skinner was in the upper box-room, with Snoop and Stott; not a particularly pleasant spot on a half-holiday, but secure for three young rascals who were smoking cigarettes, and playing nap. Bunter's step outside had caused Skinner & Co. to jump, in dire alarm. They were relieved, and at the same time exasperated, when the Owl of the Remove put his fat face in at the door.

Bunter blinked at them. He had not expected to find Skinner & Co. in that secluded quarter.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Get out!"

"Shan't!" retorted Bunter independently. "Smoky cad! Yah!"

Skinner rose from the trunk on which he was seated. But he sat down again. He was greatly tempted to kick the fat junior down the box-room stairs; but he did not want the yelling of Bunter to draw general attention to the spot.

"I don't want any of your filthy smokes!" said Bunter disdainfully. "I never knew you were here. You mind your own business, you fellows. I happen to want that old cardboard box."

Skinner & Co. stared at Bunter as he sorted out an old flat cardboard-box from among the lumber in the box-room. They had supposed that the Owl of the Remove had tracked them to their lair, to demand a share in the smokes. Bunter, evidently, had other business on hand, though they could not guess what it was.

"What on earth do you want that lumber for?" asked Stott.

"That's telling," answered Bunter mysteriously.

"Fathead!"

"You fellows needn't think I'm going to rig up a booby-trap!" said Bunter, blinking at them.

"Oh, my hat!" said Snoop.

"Of course, I'm not thinking of anything of the kind!" said Bunter fatuously. "You needn't think so for a minute."

"And who's to get the booby-trap?" asked Skinner, staring.

"Nobody, of course. Haven't I just told you that I didn't come here to get this old cardboard box to rig up a booby-trap?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I—I happen to want this box to—keep something in."

"White rabbits?" asked Skinner sarcastically.

"Yes, exactly."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"As for Smithy, I'm taking absolutely no notice of him," explained Bunter. "If he's bolted out of detention, it's no business of mine. I never went to the Form-room, and I couldn't possibly say whether he's gone or not. This booby-trap isn't for him. I mean, there isn't going to be any booby-trap."

"Has Smithy cut detention?" asked Snoop, with a stare.

Skinner nodded.

"Yes. I saw him scudding into the Cloisters, nearly a couple of hours ago. Quelch will find him gone, if he comes in."

"That's jolly serious for Smithy, if he does."

"Yes—awful, ain't it?" yawned Skinner. "If you have tears, prepare to shed them when Smithy gets caught



cut. But Smithy knows what he's about—I expect he'll be back before Quelchy." "Sure to, if he's got any sense!" assented Stott.

"Of course he will," said Bunter. "Quelchy would take him to the Head, and Smithy jolly well knows it. He will dodge back into the Form-room, of course, and be sitting there when old Quelch comes in."

"That's his game, of course," said Snoop.

"Perhaps he will get a surprise," said Bunter mysteriously. "Perhaps he won't! I'm not telling you fellows anything."

Skinner stared at him. "If you fix up a booby-trap in Smithy's study, you fat idiot, you'd better remember that it's my study, too, and that I shall scalp you."

"I'm not going to fix it up in the study!" grinned Bunter. "There's going to be a surprise for Smithy when he sneaks back into the Form-room. I dare say he will be sorry for thumping a fellow who was trying to oblige him by bringing him a letter."

"Oh, Jerusalem!" ejaculated Skinner. "Mean to say you're rigging up a booby-trap in the Form-room?"

"Oh, no! Nothing of the kind," said Bunter hastily. "Don't you run away with that idea, Skinner. I—I want this box to—keep a cake in."

And the Owl of the Remove hurried away, leaving Skinner grinning, and Snoop and Stott staring blankly.

"Is that idiot dummy enough to put a booby-trap in the Form-room?" asked Stott, in wonder.

"Isn't he dummy enough for anything?" chuckled Skinner. "That's his idea—to get his own back on Smithy for thumping him for pinching that letter. Oh, my hat!"

"I say, it's too thick!" said Stott. "It may give Smithy away to Quelchy, if he butts into a booby-trap at the Form-room door."

"Smithy won't butt into it," said Skinner. "Smithy scooted by the Form-room window, and he's pretty certain to get back the same way if he can. I saw him go, so I know. He wouldn't risk being spotted in the passages. If anybody goes to the Form-room door this afternoon, it won't be Smithy—it will be Quelchy."

"Quelchy! Oh, crumbs!" "That hasn't occurred to Bunter's bright intellect," yawned Skinner. "Let's hope he'll catch something in his jolly old booby-trap. I'd like to be on the spot if he catches Quelchy. But it's safer here."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Snoop and Stott.

Meanwhile, Billy Bunter had hurried back to the Remove passage. There was a determined expression on his fat face. By the concentration of his fat intellect on the subject, Bunter had evolved a scheme of vengeance on the Bounder, and he was losing no time in carrying it out. From one study in the Remove he gathered a bottle of gum, from another a jar of paste, from another a tube of solution. With these ingredients for his booby-trap, and the large cardboard box under his arm, Bunter rolled down the Remove staircase and headed for the Form-room.

A good many fellows saw him on his way, and some of them wondered what Bunter was carting a large cardboard box about for. But no one was specially interested in his proceedings. He reached the Remove Form-room, and slipped in quickly and closed the door after him.

The Form-room was still deserted.

On the Bounder's desk lay his Latin task, still untouched. Bunter was glad to find that the truant had not yet returned. It gave him time to prepare for his reception.

He was quickly busy. With the shovel from the fender, Bunter raked down a quantity of soot from the Form-room chimney. Some of the soot floated about the room, and some of it settled on Bunter's fat face—some of it penetrated into his mouth and nose, and made him gasp and cough. But the larger quantity was shovelled into the flat box.

Having collected a sufficient quantity of soot, Bunter poured into it the gum and the paste, and squeezed out the solution.

Then he collected about a dozen ink-pots from the desks, and tipped the ink into his mixture.

By that time, the contents of the cardboard box were extremely unpleasant, especially if taken suddenly on the head from the top of an opening door, as Bunter intended.

Bunter's next proceeding was to place the big oak door of the Form-room a few inches ajar. He took the steps from the Form-room cupboard, and arranged them inside the door, and mounted, with the cardboard box in his fat hands.

With great care, he planted the box on the top of the thick oak door, lodged against the door-lintel.

It was fortunate for the Owl of the Remove that no one opened the door while he was thus engaged. Certainly, he would have gone flying, with the box of mixture over him. Luckily, it did not happen. Having disposed of the box of mixture, Bunter descended, and replaced the steps in the wall-cupboard.

Then he blinked at his booby-trap (Continued on next page.)



**GRAND FREE GIFTS!**

**L**AST week I let you fellows into a secret. I told you that there were some scrumptious Free Gifts in store for you, and I left you a wee bit curious to know what form these Free Gifts would take. This week it's up to me to give you full particulars of this coming treat—or, to be more correct—series of treats. Every man jack of you has travelled on our railways—that goes without saying; every man jack of you at some time or another has stood and gazed in wonder at the giant engines that eat up the miles of rail track with such apparent ease. In short, unless I am very much mistaken, every boy and girl is interested in railways, particularly the steel monsters that "do all the work." With this in view I decided that Magnetites should have a wonderful series of

**METAL MODELS OF EXPRESS ENGINES**

taken from Britain's four big railways. Now it's out! Accurate in every detail, these fine souvenirs will outshine anything ever given away in the Free Gift line before. These models are made of strong metal and they will

**STAND UP ERECT ON ANY LEVEL SURFACE!**

Just think of that, chums. What's more they will be shown in their actual colours—wonderful and lasting souvenirs of Britain's railway might. The first engine will be the Southern Railway's

**"LORD NELSON,"**

a veritable king amongst his fellows. Free Gift Number 2 will be the famous

**"FLYING SCOTSMAN!"**

of the London North-Eastern Railway. Then there's the

**BIGGEST EXPRESS**

of the London Midland and Scottish Railway, which is followed by the well known steel monster of the Great Western Railway

**THE "CAERPHELLY CASTLE!"**

How does that tit-bit of news strike you? Aren't you mighty keen to know when this series of treats commences? Of course! And I'm just as keen to let you know when as you are to hear it. Right, then, this bumper Free Gift scheme starts

**IN A FORTNIGHT'S TIME!**

Two weeks you have got to wait, but when you handle the first souvenir you will agree that it's been well worth waiting for. The wise fellow will be off to his newsagent right now to place a standing order for his MAGNET. It would be a rare pity if any of you chaps missed these treats through being too casual. I'll leave it at that.

**A BUMPER NEW SERIES OF SCHOOL YARNS!**

Here's another item that will gladden your heart. Frank Richards has pilled in with a ripping series of Greyfriars stories dealing with the amazing holiday adventures of Harry Wharton & Co. This much I'll tell you now—it's a treasure quest in the South Seas. Then there's going to be a stirring new serial of peril and adventure entitled:

**"GOLD FOR THE GETTING!"**

which tells of a thrilling Gold Rush to the Land of the Midnight Sun. Finally there's a rousing new series of "shockers" from the active pen of our old friend Dicky Nugent. This then is the record programme you fellows have to look forward to. Don't forget—a fortnight's time!

**NEXT MONDAY'S PROGRAMME:**

**"BRAVO, BUNTER!"**

By Frank Richards.

This is a splendid story of the Greyfriars Chums with Billy Bunter, the fat and fatuous Owl of the Remove, in the limelight. And Billy, for once, does something of which any fellow might be proud. What it is I'll leave you to discover for yourselves.

**"THE CURSE OF LHASA!"**

This will be the concluding instalment of our popular detective and adventure serial and I know you fellows won't miss it.

**"A FORTUNE FOR FOUR!"**

That's Dicky Nugent's "ticklish tail" for next week. You'll enjoy it. In conclusion let me remind you, chums, that owing to next Monday being a Bank Holiday your copy of the MAGNET will be obtainable at all newsagents SATURDAY, JULY 30th. Don't lose sight of that. Chin, chin, chums,

YOUR EDITOR.



through his big spectacles, with great satisfaction.

All was prepared now for the return of the Bounder; and if the Bounder received that horrible mixture on his head when he came in, undoubtedly he would have ample reason to repent of having thumped William George Bunter so vigorously.

"Good!" murmured Bunter.

The fat junior retreated into the big cupboard of the Form-room. There he intended to wait until Vernon-Smith came in. From that cover, he was going to enjoy the sight of the Bounder covered with soot and ink and gum. It was a sight worth waiting for; and Bunter considered that Smithy could not be long in returning now.

He chuckled as he waited.

As a matter of fact, he did not have to wait very long. Hardly a quarter of an hour had elapsed, when there was a sound of footsteps in the passage outside the Form-room door.

Bunter waited breathlessly, almost convulsed with suppressed merriment. The Bounder was coming. At least, Bunter was convinced that it was the Bounder. The footsteps stopped at the Form-room door.

Bunter peered out of the cupboard, watching almost ecstatically as he saw the Form-room door move, pushed open from without. He suppressed a fat chuckle with difficulty.

The Form-room door opened. Then the—

Crash!

"Ooooooch — gug - gug - gug - gug — grooooooggggggggh!"

And Billy Bunter fairly hugged himself with merriment as a startled figure, in the Form-room doorway, staggered and gurgled and spluttered in the midst of a blinding cloud of soot.

## THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

### Doing Their Best!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"What?"

"Quelchy's come in!"

"That does it!" said Harry Wharton.

The Famous Five were standing in a group under the Form-room windows. They had put in some cricket practice that afternoon; but quite early they had left Little Side. All the Co. were anxious to help the Bounder, if they could, in getting back into the Form-room unnoticed when he returned to Hawkscliff.

They hoped every moment to see him returning, and they were ready to "bunk" him up to the Remove window if he came. But he had not come yet. And now, in the distance, the angular figure of Mr. Quelch had appeared, walking in with Mr. Prout.

It was not five o'clock yet, and the Bounder's detention was till six. But Mr. Quelch had come in from his walk. Smithy had taken the chance of his Form master returning early—and Mr. Quelch had returned early. It was probable that the Remove master fully anticipated that the rebel of the Form had "bolted," and expected to find him absent. If so, he was not likely to give the Bounder a chance of dodging in just before six.

Harry Wharton & Co. exchanged glances.

"That does it!" repeated the captain of the Remove. "Ten to one Quelchy will go straight to the Form-room to see if Smithy is there."

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"Smithy's torn it, now!" agreed Johnny Bull, with a nod.

"Looks like a catch!" said Bob. "I'm awfully sorry, really—Smithy's doing no harm this afternoon—in fact, it's jolly decent of him to run the risk, to see old Redwing."

"The decency is unusual and terrific!" remarked Hurrée Jamsset Rañ Singh. "But the catchfulness is the next item on the esteemed programme, unless—"

"Unless what, Inky? If you've got an idea for getting Smithy clear, cough it up quick!" said Frank Nugent.

"The delayfulness of the esteemed Quelchy would give the Bounder another chance," suggested the Nabob of Bhanipur. "He may turn up fully any minute."

"But how are we going to delay Quelchy?" said Bob dubiously. "Can't run into him and butt him on the watch-chain, I suppose?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The talkfulness is silver, and the silence golden, according to the esteemed proverb. But on such an occasion as this, the talkfulness is golden. Let us speak to the esteemed Quelchy, and keep him talking if we can."

"H'm! Might gain a few minutes, but—"

"Well, a few minutes may see Smithy clear," said Harry. "He may be only a dozen yards away at this very minute. If it's a matter of minutes, we may give him a chance. Look here, we'd better let Quelchy get into the House, or his gimlet eye will spot Smithy if he comes. We'll tackle him indoors, one after another, see?"

"Good!"

"You stay here, Bob, and bunk Smithy into the window if he does come. You others come along."

"Right-ho!"

Four members of the Co. hurried into the House, while Mr. Quelch was still advancing slowly from the gates accommodating his pace to the slow and stately progress of Mr. Prout.

The two masters entered at last, and Mr. Prout rolled on ponderously to his study. Mr. Quelch headed at once for the Form-room passage, with the evident intention of looking immediately into the Remove room for the detained junior—who was not there.

"Excuse me, sir—" Wharton spoke diffidently to his Form master, and Mr. Quelch stopped, graciously enough.

"Well, Wharton, what is it?" he asked.

"You've sometimes been kind enough to come to tea in our study, sir," said the captain of the Remove. "We should be very happy, sir, if you'd come to tea to-day. We've got something rather special."

Mr. Quelch smiled.

"Thank you very much, Wharton. On another occasion, my boy—on another occasion."

And the Form master walked on, only to meet Frank Nugent at the distance of a few paces.

"Please, sir—" began Nugent.

"Well, Nugent?"

"My lines, sir—"

"You may bring them to my study a little later, Nugent."

"I—I haven't done them, sir."

"Indeed!"

"I—I was going to ask you, sir, if they could stand over till to-morrow, if you wouldn't mind, sir?" said Nugent meekly.

This was an opportunity for Mr. Quelch to deliver one of those little lectures with which he frequently improved the minds of his pupils. He did not neglect the opportunity.

"Now, Nugent," he said, quite kindly, "you must not ask me such a thing. Nothing that can be done to-day should be put off till to-morrow. That is an old maxim, and a good one. Your imposition was given you for remissness in class, and by leaving it unwritten you are adding to your remissness. I trust that you can realise that, my boy."

"Well, sir—" murmured Nugent.

"Punctuality, whether with an imposition or anything else, is a great virtue," continued Mr. Quelch. "Punctuality is said to be the politeness of princes, Nugent. Unpunctual ways may lead to serious difficulties, as they may increase as the years go on and grow into confirmed habits of slackness and carelessness later in life. You must remember, my boy, that your schooldays are a preparation for manhood, and that bad habits indulged in boyhood may cause you very serious detriment in a wider sphere. Your lines were to be handed in to me at six. You have ample time to write them, although you have so far neglected to do so. I leave it to your own good sense, Nugent, to realise that your lines should be handed in at the specified time."

"Oh, sir!"

"Go to your study, my boy, and write out your lines," said Mr. Quelch. "The irksomeness of a task is always increased by delay."

"Oh, yes, sir!" murmured Nugent. "I—I see that, sir, now you've pointed it out to me. Thank you, sir!"

Mr. Quelch dismissed him with a gracious wave of the hand.

What Mr. Quelch would have thought had he guessed that Frank Nugent had deliberately provoked that little lecture in order to delay him on his way to the Form room, cannot be imagined. Fortunately, he did not guess it. He walked on majestically, and at the corner of the Form-room passage almost walked into Johnny Bull.

"Bother the thing!" Johnny was saying. "Oh, bother—bother—bother!" He was speaking very emphatically.

"Bull! What is the matter?"

"Oh, sir, my watch won't go, and I keep on winding it, and it doesn't make any difference! Perhaps you'd look at it, sir?"

"Certainly, Bull. Hand me the watch."

Johnny Bull handed over the watch. He stood with a respectfully anxious face as Mr. Quelch examined it. It was quite true that the watch did not go; and equally true that it had not gone since the beginning of the term, when Johnny had dropped it. That circumstance, however, Johnny did not mention.

Mr. Quelch very kindly examined the watch. He wound it with care, and soon discovered that it might be wound indefinitely, without any result accruing.

He could not help smiling at the junior's simplicity.

"My dear Bull, the main-spring is broken," he said. "You must take it to a watchmaker's for repair."

"You don't think I could mend it, sir?"

"Quite impossible."

"If I were to take it to pieces, sir—" suggested Johnny.

"I advise you not to take your watch

**ANSWERS**  
Every Saturday — PRICE 2!





Having placed the big oak door of the Form-room a few inches ajar, Billy Bunter arranged the steps and mounted them, with the cardboard box in his fat hands. With great care, he planted the box on the top of the door, and lodged it against the door-lintel. Fortunately no one opened the door while he was thus engaged. (See Chapter 10.)

to pieces, Bull. I doubt whether even an experienced watchmaker would be able to repair it afterwards if you did," said Mr. Quelch, smiling.

And he handed the watch back to Johnny and continued his majestic progress. Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh was in his way a moment later.

"Esteemed sahib—" said the nabob.

"What is it, Hurree Singh?"

"You have sometimes made honourable and ludicrous remarks, honoured sahib, upon the variety of English, pure and undefiled, which I learned from the Moonshee Mook Mookerjee at Bhanipur," said the nabob. "You had the terrific goodness to offer to correct my unworthy self when in dubious doubt of rightful expressions in language."

"Certainly."

"The excellent and idiotic Todd declares that the esteemed word 'muchfulness' is not genuine good English," said Hurree Singh. "This is a word which I learnfully acquired in early studies under the wise Mook Mookerjee. Todd assures me that it is not genuine and well-founded English such as spoken by honourable Shakespeare and Milton and Wilkie Bard and other great masters of esteemed language. He has permitted himself disrespectful cachinnations on this subject."

"Dear me!" said Mr. Quelch.

"The esteemed sahib being the fount of all wisdom and knowledge, will perhaps enlighten the doubtful ignor-

ance of my unlearned self," said Hurree Singh meekly.

"Todd is quite right, Hurree Singh. There is certainly no such word as 'muchfulness' in the English language," said the Remove master, with a smile.

And the "fount of wisdom and knowledge" passed on.

The chums of the Remove had fought a series of delaying actions, as a military man would say; and certainly they had delayed the arrival of Mr. Quelch at the Form-room door very considerably.

But they had done all that could be done, and Mr. Quelch arrived at the door of the Remove Form-room at last, the Co. watching him rather anxiously from the end of the passage.

He pushed open the Form-room door.

The next instant Mr. Quelch received the surprise of his life. Something that had been lodged on the top of the door descended upon him with a thud, smothering, drenching, enveloping him with soot!

For an instant it seemed to Mr. Quelch that the universe was collapsing upon him, so utterly was he astounded.

The next instant he was spluttering wildly, choked and blinded by soot, gasping, spluttering, stuttering, and staggering blindly in the doorway while he gasped and spluttered and stuttered.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Wharton.

"Great pip!"

And the chums of the Remove ran

up the passage to the aid of their hapless Form master as he staggered blindly and spluttered and stuttered.

## THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

### Bunter's Catch!

"SMITHY!"

Bob Cherry uttered the exclamation as a running figure came round the school buildings and stopped, panting, under the Remove window.

Vernon-Smith was crimson with haste and breathlessness.

He had ridden hard and fast from Hawkscliff, losing not a moment by the way. Bob's bike had been left at the corner of Redelyffe Lane, in the willows, and the breathless and perspiring Bounder had arrived—at last! He was almost staggering with fatigue as he reeled against the old stone wall beside Bob.

"Am I in time?"

"I—I hope so! But—"

"I know Quelch's in," breathed the Bounder. "I saw him across the fields, coming back with old Prout. Luckily, he did not see me. He's in?"

"Yes," said Bob. "But—"

"He's gone into the House?"

"Yes."

"How long?"

"About ten minutes ago—"

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The Bounder snapped his teeth.

"What rotten luck! The game's up, then. He would go to the Form-room at once, of course. I'm done!"

"Hold on!" said Bob hurriedly. "The fellows have gone in to stop him as long as they can. He mayn't have got into the Form-room yet. The window's open, and I've been listening. I haven't heard—"

The Bounder pulled himself together instantly. He was not the fellow to lose the fraction of a chance.

"Good! Give me a bunk."

"Buck up!" said Bob.

He "bunked" the Bounder up to the high window of the Form-room. Half a dozen Remove fellows, spotting what was going on, drew round the spot to screen the proceedings as much as possible from general view. Fortunately, there were no Sixth Form prefects near, most of the Sixth being at tea just then. In the distance Mr. Capper was visible, but the master of the Fourth was fortunately a short-sighted gentleman.

Herbert Vernon-Smith dragged himself in at the window.

With his knee planted there, he stared into the Form-room, and as he stared he saw the Form-room door pushed open from without.

He was too late.

Before he had time to jump in, the Form door was wide open, and had Mr. Quelch walked in in the normal manner he would undoubtedly have seen Herbert Vernon-Smith climbing in at the open window.

But it seemed like a strange vision to the Bounder. The cardboard box bonneted the Form master as he was stepping in, and the next moment he was enveloped in soot.

Mr. Quelch did not see the Bounder.

He did not see anything but soot.

He saw that and smelt it and tasted it, and lived and moved and had his being in it.

Soot clothed him like a garment.

His eyes and nose and ears were full of it, his mouth had received a fair allowance, and the rest clung to him and drenched him and smothered him.

Vernon-Smith, in blank amazement, stared.

He would not have known that it was Mr. Quelch from his looks. The Form master looked like a pillar of soot.

How it had happened, why it had happened, utterly mystified the Bounder. But Smithy was quick on the uptake. It was his chance and he took it.

Mr. Quelch could not see him or anything else. He was gouging frantically at the soot in his eyes with both hands, while he spluttered and stut-tered.

Vernon-Smith dropped lightly to the Form-room floor and crossed to his desk and sat down.

He wiped the bedewed perspiration from his brow, and then picked up his pen and started on his untouched task.

From his looks he might have been sitting there all the afternoon.

He did not heed Mr. Quelch.

That was no business of his.

The door of the wall-cupboard in the Form-room opened, and a fat figure emerged with a grinning, fat face.

"He, he, he!"

Vernon-Smith stared at Bunter.

He knew now who had rigged up the booby trap which had caught Mr. Quelch at such a fortunate moment for the truant.

Bunter did not observe the Bounder.

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The fat junior had been watching the Form-room door, and the window being opposite, Bunter's back had been to the window.

Having caught his intended victim, as he supposed, William George Bunter had emerged from his place of concealment to rejoice in the sight of Smithy covered with soot and gum and paste and ink.

"He, he, he!"

The Bounder grinned silently.

"You beast, Smithy!" Bunter was addressing the sooty figure in the doorway that gurgled and spluttered. "That's for you! Thumping a fellow because he was bringing you a letter. You've got yours. He, he, he!"

"Groooogh! Oooooch! Gug-gug-gug-gug!" came from the staggering, bewildered figure in the doorway.

"He, he, he!" cackled Bunter.

"Oooooch! Goooooch! Moooooch!"

Bunter felt the tears of merriment running down his fat cheeks.

This was "some" vengeance.

He had planned to catch his enemy in that booby-trap and to smother him with that horrible mixture, and, lo and behold, he had succeeded. He had caught somebody, at all events. As yet he did not grasp the fact that his "catch" was not the Bounder. It might have dawned upon his fat brain that the figure in the doorway was much taller than the Bounder, unrecognisable under the soot, but much too lengthy to be a Remove fellow. But the Owl of the Remove observed nothing for the moment but the success of his remarkable stunt. He doubled up with merriment.

There was a patter of feet in the Form-room passage, and Harry Wharton & Co. came running up.

Mr. Quelch staggered against the open door, trying to breathe. Soot was suffocating him. Horrid moans and gasps came from him as he breathed and masticated soot.

"Oh, sir!" gasped Wharton. "C-c-can we help you?"

The chums of the Remove did not laugh.

Mr. Quelch presented a remarkable aspect that might have moved a stone image to merriment. But if the juniors felt any merriment they suppressed it. Bonneting a Form master with a box of soot might have a superficial aspect of comicality, but it was certain to be an awfully, fearfully serious matter for the perpetrator.

"Goooch!" gurgled Mr. Quelch.

"Oocch! Moooooch! Gug-gug-gug!"

Oh! Oooooch! Mmmmmmmgggggg!"

"It—it's a booby trap!" stut-tered Johnny Bull.

"Who—what—how—

what born idiot has done this?"

"Oooooch! Gurgugrgurg!"

Mr. Quelch was emphatic but inarticulate. Generally he could make his meaning clear easily enough. Now he could only seek to express it by choked gurgling and gasping.

"My hat!" murmured Nugent, as, looking past the blackened Form master, he sighted, with the same glance, Bunter and the Bounder. Bunter was quite near at hand, doubled up with mirth. Beyond him, sitting sedately at his desk, was Vernon-Smith.

The Bounder evidently had got home. He glanced up and winked cheerily at the juniors as they stared at him past Mr. Quelch. Then, with great gravity, he resumed his task.

"I say, you fellows," squeaked Bunter—"I say, look at him! He, he, he!"

Bunter pointed a fat forefinger at

his sooty victim and gurgled with glee. Even yet the dreadful truth had not dawned upon him.

"You—you—you did this, Bunter?" stammered Wharton.

"He, he, he! You bet," chortled Bunter.

"The beast thumped me—"

"What!"

"The rotter thumped me, in the quad—"

"Shurrup, you ass!"

"Shan't!" retorted Bunter. "I jolly well rigged up this booby-trap to pay him out. He, he, he! I'll teach the rotter to thump me. He, he, he! I dare say he's sorry now for thumping a chap! He, he, he!"

The juniors stared at Bunter. Obviously, that short-sighted junior did not know that the blackened, gasping figure was the master of the Remove.

He was to make that discovery shortly, however.

Mr. Quelch, still unable to find his voice, was gasping and gurgling and moaning, breathless, blinded, smothered. He leaned helplessly on the doorpost in an atmosphere of soot. Even had Bunter recognised him there was no escape for the fat junior. But he was not thinking of escape. His victim was in no state to deal with him, and Bunter stood ready to dodge among the desks if necessary, still in the happy belief that it was the Bounder who was snorting and gurgling there. Seldom or never had the Owl of the Remove looked and felt so triumphant. His many wrongs and grievances had been avenged, and alone, unaided, he had done it!

The master of the Remove found his voice at last. Gouging with both hands had cleared his vision a little, and with bleared eyes he blinked at Bunter.

"Oooch! Goo! Grooh! Oh! Upon my word! Who has done this? Bunter? Is that Bunter? Bunter, have you done this?"

Billy Bunter ceased to chortle all of a sudden.

The well-known voice of his Form master, proceeding from that cloud of soot, had a petrifying effect on him.

His little round eyes opened wide behind his big spectacles—so wide, in terror and horror, that it really seemed as if they would never shut again. His fat jaw dropped, and his fat knees knocked together.

"Bunter!"

"Ow!" moaned Bunter.

"Bunter!"

"Ow! It's Quelchy!"

"Bunter! You—you—you—"

gurgled Mr. Quelch. Bunter stood rooted to the floor, gazing at the sooty Form master as if fascinated by horror. He did not move, he could not move, until Mr. Quelch made a stride towards him, scattering clouds of soot as he moved. Then Bunter jumped back in terror, and squeaked:

"Ow! It wasn't me! Ow!"

## THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

### Saved from the Sack!

MR. QUELCH groped for his pocket-handkerchief, and wiped soot from his face. His expression was partly disclosed to the eye; and it was an unnerving expression. The glint in his gimlet eyes might have stricken terror to a much stouter heart than William George





"He, he, he!" cackled Billy Bunter, as he surveyed the result of his booby trap. "Serve you right, Smithy, you beast!" "BUNTER!" roared Mr. Quelch. "Ow! It's Quelchy!" The Owl of the Remove stood rooted to the floor, gazing at the sooty figure of his Formmaster as if fascinated by horror. He did not move; he could not move. "Bunter! You—you—you——" gurgled Mr. Quelch. (See Chapter 12.)

Bunter's. Bunter was not a stout-hearted youth, though in other respects his stoutness beat all records. He almost crumpled up under the Formmaster's sooty glare.

The kindest-hearted and most patient-tempered Form master must have felt extremely annoyed in Mr. Quelch's position. Mr. Quelch was more than annoyed. He was enraged; he was, in fact, almost trembling with fury.

Sooty from head to foot, blackened and smothered, choked and blinded, his eyes streaming, his nose streaming, he glared at Billy Bunter as if he could have devoured that hapless youth.

He had heard every word Bunter had uttered, of course, and knew to whom he owed his present fearful condition. His gimlet eyes, as he cleared them of soot, almost bored into Bunter.

"Bunter! You—you—you did this!"

"Oh, no, sir! Certainly not!" gasped Bunter.

"I heard you say so."

"I—I meant—I didn't—I——"

Mr. Quelch turned a sooty glare round on the juniors outside the doorway.

"Were you concerned in this, Wharton?"

"I, sir!" gasped the captain of the Remove.

"Yes, you!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"No, sir! Certainly not! We—we saw what happened, and—and ran up to see if we could help!" gasped Wharton.

"You knew nothing of this vile and iniquitous trap in which I have fallen?"

"Nothing at all, sir. We haven't been in the Form-room since class this morning."

"There was no knowfulness on our esteemed part, sir," said Hurreo Jamset Ram Singh. "The surprisefulness of ourselves was terrific."

"I accept your assurance," said Mr. Quelch. "I believe you. Indeed, only a boy whose stupidity almost amounts to imbecility could be guilty of such a trick. That boy will be flogged and expelled from the school!"

"Ow!" gasped Bunter.

The Remove master turned to Bunter again.

"I think, Bunter, that you can scarcely be in your right senses," he said. "You must know the penalty of such a dastardly prank on your Form master! You will be flogged——"

"Wow!"

"And expelled——"

"Yow-ow!"

"I shall take you to the Head——"

"Oh dear!"

"If you please, sir," said Harry, trying to put in a word for the unhappy Owl of the Remove, "I don't think Bunter intended to catch you with that booby-trap, sir. He's such a fool—ahem!—he didn't think of you coming to the Form-room."

"Nonsense!"

"I—I didn't!" wailed Bunter. "I never did, sir! I—I didn't fix up that booby-trap at all, sir. I never knew anything about it, sir, and I wasn't hiding in the cupboard over there, sir, I wasn't, really——"

"How dare you tell me such falsehoods, Bunter?" thundered Mr. Quelch. Bunter quaked.

"I—I mean, sir——"

"Tell Mr. Quelch the truth, you fat idiot!" breathed Wharton. "Can't you see lies are no good, you dummy?"

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"Enough!" snorted Mr. Quelch. "You have deliberately assaulted your Form master, you wretched, disrespectful young rascal——"

"I didn't, sir!" howled Bunter. "I thought it was Smithy!"

"What? What?"

"I never knew you'd come in!" wailed the wretched Owl. "I thought it was Smithy, sir! You—you couldn't think I'd lay a booby-trap for you, sir! Oh dear! I should be too jolly frightened! Ow!"

There was a ring of truth in that statement. Indeed, as Mr. Quelch grew a little calmer he realised that it was very improbable that a fellow like Bunter would have the nerve to smother



his Form master with soot and remain on the spot to enjoy the sight.

"Tell me the truth, you wretched boy!" snapped the Remove master. "You placed this horrible stuff here—"

"I meant it for Smithy, sir!" moaned Bunter. "He thumped me this morning, sir, for pinching his letter—I mean, because I took his letter to bring to him, in my obliging way, sir, and—and I wanted to make him sit up. Oh dear! I wish I hadn't done it now!"

"Make yourself clear, Bunter. You did not intend this for me?"

"Ow! No, sir! I'd sooner set a booby-trap for the Head than for you, sir!" gasped Bunter. "He ain't so dangerous—"

"What?"

"I—I mean, I'm too respectful—"

"You must be out of your senses, Bunter. How could you have set this dastardly trap for a Remove boy who was inside the room at the time?"

"Smithy was gone out, sir," groaned Bunter, "and I wanted to catch him as he came back. I knew he'd come back before you if he could."

Mr. Quelch stared at Bunter, and stared past him. At the other end of the Form room Vernon-Smith was sitting sedately at his desk, at work at his task. Bunter evidently was not aware of that.

"You thought that Vernon-Smith had broken detention, Bunter?" the Remove master exclaimed.

"Yes, sir, I looked in for him, and he wasn't here, and so—"

"Upon my word," exclaimed Mr. Quelch, "this boy's stupidity passes all comprehension!"

"Oh, really, sir—"

"Can you not see that Vernon-Smith is in the Form-room, Bunter?" hooted Mr. Quelch.

"He isn't, sir—"

"What?"

"He isn't, sir. I thought he'd come back when you shoved the door open, sir, but it wasn't Smithy, it was you, sir—"

Harry Wharton & Co., in the Form room passage, exchanged glances and quietly trod away. They felt that it was judicious to be no longer on the spot.

Mr. Quelch did not observe them; his eyes were fixed on Bunter.

"You incredibly stupid boy!" snorted Mr. Quelch. "Are you actually unaware that Vernon-Smith is in this room?"

"Eh?"

Bunter blinked helplessly round.

His eyes almost bulged through his spectacles as he discerned Herbert Vernon-Smith sitting at his desk.

Bunter blinked at the Bounder as if he could scarcely believe either his eyes or his spectacles.

"Oh crikey!" he gasped. "I—I never saw him, sir! I—I looked in. He wasn't here; I—I thought he wasn't here. I—I'm rather short-sighted, sir! I—I thought he'd bolted, sir, and—and I fixed up that booby-trap for him when he came back. I—I assure you, sir, I thought he had cut, and—and I was shocked, sir, at a fellow cutting detention! I—I thought I'd punish him, sir, being shocked at him—"

"Silence! I believe, Bunter, that you did not intend this dastardly trap for me. I believe that in your obtuse stupidity you fancied that Vernon-Smith was absent, and fixed up this wretched trap on his account. I shall not report you to the Head."

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"Oh, thank you, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I shall deal with you myself."

"Ow!"

"Go to my study—"

"Wow!"

"And wait for me there."

"Oh lor'!"

Bunter staggered out of the Form-room. He limped away to the Remove master's study, to wait there for the incensed gentleman to deal with him. He waited with dire apprehensions—which were destined to be realised.

Mr. Quelch gave the Bounder a glance—a dark glance. But he left the Form-room immediately after Bunter. He was in need, just then, of a bath and a change of clothes, more than of anything else. The detained junior was there—still under detention—and that was what he had come to the Form-room to ascertain.

For an hour Mr. Quelch was very busy. With ample supplies of hot water and a reckless expenditure of soap, he removed the lingering traces of Bunter's booby trap. It kept him busy for a long time; and when he finally emerged into public view again there was still a clinging aroma of soot about him.

Meanwhile, the Bounder had been working at top speed. In that hour he had not finished his task, but he had put in quite enough to make a good show.

Mr. Quelch arrived in the Form-room at six o'clock.

"Vernon-Smith!" he said acidly.

The Bounder rose respectfully.

"Yes, sir."

"I will look at your task."

"I haven't been able to finish it, sir," said the Bounder demurely. "I've worked pretty hard at it, sir."

"You had ample time to complete it," said Mr. Quelch coldly, as he glanced over the papers. "However, as you have done so much, I will say no more about that. Had I found the task untouched, as I half expected, I should have caned you with the utmost severity."

The Bounder did not answer that.

"There is a more serious matter, Vernon-Smith. That obtuse and short-sighted boy, Bunter, fancied that you were absent when he prepared that dastardly trap. You, however, are neither obtuse nor short-sighted, and you must have known perfectly well that I should fall into that trap when I came to the Form-room to see you."

The Bounder suppressed a grin.

"It wasn't my business to interfere with Bunter, sir," he said. "You ordered me to sit here and work at a Latin task, sir. And it certainly never

crossed my mind, sir, that you would get the box of soot. I never thought about it at all, sir."

That was a perfectly true statement, as the Bounder had known nothing whatever about the booby-trap till he came back. But as Mr. Quelch did not know that Smithy had been absent it did not ring true to him.

"I cannot believe you, Vernon-Smith. You knew that that stupid boy was acting in a foolish error, and you allowed him to proceed, knowing that it was extremely probable, at least, that the box of soot would fall upon me when I came here. Certainly, I cannot punish you for Bunter's action, as you are well aware. But I cannot help regarding you as being an accessory, and indeed more to blame than Bunter, as you do not share his stupidity. I shall cane you as well as Bunter. Follow me to my study."

"Very well, sir."

The Bounder followed Mr. Quelch, grinning as he followed him. A caning did not worry the hardy Bounder very much.

A few minutes later loud yells were heard proceeding from Mr. Quelch's study. They came from William George Bunter, who woke all the echoes when Mr. Quelch set to work with his cane. The Bounder went through it in stoical silence.

They left the Form master's study together, the Bounder wriggling a little, Billy Bunter squirming and twisting and wailing.

Harry Wharton & Co. met them as they came up to the Remove passage. Bunter rolled on to his study, to groan and mumble till he felt better, deeply repentant of his remarkable scheme of vengeance on the Bounder.

Vernon-Smith stopped and gave the Famous Five a wry grin.

"Licked?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Just a few. Quelchy thinks I sat there watching that fat idiot fixing up the booby-trap and letting him get on with it."

"Oh!"

"I've had six for that, though I explained that it wasn't my business to interfere with Bunter—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"I'd rather Quelchy thought that than that he thought I'd been up to Hawkscliff this afternoon!" grinned the Bounder. "That fat idiot has saved my bacon. I was just getting in at the window when Quelchy got in at the door—and only the box of soot prevented him from spotting me. It was touch-and-go!"

"I'm glad you got through," said Harry Wharton. "But—"

"A miss is as good as a mile!" said the Bounder coolly. "That crass idiot, Bunter, seems to have gone in for vengeance this afternoon—and he's saved me from the giddy sack. I'll stand him a supper in the study this evening as a giddy reward. He's earned it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the Bounder lounged away, whistling.

Billy Bunter quite forgot his yearning for vengeance on the Bounder when he was asked to supper in Study No. 4 that evening. He enjoyed that supper, and did himself remarkably well, though why Smithy stood him that spread was a mystery to him: Smithy did not confide to him that it was Billy Bunter's extraordinary performances on the war-path that had saved him from the "sack."

THE END.

## SPECIAL FOR NEXT WEEK:—

### "Bravo, Bunter!"

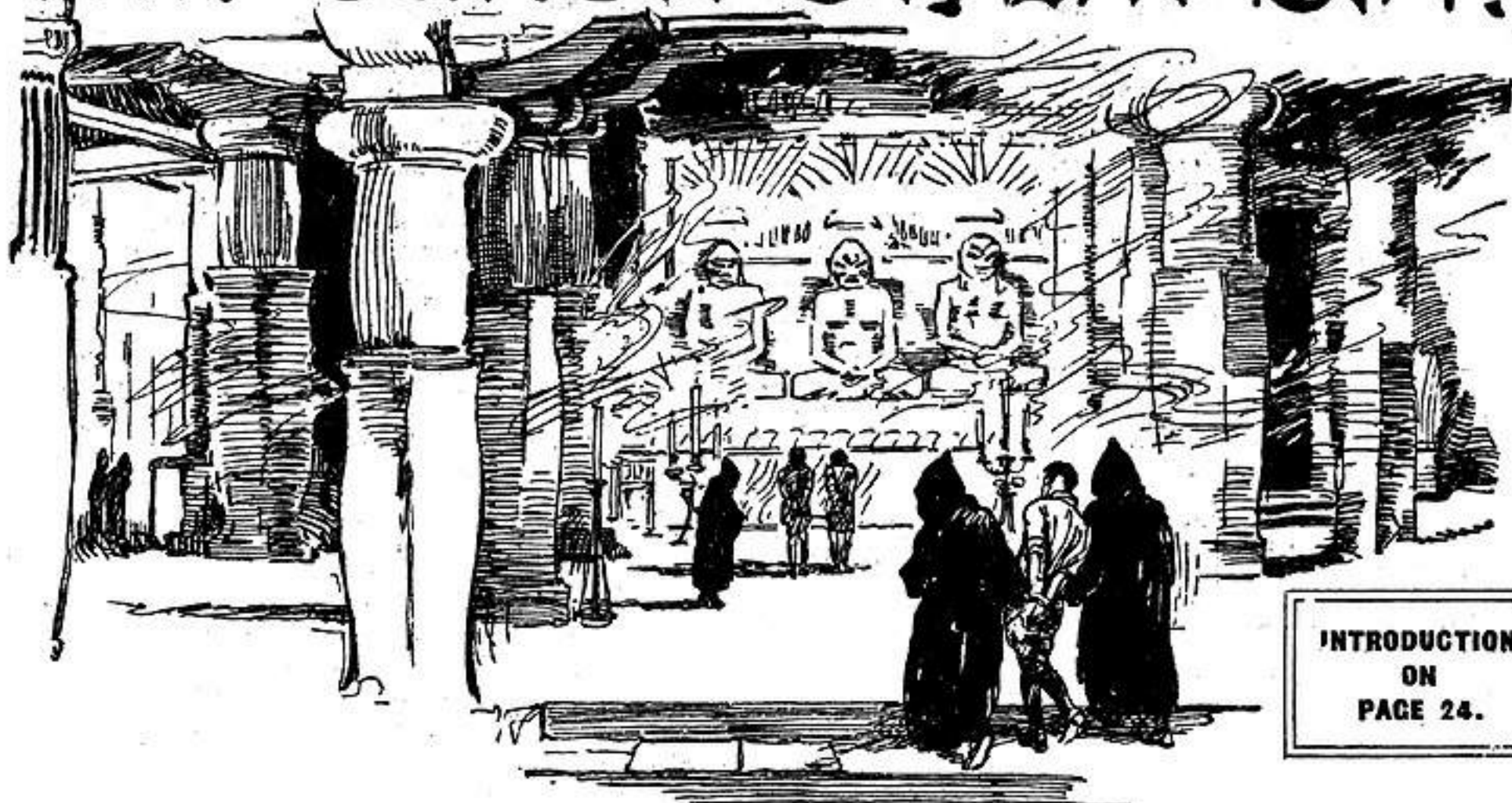
A topping yarn of Harry Wharton & Co. with Billy Bunter well in the limelight. Make sure of reading it by ordering next week's Magnet

WELL IN ADVANCE!



**THE VOICE!** The hour of the sacrifice draws nigh;—twelve helpless victims are to be sacrificed to the glory of Buddha, and amongst them are three Englishmen. . . . The first victim is led out before the giant idol of Buddha—the knives of the executioners are raised, but they don't strike, for from the mouth of the idol issues the voice of "Buddha" bidding these fanatics "Stop." And the voice is that of Ferrers Locke, detective!

# THE CURSE OF LHASA!



INTRODUCTION  
ON  
PAGE 24.

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

## Kang Pu!

**T**HE service ended, and the monks filed slowly from the temple, till it was deserted save for bare-footed acolytes who moved here and there tending and trimming the lamps.

Ferrers Locke knew that by this time the open door and the missing monks must have been discovered. No sounds of alarm disturbed the stillness, however, and all that day he lay hidden in the stone gallery.

Many services were held in the temple below him, but he saw no signs which showed that his presence in the monastery was suspected. Afternoon deepened into dusk, then dusk into night. Waiting till an evening service had concluded and the temple below was deserted, Ferrers Locke rose to his feet. Boldly he descended the narrow staircase, his hood drawn well over his face, and alive to the peril in which he stood.

Reaching the main corridor, he turned in at one of the curtained entrances to the temple. Nothing stirred, and, keeping in the shadows, he glided forward till he came to the giant Buddha. On each side of the god hung networks of light chain. Pushing the chainwork aside with his hand, Ferrers Locke passed into a small side-chapel. Sacred relics, shrines, and symbols were scattered about in great numbers.

Before a small door leading into another chamber stood a hideous dwarf. His great, ugly head was turned inquiringly towards Ferrers Locke, and his hands were clenched tightly on the hilt of a heavy paladin sword. His arms were abnormally long, his body squat and beastly, but bespeaking enormous strength. He mouthed horribly, and the detective felt a wave of repugnance and

nausea as he saw the grotesque thing was tongueless.

The chamber which he guarded was obviously situated right behind the god, and was the one for which Ferrers Locke was searching. The detective was convinced that the voice which issued from the lips of the giant Buddha was of human agency. There must be some means of reaching the great head of the god and, standing inside it, a man could see all that went on in the temple below, and also speak through the metal lips, his voice being amplified by some megaphone arrangement. It was this which Ferrers Locke wished to investigate. Simple trickery, indeed, but calculated to impress the superstitious and incredulous priests. As for the pictures in the flames—There was some material explanation of that—some illusionary effects had been used.

Advancing towards the dwarf, Ferrers Locke showed his ring. But the dwarf shook his head and raised his sword in a threatening gesture.

"Now hark," said the detective softly. "My business is with the Chosen One of Buddha, Kang Pu! It is of an urgency which brooks of no delay, and defiance is like to send thee to the chamber of torments! Permit me to pass those portals which ye guard."

But the dwarf was not so easily hoodwinked. He shook his great head in violent negation and advanced a step, the sword raised. Ferrers Locke retreated. He knew that the odds were hopeless. He was conscious of the almost superhuman strength in the squat frame of the thing that guarded the door. Moreover, the detective was unarmed except for his knife.

Turning away, Ferrers Locke shuffled slowly towards the hanging network of chain through which he had passed into the chapel. At his heels came the dwarf, his sword poised ready to strike should this presumptuous Lesser Abbot attempt

to force an entry into the inner chamber. But such a thing seemed far from Ferrers Locke's mind as he shuffled away. The dwarf leered, mouthing jeering words which he could not speak. He hated the black-robed ones—yes, although he served them. Let this Lesser Abbot persist in his demand to pass the portal, and—

Ferrers Locke had been tensing every muscle. Suddenly, without the slightest warning, he wheeled. His hand closed on the dwarf's wrist, and with expert ju-jutsu he gave a jerk which brought a strangled moan of pain from the tongueless creature. At the same instant his other hand fastened on the hilt of the sword, and he wrenched it from the dwarf's grasp. So sudden and unexpected had been the attack that the dwarf was taken completely by surprise.

Springing backwards, the sword in his hands, Ferrers Locke snapped.

"One hostile move and I shall cleave thee to the bone!"

Dumbly the dwarf glared at him through little bloodshot eyes. He had failed in his trust, and he knew what awaited him at the hands of his masters. It would be a death by torment. Better far to rush this mad abbot of small degree, and if death should come in the struggle, then it were a better death than that of the rack.

So, lowering his head, and his long arms outstretched, he dashed forward. Ferrers Locke had sensed what was going on in the creature's mind. He was loth to take life, though, should no other course be open, he would not allow that to stand between himself and his goal. Kang Pu must be frustrated at all costs or the world would be plunged into war.

Stepping quickly to one side he crashed the flat of the sword down on the dwarf's skull. With a moan the stunted mass of humanity crashed for-

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ward to the floor. His limbs twitched a moment, then he lay still, sprawled face downwards, his long arms aspread.

Bending down Ferrers Locke made sure the creature was not dead. He tore a strip from his abbot's robes and made an improvised gag. Thrusting this into the dwarf's cavernous mouth, he tied his hands and feet with other strips, then dragged him across the floor till he was hidden from view behind a shrine.

Picking up the sword, he paused a moment, listening. All was silent, and the vast temple seemed still deserted. But there was suddenly forced in on Ferrers Locke that he was being watched. It was as though some unseen presence stood in that small chapel. With a shrug of his shoulders he tried to throw off the feeling. The sword in his hand, he strode to the door which had been guarded by the dwarf. His hand closed on the wrought-iron handle.

For a moment he hesitated whilst he pulled himself together. Then, with a quick movement, he turned the handle. The door opened easily enough.

Ferrers Locke found himself gazing into a small square room, stone-walled and stone-floored. It was bare of all furnishings save for a rough table and a chair. And seated at the table was a man. He was looking straight at Ferrers Locke, and an automatic in his hand covered unwaveringly the detective's heart.

And, as though frozen, Ferrers Locke stood immobile on the threshold. But it was not the revolver which held him thus; it was the face of the man. For the first time in his life Ferrers Locke had come face to face with evil incarnate.

Eyes, red as glowing coals, glared from a visage which was bloodless, as sallow as death. A great hooked nose surmounted a mouth, the thin livid lips of which were twisted into the mirthless caricature of a smile. High cheekbones, jutting out horribly beneath the sallow skin bespoke of Oriental blood. The scraggy neck, thin, wrinkled and of a jaundiced yellowness, was encircled with a thick band of pure gold, in the centre of which glowed a colossal blood-red ruby.

The man was clothed in robes of thick purple velvet, embroidered with crimson. The fingers which were curled about the butt of the automatic were long, thin, and tapering, and of a deathly whiteness. The nails protruded above the finger-tips by more than half an inch.

But it was the face which held Ferrers Locke—that face which seemed a nightmare, so horrible and evil in its satanic beastliness. There was something familiar about it.

Then in a flash came realisation. It was the face he had seen leering from the flames before the altar of the Buddha.

Kang Pu!

And even with the thought the thin lips of the man moved.

"Welcome, my friend," he said, his voice soft and purring. "You will not forget that I have you covered! It is a long journey from Baker Street to this monastery of Salai. You have surmounted many difficulties, and have dealt roughly with my servants on your way."

Ferrers Locke stood silent and rigid. The purring voice went on:

"But my eyes have marked your progress as day by day you drew nearer to this monastery of Salai in quest of vengeance upon the slayer of Lamonte. I am the one you seek! I am Kang Pu!"

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### The Words of Kang Pu!

**T**HERE was a moment of intense silence. At last had come the meeting and, within the walls of the Salai Monastery, Ferrers Locke stood face to face with the slayer of Lamonte, and of Sir Hylton Davies.

"The score against you is heavy indeed!" went on the soft voice of Kang Pu, and the hint of mockery which it held was not lost upon the detective. "Scarcely had you crossed our frontiers than you committed sacrilege most vile at the altar of Buddha, in the lamasery of Patong! But you escaped and later forced an entry into the sacred precincts of the Seven Monasteries—"

"Why say all this?" cut in Ferrers Locke sharply. "A resume, from your lips, of my journey through Tibet does not interest me!"

Kang Pu leaned forward, his burning eyes fixed on the detective's face, his revolver pointed unwaveringly at the detective's heart.

"It does not interest you!" he repeated purringly. "You, who fired at the great Buddha in the ruined temple of the Seven Monasteries! Know then that the bullet from your revolver passed through my forehead!"

With the tapering first finger of his left hand he indicated a bluish mark on the centre of his forehead. Such a mark as a bullet, fired from a distance, might well have made.

Then suddenly the voice of Kang Pu became harsh and metallic.

"In your heart, you cursed English dog, you say that such a thing could not be: that no man could take a bullet so, and live to speak of it! But what does your Western civilisation know of the truths of immortality?"

His voice sank till it became low and tense.

"I am immortal! I, Kang Pu, have lived through ages now past and shall live through the ages to come! No man can slay me, and that death which comes to all, sooner or late, comes not to me! I, Kang Pu, am the master of life and the lord of death!"

Whilst he had been talking, his terrible eyes had never ceased to stare straight into those of Ferrers Locke. And, as he returned the stare, the brain of the detective began to feel strangely numb. Then, in a flash, came the words of Lamonte when he spoke of the awful, hypnotic eyes which glared at him from the eye-sockets of the giant Buddha.

Ferrers Locke knew well that

### 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 turn the tables on him. Then, led by **TOMO**, an outcast, the twain eventually win their way to Lhasa, where the peasants, with Ferrers Locke at their head, put the priests to rout. Following this, Ferrers Locke, by a strategic move, gains an entry into the Salai Monastery where he finds the sinister Kang Pu, with customary cunning and trickery, goading his countless followers to prepare for war.

(Now read on.)

hypnotism, whilst often vaunted by cheap tricksters, was, none the less, a very real force. And those staring, unwinking, burning eyes were boring right into his brain and slowly taking dominion over it.

He brought his every faculty into being in an effort to combat the sinister influence.

"You talk easily of immortality, you sorcerer!" he snapped. "Yet, I vow, one good clean thrust of this sword which I hold would let the life-blood from your body! If you are indeed immortal, then why hold me at bay with that revolver, I, who if your words are true, am powerless to harm you?"

"I hold you at bay, my friend!" replied Kang Pu, "for it is not seemly that a cursed English dog should lay violent hands on the Chosen One of Buddha, and that under the very eyes of my servants!"

From the corner of his eyes, as he half-turned his head, Ferrers Locke saw that the chapel behind him was filled with mailed monks, armed with long curved swords. Their advent had been marvellously silent.

Ferrers Locke was indeed in deadly peril. No way of escape opened from the rear, and a bullet through his heart was a certain eventuality should he rush Kang Pu. His life was not worth a moment's purchase, for he knew that he could expect nothing but a slow, revolting death at the hands of this sinister priest who claimed immortality and who was preparing the countless hordes of the East for war.

He knew that the room in which he stood was directly behind the giant Buddha. A heavy curtain hung against the centre of the left-hand wall; the wall on the other side of which the Buddha stood. There must be some ascent from the room to the head of the god. The chances were that the curtain shrouded a staircase which led upwards to the great head of the Buddha.

At that moment a bell tolled heavily, somewhere in the bowels of the monastery. Its ponderous notes reverberated through the room, and the thin, livid lips of Kang Pu twisted into an evil smile.

"The hour of sacrifice is at hand," he said softly, "and to-night word goes forth to my peoples to prepare themselves for war and gather in their camps. I know you, Ferrers Locke, and I know your mission in Tibet. You seek that cursed Beverley who would bring his trade caravans through this forbidden land! Hark well to this!"

He paused, as though to lay emphasis on what was to come. Then he continued in a harsh, grating voice, exultant in its triumph.

"Beverley lives, and with him Carstairs and Heyward! But they are changed with their long sojourn in this monastery. To-night they die, and you with them, on the sacrificial altar which stands before the great Buddha! You and they will share the honour of being the first to die in the war which will have its beginning this night in the mobilisation of my peoples, and which will see, before it has run its course, the whole world aflame!"

The glaring eyes were fixed steadily on the detective, and the soft voice went on:

"With the rising of Tibet, the hordes of China and Mongolia will spring to arms. Then westwards we shall be joined by the peoples of India, and the whole of Western Asia! The seeds of war have been well implanted



and have taken root amongst the millions who serve the great Buddha. Where then will stand your Britain and her Empire, you dog? Where—"

He got no further. Ferrers Locke had slowly been tensing every muscle. Suddenly, acting with a swiftness on which he knew his life depended, the detective sprang to one side, hurling his sword at the seated figure of Kang Pu as he did so.

The curved blade took Kang Pu full in the face. A scream issued from his lips as he reeled backwards in his chair. His revolver exploded, the bullet whining past Ferrers Locke's head. The mailed monks rushed forward to the aid of their chief and to seize the infidel. But Ferrers Locke had dashed to the curtain. One precious second he lost in stooping to snatch the automatic which had clattered to the floor. He had a vision of Kang Pu lying writhing beside the overturned chair, then he tore aside the curtain.

### Inside the Buddha!

FERRERS LOCKE had made his desperate bid for liberty on the assumption that the curtain against the wall hid some passage-way or staircase. If it did not, then his plight was little worse than before. He had all to gain and nothing to lose, for his life was forfeit. There was also, in his mind, a faint hope that even at this eleventh hour he might be able to, in some part, undo the work of the sinister priest and save the English-speaking peoples from a war at which imagination recoiled.

The whirling downward blade of one of the monk's grazed his shoulder. But behind the curtain there opened to his gaze a narrow winding stair. He went up it two steps at a time. The very narrowness of the staircase proved his salvation, for his pursuers could only follow in single file. In their eagerness they jostled and impeded each other. At the top of the staircase Ferrers Locke came to a small iron door. It was bolted on the outside with heavy iron bolts. Grimly he tugged at them, but the first of his pursuers was almost on him. One bolt came from its socket, then another. With a yell the foremost monk raised his sword. It was no time for half measures. Turning at bay, the detective fired point-blank. Without a sound the monk pitched backwards down the staircase, his sword clattering from his nerveless hand. His dead weight pitched into the monks at his heels, sending them staggering backwards a few steps. In the respite thus afforded Ferrers Locke drew back the remaining bolts, and, swinging open the door, dashed through and slammed it shut behind him.

On the inner side a key was in a lock. It was the work of a moment to turn the key, and the next moment the first of his pursuers threw himself against the outer side of the door. Pausing to shoot home the heavy bolts which were on the inside, Ferrers Locke turned to take stock of his surroundings.

The peculiar, almost circular, shape of the apartment, told him without doubt that he was standing in the very head of the Buddha. It was lighted by a shaded oil-lamp. Opposite him, on the inner side of what he knew to be the face of the great god, was a small platform about three feet in height. Above it hung two curtains, about a foot square. He realised without investigation that these curtained the eyes of the Buddha, and that, by drawing

one of them back, he would be able to see what went on in the temple below.

One side of the apartment was taken up by a bench on which stood test-tubes, retorts, and large jars, doubtless containing various chemicals.

Crossing to the platform, he mounted to it by means of wooden steps, and examined an iron tube which protruded about three feet from the boarding. One end of the tube was fitted with rubber, and a thin smile came to Ferrers Locke's lips as he realised that the tubing was connected to the mouth of the Buddha. The inside would be fitted with a microphone, and to produce the thunderous voice of the god it was necessary only to stand on the platform, put one's lips to the rubber mouthpiece, and talk.

Ferrers Locke then took stock of his position. He was a prisoner inside the head of the giant Buddha. Outside, the mailed monks were battering on the door. He was in possession of a six-chambered revolver, which still contained four live cartridges. He was, undoubtedly, in a position of amazing strength if he but played his cards right.

Kang Pu might be the Chosen of Buddha in the eyes of the priests. But Buddha was stronger than his chosen one, Kang Pu. And he, Ferrers Locke, was in control of Buddha. That simply was how matters stood. Ferrers Locke laughed grimly, for there was humour in the Gilbertian situation.

The priests of Salai believed unquestioningly in the voice which issued from the lips of the great god. Ferrers Locke had received ample proof of that. He realised to the fullest why the body-guard of priestly soldiers were tongueless. They knew the trickery imposed upon the superstitious priests, but, even should they dare, they could not betray their master, Kang Pu.

The battering on the door ceased. The mailed monks had evidently withdrawn. It was hopeless to attempt to force the iron door. When Ferrers Locke ventured forth, as he must do unless he wished to die of starvation, then they would probably be lying in wait for him. But Ferrers Locke was determined that much should happen before he ventured forth.

And as he stood plunged in thought there came softly to his ears the chanting of many voices. He crossed the platform, and, cautiously drawing aside one of the curtains, he looked through the eye of the Buddha.

Below, congregated in the vast temple, was the whole might of the Salai Monastery. Scarlet-clad abbots, others in vestments of blue, gold, and silver, black-robed priests and acolytes. There were fully three hundred of them. The abbots, and those of the superior orders, were ranged on front of the altars of the Buddhas. The black-robed priests and acolytes were ranged in crescent-shaped formation across the floor of the temple.

Then one—whom Ferrers Locke took to be the Abbot of Salai, next in rank to Kang Pu—turned with outstretched arms to the giant Buddha. He was clad in gorgeous vestments of gold and silver, studded with precious stones which glittered in the light of a thousand lamps.

"O Buddha," he cried, and his voice ascended clearly to Ferrers Locke, "the hour of sacrifice draws nigh, and we, thy unworthy servants, have gathered to do honour to thy name. Vouchsafe, O Buddha, that we may this night behold the form of thy Chosen One, Kang Pu! We have but heard his voice, O

Buddha, and our eyes are hungry to see him whom thou, in thy wisdom, hath ordained shall lead us in that war which will bring the peoples of the earth beneath thy rule! Vouchsafe, O Buddha, that this night Kang Pu shall come to us from that spirit world where he sojourns with our fathers! Vouchsafe, O Buddha, that from his lips we shall receive this night the message of war!"

The voice of the abbot ceased. There was a moment of silence, then came a swelling, thunderous peal of harmony, as though from some hidden organ. And with it rose the voices of the monks, an awful grandeur in their measured tones.

Two black-robed and hooded monks of large stature stepped forward and ranged themselves one on each side of the sacrificial slab in front of the god. From out of the shadows stalked a hatchet-faced priest, a drawn sword, point downwards, in his hand. And behind him, bound together by a chain which encircled each man's waist, shuffled a manacled line of wretched and emaciated prisoners.

Ferrers Locke's hands clenched. Was he at last to see those three white men for whom he had come in search?

### The Hour of Sacrifice!

ON came the line of prisoners, twelve men in all, till they were ranged in front of the sacrificial slab. The voices of the priests died away, and, amidst an unearthly silence, the abbot turned again to the Buddha with outstretched arms.

"Look down, O Buddha!" he cried. "Look down and behold those whom we sacrifice to the glory of thy name! In their blood, O Buddha, write for us thy blessing in the war which is nigh to hand!"

And in that line of doomed and wretched prisoners stood three bearded, unkempt figures. Their clothes hung in tatters on their starved and emaciated bodies. Their cheeks were drawn, their faces haggard. They looked like men to whom death would be a happy release. They stood erect in their chains, their heads held high, waiting for the inevitable end.

As the abbot ceased speaking, the tallest one of the three laughed harshly.

"Ay, call on thy Buddha," he cried, "thou canting priest! Call on him to watch thy butchery, thou hypocrite! Call on Kang Pu, that he also may attend to watch the slaughter!"

The man's voice rose louder.

"But, remember, as surely as the night follows the day, death will come to thee and to all those who tread the path of war! Now have done with this mockery! Take I and my companions first so that thou mightest learn how Englishmen can die!"

"Good for you, Beverley!" muttered the man on his right—Heyward, of the Geographical Survey. And Carstairs, next to Heyward, growled his assent.

At a snarled-out order from the abbot the two priests stepped forward from the sacrificial slab. With a deftness which had come to them through long practise, they released Beverley from the chain, and attempted to drag him towards the slab. But Major Beverley needed no dragging. He walked forward with steady tread, and none would have thought he went to his death.

The two priests seized him and laid him flat on the slab. They then took up their positions, one on each side of the





Ferrers Locke sprang to one side and hurled his sword at the seated figure of Kang Pu. The curved blade took Kang Pu full in the face, and he reeled back with a scream. As he did so his revolver exploded, and the bullet whined past Ferrers Locke's head.  
(See page 25.)

slab. One held a sharp-pointed knife poised above the victim's throat, the other held a similar knife poised above the heart.

Beverley turned his head. He saw the faces of Heyward and Carstairs.

"Au revoir!" he cried. "For it is but a short parting!"

His voice was as steady as though he were uttering some commonplace remark in the safety and security of distant England. And—

"Good-bye, old man!" replied his companions, their voices husky in spite of themselves. For it was not easy to see their leader murdered thus.

The abbot slowly raised his hand above his head. Heyward and Carstairs watched with tightened lips. For they knew that when that hand flashed downwards, the knives of the executioners would also plunge downwards, and Major Beverley would be dead.

Then, shattering the silence, came a thunderous voice.

"Stay thy hand, thou Abbot of Salai!"

Like magic every priest prostrated himself to the ground. The abbot alone stood, rooted to the spot in fear and astonishment. For the voice had issued from the lips of the giant Buddha.

"Let but one drop of blood be shed in Salai this night," thundered the voice, "and my curse shall hang heavy over thee!"

With a moan, the abbot collapsed on the floor in front of the altar. He had offended. How, he knew not. But his dark and superstitious mind was alive with fear and terror.

"Mercy!" he cried, grovelling in front of the altar. "Mercy, O Buddha! I but acted—"

Then he paused. From behind the network of chain which hid from view the chapel at the side of the god, there rushed a screaming, gesticulating figure. It was Kang Pu, his sallow, evil face working with passion and splashed with blood from the still bleeding gash caused by the sword of Ferrers Locke.

"Heed not that voice!" he screamed. "Heed not that voice, thou cursed fools!"

It is not the voice of Buddha, nor the voice of Kang Pu! I—I am Kang Pu! Heed not that—"

Drowning his screams came the thunderous voice from the god:

"Up, thou priests! Seize for me that impostor!"

With a roar, the priests launched themselves to their feet. They swept forward, their eyes ablaze with fanatical wrath.

#### The Message!

LOOKING down on the scene from the eye of the god, Ferrers Locke knew that if ever a man had himself to thank for disaster, it was Kang Pu. Purposely, the sinister priest who plotted for world power had refrained from appearing in person before the priests of Salai. He had striven to drive home the impression that he was something ethereal, some spirit which could at will, take the form of man. He had, through the lips of Buddha, steadily proclaimed his immortality. He had carefully prepared the ground for his final appearance on the night which was to be the eve of war.

But at the eleventh hour he had been forestalled. None but his tongueless bodyguard had ever seen his face. And they, poor wretches, understood little of what was toward. To them, Kang Pu was someone to be guarded from prying eyes. Those faithful to him, lived. But those who hesitated one fractional part of a second to obey his orders implicitly, died horribly. To them, Kang Pu was indeed the lord of life and death.

The priests of Salai had never seen him. In the screaming, gesticulating figure which had rushed in front of the god they looked not for Kang Pu. So they bore him down and held him roughly in their grasp, what time he mouthed and shrieked blasphemy and oaths.

The tongueless bodyguard, clustered in the chapel, scarce knew how to act. They bore no love for Kang Pu, but the old training died hard, and it was their duty to protect him.

"To me, thou dogs!" screamed Kang Pu. "To me, and slay these cursed fools!"

And at that, the tongueless ones dashed forward. They hacked, slashed, and slew. The unarmed priests fell back and fled into the shadows, seeking to save their lives. Ferrers Locke watched in silence. He knew it was useless to command the bodyguard to cease their efforts at rescue, for they were aware of the trickery and the source of the voice.

With Kang Pu in their midst, they hacked their way out of the temple. And, now that the first moments of terror had passed for the priests, Ferrers Locke called them to action through the lips of the Buddha.

"To arms, thou priests!" he thundered. "Seize the impostor before he passes through the portals of this monastery! Seize him, else I shall command that death walks inside these walls this night!"

With new heart the priests flung themselves forward. But, by the time they had armed, the bodyguard of Kang Pu had passed through the door into the cloisters, their master in their midst. Hard on their heels came the monks, and a battle royal ensued in the darkness of the monastery garden. The bodyguard were hemmed in. They fought desperately, not now to preserve their master's life, but to preserve their own. At length they broke and fled, the armed priests pursuing them and hewing them down. But of Kang Pu, he whom the priests of Salai thought to be an impostor, there was no sign. He had vanished in the darkness.

Fearfully, and scarcely knowing what to think of the events of that fateful night, the priests drifted slowly back to the temple. Carstairs and Heyward still stood in their chains, bruised and buffeted by the fight which had passed them by. Major Beverley lay on the floor, half stunned by a blow which had thrust him from the sacrificial slab. They were at a loss to account for what had happened, these Englishmen, and



there was little hope of life in their hearts. The Buddha had commanded that they be not slain, but they felt that it was but a postponing of the ultimate end.

At length a scarlet-clad abbot, wiping on his robes a wet and crimson sword, strode into the temple. His face was grim and stern, but his courage was undoubted. He and his fellow-priests had failed. The "impostor" had escaped. All that remained then was to face the Buddha who had that night been so outraged.

The abbot beat a thunderous reverberating note on a gong, and soon all but the wounded priests were gathered in the temple. Then towards the god walked a stricken abbot, he who had conducted the sacrificial service.

Dropping on his knees, he raised his outstretched hands to the god and cried:

"O Buddha, we thy unworthy servants crave mercy of thee! We shall not rest till the impostor be hunted down and this violation of thy holy shrine be paid for in his blood! Mercy, O Buddha, for we were taken unawares, and what unarmed men could do, that we did! Many of us lie stark and dead in the garden of Salai! A sign, O Buddha, that their blood has not been shed in vain and that thou wilt avenge thy vengeance against us!"

Looking down, Ferrers Locke felt in his heart a great pity for these superstitious and ignorant priests. Bigoted

they were, and merciless to their underlings. But it was more the fault of their environment than any fault of their own.

"O Kang Pu," the voice of the abbot was almost hysterical, "O Kang Pu, the Chosen One of Buddha, plead with our master that he visits not his wrath on us! O Kang Pu, thou who walkest with the spirits of our fathers, plead with the great Buddha that he lets not death stalk this night within these walls!"

Ferrers Locke placed his lips against the rubber mouthpiece, and the next instant the voice thundered from the lips of the giant god.

"Hark to my words, thou priests, for I am Kang Pu, the Chosen One of Buddha! This I say to thee! The impostor who stood before thee this night and who was carried from thee by his tongueless bodyguard, will die the death which is written against his name! Hark now to my words, for they are the last I shall speak to thee! I go this night to join the spirits of my fathers! For there shall be no war! Ask not why this thing should be! Enough for thee that I, Kang Pu, say that the priests of Salai shall go throughout the land and preach the word of peace! War is not for this land of Tibet, for mine eyes have been opened, and it is along the path of war that disaster and destruction lies!

"Take this message throughout the land! I, Kang Pu, the Chosen One of Buddha, say that the peoples of Tibet

shall live in peace with the peoples beyond the frontiers. Admit then, the trade caravans! Sheath the sword and draw it not again! The curse of holy Lhasa will lie heavy on any one of thee who stands for war, or sets his face against these words of mine!"

Priests and abbots exchanged glances of wonderment and amaze. Truly, things beyond their ken were happening that night in the monastery of Salai. Beverley, Carstairs, and Heyward were equally perplexed at this sudden change of policy in one whom they thought to be Kang Pu.

"You hear my words, O abbot?" thundered the voice from the god, and promptly the abbot replied, still on his knees and with arms outstretched.

"We hear thy words, O Kang Pu!" he cried, "and it shall be even as thou sayest! Thy messengers of Salai will go throughout Tibet, preaching the word of peace to the peoples, and bidding them sheath the sword! The trade caravans of the white man shall be given fair passage, as thou desirest! And we, thy unworthy servants, shall render unceasing honour to thy name, O Kang Pu, thou who goest this night to sojourn for all time with the spirits of our fathers!"

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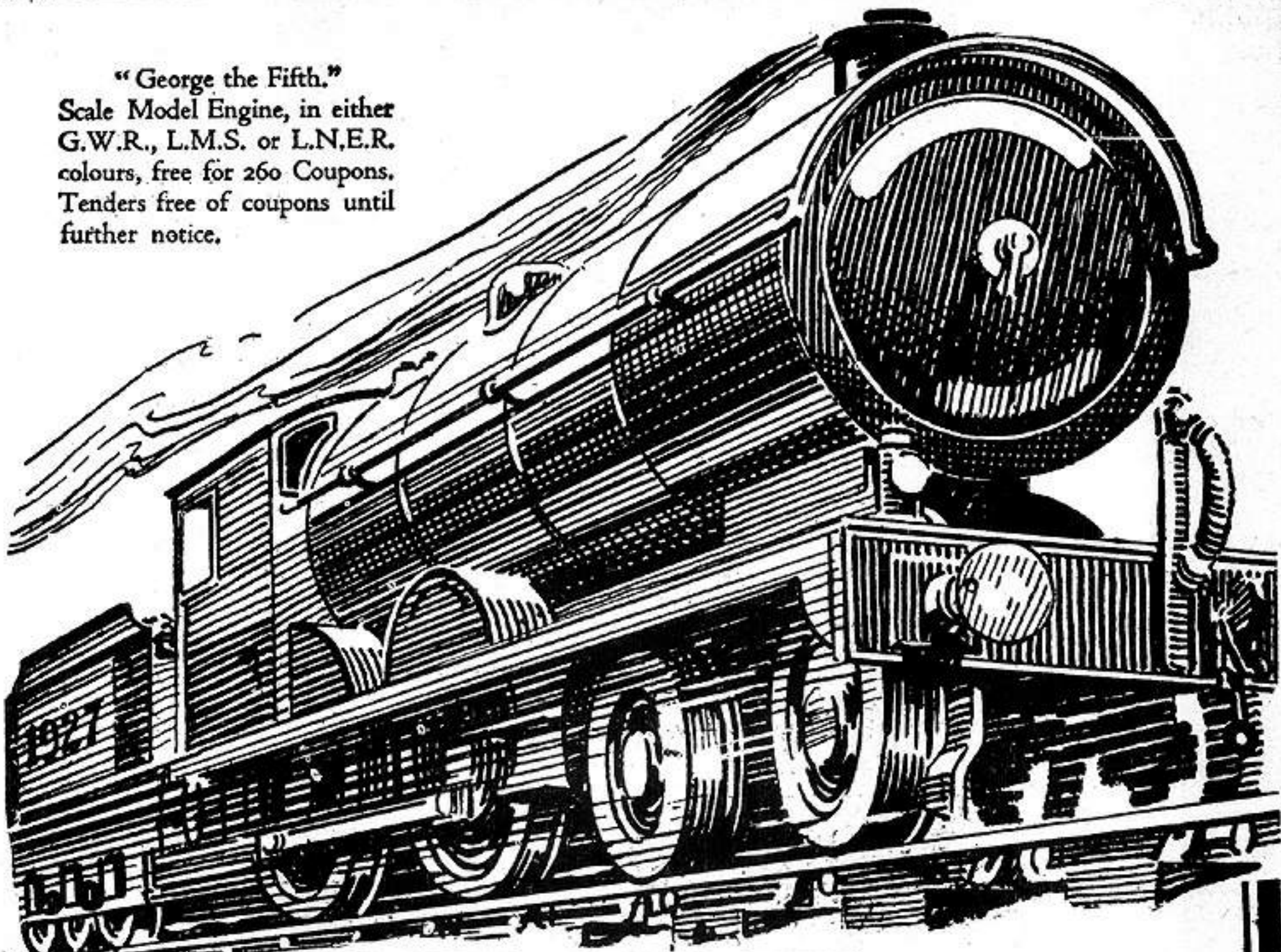
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# THE HEAD'S TREASURE HUNT!

DICKY NUGENT.

### A Side-Splitting Tail of the Cheery Chums of St. Sam's.

T-A-R-A-R-A-P-O-M!  
T-A-R-A-R-A-P-O-M!

The marion call of a bugle boomed out over the St. Sam's Camp.

It was the buglecall for breakfast. An appetising odor of fried bladders was wafted on the morning breeze; and there was a regular stampede of fellows towards the dining marked.

The masters joined in the rush, baring and charging through the crowd, and tripping over tent-pegs, in their greedy haste to be "first come, first served."

But there were four fellows who took no notice of the breakfast bugle. Jack Jolly and his chums—Merry and Bright and Frank Fearless—were standing outside their tent, in an eggstated, chattering group. They were pouring over a paper which Jack Jolly held in his hand.

It was a dusty, musty old parchment, with some lines of poetry inscribed on it, and Jack was reading it allowed to his chums.

self as rich as Croesus—a man with plenty of munny to burn. Not that the Head would dream of burning it. He would stow it away for a rainy day.

Lost in his golden reverie, Doctor Birchmell forgot, for the moment, the existence of Jack Jolly & Co. He rubbed his bony hands together, and rested with grate gusto the last lines of the doggerel:

"Let him who reads these words look sly, ye hoard, and gette rich quick!"

"To-night will be a pitch-black moon-light night!" cried the Head. "I'll take a lantern and a spade, after lights out, and go and dig for the treasure."

Suddenly he became aware of the juniors' presence.

"Jolly!" he eggstated. "You will forget that you ever found this paper. It is a worthless document, and the lines of doggerel are meaningless. It's all tommy-rot to suppose there is a treasure buried in the Smugglers' Cave!"

"Do you really think so, sir?" murmured Jack Jolly.

"Of course! I forbid you boys to go anywhere near the caves. I will not have you wait your time on a wild-goose chase. Do you here?"

"We here, sir," said the juniors meekly.

The Head nodded, and hurried away towards the camp notice-board, on which he scribbled the following announcement:

"NOTICE!  
The caves and coves along the coast are hereby placed OUT OF BOUNDS; and any cove found in a cove, digging for treasure, will be brought back to Camp and birched black and blew!"

(Signed) AIR BIRCHEMELL, Headmaster.

"Ha, ha!" chuckled the wily old Head. "Now that I have put the caves out of bounds, the coast is clear! To-night I will rally forth on my treasure hunt, and before another day dawn I shall be a rich man—rich beyond the dreams of avaris!"

To say that the Head was astonished was to put it mildly. "My only aunt!" he ejaculated. "A treasure! A buried treasure! Nuggets of gold, and doubloons, and guids, and Spanish cents! Snuff wealth to make a man independent for the rest of his days!"



Bargling and charging, and tripping over tent-pegs, masters and juniors joined in a wild rush for the market.

II.  
DOCTOR BIRCHEMELL was in his tent—and in a brown study—for the rest of the day. He was feverishly anxious for darkness to dawn, so that he could set out for the caves. A dozen times that day he poured over the musty old parchment which he had taken from Jack Jolly. A dozen times he smacked his lips, and squeezed his skinny hands together, and danced a jig in his eggstated mind.

And at last—at long last—the dawn of darkness came!

The camp bugler sounded the "Last Post," and all fellows who had letters to dispatch promptly ran out to post them. Then they scuttled back to their tents, and turned in, and a solemn hush descended upon the Camp.

Presently the Head crept out from his tent, like a thief in the night. He had put on his shabbiest suit, and a pair of rubber-soled jim shoes. In one hand he carried a spade, in the other hand a pickaxe, and in the other hand an unlighted lantern.

Softly he stole towards the camp exit. He had almost reached it, when suddenly a voice hailed him from the darkness.

"Halt! Who goes there?"

The Head clicked his false teeth with annoyance. He had forgotten that there would be a sentry on duty. He was in rather a dilemma; for if he would never do for the headmaster of St. Sam's to be seen sneaking out of Camp at dead of night. It would look as if he was going out to beggle a bank.

Getting no reply, the sentry's suspicions were aroused. Tallboy of the Sixth was the sentry, and faintly through the gloom he could make out a shadowy figure. He promptly rushed towards it, and grappled with it, and bore it to the ground.

"Got you, you young rascal!" panted Tallboy. "Trying to brake camp, hey? I'll take you before the Head!"

"Ow! Ow! Ow!" gasped the Head, who was nearly suffocated. "Gorrot me chest! What d'you think you're doing? I AM the Head!"

Tallboy removed his knee from the Head's chest, and jumped to his feet in alarm. He switched on his electric

torch, and was horrified to see, squirming at his feet, the majestic figger of his headmaster!

"Gimme a hand!" snorted the Head. "For this outrage, Tallboy, you shall be birched black and blew when we get back to St. Sam's!"

"I'm awfully sorry, sir," he said; "but you should have answered me when I challenged you. I thought it was one of the fellows braking camp. Who would eggspit to see a headmaster prowling around like a thief in the night? Where are you going with that spade and pickaxe, sir?"

"Mind your own bizney!" snapped the Head.

And he stalked past the astonished Tallboy, and was swallowed up in the inky blackness of the moonlight night.

After crossing several fields, and stumbling over sleeping cows, and pitching heading into muddy ditches, and crashing into prickly hedges, the Head reached the caves without mishap. And now he lighted his lantern, and peered around for the Smugglers' Cave. It was a dark, forbidding den—simply foggy with the ghosts of the old-time smugglers. When the Head crept inside his flesh was creeping, too.

But this was no time for cowardice. He peeled off his coat and rolled up his sleeves, revealing a pair of bony biceps. "Then, seizing the spade, he started digging away as if for a wager. 'Few!' panted the Head presently, pausing to mop his brow. 'This is warm work! Wonder how far beneath the surface the treasure is hidden?'

He resumed his eggstations, until he had made a hole big enough to bury himself in. And still there was no sign of the treasure.

Outside, the angry billers boomed and crashed, and the wind, waisted like a sole in torment, while deftly peels of thunder disturbed the drowsy ear of night. And then, clearly above the din, the Head heard the stealthy sound of approaching footmarks.

He stopped digging, and started. What mysterious being—human or inhuman—was approaching the Smugglers' Cave? Was it the ghost of William Wilks?

The Head stood still in frozen silence, but his teeth were chattering. Nearer and nearer came the footmarks—closer and ever closer—until the Head felt that he must either scream or bust.

But it was no ghostly phantom that stepped into the Smugglers' Cave. It was a very solid being, of flesh and blood—the substantial figger of Mr. Justiss, the master of the Fifth! Mr. Justiss carried a spade and a lighted lantern, and he gave a low cry of astonishment on catching sight of the Head.

"Bless my sole! Doctor Birchmell! What are you doing here, sir?"

The Head jerked his thumb towards the cave entrance.

"Hop it!" he said tersely. "I'm carrying out a little treasure-hunt, Justiss, and nobody's going to queer my pitch! I gave distinct orders that these caves were out of bounds!"

"To the masters, sir!"

"To everybody, barring myself! Just you hop it, Justiss! How did you come to know there was a treasure here?"

"Jolly of the Fourth showed me an old parchment, sir, relating to the treasure-trove. It appears that he showed it to you as well. I suggest that we join forces, and go fifty-fifty with the plunder."

The Head did not warm to this suggestion. It left him cold. He strode towards the master of the Fifth and pushed him out of the cave.

"Y'arrose the ranch!" he said. "And Mr. Justiss had no choice but to 'vanose.' He disappeared into the darkness, nashing his teeth with vexation and shagrin."

The Head went on with his digging, and at last, after an hour's hard labour, his patience was rewarded. His spade, plunging downwards through the sand, struck something solid, and there was a metallic clink.

"The treasure!" cried the Head hoarsely.

Feverishly he scooped away the sand, until at last, in the deep cavity an old oak chest, banded with iron, lay revealed. Heaving and straining, the Head managed to haul it up. Then he frisked and capered around it, clapping his hands with glee.

"Mine! Mine!" he chortled. "No more debt and disgrace—no more pinching and scraping to make ends meet! Alf Birchmell is now a rich man—the wealthiest of the wealthy!"

Now came the task of opening the treasure-chest. The Head hacked away like a Hercules with his pickaxe, but

for a long time he could make no impression on the solid oak lid. Every now and again he was compelled to pause, in order to pump in breath, and to wipe the inspiration from his streaming brow.

Not until the first grey gleams of dawn came creeping into the old Smugglers' Cave did the Head succeed in prizing the lid of his prize. Well-nigh eggshattered from his eggstations, he raised the lid, eggpecting to feast his eyes on glittering gold and gleaming jewels and sparkling gems. Instead of which he found himself gaining helplessly at a useless heap of stones and shingle—worthless rubble collected from the seashore!

"Spoonful!" cried the Head wrathfully. "Dished, diddled, and done! I have been made the victim of a practical joke!"

And daybreak found Doctor Birchmell sitting in the midst of his wrecked hopes, and vowing vengeance most dire upon Jack Jolly & Co., who had given him a night's hard labour for nothing!

THE END.



"Ow! Ow! Ow!" gasped Doctor Birchmell, as Tallboy nearly suffocated him. "Gorrot me chest! What d'you think you're doing? I AM the Head!"

(Be sure you read "A Fortune For Four!" next week's screamingly funny story of St. Sam's. It shows Dicky Nugent in tip-top form.)

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