

Amazing Story of: The FOREIGN LEGION **"FOR THE GLORY OF FRANCE!"** STARTS INSIDE!

No. 1,148. Vol. XXXVII. Week Ending February 15th, 1930.

The MAGNET

EVERY SATURDAY.



AN "ALARM" IN THE NIGHT!

"Stop that blessed clock!" "Jump on it!" "Bury it!" These and similar ejaculations go to prove that Billy Bunt's alarm-clock is not a great success in the Remove dormitory.—See the superb Greyfriars School Story inside.

Are You Interested? Then . . .



Come Into the Office, Boys!

Always glad to hear from you, chums, so drop me a line to the following address:
The Editor, The "Magnet" Library, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Fleetway House,
Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

WE'LL kick off our "pow-wow" this week with a winning limerick. Here it is:

Of flabbiness Bunter's the symbol,
So it's no surprise he's not nimble.
But he'd win in a race
To one certain place
—The Tuckshop owned by Dame Mimble.

H. Derbyshire, of 1, Derby Road, Worcester, who sent in the above winning effort, is now the happy recipient of one of our useful leather pocket wallets.

WHY DO SHIPS HAVE DUMMY FUNNELS?

asks a South Shields reader. In many cases they are put there for ventilation purposes, but shipping companies who trade "out East" have discovered that native passengers prefer to travel on liners which have several funnels. Consequently a vessel which could quite well get along with one funnel, is sometimes fitted with three—one actual funnel and two dummies. Natives seem to think they are safer on such a vessel!

Here's another question. A South London reader wants to know if sea water can be made drinkable. Yes. An ounce of citrate of silver will make half a pint of sea water quite drinkable, and this will keep a man alive for a day.

There's another fellow trying to pull my leg this week. He tells me he has bought a piccolo, and asks for some advice on how to learn to play it. The only advice I can give him is to pick-a-to-nely spot in which to practise!

LOOKING THROUGH MY DIARY

I notice a date which many of my Scots readers will remember—especially if their name happens to be Macdonald! It is a wonder, as a matter of fact, that there are any Macdonalds left, for two hundred and thirty-eight years ago this Thursday, the Earl of Stair, who was the sworn enemy of the clan, persuaded King William to sign a decree to extirpate the whole of them! Every man under seventy years of age was to be killed, and the massacre took place on February 13th, 1692. What made the business all the more treacherous was that the soldiers who carried out the massacre at Glencoe had previously been hospitably received by the Highlanders!

And this was in what they call "the good old days!" Anyway, the Macdonalds did survive, and I can number many readers of THE MAGNET amongst them. And (whisper it not in Gath!) one of their descendants to-day is actually an artist on our staff!

HERE'S a curious question which one of my readers asks me to answer.

HOW MUCH IS A TON?

No, it's got nothing to do with hundred-

weights, and things like that! He wants to know why ships are measured by "tons," and if that is really the weight of the cargo she carries. The answer is no! The ton-measurement of cargo was originally based on the space that would be occupied in the hold by four hogheads—otherwise known as a "ton." Nowadays, however, cargo space is measured by the amount that would be necessary to carry the bulk of four quarters of wheat which is what is known as a "short ton." You see, different cargoes weigh differently, so a ship's "tonnage" is actually a measurement, and not an ordinary weight!

'Scuse me, you chaps! I'm blushing! You see, another reader has just sent along a few verses, which he dedicates to yours truly! Here they are:

If there's anything you'd like to know
About any old thing on the go,
You've only to write
To the "Magnet" to-night
And the Editor won't answer "No!"

He'll tell you what beans you must take
If five is the number you'd make,
And you even can come
With an intricate sum
And he never will make a mistake.

In worry, or trouble, or strife,
When all sorts of questions are rife,
Just drop him a line
And you'll never repine,
For he won't let you down—bet your life!

Thanks very much! It's very nice to know that my readers think so much of me! I'm not so sure about that "intricate sum" business, but thank goodness I always have "Mr. X" to fall back on! So you can fire in your questions as fast as you like, and, as my chum says, I won't let you down—if I can help it!

HERE are A FEW QUESTIONS

which have already been fired:
How many times has Britain won the Schneider Trophy? Four. Italy comes next with three wins, then the United States with two, and France with one. No other country has ever won the trophy. Who or what is "Jellybelly?" I presume my correspondent means "Jollibelli." This is the name of a well-known

SEND ALONG YOUR JOKE OR YOUR GREYFRIARS LIMERICK—OR BOTH—AND WIN OUR USEFUL PRIZES OF LEATHER POCKET WALLETS AND SHEFFIELD STEEL PENKNIVES. ALL EFFORTS TO BE SENT TO: c/o "MAGNET," 5, CARMELITE STREET, LONDON, E.C.4 (COMP.).

tailoring firm on the China coast. Curious name, isn't it? But it's true!

What was the "Cook Lane Ghost?" A certain house in Cook Lane, London, was reputed to be haunted, but after investigation it was found out that the ghostly noises were caused by a girl ventriloquist, whose father had hit upon this way of deluding people and making money out of them.

Here is a longer reply to a reader who wants to know

SOMETHING ABOUT AIRSHIPS.

He asks whether R100 or R101 is the larger ship? They are both of the same cubic capacity, but R101 is twenty-three feet longer. Against this, however, R100 has six engines of a higher horse power than the five possessed by R101.

Germany is at present building a Zeppelin which will be larger than either of these, and the United States, not to be outdone, is planning an even bigger one. But at the present time this country possesses the two largest airships in the world, and the chances are that she will not allow herself to be outstripped by her rivals!

By the way, would you like to win a Wembley Cup-final Ticket or a "Moad" Bicycle? Everyone stands an equal opportunity of winning one of these fine prizes in a simple 4-week competition—full particulars of which appear in next Wednesday's issue of the "GEM." Order a copy to-day!

Now let's have a laugh at this yarn which has been sent in by Walter Ledaw, of 17, Brighton Place, Abbey Street, Hockley, Birmingham. By this time he will have received his pocket knife for it. Have you got yours yet?

GENEROSITY!

"Here's a tip for you, laddie," said the dour-looking Scots member, as he entered the club-house after a round of golf.



"Thank you, sir," said the



caddy expectantly.
"Go home at once. You big cloud means rain?"

TO wind up this chat of mine, let's see what is in store for next week. There's lots of exciting situations for you in Frank Richards' fine yarn, which is entitled:

"GOOD-BYE, BUNTER!"

It is hard to know what appreciative adjectives to apply to this yarn. I might say it is "excellent," "superb," "enthraling," and so on—but you know perfectly well that every one of his yarns are all that! So I'll just say that it's Frank Richards at his best—and you know what that means!

As for our new serial:

"FOR THE GLORY OF FRANCE!" By George E. Rochester

well, you've only got to get your teeth into it to know how fine it is. There'll be another grand instalment next week, as well as Dicky Nugent's contribution, which is:

"THE STATUE OF ST. SAM'S!"

Need I mention the "footer" article and my chat? Hardly!

(Cheerio, chums!
YOUR EDITOR.

YOUR FAVOURITE AUTHOR AT HIS VERY BEST, BELOW!



THE MAN FROM SCOTLAND YARD!

BY
FRANK RICHARDS.

A Splendid New Long Complete School Story of Harry Wharton & Co., at Greyfriars.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Bunter, Too!

NUGENT, old chap!"
"Cut it short!"
"Oh, really, Nugent——"
"Prep, yo' ass!"
"Will you lend me——"
"No!"
Frank Nugent dropped his eyes to his books again. Harry Wharton had not looked up.
The chums of Study No. 1 were at prep, as Billy Bunter ought to have been. But Bunter, apparently, had something more important on hand than preparing his lessons.
"I say, you fellows——"
"Hook it!" said Harry Wharton, still without looking up.
"You shut up, Wharton," said Bunter. "I'm speaking to my pal Franky. I say, Franky, old chap will you lend me——"
"No!"

those missiles at the Owl of the Remove, stared at him in astonishment.
"My alarm-clock?" repeated Nugent.
"Yes, old chap! I suppose you didn't think I was going to borrow any money?" said Bunter, with dignity.
Nugent grinned.
"No; I didn't think you were going to; but I thought you were going to try." Nugent replaced the inkpot on the study table. "What the thump do you want my alarm-clock for?"
"To wake me up, of course!" said Bunter.
"Afraid you won't hear the rising-bell?" asked Harry Wharton, with sarcasm. "And awfully afraid you will be late for prayers in the morning?"
"The fact is, I'm getting up before rising-bell," said Billy Bunter, blinking at the chums of the Remove through his big spectacles. "I'm getting up

"What on earth's the game?" asked Frank Nugent blankly.
"Well, the fact is, I'm—I'm going to set an example to the Form," said Bunter. "Fellows like frowsting in bed these cold February mornings. I don't approve of that sort of thing——"
"Great pip!"
"So I'm turning out early," said Bunter. "Can I have the alarm-clock to-night, Franky?"
Nugent chuckled.
"What do you want it for?" he asked.
"Eh? I've just told you."
Frank Nugent shook his head.
"You've told me what you don't want it for," he said. "Gammon, old fat bean! You're not turning out before rising-bell. Spoof!"
"Oh, really, Nugent——"
"Anyhow, you can have it, if you like," said Nugent. Take it and go.

If you damage it, I shall damage you."
"That's all right," said Bunter. "I only want to use it just for to-night, you know." Bunter rolled across the study, took the little clock off the mantelpiece, and rolled back to the door. "I say, you fellows——"
"Hook it!"
"I'm going. But, I say, you needn't mention to Smithy that you've lent me this alarm-clock."
"Smithy!" repeated the two juniors, staring at Bunter again.
"Yes. You know what a suspicious beast the Bounder is. He might think I knew he was breaking bounds to-night——"
"What?"
"The fact is, I know nothing about it," said Bunter, blinking at the two. "I never heard Smithy talking about it to Skinner."
"Oh crumbs!"
"As for going with them, I wouldn't," said Bunter. "It's against all the rules to go for a joy-ride in the middle of the night. Steele goes prowling out at

"Standing before the open safe was the Remove Form master! Harry Wharton started violently as he recognised him." . . .
early—very early, in fact! He, he, he!"
"My hat!"
The chums of Study No. 1 forgot prep for the moment. The news that Billy Bunter was thinking of turning out before rising-bell was enough to make any fellow sit up and take notice.
Bunter never got up at rising-bell, if he could help it. It was his custom to snatch every possible extra moment in bed, and to turn out barely in time for the rush down to prayers. Often he cut it so fine that his morning wash had to be sacrificed—a sacrifice, however, that did not cost Bunter very dear. A reckless use of soap and water was not one of the fat junior's weaknesses.
If Bunter had started getting up at rising-bell it would have been surprising enough. But Bunter getting up before rising-bell was absolutely astounding.

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night, as you know; but he's a Beak, and can do what he jolly well likes. But—"

"Is that fathead Smithy breaking bounds after lights out?" exclaimed the captain of the Remove, frowning.

"Oh, really, Wharton! How should I know? Smithy doesn't tell me what he's going to do."

"You frabjous idiot!"

"I'm quite in the dark," explained Bunter. "I never told Smithy I'd go with him, and he never kicked me—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"As for borrowing this alarm-clock to wake up at ten-thirty, of course, I never thought of such a thing. I never heard Smithy arrange it with Skinner for ten-thirty."

"You piffing, potty porpoise—"

"Oh, really, Wharton! As I said, I've borrowed this alarm-clock to get up early in the morning, to—to set an example to the Form. Still, you needn't mention it to Smithy. He's suspicious. He might jump on this clock, if he knew—"

"Here, you leave that clock here!" exclaimed Nugent, jumping up.

"It's all right, old chap! If anything happens to it, I'll pay for it. I'm expecting a postal-order, to-morrow. But don't mention it to Smithy—or to Skinner. They might think—"

Bunter did not finish. Nugent was coming across the study, evidently to reclaim his property and keep it out of danger. Billy Bunter backed into the Remove passage, and retired hurriedly. "Come back!" roared Nugent, from the doorway.

Billy Bunter did not answer, and he did not come back. He vanished in the distance, with the alarm-clock under a fat arm.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"If that fathead Smithy is playing the goat to-night, it will serve him right to have an audience when he turns out," he said. "Let Bunter rip, Franky."

Nugent laughed, too, and returned to his prep, and William George Bunter was allowed to "rip."

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Black Sheep!

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH, as he sat at prep in Study No. 4, raised his eyes several times to glance at Tom Redwing across the table.

Redwing kept his eyes on his work.

But there was a cloud on his usually cheery face, which showed that his thoughts were not all concentrated on P. Vergilius Maro, and that they were not wholly agreeable.

The Bounder laid down his pen at last, pushed his books away, and grunted expressively.

"Thank goodness that's done."

He rose from the table, lounged across to the fireplace, and took a packet of cigarettes from his pocket.

"Mind if I smoke, Reddy?" he asked, with a note of mockery in his voice.

"You can do as you like, Smithy," answered Tom, without looking up from his work.

The Bounder did not smoke, however. He dropped the packet of cigarettes into his pocket again, with another grunt.

"Still going on?" he asked.

"I'm not finished yet."

"Skinner's coming in after prep."

Redwing made no answer to that. The Bounder had scamped his prep, but Tom was a careful worker, slower than the Bounder, but a good deal surer.

Vernon-Smith moved uneasily about

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the study, while Tom continued to work in silence. The Bounder had made up his mind to kick over the traces that night, and he did not intend to change it; but he had the grace to feel a little ashamed of himself.

"Look here, Reddy!" he exclaimed, at last. "There's no need to look like a boiled owl because a fellow's going to see a little life for once."

Redwing smiled faintly.

"I wasn't aware that I was looking like a boiled owl," he answered.

"Where's the harm?" said the Bounder argumentatively. "Look here, Reddy, you turn out to-night, too, and come."

Tom shook his head.

"It's no end of fun," said Smithy eagerly. "I've got a car waiting for me to-night, and it will be a ripping run to Lantham. You'd like it."

"I'd like it all right."

"Well, why not come, then?"

"I can't come, and you ought not to go, Smithy. If it came out, the Head wouldn't believe that it was only a joy ride."

"Well, I'm going to see a man at Lantham," admitted Smithy. "But if you come, you can stay in the car while I'm seein' him. I won't drag you into naughty company."

"Some racing tout, I suppose?" said Redwing, with a curl of the lip.

"Somethin' of the sort! But I'm really goin' for the run more than anythin' else. I wish you'd come."

"I wish you'd chuck it," said Tom. "Sooner or later, your luck will fail you, Smithy, and you'll get the chopper. You can't say that you don't keep on asking for it."

"There's not a lot of risk. Besides, a little risk makes it excitin'." The Bounder grinned. "Our jolly old Form master goes prowlin' out at night, you know, Reddy."

"That's his business."

"I've often wondered why," said the Bounder. "Some of the fellows still think he's the Courtfield cracksman—Skinner does. I believed so at first—but I know now it's not that. But I've often wondered why he prowls out at night; he's got some reason."

"It's not to see racing men and back horses, anyhow," said Tom.

"No; I suppose not. But look here I—"

The study door opened, interrupting the Bounder, and Skinner of the Remove came in. He gave Smithy a grin and a nod, and grinned again as he glanced at Redwing's clouded face.

"Redwing givin' you a sermon?" he asked. "I'm just in time! Get on with it, Redwing; don't mind me. It may do me good."

Tom compressed his lips. He was a good-natured fellow, with little bitterness in him, but he disliked Skinner as much as it was in his nature to dislike anybody.

"Redwing thinks we're asking for the sack," said the Bounder.

"So we are!" answered Skinner cheerfully. "But we shan't get it. Who's to know?"

Redwing looked up.

"Bunter knows," he said: "he's probably tattled it all over the Remove by this time."

"Well, no Remove man would give us away," said Skinner. "Safe as houses. We're not scared, are we, Smithy?"

"Hardly," said the Bounder contemptuously.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Get out!" roared Vernon-Smith, as a fat face and a pair of big spectacles were inserted in the study doorway.

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"Kick him, Skinner."

"Certainly."

"I say, you fellows, no larks!" said Bunter. "Wingate's in the passage, and if you kick me, you beast, I'll jolly well yell."

Skinner, with his foot lifted, dropped it again. He did not want to bring a prefect on the scene.

"Travel, you fat freak," growled the Bounder.

"The fact is," said Bunter, blinking at him, "I want to come to-night, Smithy! I'll tell you what! You've hired a car from Courtfield garage, haven't you?"

"Find out."

"Well, I heard you say so to Skinner, so I've found out," said the Owl of the Remove cheerfully. "Well, I'm willing to pay my whack in the car. That's fair. I'm expecting a postal order—"

"Will you buzz off?"

"I haven't finished yet, old chap. I'm jolly well coming," said Bunter warmly. "I'm surprised at you, Smithy, leaving a pal out of a thing like this. I'm just the fellow you want! I'm rather a roarty dog, you know—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"And the fact is, I'm coming," said Bunter positively. "I intend to wake up to-night when you start—I'm making a point of that. Rely on me to be ready, old bean. I shan't fail you."

The Bounder grinned. Once Bunter was asleep, there was little likelihood of his awakening when the breakers of bounds started on their excursion. He was not aware of the astute precautions that William George Bunter had taken.

"We'll have a high old time, Smithy! I say, are you going to the night club at Lantham?"

"You silly owl!"

"We'll jolly well paint the town red, what?" said Bunter gleefully. "I can tell you I'm a roarty dog when I get going. The only difficulty is, that I've been disappointed about a postal order, and I'm rather short of money. But you can lend me a few quids, old chap."

"I'll lend you my boot, if you don't travel."

"He, he, he! I say, Redwing, why don't you come?" asked Bunter, blinking at the sailorman's son. "We're going to have a roarty time, ain't we, Smithy? It will liven you up, Redwing. Take it from me. Look here, come! Be a man, you know! Like me!"

"Oh crumbs!" said Redwing.

"You haven't got much spirit, you know," said Bunter. "A fellow likes to be roarty at times. You must be a silly ass to stick in while we're rolling round the town—"

"What's that?" said a voice behind Bunter.

"Oh crickey!"

Bunter jumped, and spun round to blink at Wingate. The captain of Greyfriars looked at him, and looked at the fellows in the study. Vernon-Smith bit his lip hard.

"Well, what does that mean?" asked Wingate.

"Oh, nothing!" gasped Bunter. "I—I—I—"

"Only Bunter talking out of the back of his head, Wingate," said Skinner. "He can't help doing these things. We were talking about a trip to-morrow afternoon—it's a half-holiday, you know, and—"

"Is that all?"

"Oh, yes, that's all."

"Yes, that's all, Wingate," said Bunter hastily. "I—I'm going to stand a car to-morrow and take these fellows for a run, in—the afternoon. I—I'm

Bunter made a grab at the clock, but instead of silencing the ticking, he started the alarm. Buzzzzzzzzzzzz! Mr. Steele jumped. "Why—what—what—" he ejaculated.



going to ask Steele for leave. That's all.

Wingate gave the occupants of Study No. 4 a rather penetrating look, and walked on along the Remove passage. Bunter winked at the Bounder.

"All serene!" he said. "Wingate never sees anything! He's rather a dummy. Now it's arranged, old chap, and at ten-thirty to-night we—Yaroooooh!"

Billy Bunter jumped out of the study just in time to escape Herbert Vernon-Smith's lunging boot. Smithy slammed the door after him.

Redwing rose from the table. Skinner had come there to discuss plans with the Bounder, and it was not much use to think of more work while the discussion was going on.

"Not leaving us?" asked Skinner. "Well, we'll try to bear it."

Redwing looked at the Bounder, taking no heed of Harold Skinner.

"Look here, Smithy! I wish you'd chuck it," he said quietly. "You're running a lot of risk, and disgracing yourself. But that isn't all. Look at the harm your rotten example is doing to a fool like Bunter. If he lands into trouble, you're responsible for it to a large extent."

"What rot!" "I don't think it's rot! I think it's selfish and blackguardly to do rotten things that a silly fool like Bunter thinks it clever to imitate!" said Redwing hotly.

"I'm not Bunter's keeper," sneered the Bounder; "and if you're goin' to preach, Reddy, you can take your sermon to somebody who wants to hear it. I don't!"

"Same here!" agreed Skinner. "Smithy, old chap—"

"Oh, cheese it!" interrupted the Bounder. "I've asked you to come;

and if you won't come, there's an end. Leave a fellow alone."

Rowding opened his lips for an angry reply. But he closed them again, and left the study without another word.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Sudden Alarm!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry, coming along to the Rag after prep, spotted Billy Bunter in the passage—busy.

Bunter had a small alarm-clock in his fat hands, and he was holding it to a fat ear, listening for the tick.

He had been winding it, perhaps a little too thoroughly. Anyhow, the tick was not in evidence.

"The beast's stopped!" said Bunter. "It was going all right a minute ago; I suppose I'd better shake it!"

"What the thump are you doing with Nugent's alarm-clock?" asked Bob.

"He's lent it to me," explained Bunter. "I'm going to set an example of early rising to the Form—Garmon!"

"It's rather ungentlemanly to doubt a fellow's word, Cherry. There, it's going at last!" Bunter had shaken the clock vigorously, and it started to tick. "If that beastly thing lets me down to-night—"

"To-night?" said Bob, with a stare.

"I—I mean to-morrow morning, of course. I—I wonder what made me say to-night!" said Bunter. "But I suppose it's all right now! I've wound it up, and wound up the alarm, and now I've only got to set it for ten-thirty—"

"Ten-thirty!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "Are you thinking of getting up at half-past ten in the morning?"

"Eh! Yes! No! You see—"

"Blessed if I do!" said Bob. "The—the fact is—"

"Bunter!"

"Oh lor'! Yes, sir!" gasped Bunter, shoving the alarm-clock hastily into his pocket at the sound of Mr. Steele's voice.

The new master of the Remove came up the passage. Bunter blinked at him uneasily.

"Have you done your lines, Bunter?"

"Nunno, sir! I—I've been rather busy—"

"Too busy to write out your impositions?" asked Mr. Steele.

"Ye-es, sir! Exactly!"

"Your lines have been doubled twice, Bunter," said Mr. Steele severely. "I shall not double them again."

"T-t-thank you, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I shall cane you, Bunter, instead."

"Oh crikey!" "Go to my study at once!"

Mr. Richard Steele walked on. Billy Bunter bestowed a ferocious glare on his broad back.

"Beast!" he groaned.

"You're for it, old fat bean," said Bob sympathetically. "Why the thump don't you get your lines done, like any other fellow?"

"'Tain't my fault!" groaned Bunter. "I've asked Toddy to do them—a lot of times. He refused every time. I asked Wharton and Nugent to whack them out. They refused. I'm getting pretty sick of the selfishness of fellows in the Remove. I can tell you!"

Bob Cherry chuckled, and went on to the Rag. Billy Bunter, in the lowest possible spirits, rolled away to Mr. Richard Steele's study.

Billy Bunter was a firm believer in the strange story that was told about Richard Steele in the Remove. But if he had doubted it before, he would have

been convinced of it now. A man who not only gave him lines, but asked for them to be produced, and caned a fellow when they were not produced, was evidently capable of anything.

Mr. Steele, standing by his study table, turned his keen grey eyes on Bunter as the fat junior entered. There was a cane lying on the table, and Bunter's eyes fell on it at once apprehensively.

"I—I say, sir—" stammered Bunter.

"Well, Bunter?" asked Mr. Steele mildly. "I am very sorry to have to punish you, but you must learn not to be idle and dilatory. We are not here to waste our time, Bunter."

"Ain't we, sir?" asked Bunter. His own impression was quite different from Mr. Steele's on that subject.

"Certainly not. You are at school to work, Bunter."

"Oh!" said Bunter, as if this was quite a novel idea to him.

"You are expected to learn, Bunter. How do you expect to pass examinations, if you learn nothing?"

"I—I ain't keen on passing exams, sir," said Bunter.

"You should try to be keen, Bunter. Talking to you seems of little use, and I am afraid I have no resource but to cane you."

"If—if you don't mind, sir, I—I'd rather you talked to me," said Bunter eagerly. "I—I feel that it will do me a lot of good, sir! You—you've got such a nice voice, sir!"

"Bunter!" "I—I like listening to you, sir," said Bunter. "It—it's a real pleasure, sir! I don't think that Beaks always talk silly rot, like some of the fellows, sir. I wish you'd talk to me instead of

caneing me, sir! I think it would do me a lot more good."

Mr. Steele smiled. "Well, I will try the effect of speaking to you once more, Bunter. I should like to make you understand that it is unprofitable to waste your time. Why have you not done your lines?"

"I haven't had time, sir! You—you see, the—the fellows take up a lot of my time. I'm always helping them with their work. They always come to me when they get stuck on a knotty point in Latin, sir. I always help them out."

"Upon my word!" said Mr. Steele. "I am afraid that you are an extraordinarily untruthful boy, Bunter!"

"Oh, no, sir! Mr. Quelch used to say I was the most truthful chap in the Form, sir. He used to compliment me on it, and—and hold me up as an example to the Remove, sir. I believe I'm the only fellow in the Remove who really never tells fibs, sir."

"Really, Bunter—"

"C-c-can I go now, sir?" Mr. Steele's attention seemed to wander from Bunter for the moment. He glanced round the study.

"Dear me, where does that ticking come from?" he asked.

It was coming from Bunter's pocket, as a matter of fact. The American clock, which did not always go when it was wanted to go, was going strong now.

"T-t-ticking, sir?" stammered Bunter.

"Yes. Cannot you hear it?"

"N-n-no, sir!" stammered Bunter.

Mr. Steele, very much puzzled, glanced round the room again. There was a sound of steady, persistent ticking.

Mr. Quelch's clock, on the mantelpiece, had a soft and subdued tick, which was barely audible. But from

somewhere came a loud and raucous ticking.

"Tick, tick, tick!" "This is really very curious," said the Remove master. "Someone must have placed a clock in the room—I cannot imagine why."

Bunter blinked round the room through his big spectacles.

"I can't see it, sir," he remarked. "But you can hear it, surely!" exclaimed Mr. Steele.

"No, sir. Not a sound. Perhaps it's imagination, sir!" suggested Bunter brightly.

"What?" "People imagine all sorts of things, sir—"

"Don't be absurd, Bunter!" Mr. Steele looked round the study, puzzled and a little irritated.

Bunter backed farther away. He did not want that alarm-clock to be discovered.

Steele was well known in the Remove to be a downy bird. He might have wanted to know what Bunter was doing with an alarm-clock. Certainly, he was not likely to suspect Bunter of early rising. Nothing but a fire or an earthquake would have dragged Bunter out of bed before rising-bell. If he discovered that alarm clock in Bunter's possession he might tumble!

"Really, this is extraordinary!" exclaimed Mr. Steele, after walking round the study, in a vain search for the mysterious tinker.

"Yes, isn't it, sir?" stammered Bunter. "P-p-perhaps it's a cricket, sir—a cricket on the hearth."

"It is nothing of the kind, Bunter. It is the ticking of a clock. I suppose you have not brought a clock into the study?"

"Oh, no, sir!" "The sound seems to come from your direction, Bunter," said Mr. Steele, staring at him.

"D-d-does it? I—I can't hear it, sir!" gasped Bunter. "Are you deaf?" snapped the Form master.

"Nunno, sir! C-c-c-can I go now?" "Bunter! Have you a clock in your pocket?" exclaimed Mr. Steele, realising that that must be the explanation, unlikely as it seemed.

"Oh, no, sir! I—I haven't a clock, sir! P-p-perhaps it's my watch you can hear, sir," said Bunter, in alarm.

"It is a clock," said Mr. Steele. "I cannot imagine why you should be carrying a clock in your pocket, but—"

"N-n-nothing of the kind, sir! I—I—I shouldn't dream of such a thing, sir!" gasped Bunter.

He shoved his fat hand into his pocket, in the hope of stilling the ticking of the clock. The next moment a loud, raucous, echoing whir filled the room with deafening noise.

Buzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz!

"Oh crickey!" gasped Bunter. It was a most unreliable clock. A mere touch was enough to stop it, sometimes. But on this occasion Bunter's grab at it in his pocket, instead of stopping it, had started the alarm.

Buzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz! Gerrrrrr! Whirrrrrr! Buzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz!

Mr. Steele jumped.

"Why—what—what—what—" he ejaculated.

Buzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz!

"Stop that noise!" roared Mr. Steele. "Do you hear me? Upon my word! Stop that at once!"

"Oh crumbs!"

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"You have a clock in your pocket!" exclaimed Mr. Steele. "You do not deny it now, I presume?"

"Oh lor'!" groaned Bunter. It was not much use denying it further, with the alarm clock raging in his pocket, filling the study with din, and sending its raucous whir far along Masters' passage.

"Stop it at once!" Billy Bunter jerked the clock out of his pocket. The raucous roar was stilled at last, and a blessed silence descended upon the Remove master's study.

Richard Steele glared at Bunter. He had been disposed to give the Owl of the Remove a heart-to-heart talk, instead of the caning that was his due. Now, evidently, his thoughts were reverting to the caning.

"Bunter! You had that clock in your pocket all the time!" he exclaimed.

"Oh! No, sir!"
"What?"
"I—I mean, yes, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I—I forgot it was there."

"You forgot it was there, when you heard it ticking! How dare you tell me such untruths?"

"I—I mean, I didn't forget it was there, sir! That's what I meant to say!" stammered Bunter.

"Why did you not tell me you had the clock in your pocket, you absurd, stupid boy?"

"I—I—I—"
"Well?" rapped out Steele.

"Oh dear! You see, sir, I—I—"
Bunter floundered helplessly. "I—I was afraid you mightn't believe I borrowed this alarm-clock to wake me up early in the morning before rising-bell."

"Certainly, I should not believe that," said Steele.

"I—I assure you, sir, that I'm not going to set it on for to-night," said Bunter anxiously. "I wouldn't—"

Steele stared at him.
"For to-night?" he ejaculated.
"Not at all, sir! Nothing of the kind."

"You are a very extraordinary boy, Bunter," said Mr. Steele, "and a very stupid one. Also a very untruthful one!"

"Oh, really, sir—"
"You cannot help being stupid, Bunter—"

"Oh, I say—"
"But you can help being untruthful. It is my duty to punish you for untruthfulness, Bunter."

"Oh dear! I—I say, sir, I've told you the exact truth!" groaned Bunter. "I couldn't do anything else if I tried. Quelch would tell you how truthful I am, if you asked him. The Head knows! Any fellow in the Form, sir—"

"Bend over that chair, Bunter."
"Oh lor'!"
Whack, whack, whack!

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!"
"You may go now, Bunter! If your lines are not handed in to-morrow, I shall detain you for the half-holiday to write them."

"Owl! Wow! Wow!"
Billy Bunter left the study, and yow-wow-wowed his way back to the Rag. He groaned as he rolled into that apartment.

"Licked?" asked Bob Cherry.
"Owl! Wow! Wow!"

"Is the lickfulness terrific, my esteemed howling Bunter?" asked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Owl! Wow! That beast is always picking on me!" groaned Bunter.

"It's all his fault that I don't do my lines!"

"How do you make that out?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Well, the beast gives me the lines, doesn't he?" said Bunter. "I don't want him to. I wish the bobbies would come and nab him! I say, you fellows, it's pretty sickening having a burglar for a Form master—"

"You fat duffer!"
"It's time he was run in," said Bunter. "That man's no gentleman, you fellows! He doubts a fellow's word!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at. Practically called me a

nutshell story which earns a pocket-knife for Reggie Lynch, of 47, Lower George's Street, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin, Ireland.



HAVE YOU HEARD THIS ONE?

Teacher: "Well, Jimmy, why are you late for school this morning?"
Jimmy: "Well, you see, sir, it was frosty and the ground was so slippery that every time I took one step forward I slipped back two steps."

Teacher: "Well, that is very funny. If you slipped back two steps for every one you took forward, how did you get here at all?"
Jimmy: "Well, you see, sir, I turned back to go home!"

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liar!" said Bunter indignantly. "I told him he was a cad!"
"You told Steele?" ejaculated Bob Cherry.
"Yes—and so he is! Doubling a fellow's word—making a fellow out to be a liar!" said Bunter warmly.
"Caddish, if you like! I said 'You beastly cad!' Just like that!"
"To Steele?" yelled Johnny Bull.
"Yes."
"And what did he do?"
"Nothing. I—I didn't say it till I was outside the study," explained Bunter. "I thought I'd better not let him hear."
"You fat idiot!"
"Oh, really, Cherry! He thinks he's jolly sharp, too!" added Bunter derisively. "But he never guessed what I've got this alarm-clock for."
"What have you got it for, fathead?"
"That's telling. Steele doesn't know. I've pulled the wool over his eyes a treat!" said Bunter complacently. "He's quite in the dark."

Bunter had no doubt that he had pulled the wool over Mr. Steele's keen, grey eyes. He was to learn later that Mr. Steele was not quite so much in the dark as he supposed.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.
Breakers of Bounds I

WINGATE of the Sixth saw lights out for the Remove that night.

It seemed to Tom Redwing that the prefect's eyes dwelt, once or twice, sharply on the Bounder, though he made no remark to him.

Owing to the length and activity of Billy Bunter's tongue, most of the Remove knew of the Bounder's intentions that night. But Smithy's look told of nothing unusual.

Lights were turned out, and the Greyfriars captain shut the door and left the Remove to slumber.

"Smithy!"
It was Harry Wharton who spoke.

"Hallo!" yawned the Bounder.
"I hear that you're thinking of playing the giddy ox to-night, and breaking bounds."

"What's put that into your head?"
"Well, isn't it so?"
"You never can tell," answered Smithy. "No need for you to butt in, anyhow."

"I don't want to butt in," answered Wharton quietly. "But it seemed to me that Wingate had his eye on you."

"What rot!"
"If you're caught out, you know what it means," said the captain of the Remove. "If you can't be decent for decency's sake, you ought to have sense enough not to run risks."

The Bounder laughed.
"Wingate's all right. He won't come rooting into this dormitory, once he gets back to his study. Besides, he goes to bed early."

"He might mention it to Steele, if he thinks there's something up."

"Well, Steele will most likely be out himself. You know he goes on the prowl."

"Well, I thought I'd give you the tip," said Harry. "You're a fool to run such risks."

"Thank you for nothing."
"Oh, go and eat coke!" said Wharton; and he laid his head on the pillow, and dismissed Smithy and his affairs from his mind.

"I thought the same, Smithy," said Tom Redwing, in a low voice. "I wish you'd chuck it, old man."

"Rats!"
"Give us a rest, Eric!" yawned Skinner. "Steele won't be bothering about this dormitory. Two nights out of three he clears out of the school himself; and we jolly well know what for. Some day the police will catch him at it, and we shall lose our dear Form master."

"Smithy, old man—" urged Redwing.
"Oh, shut up, Reddy!" said the Bounder.

Redwing shut up, and there was silence in the Remove dormitory. The fellows settled down to sleep, with two exceptions. Skinner and the Bounder did not intend to sleep.

And if they had had any doubts about Billy Bunter, they would soon have been reassured. A sound like the rumbling of distant thunder whirred in the dormitory. It was the snore of the Owl of the Remove.

Bunter was fast asleep.
But the Owl of the Remove had settled down to slumber with an easy

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mind. Under his bed was Nugent's alarm-clock. When the voices died away, the ticking of that alarm-clock might have been noticed, but for the gargantuan snoring that was going on in the bed above. Billy Bunter's snore was calculated to drown all lesser sounds.

Bunter had set the alarm; and he was satisfied. Had he had a closer acquaintance with the manners and customs of some American alarm-clocks, he might not have felt so satisfied. There was no doubt that the alarm, being wound up, would go off. But there was some doubt when it would go off, if Bunter had only known it. Still, as he did not know it, he settled down happily to slumber, assured that he would be awakened at half-past ten, the time fixed for Smithy and Skinner to start. And when that time came Bunter was going to join in the excursion, or know the reason why.

Half-past ten was announced, at last, by a cime from the clock tower. As the chime died away, Vernon-Smith slipped out of bed.

"You awake, Skinner?"

"Yes, rather!"

"Buck up, then!"

"You bet!"

Skinner chuckled softly as he groped for his clothes in the dark.

"Listen to the band," he murmured. He was referring to Bunter's snore. It was still going strong. Under Bunter's bed the alarm-clock was still ticking away cheerily, though its tick was drowned by Bunter's nasal efforts. But the alarm had not gone off. No doubt it would go off some time. But that time was not yet. That alarm-clock had a will of its own, and was not to be hurried.

"The fat idiot!" muttered the Bounder. "Thank goodness he's asleep! The potty porpoise would have kicked up a row—"

"That was his jolly old game!" agreed Skinner. "But he's safe till rising-bell, I fancy."

The two young rascals dressed quickly, and crept towards the door of the dormitory.

Not a fellow in the Remove awakened.

Smithy opened the door softly, and they crept out, and the door was noiselessly closed. The deep snore of William George Bunter died away behind them as they stole down the dark passage.

A few minutes more, and they dropped from the box-room window to the leads underneath, and scrambled to the ground.

"Hook it!" whispered Smithy.

They cut off in the direction of the Cloisters. There was a certain spot in the old wall there, well known to most of the fellows, where it was easy to negotiate.

The two black sheep lost no time.

Smithy clambered over the wall and dropped into the road, and Skinner followed him.

They stood back in the deep shadow of the wall to watch the road and listen for passers-by before going further.

"All serene!" whispered Smithy. "Nobody about."

"Hold on a minute!"

"Oh, come on!"

"Hold on, I tell you!" said Skinner, in a fierce whisper. "I can hear somebody."

"Nerves!" grunted the Bounder. The Bounder had a nerve of iron; but Skinner was not nearly so easy in his mind. The consequences of being discovered out of bounds at that hour

of the night were rather painfully present in Skinner's thoughts.

He grasped Vernon-Smith's arm, and dragged him back into the deep shadow of the wall.

"Quiet!" he breathed. "It may be that old fool Tozer coming by! Precious asses we should look if the village bobby marched us in, and rang up Gosling."

"Oh, rot!"

"Quiet!" hissed Skinner.

The Bounder yielded impatiently. But he was glad the next moment that he had given in. Through the silence of the night came the sound of a soft footfall on the road.

The Bounder listened quietly; Skinner with his heart throbbing. The footfalls were coming along the road, from the direction of the Greyfriars garage. A dark figure, wrapped in coat and muffler, with a cap pulled low down over the forehead, came quietly, but swiftly by, passing within a few feet of the two juniors without observing them.

The figure passed on, and disappeared in the night.

Skinner's heart thumped.

"That was a narrow shave," he muttered. "It was somebody belonging to the school. I feel certain he came out of—"

"I know he did," the Bounder grinned. "I know who it was, too."

"Not Steele. Not tall enough—"

"It was Barnes."

"Barnes!" repeated Skinner.

"The Head's chauffeur," said Smithy. "Just as well he didn't see us; he might have given us away, though it's no bizney of his. Can't be too careful."

"Barnes! Where the thump is he going at this time of night?"

"Well, he can go where he likes when he's off duty. No business of ours," said Vernon-Smith. "Come on."

"Give him time to get clear."

"Oh, rot! Come on—he's gone now."

Vernon-Smith left the shadow of the wall, and Skinner, still uneasy, followed him. They hurried away in the direction of Courtfield Common.

In a narrow, shadowy lane, on the edge of the common, a car was waiting. A man in a peaked cap touched the cap to Vernon-Smith as he came up.

"Ready, sir?"

"Right-ho!" said the Bounder cheerily. "Get in, Skinner! Let her out, Powser, when you get going."

"I'll let her out all right, sir," said Powser.

The two juniors sat in the car, and Powser started the engine. They rolled away up the dark lane for the Lantham road.

The Bounder produced a packet of cigarettes and lighted one. Skinner lighted one also.

"This is somethin' like," remarked Skinner, as he leaned back in his corner and smoked.

"What-ho!" said the Bounder, blowing out a cloud of smoke. "I wonder what the Head would say if he could see us now."

Skinner shuddered.

"For goodness' sake chuck that, Smithy," he grunted. "It would be the sack for both of us. What's the good of thinkin' of it, you ass?"

The Bounder laughed. He had the courage of his blackguardism, and the sense of danger only exhilarated him. It was far from having that effect on Skinner.

"I wonder if Wingate suspected anything," he drawled.

"Why should he?" snarled Skinner.

"Well, he heard what Bunter was cackling in the study—"

"Nothin' in that—we stuffed him all right."

"I wonder!" yawned the Bounder. Skinner gave him a very unpleasant look.

"Look here, Smithy, if there's risk—"

"Of course there's risk, old bean." It seemed to afford the Bounder a sort of gnomish amusement to play on the fears of his companion. "You can't break bounds after lights out without risk. That's where the fun comes in mostly."

"Well, I don't see it," growled Skinner. "That isn't the sort of fun I'm after, anyhow. If you think there's risk—"

"Bags of it!" said the Bounder cheerily.

"Then we'd jolly well better go back."

"Think so?" grinned the Bounder.

"Yes, I do," growled Skinner.

"Shall I speak to the chauffeur?"

"Yes."

"Right!"

Vernon-Smith spoke through the tube. "Let her out, Powser! You're crawling, old bean."

The car leaped into dizzy speed. The Bounder sat back again and laughed. Skinner scowled, and threw away his cigarette, which seemed to have lost its savour.

Through the dark winter night the car rushed on, eating up the miles to Lantham. The Bounder's eyes were shining with excitement and enjoyment. Skinner's enjoyment was more doubtful. But he was "for it" now, and there was no help for it.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Alarming!

B UZZZZZZ!

In the Remove dormitory, for a long time, there had been no sound but the quiet breathing of sleepers and the snore of Billy Bunter.

Now there was a sudden sound—a raucous, rumbling, grinding, grating, buzzing sound—the sound of a cheap American alarm-clock doing its worst!

Bunter's snore had drowned the ticking of the clock. But the roar of the raucous alarm drowned Bunter's snore.

Even Bunter awakened at that sudden burst of revelry by night.

Every fellow in the dormitory awakened; the furthest sleeper started out of slumber with a jump.

Five or six voices ejaculated at once. Fellows sat up, rubbed their eyes, stared, and exclaimed:

"What's that row?"

"What's up?"

"Stop it!"

"Turn it off!"

"What the thunder—"

Buzzzzzz!

Under Bunter's bed the alarm-clock rang on merrily. There are alarm-clocks and alarm-clocks! This one, produced at a low price by mass-production in the great United States, did not keep time—that was not to be expected—but its volume of sound left nothing to be desired. It was crammed with energy when the alarm did start, and if it started at unexpected and unlooked-for times it made up for that drawback by the terrific noise it made when it was on the go. It fairly roared.

Bunter sat up in bed.

He yawned, grunted, and rubbed his eyes. He had been sleeping soundly—and Bunter was a hefty sleeper—but that alarm-clock would have awakened Rip Van Winkle and the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus.



A dark figure, wrapped in coat and muffer, with a cap pulled down over the forehead, passed within a few feet of Vernon-Smith and Skinner without observing them.

"I say, you fellows, it's all right," said Bunter. "It's only my alarm-clock—"

"Shut it off!" roared Bob Cherry. "Stop it, you fat idiot! You'll have the Beaks up here with that frightful row!" shouted Johnny Bull.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bunter. He rolled out of bed.

The deafening noise of the alarm-clock not only rang through the dormitory, but far beyond. Bunter had not calculated on that, and on the distance to which sound would travel in the silence of the night. For the first time it occurred to his powerful intellect that the alarm might awaken others—outside the Remove dormitory.

Masters sometimes walked through the dormitory passages at night—in fact, some master was supposed to make the round at least once. Any master within range of the Remove dormitory could hardly have failed to heed that terrific uproar.

Buzzzzzzz!
Bunter groped wildly under the bed for the clock.

"Will you stop it, you fat freak?" yelled Peter Todd.

"Oh, really, Toddy—"

"Stop it, you villain!" shouted Wharton.

"I'm just going to—"

"Buck up, you fat ass! We shall have the masters or the prefects up here!" exclaimed the captain of the Remove.

"Chuck something at it!" bawled Bob Cherry, and, suiting the action to his words, he let fly with a boot!

Other fellows followed Bob's lead, and soon the air was thick with flying missiles—boots, pillows, bolsters—anything and everything which was near at hand.

"Oh! Yow!" wailed Bunter, as a

bolster caught him a hefty swipe on his fat nose! "Stop it, you beasts!"

Tom Redwing jumped out of bed and lighted a candle-end. He did not need telling why Bunter had set his alarm-clock that night. Bunter had set it—or intended to set it—for half-past ten, as Redwing guessed at once. But, without looking at his watch, he knew that it was much later than that now. Holding up the candle, Tom glanced at the Bounder's bed. It was empty; and another glance showed that Skinner's bed was also empty. The two black sheep were gone, and had long been gone.

Buzzzzzzz!
"Bunter! Stop that!" exclaimed Redwing anxiously. "You fat idiot! If anybody comes here, it's all up with Smithy."

"Is he gone?" asked Frank Nugent.

"Yes—and Skinner."

Bunter had grabbed the alarm-clock now. But as he heard Tom's words he ceased to grope for the catch to shut off the alarm and blinked at the sailor-man's son.

"Gone!" he ejaculated.

"Yes; shut that off—"

"The beasts!"

"You fat dummy, stop that row—"

"The rotters! They've got off early to leave me out!" howled Bunter indignantly. "The sneaks!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You fat ass, it's a quarter to twelve!" said Redwing, looking at his watch in the candle-light.

"Wha-a-at?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry.

"You set the alarm wrong, Bunter."

"I didn't!" howled Bunter. "The beastly thing don't keep time! You were swindled over this clock, Nugent."

"I know that!" chuckled Nugent. "I bought it from Fishy."

"I guess that's a good clock," said Fisher T. Fish warmly. "You can't say it wouldn't wake a galoot right up."

"It will wake the whole House if that fat chump doesn't stop it," said Hazeldene. "If anybody comes here and—"

"Oh, that's all right," said Bunter. "I'm trying to stop it, but the beastly thing won't stop! They won't take any notice of an alarm-clock going off—"

Buzzzzzzz!

"Stop it, you chump!"

"I'm trying to," gasped Bunter. "But the brute won't stop! I keep on turning the thing every way, but it makes no difference! It will have to run down!"

Buzzzzz! Whirrrrrrrrr!

"It will wake all Greyfriars, if it doesn't wake Courtfield and Friardale, too!" said Squiff.

"My hat! If anybody comes—"

said Wharton.

"After all, if anybody hears it, it's only an alarm-clock," said Bob Cherry. "They'll guess it's gone off at the wrong time, you know. No reason for the beaks to take any notice."

Buzzzzz!

Redwing's face was tense with anxiety. He had opposed the Bounder's reckless outbreak; he had almost quarrelled with him on the subject. But now that his chum was in danger of discovery, he forgot all that, and thought only of helping him.

While the other fellows were talking, Tom Redwing was busy. He gathered coats, bolsters, rugs—anything that came to hand, and stuffed them into the Bounder's bed, arranging the bedclothes over them in the form of a sleeper.

"Good wheeze!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, as he noted what Redwing was

doing, in the glimmer of the candle-light. And Bob jumped out and proceeded to follow Redwing's example, taking Skinner's bed.

For Skinner himself Bob did not care two straws; but the fellow was in danger of the "sack," or at least a flogging, if anyone came to the dormitory, and that was enough for Bob.

"Grrrrrrrr!" came in a last groaning whirr from that terrible American clock. It had run down at last, and there was blessed silence.

Through the silence came the sound of a footstep.

"Ware beaks!" gasped Hazeldene.

"Look out, Reddy!"

Redwing gave a last touch to the Bounder's bed, and bolted back into his own.

Footsteps approached the door of the dormitory. It was a well-known tread—the tread of Richard Steele, the master of the Remove. Redwing blew out the candle.

"Beast!" gasped Bunter. "Give a fellow light to get back to bed!"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"Look here, you beast—"

Bunter groped back to bed in a hurry. The door was opened, and the light switched on. Mr. Richard Steele, standing in the doorway, looked into the dormitory at faces staring in the sudden light and at a suit of striped, well-filled pyjamas just vanishing into Bunter's bed.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Only Bunter!

MR. STEELE stood silent, looking in.

Redwing hardly breathed.

He knew that the Remove master, for some reason, had his suspicions aroused.

The din of the alarm-clock, hefty as it was, could scarcely have reached his study. Apparently he had been within hearing of it. The sound of an alarm-clock going off at the wrong hour was not in itself a suspicious matter. But it was obvious that the Form master was suspicious now.

Had the beds of Smithy and Skinner remained as they had been left, the fact that they were unoccupied would have caught the master's eye immediately.

Now they looked as if they contained sleepers. Only a close investigation would have revealed the dummies. Redwing wondered, with beating heart, whether that investigation would be made. He had done his best to save Smithy from the result of his recklessness, and he could do no more.

It was with deep relief that he found that Mr. Steele fixed his attention upon William George Bunter.

Apparently it was Bunter of whom the Form master was suspicious. Why, Redwing could not guess; but the fact, fortunately, was clear.

"Bunter!" said Steele.

Bunter plunged into bed and dragged the blankets over him.

"Bunter!"

"Oh dear! Yes, sir?" gasped Bunter.

"You were out of bed, Bunter."

"Oh! No, sir!"

"What! I saw you getting into bed, Bunter!"

"Did—did you, sir? It was Redwing's fault! If he hadn't blown out the candle—"

"You were out of bed."

"Yes, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I—I got up to stop the alarm-clock, sir. It—it went off at the wrong time."

"You did not intend to leave the dormitory?"

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"Oh! No, sir."

"You had better tell me the truth, Bunter," said Mr. Steele quietly. "This matter is serious. A prefect reported to me that he had heard you use words which gave him the impression that you intended to break bounds to-night."

"That beast Wingate—"

"Wingate very properly reported the matter to me, Bunter. Had you arranged to leave this dormitory in company with other boys?"

Steele's eyes turned to the Bounder's bed as he spoke.

From that bed came no sign.

The form of a sleeper—apparently, at least—could be seen, and there was nothing to indicate that Vernon-Smith was not there.

"Oh! No, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"Nothing of the kind!"

"Then why did you set the alarm-clock for this hour, Bunter?"

"I—I didn't, sir."

"When I saw the alarm-clock in your possession in my study, Bunter, I had no doubt what you intended it for, taken in conjunction with what Whmgate had reported to me," said Mr. Steele.

"Oh crumbs!"

It dawned on Bunter's fat brain that the wool had not, after all, been pulled over Richard Steele's eyes.

"I fully expected," continued Mr. Steele, "that the alarm-clock would be heard in this dormitory to-night, and I intended to remain up in case it should be heard."

"D-d-did you, sir?"

"What I expected has now occurred," said Steele, "and I require to know what it means, Bunter."

"N-n-nothing, sir."

"You have spoken of a candle lighted by Redwing." Mr. Steele turned to the sailorman's son. "Redwing, you have been out of bed?"

"Yes, sir."

"You lighted a candle?"

"We were all woke up by the alarm-clock, sir," said Harry Wharton before Redwing could speak. "That ass Bunter—I mean, Bunter had it under his bed, sir, and couldn't get hold of it in the dark."

"I do not suspect you of intending to break bounds, Redwing—I know your character too well," said Mr. Steele kindly.

"Thank you, sir," said Tom. "I certainly never intended anything of the kind."

"I am sure of that. I wish I were as sure of other boys—who do not add to my trust in them by affecting to be asleep at the present moment," said Mr. Steele, with another glance towards the Bounder's bed.

Redwing caught his breath.

But the master's glance returned to Bunter. Evidently he had no suspicion that the Bounder was not present.

"Bunter!"

Snore!

"Bunter!"

"I—I'm asleep, sir."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You absurd boy!" exclaimed Mr. Steele. "Bunter, tell me at once why you set that alarm-clock on to-night."

"I—I—I—"

"It is nearly twelve o'clock," said Mr. Steele. "For what reason, Bunter, did you set the alarm at such an hour?"

"I—I didn't sir! The beastly clock went off at the wrong time, sir!" groaned Bunter. "I—I set it for the morning, sir!"

"It's a rotten clock, sir," said Nugent. "It goes off at all sorts of times—it's an American clock, sir."

Mr Steele came towards Bunter's bed. The Owl of the Remove had left the clock on a chair by his bedside.

He watched the Form master uneasily as Steele picked up the clock and looked at it.

"The alarm is set for half-past ten!" said Mr. Steele. "Apparently it sounded at the wrong hour. Do you mean to tell me, Bunter, that you set this alarm for half-past ten in the morning?"

"Yes, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I mean, no, sir! Of—of course not, sir!"

"You set it for half-past ten this night," said Mr. Steele. "It was obviously your intention to get up at half-past ten. For what reason, Bunter, did you intend to get up at half-past ten?"

"The—the fact is, sir—"

"I am waiting, Bunter."

Billy Bunter blinked at him hopelessly. Even his wonderful powers of prevarication seemed to fail him now.

"Have you nothing to say, Bunter?"

"Oh, yes, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"Lots!"

"I am waiting to hear it."

"The—the fact is—"

"Are you trying to think of some prevarication, Bunter?" asked the Remove master, sternly.

"Yes—I mean, no, sir! The fact is—"

is—"

"Well?"

"N-n-nothing, sir!" groaned Bunter.

"Very well, Bunter," said Mr. Steele.

"I take it for granted that it was your intention to break dormitory bounds, as you have no explanation to offer me. I shall deal with you in the morning."

"Oh crikey!"

"Good-night, my boys!" said Mr. Steele, and he went to the door.

"Good-night, sir!"

The Remove master left the dormitory, and the light was turned off; the door closed. Mr. Steele's footsteps died away down the passage.

"I say, you fellows—" groaned the Owl of the Remove.

"You fat idiot!"

"I—I say—"

"You burbling bandersnatch!"

"And he never spotted Skinner or Smithy!" said Snoop. "My hat! If he'd spotted that they were out—"

"Serve them right if he had!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Jolly lucky for them he didn't!"

chuckled Snoop. "He's only spotted Bunter. Ha, ha, ha! Bunter's for it!"

"Six of the best in the morning!"

grinned Peter Todd. "Serve the fat chump right for waking us all up with that putrid alarm-clock!"

"Oh, really, Toddy—"

"Go to sleep, you fat dummy, and dream of bending over in Steele's study in the morning."

"Beast!"

The Remove settled down to sleep again, but William George Bunter, for once, found it difficult to compose himself to slumber. It was nearly a minute before his deep snore once more awoke the echoes of the Remove dormitory.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Night Out!

CRASH!

It came suddenly. At the very time when Mr. Steele was investigating in the

Remove dormitory at Greyfriars, the Bounder's car was whizzing along the dark road back from Lantham.

They sat in the car, covering the ground at a great rate, little dreaming of what was happening in those very moments and of the narrow escape they had had of detection. Both of them were silent—Skinner tired and irritable,

(Continued on page 12.)

INSIDE INFORMATION



By
The "OLD
REF."

In addition to solving Soccer problems of general interest in these articles, "Old Ref" replies to readers' own queries. All letters should be addressed to: "Old Ref," c/o The "Magnet," The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

THE struggle for the Cup goes on, and as the various rounds are worked off excitement grows. I have some questions to answer this week on Cup topics. The trophy which is the most coveted possession open to a football team, is almost invariably referred to as the English Cup, but one of my readers wants to know what is the exact and official title. Here is the answer:

The title which appears on the Cup itself is: The Football Association Challenge Cup.

On at least one occasion, of course, the absurdity of calling the trophy the English Cup was brought home in no uncertain fashion—when it was won by Cardiff City, a team with its home in Wales. As a matter of fact the officials of the Football Association are always very careful not to use the words English Cup in their official references to the draw, etc., but they themselves once stumbled over this matter.

As you know, medals are presented to every player who appears in a Cup Final, those which are given to the losers being slightly different from those presented to the winners. The men who played in the successful Burnley side of 1914 have medals which are unique, for they bear the words: winners of the English Cup. I don't know how it came to pass that such words were allowed to be engraved on the medals given to the Burnley players in that year, because all the other Cup-winners' medals which I have seen adorning the watch-chains of the lucky lads who have won them bear the official title of F.A. Challenge Cup.

ANOTHER query regarding the Cup competition which has just reached me is in respect of the rules regarding the colours of the shirts worn by the players in the event of two teams being drawn together whose usual colours clash. In regard to this there is a new rule in operation this season. In the past, when two clubs with similar colours were drawn together in any round prior to the semi-final, the side playing at home had the right to "dress" as usual, while the visitors had to change. An old semi-final rule left the decision as to which club should wear its own colours to the luck of the toss, but in finals when colours clashed each played in strange ones.

This year, however, the new rule for all rounds of the Cup lays it down that in the event of the colours of the competing clubs clashing both shall change.

It was the strange experience of Chelsea last season which drew special attention to the necessity for such a change in the rules.

In three successive rounds—against Everton, Birmingham, and Portsmouth, Chelsea, who wear blue shirts, were drawn at home, and each of their three successive Cup opponents, who also had blue as their regular colour, had to change. Some people may suggest that this question of colour is a trivial one, but it is possible that a change may have an adverse effect on a side, and the only fair way is the present one—when the colours clash both clubs change. A fellow who has been accustomed to passing the ball to a colleague in a blue shirt, say, might, in the excitement of a big Cup contest, pass to an opponent if that opponent happened to be wearing a blue shirt.

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EVERY little detail is considered of some importance in the specially big Cup-ties, and that is one reason why particular attention is paid to the training of teams which are "in" for the Cup. As my readers are aware, the players of many teams are, at this period of the season, taken away for special training either to the seaside or some inland resort which is noted for the sort of air which braces.

Actually, that is about all special training means: a change of air with a view to giving the fellows a new lease of energy when they may be getting a bit tired and stale. Special training does not consist, as many people appear to believe, in a greater amount of sprinting and gymnasium exercises, and extra time spent in practising with the ball on the pitch.

There is another advantage, however, in having players gathered together under one roof during their preparation for a specially important match, and this is the fact that the food which they eat can be specially watched. The diet of a footballer is considered very important by some trainers.

You will recall that in 1921 Wolverhampton Wanderers, a Second Division team, surprised the football world by reaching the Cup Final. I had some talk with their trainer when they were preparing for the last round, and he was very confident that the men had been helped in their progress to the Final because a special watch had been kept on their food.

THERE is another reason why players have to be trained to the highest possible degree of physical fitness during the Cup-tie part of the season. They may, in any round, be called upon to play, not merely for ninety minutes, but for two hours. And that extra half-hour, on a difficult pitch, calls for real stamina.

At no stage of the Cup competition is extra time played at the first meeting between any two clubs save in the final tie.

In the Final, if the score is level at the end of ninety minutes, an extra half-hour must be played at the first meeting.

This rule was put on the books just before the War, but it has only been necessary to put it into operation on one occasion since—in 1920 when Aston Villa and Huddersfield Town met in the Final at Stamford Bridge. There was no score at the end of ninety minutes, and the players, who had forgotten about the new rule, were trooping off the field when Referee Howcroft told them that they would have to go on for another half-hour.

SHORT REPLIES.

"A BRIGHTON READER."—If the full-back taking a goal-kick, and in passing back to his goalkeeper sent the ball straight into the net without the goalkeeper or any other player touching it, the decision should be a corner-kick, not a goal.

E. H. (Hull) puts the following case: Taylor, of Hull City, sent in a shot which was caught by the Cardiff City goalkeeper. As the goalkeeper was about to clear, Mills, the Hull centre-forward, charged him into the net. Who should be credited with the goal—Taylor or Mills, or should the goalkeeper be said to have put the ball through his own goal? As I have explained previously, these are merely matters of opinion, but I should say that Mills was the scorer.

THE MAN FROM SCOTLAND YARD!

(Continued from page 10.)

the Bounder morose. Both were feeling the effects of late hours, and perhaps realising that they would have acted more wisely if they had stayed in bed.

"Nearly twelve!" said Skinner, breaking the silence, with a grunt.

"We shall be in soon after twelve," said the Bounder. "Powser's putting it on."

"I'm jolly sleepy!"

"You could have stayed in bed, if you'd liked."

"Oh, rats!"

Skinner relapsed into sulky silence again.

Then the crash came!

There was snow on the road, frozen hard. Vernon-Smith had told Powser to put it on; and no doubt Powser was anxious to get to bed himself. Perhaps he put it on not wisely, but too well.

Exactly what happened the two juniors hardly knew. One moment they were whizzing along the road at a speed that blurred the wayside trees into one another. The next, the car was hammering into a frosty hedge and Powser was frantically jamming on his brakes.

Skinner let out a terrified yell.

The shock flung him into the bottom of the car, and the Bounder sprawled over him.

Vernon-Smith scrambled up. Skinner continued to yell; but the Bounder was not frightened, only enraged.

"The clumsy fool!" he panted.

The car came to a standstill in the hedge. Vernon-Smith tore open the door and scrambled out, leaving Skinner still yelling.

"What's up? What—"

"Skid, sir!" gasped Powser.

"You silly dummy!"

Powser made no reply to that. He was trying to back the car out of the hedge, but it refused to move. He got out of the seat and proceeded to make an examination.

"Shut up that row, Skinner!" snapped the Bounder. "You're not hurt, you fool! What are you caterwauling about?"

Skinner scrambled out. He was quite surprised to find that he was not hurt, only shaken and breathless.

"We were going too fast!" he enarled.

"Lot of good saying that now!" sneered the Bounder. "I dare say Powser will fix it all right. He's a good mechanic."

"My hat! What time are we going to get back?" groaned Skinner.

"Along with the milk in the morning, perhaps," answered the Bounder flippantly.

"I'm afraid it's no go, sir," said Powser. "Can't be helped, sir! I shall have to leave the car here, and get a tow to the garage in the morning."

"Oh crumbs!"

"This means walking to Courtfield!" said Powser dismally.

Apparently Powser was thinking chiefly about himself.

Vernon-Smith gritted his teeth.

"It means walking to Greyfriars for us!" he snapped. "My hat! What a rotten sell!"

Skinner contributed a groan.

"No good grouching, you fool!" growled Vernon-Smith. "Accidents will happen! Lucky we're only a few miles from the school."

"Only a few miles!" groaned Skinner.

"Well, it might have happened miles

back. Anyhow, grouching and groaning won't mend matters!" said the Bounder savagely. "We've got to walk it!"

"You silly idiot, Smithy! This is what comes of your dashed joy-rides in the middle of the night!" said Skinner viciously.

"Oh, shut up!"

The Bounder was in a savage temper, and not disposed to be patient with a complaining companion. He turned his back on Skinner, and started to walk; Skinner followed him.

Powser was left with the car to his own devices. Neither of the juniors was worrying about Powser. They had worry enough on their own account.

"It's about four miles by the road," said Vernon-Smith, as Skinner hurried on and joined him; "but it's less than three by the lanes. We can cut through the lanes and save time. Come on!"

"The lanes are beastly lonely at this time of night—"

"Are you afraid of tramps?" asked the Bounder mockingly. "If you are you can go by the road. I'm going by the lanes."

And the Bounder turned off the high road; and Skinner, after a moment or two of hesitation, followed him.

The country lanes were dark, misty, and ridged with snow. It was not a pleasant walk, even had the juniors not been tired, and the hour not so late, and their minds not so anxious. But the Bounder tramped on with dogged indifference. If matters went wrong, Smithy found no comfort in complaint; and he had only savage derision for complaints from others.

Skinner tramped a little behind him, hard put to it to keep up with the Bounder's rapid pace, soon out of breath, and wishing from the bottom of his heart that he had consumed fewer cigarettes during that night out. Those cigarettes were taking their revenge now, and Skinner puffed and panted dismally as he trudged wearily on.

What breath he could spare he expended in grumbings and reproaches. The Bounder hardly troubled to answer him; only now and then snapping out some contemptuous gibe.

But they soon fell into complete silence, feeling that they needed all their breath for the weary tramp through the winter night.

The few scattered buildings they passed were dark and silent, and not a single wayfarer appeared in the lanes. That was rather a relief than otherwise, though the silence and solitude had their effect on Skinner's shaky nerves.

But about a mile from the Lantham road, in a broad lane lined by tall oaks, there was a sudden change. Through the leafless branches of the trees they caught a flashing of lights. They came from a mansion standing back from the lane, with big bronze gates on the roadside.

The Bounder paused a moment and looked in the direction of the lights.

"That's Topham Croft," he said.

"I don't care what it is!" mumbled Skinner wearily. "Let's get on."

"Somethin's up there," said the Bounder. "Look! Every window is lighted—and it's getting on for one o'clock."

"I don't care."

"My father knows old Topham," said Vernon-Smith. "He's on the Stock Exchange. No end of money. I wonder—"

"Oh, come on!"

The Bounder moved on, Skinner limping after him. But he stopped again as he came up to the big bronze gates that looked on the road.

The mansion lay a considerable distance back; but looking through the bars of the gates Smithy could see that

the great door was open, and light blazing out into the night, and a distant confused sound of voices reached his ears. He was keenly interested, and heedless of Skinner's impatience to get on.

"Somethin's up!" he repeated. "My hat! I wonder if it's the jolly old Courtfield cracksman been at work again?"

"Oh!" said Skinner. Tired and dismal as he was, he was faintly interested at that suggestion. It was obvious that something of a very exciting nature was going on in the mansion. "Steele, do you mean?"

"No, I don't! Don't be an ass!"

"Oh, I forgot!" sneered Skinner.

"You make out now that you don't believe that Steele is the Courtfield cracksman."

"I make out that he isn't because I know he isn't! Don't be a fool, Skinner! But this looks to me as if there's been burglars found in the house. Listen!"

There were footsteps on the gravel drive leading down to the bronze gates. Shouting voices were heard.

"Oh, come on!" said Skinner, in alarm. "We don't want to be seen here."

"My hat! No!" The Bounder laughed. "It would make a ripping item for the newspapers—two Greyfriars men spotted on the scene of a burglary in the middle of the night—"

"Is it a laughing matter?" hissed Skinner. "It's the sack for both of us, and you know it! Will you come on, you fool!"

From the shadow of the wall near the gate a voice shouted. For the first time, the juniors realised that the alarm at Topham Croft—whatever was its cause—was not confined to the house. A man leaped out of the shadows and ran towards the juniors, shouting as he came.

"This way! This way! Here's two of them!"

Skinner burst into terrific flight.

"Oh gad!" gasped the Bounder.

The man who was running towards him looked like a footman—a big, fat, powerful looking man.

The Bounder darted after Skinner.

Shouting voices sounded in all directions. The footman pounded heavily after the two schoolboys, who ran as if for their lives.

"This way! I've got them!" he yelled.

"This way! I've got the burglars—two of them!"

Skinner groaned in terror as he raced on. The Bounder grinned breathlessly.

Obviously there had been a burglary at Topham Croft and an alarm, and the household had turned out and were searching for the thief in the night.

The footman's mistake was a natural one, in the gloom of the winter's night he saw only two dim forms hanging about the road, and they fled instantly as he sighted them and tried to run them down.

The man had no doubt that he was close behind thieves who had escaped from the mansion when the alarm was given. He ran his hardest after the fleeing juniors, shouting as he ran; and other voices answered, other footsteps rang on the frosty road.

Had the juniors been captured, they were, of course, in no danger of being accused of concern in the burglary once they were recognised as schoolboys; but the fact that they were out of school bounds after midnight would inevitably have become known to their headmaster.

That was what frightened Skinner almost out of his wits as he heard the footman's heavy tread pounding behind him.

"All serene, old man!" the Bounder panted in his ear. "That fat ass will never run us down, too well-fed!"

Skinner did not speak; he tore on.

But it was a case of more haste and less speed. His flying feet slipped on a sheet of frozen snow and he went over headlong.

The Bounder passed him, running too hard to stop immediately. Skinner sprawled in the road—breathless, spent, overcome with terror. The footman came racing up.

Vernon-Smith spun round. It did not even cross his mind to make good his escape and leave Skinner to his fate. The Bounder was not the man to desert a comrade in extremity.

He whirled round and came charging back.

The Topham Croft footman had reached Skinner, and was bending down to grasp him, when the Bounder rushed at him recklessly and crashed.

There was a breathless gasp from the fat man as he reeled under the charge and went spinning over.

This unexpected adventure was a happening after the Bounder's own heart. He was enjoying himself.

Skinner was far from enjoyment. He gasped feebly for breath, and quaked with terror.

"Oh, oh, oh! Oooh, oooh!" was all that Skinner could say.

"All serene!" said Smithy. "They've missed us! We'd better not get back on the road, though. They'll be rooting through Oak Lane from end to end; and I imagine that they've telephoned for the police before this! We don't want to run into a bobby—what?"

Skinner shuddered at the idea.

"What a lark!" chuckled the Bounder.

"A—a—a lark?" gurgled Skinner.

"You call it a lark, you madman?"

"What do you call it? That fat flunkey thought he had the burglar; it would have surprised him if he'd got us and marched us into the house and

slackened his pace. He had run the risk of capture, to save Skinner, and he had no idea of deserting him, howsoever troublesome he was, but he could not be called an agreeable companion to a fellow who was unable to keep up to the mark. Skinner was a burden now, and he bore the burden uncomplainingly, but with a contemptuous derision that made Skinner feel that he hated Smithy more than anyone else in the wide world. The Bounder, quite indifferent to his feelings, giped him mercilessly.

"Get on! Do you want me to carry you? My hat! At this rate we shan't be home before morning! Still, take it easy! Look here, what about going on all fours and crawling the rest?"

Skinner gritted his teeth.

"You rotter! I—I wish I could lick you!" he gasped.



One moment the car was whizzing along the road at an alarming speed, the next it was crashing into a frosty hedge. Skinner let out a terrified howl as the Bounder sprawled over him!

Smithy grabbed Skinner by the arm. "Quick!" he panted.

He fairly dragged the exhausted junior to his feet and dragged him on along the road. The footman sat up dazedly. He shouted; and running footsteps rapidly approached the spot.

Skinner ran on breathlessly, desperately, with the Bounder's grasp on his arm dragging him onward. A few minutes and the Bounder plunged into a gap between the trees by the roadside, dragging Skinner after him, and stopped, crouching low in the darkness.

"Quiet!" he breathed.

Skinner, at the end of his strength, collapsed in the damp grass, gasping spasmodically. Running footsteps passed on along the road—past the spot where the schoolboys lay in darkness.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

What a Night!

HERBERT VERNON SMITH laughed softly.

The pursuers had raced past, ignorant that the two fugitives had dodged off the road into the adjacent field.

The running footsteps died away along the road.

"We win!" murmured the Bounder. His eyes were shining with excitement.

found out that we were Lower Fourth fellows of Greyfriars." Smithy chuckled. "Old Topham knows me; I've seen him lots of times at home at my pater's. What a giddy surprise for him if his flunkey had walked us in!"

"Let's get going," groaned Skinner.

"Oh crikey! If I ever break bounds again after lights out—oh dear!"

"Don't you think this is a tremendous lark?" chuckled the Bounder.

"You blinking idiot!"

"Well, come on, if you've got wind enough to move, you seedy, weedy, waster," said the Bounder contemptuously. "We've got to cut across the fields, and the sooner the better; they may search the fields—"

"We shall lose our way in the dark," groaned Skinner.

"If we do, we'll find it again. We can get on to a footpath here, that leads to the Sark, then we can get over the bridge, come on!"

Skinner staggered up dismally, and too exhausted to move; but he dared not remain by himself. He tottered after the Bounder.

"Not so fast!" he groaned.

"Oh, put it on!"

"You rotter! I can't go so fast." The Bounder laughed scornfully, and

"Well, you couldn't lick half of me," chuckled the Bounder. "Make the pace old bean! If you're out for a gentle stroll, I don't mind."

Skinner limped on drearily.

The lights and the uproar at Topham Croft died away in the night.

Smithy, who seemed to be able to see like a cat in the dark, struck a cart-track that led them into a by-lane, which he announced would lead them to the tow-path on the Sark. That was good news, so far as it went, though Skinner groaned at the prospect of the distance that had to be covered. By leaving Oak Lane, they were forced to take a roundabout course which added more than a mile to their way.

"Might as well have stuck to the main road, after all!" groaned Skinner.

"But, of course, you knew best, you clever beast."

"You silly owl, how was I to know a burglary was going on at Topham Croft?" said the Bounder. "Don't be an idiot! And I wouldn't have missed the fun for anything."

"Oh, shut up about the fun!" groaned Skinner.

It was a relief, at least, to hear no

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(Continued from page 13.)

sounds of pursuit. They came out on the tow-path at last, with the Sark glimmering in the pale gleam of the stars. Skinner sank down helplessly on a bank under the trees. The Bounder stared at him.

"Going to sleep there?" he inquired sarcastically.

"I can't keep on."

"Oh, pull yourself together." The Bounder's iron frame seemed impervious to fatigue, and he had no consideration for a weaker fellow. "You'll catch cold there."

"I don't care."

"Well, I'm not staying out all night, you weedy ass! I'm going on."

"Go, and be hanged," groaned Skinner.

"You'll soon follow, I fancy," chuckled Vernon-Smith, and he tramped on down the tow-path.

But Skinner did not follow. He was exhausted, and could not. And the Bounder, finding that he did not stir, turned back and rejoined him.

"Precious sort of ass you are, to take for a night out!" he sneered. "My hat! Might as well have been Bunter! How long are you going to stick there?"

"Find out!"

The Bounder laughed scoffingly, and leaned on a tree to wait. Skinner, sprawling in the grass, gradually recovered his breath, and his gasping grew less spasmodic.

The spot was utterly solitary and silent. Only a faint murmur came from the Sark, rustling through the frozen rushes.

The Bounder waited with indifferent patience for Skinner to recover. There was no danger in halting, Topham Croft lay a mile behind them, and there had been no pursuit across the fields. And no wayfarer was likely to pass along the lonely tow-path at that hour of the winter's night. Probably the Bounder himself was glad of a rest, though he would not have stopped on his own account. From where he stood, hidden in the dark shadow of the tree against which he was leaning, Vernon-Smith could see across the starlit river, to the grassy bank and dim woodlands on the other side. And to his surprise, he became suddenly aware of a figure moving on the other side of the Sark.

He watched it curiously.

The river was wide at that point, and the starlight was dim. All the Bounder could see was a dark figure, but it was evidently the figure of a man, moving slowly along the bank. One of Sir Hilton Popper's keepers looking for poachers, or perhaps a poacher, the Bounder considered. Skinner stirred in the grass, and the Bounder whispered to him.

"Keep close! There's somebody across the river, on the other bank!"

Skinner gasped.

"He can't see—"

"Of course he can't, idiot, under these trees. But he will see you if you move out on the tow-path."

Skinner did not move.

"Who—who can it be?" he breathed.

"Blessed if I know! A keeper or a

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poacher—but I don't believe it's either! Can't make it out! Quiet."

The Bounder watched. On the opposite bank, the woodland lay back from the water, and there was an open space of grass. The figure was moving along the very edge of the bank, peering down at the river, as if looking for something there.

The bank was high and steep, dropping four or five feet to the water. Suddenly the man slid over the bank, and the Bounder, in wonder, expected to hear him splash in the Sark.

But there was no splash.

"My hat!" murmured Vernon-Smith.

In the dark bank above the level of the water, was a blacker patch, and the Bounder knew what it was, a small bricked arched opening of a drain. The Bounder had seen it often enough from a boat, in the summer. When the rains wore heavy, the water came pouring out of the bricked opening into the Sark. In the present hard frost, it was dry enough. For some reason—mysterious enough to the Bounder—the man he was watching had swung himself down the steep bank to the bricked opening. There he seemed to have vanished.

As the opening was only two feet high, or less, the man must have crawled into it. The Bounder almost doubted the evidence of his eyes. But there could be no doubt—the man had vanished, and could only have disappeared into the tunnel under the bank.

A poacher hiding his plunder, with the keepers looking for him? It was not that. But what it was—

The figure suddenly emerged into sight again.

It clambered actively up the bank, and hurried away, taking a path that led through the trees.

In a few moments, it was gone.

"Well, my only summer bonnet!" murmured the Bounder blankly.

"Is he gone?" whispered Skinner.

"Yes."

"What was he up to?"

"Hiding something in that old drain under the bank—or else fetching away something he had hidden there. Goodness knows!"

"Can't be a poacher now—"

"Hardly."

"Well, whoever he was, thank goodness he never spotted us," breathed Skinner. "What a night we're having!"

The Bounder laughed.

"I don't suppose that chap would have talked much, if he'd spotted us. He was up to something. I wonder—Great Scott!"

Skinner stared up at him.

"What's got you now?" he muttered sourly.

"That fellow was hiding something in that old woodland drain," said the Bounder, his voice tense with excitement. "He couldn't have gone nosing into it for anything else. And—there's just been a burglary at Topham Croft, less than a mile away."

Skinner started.

"You don't think—"

"I think it's jolly likely—just the place where the giddy crackman might stick the loot, till it was safe to come back for it."

"Oh, rot!" muttered Skinner. "Look here, Smithy, it's no bizney of ours. We're not giving it away that we were out at this time of night—"

"No fear!" grinned the Bounder.

"All the same—"

"Oh, let it drop! Let's get on now," said Skinner.

"Sure you're up to another crawl?" asked the Bounder satirically.

"Shut up, and let's start!"

Skinner dragged himself wearily from

the grass. They started down the tow path again.

Skinner was thinking only of his weariness and his intense desire to find himself safe in bed. But the Bounder's thoughts were running on what he had seen by the river.

They reached the bridge at last, and tramped across it, and took the footpath towards Friardale Lano.

In spite of his rest, Skinner was feeling as if his weary limbs would drop off by the time they reached the school.

The Bounder had to drag him over the wall into the Cloisters. He had to drag him up to the leads under the box-room window, and drag him again into the window.

"Now crawl the rest on your hands and knees," he sneered.

"Hang you!"

Softly the two truants crept back to the Remove dormitory. From the clock-tower came two booming strokes. It was two o'clock in the morning!

The Remove dormitory was buried in slumber when the two juniors crept in. Steady breathing from many beds, and a deep snore from one bed, greeted them as they stole in.

"Is that you, Smithy?"

It was Redwing's voice, in a low whisper. Skinner started with alarm at the sound.

"Yes," answered the Bounder coolly. "You awake, Reddy?"

"There's dummies in your beds," whispered Redwing. "Steele's been here."

"Steele?"

"Yes."

Skinner almost whimpered.

"Does he know—"

"No. We fixed up the dummies before he got here, and he never noticed."

Skinner gasped with relief.

"You're a good chap, Reddy!" said the Bounder gratefully. "We've not been spotted?"

"No."

"Good egg! And you stayed awake to tell us so?"

"Yes."

"Good man! You've saved our bacon!" said the Bounder. "My hat! I can do with a snooze! What about you, Skinner?"

Skinner did not answer. He dragged the dummy from his bed, and plunged thankfully in. It was likely to be a long time before Harold Skinner joined the reckless Bounder again on a "night out."

"Good-night, Reddy!" said the Bounder, as he turned in. "You're a brick!"

"Good-night, Smithy—you're an ass!"

The Bounder chuckled sleepily and closed his eyes. No one else in the dormitory had awakened, and in a very few minutes all were sleeping.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Danger Ahead!

"I SAY, you fellows! What's going to be done?"

"You are!" answered Peter Todd.

"Beast!"

Bunter seemed worried.

"Something's got to be done," he said, blinking round at the other fellows in the dormitory, in the grey light of the winter morning. "Steele's going to have me on the carpet! I say, Smithy."

"Go and eat coke!"

"It was all your fault," said Bunter.

"You know that. If you hadn't left me out, like a mean rotter, I shouldn't have set the alarm-clock to wake me at half-past ten, and it wouldn't have gone off at a quarter to twelve—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And if the alarm-clock hadn't gone off, Steele wouldn't have come here, and if Steele hadn't come here—"

"What a lot of 'ifs,'" said Bob Cherry. "If 'ifs' and 'ans' were pots and pans, there'd be no work for tinkers."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"
"It's all right, Bunter," said Squiff consolingly. "Steele won't give you more than six."

"Why, you beast, do you think I want six?" roared Bunter. "It's all Smithy's fault, and I think he ought to own up. If he hadn't gone out of bounds last night, and if—"

"My absurd Bunter," said Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh, "as the excellent Cherry remarked, if 'ifs' and 'ans' were worthy pots and esteemed pans, the ludicrous tinker would be genuinely seeking work, in vain. So give us a rest."

"Yes; but if—"
"Oh, cheese it, old fat man!" said Peter Todd.

"Something's got to be done," hooted Bunter. "I'm not going to be licked just because Smithy was blagging last night. If Steele knew that he had been out on the ran-dan all night he would let me alone and take it out of Smithy. Smithy ought to own up."

"Own up to what?" asked Vernon-Smith.

"Breaking bounds last night—"
"Who broke bounds last night?"
"You did, you beast!"

"What rot!" drawled the Bounder. "Steele came here last night, and he knows I never broke bounds."

Bunter blinked at him.
"That was because Redwing put a dummy in your bed. You were out of the dorm all the time."

"What rot! Not much good telling Steele that, when he has the evidence of his own eyes that I was in the dorm all the time," said the Bounder coolly.

"I'm not going to tell him. But if you own up, he will let me off. A Form master only wants to lick somebody, and it stands to reason that he doesn't mind who it is much."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Well, he's not goin' to lick me," chuckled the Bounder. "I can't own up to breaking bounds, Bunter, because I cannot tell a lie."

"What?" yelled Bunter.
"I was fast asleep all night," drawled the Bounder. "Weren't you, Skinner?"

"Never opened my eyes once," said Skinner.

"But you were out when I woke up!" howled Bunter.

"You dreamed it, old fat man."
"Well, you beast—"

The Bounder laughed, and left the dormitory. In spite of fatigue and loss of sleep, Smithy had turned out in high spirits that morning. Skinner was looking rather pale and tired, and he was not feeling easy in his mind. He followed the Bounder down.

"That fat idiot may let something out when Steele jaws him, Smithy," he said, on the stairs.

The Bounder shrugged his shoulders.
"We're all right. Steele was there, and saw us in bed, or thinks he did. Redwing saved our bacon, bless his little heart. Bunter can say what he likes. We've only got to stick it out."

"Steele isn't a man you can tell lies to," muttered Skinner.

"Isn't he?" yawned the Bounder.
"Well, if he asks me questions, I'll do my little best!"

"I wish I had your nerve!"
"Oh, rot! Stick it out! It's Steele's game to catch us, and our game to stop him. All's fair in love and war!"

But Skinner was still feeling uneasy when the Remove went to their Form-

room that morning. He had very little conscientious scruple about lying, but he felt very uncertain of "getting away" with it. And his uneasiness increased when Steele called Bunter out.

"Now, Bunter," said the Remove master not unkindly, "I desire to know the truth regarding the occurrence in your dormitory last night. It is not a matter I can pass over, as you very well know."

"I wasn't going to break bounds, sir," groaned the hapless Owl of the Remove.

"I—I wouldn't have gone with them if they'd asked me."

"With whom?" asked Mr. Steele, very quietly.

The Bounder's face hardened, and Skinner shivered. The rest of the Remove listened with keen interest. "Snoaking" was severely barred in the Form, and Bunter certainly was no sneak; but there never was any telling what Bunter might say when his lengthy tongue once commenced operations.

"Oh, nobody, sir!" gasped Bunter.
"I think the matter is fairly clear," said Mr. Steele. "Some boys in the Remove were planning to break bounds, and you intended to accompany them, Bunter. And you set the alarm-clock for that purpose."

"Oh crikey! How did you know, sir?" gasped Bunter, in dismay. This seemed something like magic to Bunter.

"It was not difficult to guess, Bunter. I will not ask you the names of the boys in question." Mr. Steele's glance travelled to the Bounder and Skinner.

"As you did not carry out your purpose, Bunter, I shall not cane you—"

"Oh, good!" gasped Bunter.
"You will take a hundred lines for having made a disturbance in the dormitory. Go to your place."

But though he cannot spell or play An average game of cricket, Coker's detractors cannot say Of luck there's a deficit.

For Horace never stops to see The odds when there's a scrap on. He just wades in right lustily— Ask Bull or Todd or Wharton!

These cheery fellows all combine When Coker's out for vengeance. Shoulder to shoulder, all in line, They lead him such a rare dance! Yet still our Horace tries to land His scheme of reformation. He thinks the "fags" are out of hand, And need stern castigation!

But castigation, strange to say, Comes mostly to poor Coker. He barges in prepared to flay, And comes out chased by poker! A tattered wreck, all bruised and sore, A creeps up the Fifth Form passage, And leans against a study door And groans and tries self-massage!

With all his faults, and they are great, His fame will ne'er diminish; Although his japes are out of date, He'll work them to a finish. Despite the fact that Potter says: "My dear old chump, you're dotty!" To rag Removites never pays." Will Coker heed? No, not he!

Yet facts are facts, and we must hand The palm for generosity To Horace James, you understand, The Fifth Form curiosity; Whose spelling makes old Prouty weep And tear his hair in anguish. Poor Coker, though true as steel, Is certainly a queer fish!

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,148.

THE GREYFRIARS CELEBRITIES.

Our Greyfriars Rhymester is in tip-top fettle as usual. This week his pen engages the "fighting" man of Greyfriars: Horace James Coker.



THIS week we'll take a Fifth Form man And hold him in "a lime-light;

A fellow always in the van (Perhaps the "cart" is more bright!).

A hefty sort with weird ideas, A really hopeless joker.

A duffer big and bold appears; His name is Horace Coker!

His rugged face and burly frame, His big fists ever ready,

And strange ideas of any game, His "top-piece" most unsteady—

All play their part to raise each week A laugh when you are moody. Then there's, of course, that other freak— His dotting Auntie Judy!

If you have anything to confess I will hear you now, and in view of your confession will deal as leniently with the matter as possible."

Mr. Steele paused for a reply.

There was no reply.

He set his lips, and his square jaw seemed to grow squarer.

"Very well," he said. "If it should transpire that you were out of bounds last night the matter will go before the Head, and I can hold out no hope that you will escape expulsion from the school. That is all I have to say for the present."

And with that the subject dropped and lessons began.

When the Remove were dismissed for break Skinner joined the Bouncer in the quad.

"We're for it if it comes out, Smithy," he breathed.

"Us for the long jump!" agreed the Bouncer. "Keep a stiff upper lip, you ass—it won't come out. We've been as near it before, and the chopper's never come down."

"Steele may nose something out—"

"Rot!"

"I—I wish we hadn't gone—"

"Fat lot of good wishing that now, isn't it?" said the Bouncer contemptuously. "I'm glad we went—I wouldn't have missed it for anythin'. Keep your mouth shut and try to dig up a little pluck from somewhere, and you're all right."

"I don't feel all right!" grunted Skinner.

"You can't expect to when you're a rotten funk," sneered the Bouncer.

"You rotter!" said Skinner.

"You worm!" retorted the Bouncer.

And he walked away whistling, leaving Skinner scowling.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Up to Wharton!

BILLY BUNTER, for once, missed the news.

That afternoon was a half-holiday, and a huge accumulation of lines kept Billy Bunter busy in the Form-room.

Bunter had left his lines again and again, and they had been doubled and added to until the fat Owl hardly knew how many were to his debit.

He was quite prepared to leave them again; in fact, he did not mind how often they were doubled and re-doubled so long as he was not called on to produce them.

Now Mr. Steele had called a halt, as it were. After dinner he called on Bunter, led him to the Form-room, placed him at his desk, and ordered him not to move till his lines were written.

It was awful for Bunter. In those dreary hours, while he laboured dismally through long arrears of lines, Bunter felt that of all the beasts in a beastly world, that beast Steele was the beastliest. He felt it very hard that a man whom Bunter, at least, knew to be a cracksman, should be left at large when he had nothing better to do than to give a fellow lines, and make him write them. But there was no help for it; and the Owl of the Remove groaned and scribbled and scribbled and groaned, inky and desolate.

And so he missed the news.

It spread all over the school early in the afternoon. Police-constable Tozer had dropped in to tell Gosling; a friend from Courtfield had told Mr. Prout; somebody else had told a Fourth Form man. Once more the Courtfield cracksman was the great topic.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,148.

That mysterious and unknown depre-dator had been at work again.

Topham Croft, the magnificent country residence of Mr. Jabez Topham, stock-broker, had been broken into the previous night; but the cracksman had not carried through his 'job,' as usual, without giving the alarm.

The butler, it appeared, had awakened and gone down, and almost caught the man in the act. He described a man in dark clothes, with his face hidden by a muffler, who had knocked him down and escaped by a window—unfortunately taking with him a large bundle of bonds from Mr. Topham's safe—bearer bonds of a face value of twelve thousand pounds. It was one of the biggest coups of the mysterious cracksman.

But that was not all.

The alarm having been given, the whole household had turned out to search for the burglar or burglars. Two persons had been seen in the lane outside the gates, chased by a footman, and almost captured. That they were concerned in the burglary seemed to admit of no doubt, for they had fled instantly, and assaulted the footman who had chased them, afterwards making good their escape.

The Bouncer chuckled over that part of the story.

Skinner did not chuckle; he was deeply scared.

"If it comes out that it was us!" he muttered to Smithy.

"How could it, you ass?"

"Well, I'm not saying anything about it—mind you don't!" said Skinner. "Let the silly idiots think it was a couple of burglars, if they like."

"What ho!" chuckled Smithy. "Let them rip."

"They say there's a Scotland Yard man on the job," said Skinner. "He will want to know who those two persons were."

"He will want for a long time before he finds out," said Vernon-Smith, laughing.

"Well, he's very likely a good deal sharper than old Grimes at Courtfield."

"Much of a muchness, I dare say. They've been talking about a Scotland Yard man on the job ever since the burglaries started—and that was last term. He hasn't done anythin' so far. The cracksman's rifled a dozen places within a few miles of here, and the Scotland Yard man hasn't found a lot of clues, to judge by results."

"Well, I hope he won't find us—never mind the cracksman," said Skinner. "So long as we ain't found out—"

"Keep your pecker up, fathead. It's all right."

"There goes Steele!" muttered Skinner, as the master of the Remove came out of the House and walked away to the garage. "He's got his eye on us."

"Let him!" said the Bouncer indifferently.

Skinner glanced uneasily, and at the same time curiously, after the new master of the Remove.

"I say, Smithy, it's queer! If that thief last night at Topham Croft was the Courtfield cracksman—and I suppose he was—"

"No doubt about that! There's not two first-class johnnies in that line of business working this district, I imagine."

"Well, from what the fellows told us, Steele came to the dorm here, at the time the burglary was taking place at Topham's house."

"What about it?"

"Well, he couldn't be the man!" said Skinner.

The Bouncer laughed.

"I told you long ago he wasn't the

man! I don't know what his game is—he's not an ordinary schoolmaster, and he's up to somethin'; but he's no more a cracksman than you are. I believed it at first; but there was nothin' in it, though I can't make him out. Not that I care what he's up to—so long as he doesn't find out what I'm up to," added the Bouncer, with a chuckle.

Harry Wharton came out into the quad, glancing round. He was apparently looking for Smithy, for he came over towards him at once; and Skinner lounged away.

"Lookin' for me?" asked Vernon-Smith.

"Yes."

"Coincidence—I was just goin' to look for you."

"Then we've found one another," said the captain of the Remove, with a smile. "Have you forgotten the footer?"

"No. But—"

"It's all right if you want to stand out; it's only a Form match with Temple's lot," said Harry. "But I want to know."

"I was thinkin' of askin' you to stand out."

The captain of the Remove stared at him.

"Is that a joke?" he asked.

"Sober earnest."

"Well, I don't see what you mean," said Wharton. "If you mean anything, you may as well explain. I've got to get to the changing-room."

The Bouncer gave a glance round, as if to ascertain that no one was in hearing. Wharton waited rather impatiently. He had no desire to hear secrets from the Bouncer. The less he knew of Smithy's personal affairs the better he liked it.

"It's rather a curious position," said the Bouncer. "You know how I stand about last night? I can't let it come out now, at any price, that I was out of bounds."

Wharton did not reply to that.

"I've got the sack ahead, if it comes out," went on Smithy. "Steele gave me a last chance in the Form-room this mornin'—"

"You were a fool not to take it," said Wharton bluntly.

Smithy shrugged his shoulders.

"I'm not keen on a floggin', thanks; I'd rather risk the sack. But the sack won't be a risk—it will be a dead cert, if it comes out that I was out of bounds last night."

"Well, what about it?" asked Harry restively. "The fact is, Smithy, I don't want to hear about your blagging, if you don't mind."

"I'm not going to poison your young mind!" sneered the Bouncer. "I've got something to tell you, if you care to hear it. I can't tell the beaks without giving myself away—and I wouldn't do that, to save all the mansions in Kent from the Courtfield cracksman. But my father knows old Topham, and I'd like to do him a good turn."

Wharton looked at him blankly.

"What the merry dickens are you driving at, Smithy? You don't know anything about the burglary at Topham Croft, I suppose?"

"Lots!" said the Bouncer coolly.

"My hat! What—"

"Listen!" said Vernon-Smith quietly; and in a few succinct words he told of what had happened during that "night out" after the accident to Power's car on the road home from Lantham.

The captain of the Remove listened

EVERY SATURDAY

in amazed silence. He did not speak till the Bounder had finished.

"Great pip!" he said, with a deep breath at last. "Then you and Skinner were the two 'persons' that footman nearly collared?"

"Little us!" agreed the Bounder.

"You awful ass!" said Harry. "If the man had bagged you—"

"He nearly did bag Skinner; but I butted him over, and we got away." Tho Bounder chuckled. "Tremendous lark, wasn't it?"

"It will be in the papers," said Wharton, aghast. "The reporters will get that footman's story—"

"Funny, ain't it?" chuckled Smithy.

"Well, it may be funny, in a way; but—"

"I shall be quite keen to read the report. But that isn't what I wanted to speak about. That man I've told you I saw by the river—"

"You think he was the cracksmen hiding his loot?" said Harry doubtfully.

"I think it's jolly likely. What was he doing there at one in the morning, an hour after the burglary? It looks like it."

"It's possible, at least," said Harry. "You certainly ought to give information of what you saw, so that it can be looked into. Or you could run across and look there yourself this afternoon."

"Neither, thanks!" yawned the Bounder. "I'm not going to get mixed up in it. If I give information, or if I find something there that has to be taken to the police, it comes out at once that I saw the man hiding it—and the Beak would want to know how I saw him when I was fast asleep—or ought to have been—in the Remove dormitory at the time."

"But, dash it all, Smithy, you can't keep it dark, and let Mr. Topham lose a large sum of money, to save your own skin, if it's really as you think!" exclaimed Wharton warmly.

"Can't I?" smiled the Bounder. "I jolly well can, and shall. That's what I'm comin' to. There may be nothin' in it, or there may be a lot. I'm puttin' it up to you."

"To me?" exclaimed Wharton.

"Yes. You can buzz out on your bike, as well as I can; you can nose into the place and see if old Topham's bonds are there—just as easily as I could."

"But—"

"And you won't be suspected of breaking bounds, and naughty things like that!" grinned the Bounder.

"You're well known to be a model youth and a shini' example, incapable of naughty actions—"

"Oh, cheeze it!"

"Though you did break out once, I remember!" added the Bounder mockingly.

Wharton coloured angrily.

"It's queer the way you make fellows want to punch your nose, Smithy!" he said. "Look here, you know jolly well that you ought—"

"If I did all that I ought, old



Harry Wharton's eyes gleamed with excitement as the flickering flame from the match showed up a wallet lying on the floor of the tunnel!

scout, I should never have time to do the things I want to!" drawled Smithy. "You can do as you jolly well like; I've put it up to you, and you can take it or leave it. You can handle the matter without danger—I can't. I'd see old Topham's bonds, and old Topham himself, at the bottom of the Sark before I'd risk getting bunked from Greyfriars on his account. I'm right out of it. What I've told you is in confidence, and you're not to mention my name."

Wharton stood silent.

"If you like to look into it, I'll captain the side, if you like, and knock the Fourth into a cocked hat while you're gone," said the Bounder. "You can leave Temple to me, and rely on seein' him look like a deflated gasbag when you come back."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Somebody ought to look into it," he said. "If you won't—"

"I jolly well won't!" said the Bounder emphatically.

"Then I must."

"And the sooner the quicker," said Vernon-Smith. "If it's as I fancy, that thief hid the stuff there not to run the risk of bein' found with the goods on him. But he won't leave the loot long in a place like that. It may be removed after dark to-day."

"I'll go," said Harry. "There's very likely nothing in it; but if there's a chance in a hundred of recovering Mr. Topham's property before the thief

can get rid of it, it's worth trying. You tell the fellows I'm standing out of the footer."

"Right-ho!"

The Bounder went to the changing-room, with a look of satisfaction on his face.

With all his assumed indifference to considerations of right and wrong, Smithy had been feeling far from easy in his mind on the matter.

His own fate depended on his keeping silent; and he was quite resolved not to utter a word that would betray himself. But it was a relief to him that he could keep silent now with the knowledge that what he ought to have done immediately would be done by another before it was too late.

Redwing gave him a cheery smile as he came into the changing-room. He was glad to see the Bounder there.

"You're playing, Smithy?" he asked.

"You bet, old bean," said the Bounder. "In fact, Wharton's left it to me to captain the side, bein' otherwise engaged this afternoon."

"Wharton cutting the match?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Yes; he thinks we can beat the Fourth without him. He's got some pressin' engagement or other," said Smithy. "The matter is left in my unworthy hands."

The Bounder led the Remove team into the field that afternoon. Some of the fellows wondered where Harry

Wharton was, and what his pressing engagement might be. But no one—not even Smithy—was likely to guess what a strange discovery the captain of the Remore was destined to make while his friends were beating the Fourth at football.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Surprise of His Life!

HARRY WHARTON wheeled out his bicycle. From the garage gates, at a little distance, a small, dark blue two-seater glided out into the road, with Mr. Steele driving. Harry Wharton glanced at the Remore master as he drove away, and he noticed that Barnes, the Head's chauffeur, was standing in the gateway looking after Richard Steele. There was a singular expression on Barnes' quiet, impassive face, which struck the junior. The next moment Barnes saw him, touched his cap in his respectful way, and went back into the garage yard.

Wharton wheeled his machine down to the bank of the Sark, and mounted there. Fellows were not supposed to cycle on the path by the river; but in the winter, when there were very few pedestrians there, a fellow could stretch a point. And it was more than a mile to the spot where the woodland drain opened under the bank, and Wharton was in a hurry to get his task done.

If, as the Bounder surmised, it was the Courtfield cracksmen he had seen the previous night, concealing his plunder, the sooner the spot was visited the better. Wharton had very strong doubts as to the correctness of the Bounder's surmise; but it was obvious that an investigation ought to be made.

On the river-path he passed only a wood-cutter, and there was no one in sight when he reached the spot he was seeking. He did not need to search for it, the place was well known to him.

He halted, and jumped off his machine, leaning it against a tree a little back from the river. Then he approached the steep bank, and looked over it.

Below him was the little, bricked archway, a black opening in the river-bank. The Sark had been recently frozen, and ice still clung to the bank and the frosty rushes. The tunnelled drain had been built to carry away the overflow from the lake in the Popper Court woods, which was fed by a spring. But that lake was frozen now, and the tunnel quite dry.

Wharton lowered himself down the steep bank cautiously, for below the bricked drain flowed the Sark. He got his feet into the opening, lowered himself further with great care to his knees, and got his head and shoulders into the brick tunnel.

Within all was blackness. He crawled in a couple of feet, felt for his matchbox, and struck a match.

The flickering flame showed the dim tunnel disappearing into deep blackness farther on.

He struck another match, and another.

Nothing but muddy brickwork met his eyes, and he crawled, unwillingly enough, farther up the tunnel under the bank.

"My hat!" he ejaculated suddenly. His groping hand came in contact with something that moved. He stopped, and struck another match.

"My hat!" he repeated. His eyes gleamed with excitement. On the floor of the tunnel, seven or eight feet from the opening, lay a leather wallet.

It was a common article enough, with no mark on it to give a clue to the owner. But its presence there was enough to excite the junior. It was easy to see that it could not have been there long, and there could be no doubt that it had been placed there by the unknown man the Bounder had watched the previous night.

Wharton caught it up at once, and crawled back to the opening of the brick tunnel.

There in the light, he opened the wallet. It was fastened by a common catch, and there was no difficulty in opening it.

It was crammed with something that cracked and rustled as it was opened.

Wharton gasped.

The wallet was crammed, almost to bursting, with thick, folded papers, covered with small print with headings in larger letters, and figures—each paper bearing the figure "£1,000."

Wharton knew a bond when he saw one. There were twelve of them, each marked "£1,000." The thick, crackling papers he held in his hand represented the sum of twelve thousand pounds.

"My only hat!" murmured the junior.

Twelve thousand pounds! He held in his hands the bonds that had been taken from Topham Croft the previous night. The Bounder had been right, after all. It was the cracksmen whom he had seen concealing his loot in the woodland drain. There was no doubt on that point now—when Harry Wharton was holding the loot in his hands!

For many long minutes Wharton remained where he was, crouched in the confined space of the bricked tunnel, staring at the bonds that crackled in his fingers.

The discovery had almost taken his breath away. There was something dazzling to the schoolboy's mind in that enormous sum of money.

But he stirred at last.

He closed the wallet, put it under his jacket, buttoning the jacket over it, and clambered up the bank.

His heart was thumping with excitement.

The police were hunting for the Courtfield cracksmen—a special detective from Scotland Yard, it was said, was somewhere on the scene, helping the local police. And the Bounder of Greyfriars had actually seen the man hiding his loot after the robbery, and Harry Wharton had the loot in his possession! It was an exciting thought—and it was rather a disturbing one. The sooner the schoolboy got that sum of money out of his hands, the better.

Wharton looked quickly round him as he stood on the bank again, in the wintry sunshine.

It was most likely, as the Bounder had said, that the thief would come back for his plunder after dark, when the time came to remove it from its hiding-place. But it was not certain—and the bare possibility of a desperate man coming on the scene, made Wharton anxious to get clear without losing an instant.

He started, and caught his breath, at the sight of a man in the distance. But a second glance showed that it was a keeper, one of Sir Hilton Popper's many keepers. There was no one else to be seen; but Wharton's glance turned rather uneasily on the dark woods that lay at a little distance back from the river.

He hurried to his bicycle, and wheeled it away, the wallet bulging under his jacket. He was undecided, for the moment, whether to head for Courtfield, and hand the wallet over to Inspector Grimes at the police station there, or to take it direct to Topham Croft. There was no doubt that Mr. Jabez Topham would be glad to see his property again at the earliest possible moment, and his house was nearer than Courtfield, and it was certain, too, that a police-constable would be there—probably Inspector Grimes himself. He decided to head for Topham Croft, and mounted his bicycle, and rode away swiftly.

At a breathless speed he whizzed along the river path and reached the bridge over the Sark, crossed it, and turned into the lane that led to Topham Croft.



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NELSON LEE

NOW ON SALE - - - 2d.

The wind whistled about his ears as he drove at the pedals.

The big bronze gates stood open when he reached Topham Croft. He left his machine in the gateway and walked up the drive.

A car was standing on the drive opposite the big doorway of the mansion—a small, dark blue two-seater. Wharton started as he saw it. He knew Mr. Steele's car.

He rang the bell, and the door was opened by a tall, fat footman. Wharton wondered for a moment whether it was the same footman that the Bouncer had charged over the previous night.

A police-constable was visible in the hall as the footman opened the door.

"Is Mr. Topham at home?" asked Harry.

"No, sir. He has gone up to the city."

The footman eyed him curiously; probably wondering what a schoolboy wanted with Mr. Topham.

"Oh!" said Harry. "Is Inspector Grimes here?"

"He was here this morning, sir, but he has gone back to Courtfield."

"I've got some information to give about the burglary last night," said Harry. "About the things that were taken, I mean."

The footman jumped.

"Then you'd better speak to Inspector Irons," he said. "The officer from Scotland Yard is here."

"Oh, good!" said Harry, feeling quite interested to see the officer from Scotland Yard. "That will be all right."

"Please come in, sir."

Wharton entered, and the footman closed the door. The police-constable came towards him, with a very curious expression on his face.

"You've something to tell about what happened here last night, sir?" he asked.

"Yes. I've heard that bonds were taken—twelve thousand pounds in bonds," said Harry. "That's right, isn't it?"

"That's right," assented the constable. "If you've any information to give, Mr. Irons will be glad to hear it, I'm sure."

His tone seemed to imply a personal doubt of the value of the information, which was not lost on Wharton.

The junior smiled.

"I can tell the inspector where to find the bonds," he said.

"Eh?"

"So the sooner I see him the better," said Harry cheerfully.

The constable stared at him hard.

"Come this way, please!" he said.

Harry Wharton followed him, leaving the footman and several other servants who had come into the hall staring.

The constable opened a door, and Wharton had a glimpse of book-lined walls. Inspector Irons, of Scotland Yard, was in the library.

"What is it?" came a voice from someone whom Wharton could not yet see.

He knew the voice: it was that of his Form master at Greyfriars. He concluded that Mr. Steele was there with the inspector from Scotland Yard, though he could not imagine why.

"Excuse me, sir," said the constable; "a lad has called to say that he has information to give about the bonds that were taken last night."

"Send him in at once!"

"He is here, sir!"

The constable made Wharton a sign to enter, and the junior passed him and went into the library, the constable drawing the door shut behind him.

A man who was standing by an open

safe in the opposite wall, had turned, and was looking towards the door.

"What is it?" he asked. "I am Inspector Irons—What—Good gad! Wharton! What are you doing here?"

Harry Wharton felt his head turning round.

There was only one man in the library at Topham Croft. And that man was Richard Steele, the master of the Remove at Greyfriars.

The junior gasped.

"Mr. Steele—What—what—"

But he knew at once! In a flash the strange mystery that had surrounded Richard Steele, the Remove master at Greyfriars was cleared up. He knew!

Richard Steele, the mysterious master at Greyfriars, was Inspector Irons, of Scotland Yard!

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Schoolmaster and Detective!

"MR. STEELE!" stammered Wharton.

Steele came towards him, his face set, his eyes glinting under his knitted brows. Never had the captain of the Remove seen his Form master looking so angry.

.....

ONE OF THIS WEEK'S
LEATHER POCKET WALLETS

goes to E. C. Stoffell, Chaites Cottage, Bolney, near Haywards Heath, Sussex, who sent in the following Greyfriars limerick:

Billy Bunter once needed a
rest
In a hayfield. But, alas, on a
nest
Of wasps he reposed,
So, it must be supposed
To retreat W. G. B. did his
best.

Don't wait for others to carry off
these useful prizes; win one your-
self!

.....

"Wharton! How dare you!"

"I—I—"

"How dare you come here? What is your business here?" exclaimed Mr. Steele. "How did you know—"

"I—I didn't know!" gasped Wharton dazedly. "I—I can't quite believe it now. The man said that Inspector Irons was here—"

Steele bit his lip. "You know now that I am Inspector Irons," he said curtly, "and unless you can explain your presence here—"

"I had no idea you were here, sir, till I saw your car on the drive outside. Then I never dreamed—"

"Why did you come?"

"I told the constable why I came. I expected to see Mr. Topham or Inspector Grimes—"

"Why? Why?" snapped Steele.

"The bonds—"

"Bonds? What do you know about the bonds?"

"More than anyone else, I think," said Harry quietly. "If you are an inspector from Scotland Yard, sir, as I suppose now, you are the man I should see about them. But—but I'm sorry I've found this out, sir, if—if—if you can't trust me not to talk about it."

Steele's stern, angry face relaxed a little.

"I can trust you not to repeat what you have discovered here by accident?" he asked.

Harry Wharton coloured.

"I am not a tattler, sir."

"I know! But—but—"

"You can trust me, sir," said Wharton steadily. "I know now why you came to Greyfriars in Mr. Quelch's place, of course; I know what you have been doing. It is all explained now. And I know it would be awkward if it came out. Why should you think that I would talk about it? It is no business of mine, and, unless you give me permission, I shall not mention it even to my friends."

Steele compressed his lips. He was obviously disconcerted—utterly disconcerted—by the Greyfriars junior's discovery that his Form master was a Scotland Yard detective.

That secret had been carefully kept; and Steele, cautious and wary as he was, had been quite unable to foresee the possibility of a Greyfriars junior finding him at Topham Croft that afternoon, under his own name and in his own character. Wharton, he knew, was to be trusted; but such a secret was one that he did not desire to trust to anyone outside the police force.

"You have not yet explained why you are here," he said. "I think I know you too well, Wharton, to suspect you of impertinent curiosity—of suspicious spying—"

"I hope so, sir," said Harry quietly.

"But why are you here, and what do you mean by speaking of the bonds? What can you possibly know about the bonds?"

For answer, Wharton drew the wallet from under his jacket, and handed it to the schoolmaster detective.

Steele started, staring at the wallet, then at Wharton, then at the wallet again.

"What—" he began.

"The bonds, I think, sir!"

"Impossible!"

"Look in the wallet, sir."

In utter amazement, Steele opened the wallet. Like a man in a dream he drew out the crackling bundle of bonds.

"What—how—" he ejaculated.

But, without waiting for Wharton to answer, the detective turned away, laid the bonds on a table, and drew a paper from his pocket containing a list of numbers.

These he compared with the numbers on the bonds.

Harry Wharton stood silent, watching him.

The junior was still feeling his brain a whirl from his startling discovery.

The man from Scotland Yard! Many times he had seen mention in the papers of a detective from Scotland Yard who was working with the local police in the hunt for the Courtfield cracksmen. The name had never been given; neither, apparently, had anyone seen the man in the district. And this was the man!

The man who had been suspected, in the Remove, of being the cracksmen himself, was the detective who was hunting the cracksmen!

Many strange and mysterious things were explained now.

Wharton recalled that night last term, when he and Bunter had seen the man with the square jaw, climbing the park wall at Hogben Grange, on the night of the burglary there—the man who had afterwards come to Greyfriars as a Form master.

He understood that episode now.

Obviously, Inspector Irons had been in the neighbourhood privately, his connection with the police a secret.

He had been watching Hogben Grange that night. Wharton knew now.

He recalled, too, how, during the holidays, his suspicions of the man with the

square jaw had been strengthened by seeing him in Surrey, hanging about Sankey Hall, where a burglary had taken place. He smiled now as he thought of that. Obviously, the Scotland Yard man had come down to Sankey Hall on account of the burglary there.

And those mysterious night prowlings, which had convinced the Remove fellows, or many of them, that Richard Steele was the cracksman? Wharton knew now why Steele left the school at nights. In the daytime he was a Form master, but in the night he was a detective hunting for the mysterious cracksman.

It was all clear now. And Wharton, remembering his own early suspicions of the Form master, smiled. He remembered that Inspector Grimes had told him that he knew Steele, and would answer for him; and he remembered the smile with which Mr. Grimes had given him that assurance.

Steele turned from the table. His eyes fixed on Wharton with a very strange expression in them.

"These are the bonds that were taken from this safe last night," he said.

"I thought so, sir."
"How did you find them?"
Wharton paused.

To Inspector Irons, of Scotland Yard, he was prepared to give a full explanation. But to Mr. Steele, master of the Remove, he could say nothing that would endanger the Bounder.

"Come—come, speak!" said Steele impatiently. "You appear to have performed a most important service, Wharton. You have saved Mr. Topham from a heavy loss. These are bearer bonds, easily negotiable, and once they were taken out of the country, the thief could have turned them into money. You have saved Mr. Topham from a loss of twelve thousand pounds. Do you realise that?"

"I'm very glad of that, sir, though the credit isn't due to me," said Harry. "I was told where to find the bonds."

"Where did you find them?"
"In the woodland drain on the Sark."
Wharton described the place, which was unknown to Steele.

The astonishment in the Form master's face was intense.

"This is utterly amazing, Wharton! No doubt the thief hid the bonds there, intending to remove them at a safe time later. But how could you possibly have known that they were there?"

"I did not know; but I was told that somebody was seen to hide something there," said Harry. "He—the fellow who told me—suspected that it might be the burglar, and I went to investigate. I did not really expect to find anything. But the bonds were there, and I brought them at once to this house."

"It was obviously the cracksman who hid them there. It must have been done after the burglary last night. Who saw the man?"

Wharton did not answer.
"Who gave you this information, Wharton?"

"I can't tell you, sir."
"You must tell me, boy!"
"I can't, sir!"

Steele gave him a penetrating look. "I gather, Wharton, that you must have been told this by a Greyfriars boy. You can scarcely have obtained information from any other source. The bonds must have been placed where you found them, at a late hour of the night. Some Greyfriars boy was out of bounds last night, and saw the occurrence; and he told you what he saw."

Wharton crimsoned.

"I can't tell you, sir. I came to this room expecting to see a police inspector, not a Form master. This isn't fair to me."

"What?"
"It's not fair play, sir," said Wharton stubbornly. "You're bound to take what I've told you as Inspector Irons, not as Mr. Steele."

Steele's brow knitted for a moment or two, and then, to Wharton's surprise and relief, he burst into a laugh.

"My double character has placed you in an awkward position, my boy," he said, good humouredly. "But you have, I think, found your Form master a man of honour. And at Scotland Yard, if you could ask them, they would tell you that Richard Irons is a sportsman as well as a detective. You may accept my assurance that anything you say to Inspector Irons will be totally forgotten by Mr. Steele."

"Thank you, sir!" said Harry.
"You may speak freely. It was a Greyfriars boy who told you where he had seen a man hide this wallet?"

"Yes, sir."

"I will not ask you his name—I know it already," said Steele. "At all events, I have a fairly clear idea."

He paused.
"I was surprised, Wharton—and, I admit it, very angry to see you here," he went on. "You have discovered a matter that I desired to keep very secret. Now, my boy, I will speak frankly to you. It must have surprised you very much to find that your Form master is a Scotland Yard officer."

"Very much indeed, sir," said Harry.
"But the explanation is quite simple."

For months past an unknown thief has been committing robberies in this neighbourhood—evidently a man living in the district, and covering up his tracks carefully and successfully. The local police were unable to deal with the matter; and it would have been futile for a London detective to come down here openly—he would have been known, while his adversary remained unknown. As it happened, the cracksman had attempted to rob the school, among other places he had victimised. Dr. Locke was glad to lend his assistance to the authorities in the matter."

"I understand, sir."

"It was my object to take up my residence in this neighbourhood, under a name and character that the cracksman would never suspect, if he was on the watch, as assuredly he was. Nothing could have been more unsuspecting than the character of a Form master in a school," added Steele, with a smile. "Mr. Quelch, who knows me, was very willing to prolong his holiday. The Head gave his permission, and at the beginning of the new term I came to Greyfriars as Form master of the Remove—much to your surprise."

Wharton smiled.
"There have been many rumours about me in my Form," added Steele, with a glimmer of amusement in his grey eyes. "But the actual facts, I think, have never been suspected."

"Never, sir," said Harry. "But—"
"But what?"

"You were able to act as a Form master, sir. I shouldn't have supposed that a detective—"

Steele laughed.
"I was not always a detective, Wharton. I began life as a Form master in a school."

"Oh!" ejaculated Wharton.
"I was a Form master for three years, before taste and opportunity turned me in another direction," said Steele. "My old work came back very familiarly to me; and I think I have given satisfaction as Form master at Greyfriars. And though my primary object was to discover the Courtfield

cracksman, I do not think that I have neglected any of my duties to the Remove."

The schoolmaster detective paused.
"I have now explained the matter to you, Wharton. I think you are a boy to be trusted. You will see for yourself that although it matters little whether some foolish boys in my Form suspect me of being a cracksman, it would matter a very great deal if anyone at all suspected me of being a detective."

"I see that, of course, sir."
"I must rely on you to keep this secret, Wharton, until the time comes for me to leave Greyfriars. By a careless word, it is in your power to spoil everything."

"I shall not say a word, sir."
"Not a word—not a syllable," said Steele earnestly. "Probably it will not be for long now. It happens curiously enough that Greyfriars was the very best spot I could have chosen for my purpose. Wharton, from the moment you leave this house, you must forget Inspector Irons, and remember only Richard Steele."

"I will do so, sir."
"I must trust you, and I think I can trust you with safety," said Steele.

And, with that, he shook hands with Wharton, and dismissed him.

Harry Wharton left Topham Croft, and went back to his bicycle. He was still feeling like a fellow in a dream as he rode back to Greyfriars.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter is Late with the News!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"
"We've beaten them, old bean!"

"The beatfulness was terrific and preposterous!"

The football match was over when Harry Wharton arrived at the school. His strange and startling experience that afternoon had quite driven it from his mind, as a matter of fact.

"Three goals to nil," said Bob Cherry. "But where have you been, old scout? Smithy told us you'd gone out and left him to captain the side."

"That's so," said Harry. "I've been out on my bike."

He coloured rather uncomfortably. It was not agreeable to be keeping a secret from his chums, but there was no help for it.

"What about tea?" he added. "I'm hungry."

"Same here," said Bob.
And they went into the House. Tea was going on in Study No. 1 when the Bounder looked in. He gave Wharton a rather curious glance.

"Trot in, Smithy," said Nugent. "Lots of grub!"

"The lotfulness is terrific, my esteemed Smithy," said Hurreo Jamset Ram Singh, "and the honour of your ridiculous company will be a boonful blessing."

Smithy laughed and came in. He shut the door after him and pulled a chair to the table.

"Well, what's the news, Wharton?" he asked.

"The news?" repeated Harry.

"Yes. I suppose you've got something to say. No need to keep it dark from these fellows. They won't burble it all over Greyfriars."

Wharton's chums looked at him.
"What's the giddy mystery?" asked Bob.

"Anything up?" inquired Johnny Bull.

"Cough it up, Wharton," said the Bounder. "I'm yearnin' to know whether you found anythin'."

"I did," said Harry.
 "The goods?" exclaimed the Bounder.
 "Yes."
 "Great Scott!"
 "What the thump are you fellows driving at?" exclaimed Bob Cherry.
 "What have you been up to this afternoon, Harry?"

"It's rather a secret," said Smithy, before the captain of the Remove could answer. "I believe you fellows sort of suspect that I was of bounds last night—"

"We had a faint idea!" said Johnny Bull sarcastically.

"Well, on our way back, I saw a man hiding something in the old drain by the Sark," said the Bounder. "It's not to be jawed about, you know. If it gets to Steele, I'm done for."

"Serve you right if you are!" said Johnny Bull.

"Thanks! What I like about Bull," said the Bounder, is his nice, pleasant, straightforward way of speaking his thoughts, not to mention his agreeable manners at a party."

"Well, I think—"

"Dear man, you needn't tell us what you think—we know already. Your jolly old thoughts always follow the same lines, you know, and so the speech can be taken as read."

"Look here—" growled Johnny Bull.

"Order!" said Frank Nugent. "Don't rag. Get on with the washing, Smithy. What's it all about?"

"Wharton knows the rest," said the Bounder. "I told him what I'd seen, and left it to him, desiring to remain in the background personally, with my accustomed modesty."

"Smithy told me," said Harry. "I went to look in the place, and found the bonds that were stolen from Topham Croft last night."

"Great pip!"

"You found them?" ejaculated Bob.

"Yes. It must have been the cracksmen that Smithy saw, when he was out of bounds last night. Anyhow, the stuff was there, and I bagged it."

"And what did you do with the plunder?" asked Smithy.

"I took it direct to Topham Croft."

"Twelve thousand pounds, according to what we've heard!" said Frank Nugent.

"That's right."

"My hat! What a find!"

"And what a surprise for the jolly old burglar when he goes back to lift the loot!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "When he gets there, the cupboard will be bare—"

"And so the esteemed dog will have none!" remarked Hurree Singh.

"Well, I'm jolly glad" said the Bounder. "Old Topham isn't a bad sort, I believe; and my pater knows him in the City. I'm glad he's got his bonds back. You didn't mention my name?"

Wharton shook his head.

"Can't be too careful," said Vernon-Smith. "Steele meant what he said in the Form-room this morning. It's me for the long jump if it comes out that



Wharton drew the wallet from under his jacket and handed it to the schoolmaster detective. "The bonds, sir. I think they are in here!" he said steadily.

I was on the spot when the giddy burglar was hiding his loot. I don't want any thanks." The Bounder grinned. "I want to understudy the flower that blushed unseen. You saw old Topham?"

"No; he was gone up to town."

"But to whom did you hand the plunder, then?"

Wharton paused a moment. He was on rather delicate ground now.

"To a police-inspector who was there," he answered.

The answer was the truth, but Wharton had an uncomfortable feeling of being a little evasive. He would have been glad to get off the subject; but the Bounder wanted to know all about it, which was natural enough.

"Old Grimes?" asked Smithy.

"No; another man."

"You had to tell him where the bonds were found, and how you knew they were there?" asked the Bounder.

"Yes, of course."

"But surely he asked you who had put you on to it?" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Yes, he asked me. I couldn't mention Smithy's name, of course," said Harry slowly. "But—"

He paused uncomfortably. Owing to the unexpected circumstance that the police-inspector had turned out to be Mr. Steele, Remove master of Greyfriars, there was little doubt that he had guessed the name of Wharton's informant.

Certainly, Steele had promised not to use, as a Greyfriars Form master, the information given him as a Scotland Yard detective. Wharton knew that he would keep his word. But he felt far from comfortable.

"But what?" asked the Bounder, eyeing him rather sharply.

"I wish you'd taken the matter in hand yourself, Smithy," said the captain of the Remove. "You ought to have done so really."

"Oh, rot! I suppose the police-inspector you saw there is not likely to talk to Steele?"

Wharton smiled involuntarily.

"He's not likely to talk to him—certainly," he agreed.

"So long as you didn't let out my name it's all right. By the way, who was the man?"

"Who was he?" repeated Wharton.

"The—the inspector, do you mean?"

"Of course I mean the inspector—the man you gave the bonds to. I suppose you know his name?"

"His—his name?"

"Yes, his name!" said the Bounder impatiently. "I suppose you didn't hand twelve thousand pounds' worth of bonds to a man without knowing who he was."

"N-no! His name was—was Irons."

"Never heard it before. Not a local man—a Courtfield man?"

"No, not a Courtfield man."

"Well, it's all right, I suppose," said Smithy. "You'll very likely be asked questions again, but you'll have to keep it dark that you got it from me. They ought to be glad enough to get the bonds back; it's the first time they've got back anything lifted by the Courtfield cracksmen. He must have tons of loot stacked away somewhere—unless he gets rid of it after every raid. They say there's a special man from Scotland Yard on the case; but he hasn't much to boast of so far."

Wharton was silent.

"Why, the man you saw may have been the Scotland Yard man, if he wasn't a local bobby," added the Bounder. "Do you know?"

"Oh! Yes! I—I think—I mean the constable said he was from Scotland Yard," stammered Wharton.

"What was he like?"

"Like?"

"Yes. I suppose you looked at him?"

"Oh! Yes! I—I looked at him."

"Did he look like a man who knew his business?"

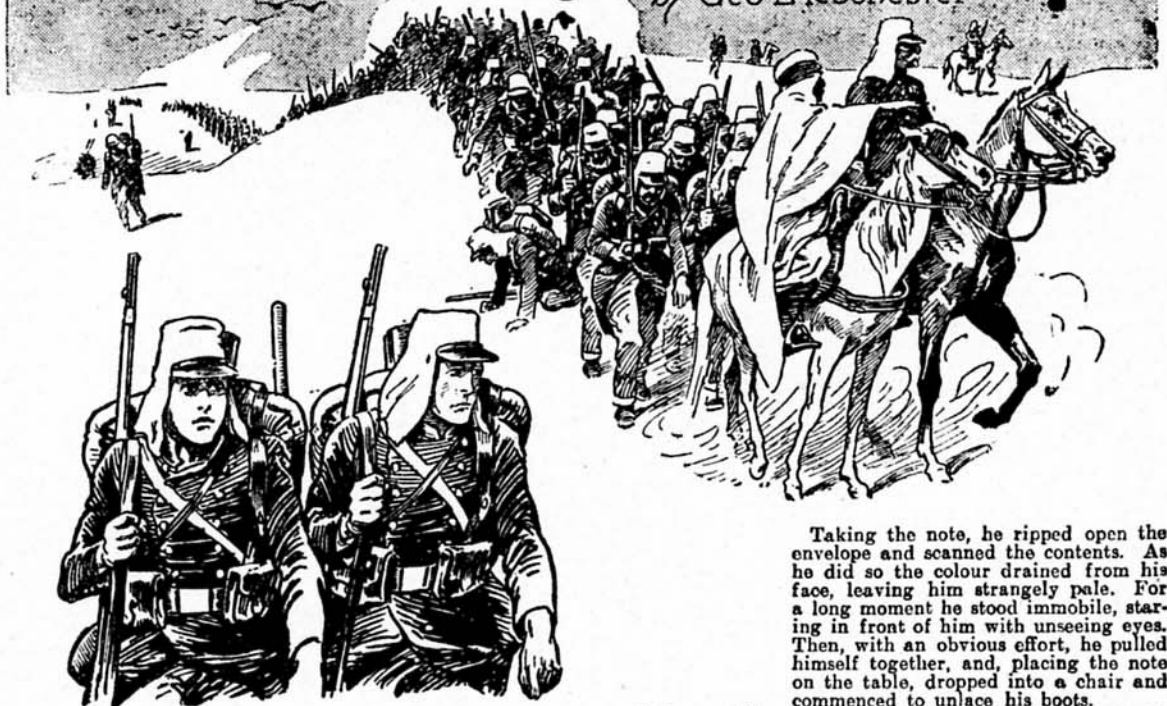
(Continued on page 28.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,143.

GRAND OPENING INSTALMENT of the Most Thrilling Adventure Serial Ever Told!

For the Glory of France!

by Geo E Rochester



Taking the Biame!

"SCH-O-O-L!"

A deep-throated roar came from the serried ranks massed on the touchline, as the black-and-scarlet shirts of the Greystones' forward line swept up the field with the precision of a machine.

This was Greystones' last effort to snatch a victory against Parnborough, their great rivals. And every frozzied spectator knew it to be a last effort, for already the referee was consulting his watch.

But not for nothing had Greystones earned the reputation of being one of the best Public School teams in the county.

And now, in the final seconds of this dour struggle with mighty Parnborough, each Greystones man was singularly cool and unruffled.

The Greystones' inside-right had possession of the ball. He rounded the Parnborough left-half, hung on just long enough to lure the hefty back, then shoved the ball out to his winger; who took it with racing feet which never faltered for an instant in their stride.

"Sch-o-o-l!"

The prolonged roar from the crowded touchlines was deafening.

The Parnborough back slithered, recovered himself, and pounded in pursuit of the fleeing wing-man.

"Get rid of it!" screamed a voice in an agony of apprehension.

The outside-right paid no heed to the panicky injunction. It is doubtful even if he heard. A few more yards he raced; then, steadying himself, swung the ball high across into the Parnborough goal-mouth. A lithe, black-and-scarlet-shirted figure leapt upwards. His head just touched the ball, deflecting it into a

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corner of the net out of the goalie's reach.

"Goal!" howled the delirious spectators, and mingling with the jubilant yells came the long-drawn screech of the referee's whistle.

Right on time Greystones had scored the only goal of the match.

"Ripping game," said the Parnborough skipper, as he walked slowly from the field with Guy Warren, footer captain of Greystones.

Warren laughed modestly.

"I think we had what luck was going," he replied, then broke off to nod his acknowledgments to the cries of "Well played, Warren!" which came

Unseen, unheard of by the rest of the world, the French Foreign Legion patrols the vast African desert, enduring privation and hardship, keeping the warlike Arab tribes in subjection! Englishmen, Germans, Swedes—adventurers from many climes rub shoulders together, fighting in a common cause. Some find glory—others a solitary grave in the sun-swept wastes of the desert.

from the boys who still lingered about the touchline.

Leaving the Parnborough skipper to make his way to the dressing-room, Warren cut across the quad to the main entrance of Routledge's House, and clumped upstairs to his study.

Young Scrivener, his fag, had laid tea, and was now busily engaged in making toast in front of a cheery fire.

"There's a note for you, please, Warren," he said, looking up as the senior entered the study. "I've propped it against the teapot."

"Thanks!" grunted Warren.

Taking the note, he ripped open the envelope and scanned the contents. As he did so the colour drained from his face, leaving him strangely pale. For a long moment he stood immobile, staring in front of him with unseeing eyes. Then, with an obvious effort, he pulled himself together, and, placing the note on the table, dropped into a chair and commenced to unlace his boots.

The Parnborough skipper teared with him, and it is safe to say that that youth never enjoyed a meal less. For Warren was silent and preoccupied, either ignoring his guest's observations altogether, or answering them so entirely at random that at length the latter excused himself somewhat abruptly, and withdrew to seek the more congenial society of his companions.

Scrivener, entering the study in order to clear away the tea, found Warren seated alone at the table, hands plunged in pockets.

"May I clear away, Warren?" he asked timidly.

Warren pushed back his chair and rose to his feet.

"No, you needn't bother just now," he said. "Tell Blake I want to see him!"

Scrivener departed on the errand. A few minutes later there came a knock at the study door, and Warren's cousin, Paul Blake, of the Upper Fifth, entered the room.

"You want me?" he asked questioningly.

"Yes," nodded Warren. "Shut the door and take a pew."

Paul obeyed. There was something about Warren which puzzled him. The fellow seemed strung up, somehow.

"It's about the Gower Fund," said Warren.

Gower, the veteran school cricket professional, had announced his intention of retiring at the end of the summer term. And, in order that they might show their appreciation of his long service at the school, Greystones—old boys and present boys—were contributing towards a presentation.

Warren was assistant treasurer of the fund, and dealt with all contributions from present members of the school;

whilst Mr. Routledge, the House-master, was responsible for all those which came from old boys.

"I've just had a note from Routledge," went on Warren. "He's coming along after chapel to-night to check my accounts."

"Well?" said Paul.

Warren laughed forcedly. "It's anything but well," he replied. "There's thirty pounds I can't account for!"

"Do you mean there's thirty pounds you can't trace?" demanded Paul.

Warren took a turn of the floor, then swung on Paul.

"Oh, yes, I can trace it all right," he replied roughly. "Standish and company got some, and Rosen got the rest!"

Paul leapt to his feet. "Do you mean you've used the money?" he cried, his hands clenched.

"You needn't shout it all over the corridor!" snarled Warren. "Yes, I've used it. And I don't want any preaching!"

"You needn't worry," replied Paul coldly. "I'm not going to preach. I know Standish and his pals are a set of card-playing bounders who ought to be turned out of the school. But I don't know Rosen. Who is he?"

"A bookmaker."

"Phew!"

"Oh, cut that out, will you?" said Warren savagely. "I've been a fool and I know it. The point is, what's to be done?"

With hands in pockets and head bent, he paced the study floor. Then suddenly he brought up in front of his cousin.

"See here, Blake," he said quietly, "do you mind if we have some plain speaking?"

"Go on," replied Paul, eyeing him steadily.

"Well, it's like this," went on Warren hurriedly. "You owe everything to my guv'nor. You were only a kid when your father was killed in France. He died penniless. My guv'nor has looked after you—given you a home—sent you here to Greystones—"

"What exactly are you getting at?" cut in Paul, with dangerous calm.

"I'm getting at this," retorted Warren. "You owe my father a great debt. You admit that?"

"Yes."

"Then are you man enough to pay it?"

"How?"

"By leaving Greystones to-night!"

White to the lips, Paul Blake faced his cousin.

"Are you suggesting—" he began unsteadily.

"That you should take the blame," took up Warren quickly. "Yes, I am. Wait a minute. Let me speak. It is not to save me; it is to save my father. It will break his heart if I am expelled for a thing like this. It is for his sake I'm asking you to do it—not mine. You've helped me with the accounts. You've had access to the money. If you clear out they'll think you've had what's missing—"

"You're mad!" cut in Paul coldly, turning towards the door.

Warren grabbed him by the arm, swinging him round.

"You won't do it?" he demanded gratingly.

"No, I certainly will not!" retorted Paul.

For a moment the two boys stood facing each other with blazing eyes. Then Warren released his grip.

"Very well," he sneered. "I might have known that gratitude would be an unknown quantity in a charity cad. But, in future, I hope you'll have the

decency to refrain from sponging on my guv'nor!"

Smack!

Paul's clenched fist took Warren full on the mouth, sending him reeling back against the table. Then, turning on his heel, Paul strode from the study without a backward glance.

He did not answer the chapel bell that night, nor was he present at roll-call which followed in Big School. But when that function was over and juniors had dispersed to their dormitories and seniors to their studies, Warren found a sealed envelope lying on his study table.

It was addressed to him in Paul Blake's hand, and, ripping it open, he withdrew the single sheet which it contained.

"By the time you get this," he read, "I will have left Greystones. Your remarks give me no other choice. You are at liberty to say what you like about the money which is missing. I shall not give you away, but I trust that by my thus sacrificing honour, name, and career, the debt I owe your family can be considered as paid. And if you've got a spark of decency in you, you'll go straight in future."

"PAUL BLAKE."

With a faint smile, Warren slowly tore the note into fragments and dropped them into the fire.

Majuba Smith!

THREE miles from Greystones lay the Great North Road, and tramping resolutely along it, his face set Londonwards, went Paul Blake.

The night was fine, with a cloud-swathed moon bathing hedgerows and fields in a cold, yellow radiance. Paul was bare-headed, for he had long since discarded his school cap, knowing that the hue and cry for him would be raised the moment it was definitely established that he was missing from Greystones.

Eventually he halted, and, perching himself on top of a five-barred gate, proceeded to cogitate upon his future plans.

He had known, as had others in the Fifth and Sixth corridors, that Warren was associating with Standish and his set. But never until that evening had he had the slightest suspicion of the extent to which his cousin was involved.

Guy Warren—popular fellow—captain of football—and thief!

No, that was hardly fair. Undoubtedly Warren had intended to repay the money, but Routledge had dropped on him before he'd had time to do so. Still, such borrowing as Warren had been guilty of was as bad as stealing.

Well, there was no use thinking about all that now. What of the future? Suspected of stealing money, where could a runaway Upper Fifth fellow go? Unless the school governors thought the matter one which had better be hushed up for the sake of the school, they were almost certain to set the police after him. Thirty pounds was a lot of money—

"Hallo, mate!"

A voice cut in on Paul's thoughts, and, turning his head, he saw that he had been addressed by a lanky, shabbily-dressed youth, who sported neither collar nor tie. So silently had the stranger approached him that, as far as Paul was concerned, he might have suddenly blossomed forth from the ground.

"Mind if I sit here a bit?" went on the youth, placing one hand on top of the gate.

"Not at all," replied Paul affably.

The other swung himself up, and, hitching the worn heels of his gaping boots behind one of the lower bars, sat with his hands clasped between his knees.

"Hope I'm not buttin' in," he remarked, "but it gets awful lonesome on the road sometimes, and a feller gets kind of sick of his own company." "Are you on the road, then?" inquired Paul, with interest.

His companion nodded.

"Been on ever since I was a kid," he replied.

He sat awhile in silence, staring at the dark shadow of the opposite hedge.

"Mind you," he resumed, "I ain't whining. I got nobody to thank but meself that I'm on the road. If I'd liked to have swallowed all the things what she called me and stayed on with her, I reckon I could have been earning good money in a Tyneside shipyard today."

"Stayed on with whom?" asked Paul. "My aunt—her what brought me up after my father was killed in France."

"My father was killed in France, as well," said Paul quietly.

The other looked at him quickly.

"Was he, mate?" he said sympathetically. "I reckon I know how you feel about it."

A moment he sat, shoulders hunched and thin hands clasping and unclasping between his knees. And when next he spoke his tones were halting.

"A real soldier he was, my father," he said—"a reg'lar. Fought at Majuba, in the Boer War, when he was young. He named me after that there fight. Majuba Smith's my name—Jub, for short. And when the big War come he joined up again, and went to France with his old regiment. He was killed at Wipers; and they give me this."

He fished in his shirt, and, on the palm of his hand, held out something which was suspended round his neck by a length of tape.

It was a Victoria Cross.

Reverently Paul took that little bronze symbol of valour and examined it by the light of the moon.

"By Jove, man," he said in a hushed voice, "but you must be jolly proud of him!"

Majuba Smith nodded.

"Yes," he said, slipping the Cross back inside his frayed shirt; "I reckon I am." Then bitterly: "But I don't think he's got any particular call to be proud of me! Still, I wasn't going to be called a charity brat by no one!"

"Did she call you that?" demanded Paul.

"Yes; that's why I cleared out and took to the road." Majuba Smith gave a queer little laugh. "But it ain't fair. I got no right to unload on you like this. Miserable, complainin' sort of cove, you must think me."

"I think nothing of the kind," replied Paul quickly. "I'm jolly interested in what you're telling me."

He was interested—more interested than ever his companion could have guessed. For in this lonely soul, cast by a strange whim of Fate across his path, he glimpsed tragedy closely allied to his own.

And, for his part, Majuba Smith was finding in this chance companion a sympathy which had never come his way before.

"You see," he explained, "aunt brought me up, 'cos there wasn't anybody else to do it. But I couldn't stick the way she used to throw my poverty in my face, so—like I told you—I run away."

"I've had my poverty thrown in my

face to-night," said Paul quietly, "and I've run away!"

"Eh?" ejaculated Majuba Smith, in astonishment.

"It's a fact!" reiterated Paul.

"But you're not poor—not poor like me?"

"Just as poor," asserted Paul steadily. "Poorer, I should imagine. I haven't a ha'penny in the world."

"But where have you run away from—home?"

"No, school."

"Well," gasped Majuba Smith, "if that don't beat the band! And now that you've run away, what are you going to do?"

Paul gripped him by the arm.

"I'll tell you what I'm going to do!" he said fiercely. "I'm going to clear out of England! I'm going to join the Foreign Legion!"

Majuba Smith scratched his head.

"The Foreign Legion?" he repeated. "I don't think I've ever heard of it." Then apologetically: "I'm an awful ignnerant sort of bloke, you know! Never had no schoolin' to speak of."

"It's the French Foreign Legion, I mean," explained Paul—"a regiment which serves in Africa."

"Oh, soldiering!" said his companion. "I wouldn't mind that, but I just couldn't stick the drillin' and paradin' without any fighting to make up for it."

"The Legion gets plenty of fighting," replied Paul. "They often have scraps with the desert tribesmen."

"Do they?" exclaimed the other eagerly.

Paul nodded.

"Yes; but it's a pretty rotten life, really," he said. "The discipline is terrible, and the desert is worse."

"I could stick that as long as there was fighting!" returned Majuba Smith doggedly.

He terminated the silence which fell then by suddenly swinging his feet to the ground.

"Well, reckon I'll be getting along,"

he said. "Pleased to have met you! And good luck, mate!"

"Where are you going?" asked Paul. Majuba shrugged his shoulders.

"Oh, I dunno!" he answered. "London, I reckon."

"And then?"

"Well, then I s'pose I'll just keep goin'—trampin'."

Paul slid off the gate and faced him.

"Jub," he said, "will you join the Legion with me?"

Majuba Smith shook his head.

"It's—it's decent of you to ask me!" he replied slowly. "But—no!"

"Why not?"

Majuba dug the ground with the gaping toe of his boot. Then, raising his eyes to Paul's, he said squarely:

"Because you don't want a bloke like me with you, that's why. It wouldn't be fair to you."

"Don't be such a prize ass, man!" responded Paul. "We're both up against it. You've got to quit the road, and I've got to find a job. Let's try the Legion together!"

He held out his hand. His companion hesitated, then thrust out his own and took Paul's in a firm grip.

"I'm game!" he said huskily.

And in his eyes was a wetness akin to tears. For, following the weary, lonely road, Majuba Smith had at last found a friend!

The First Stage!

IN a certain mean street in Soho will be found the small, evil-smelling pawnshop of Isaac Rubenstein.

Paul and Jub found it towards dusk of the day following their joining forces.

"You wait here, Jub," said Paul, as they stood gazing into the littered window. "There's no need for us both to interview him."

Jub plucked him by the sleeve.

"I've got this," he said. "I want you

to take it in along with your watch. Maybe it's worth something."

He thrust into Paul's hand the little bronze Cross, in the winning of which his father had laid down his life.

Paul stared at him.

"But you wouldn't sell this, man?" he exclaimed, in astonishment.

It appeared, however, that Jub would.

"Yes," he said airily. "Reckon I've got a bit tired of carryin' it around, that's all. Keeping it ain't ever done me much good that I can see. Best try what you can get for it."

Paul thrust the medal back into his companion's hand.

"Jolly sporting of you, old man!" he said softly. "But you make an awful rotten liar!"

Abashed, Jub dropped his gaze.

"I just wanted to stand my share," he mumbled. "You say we've got to have money to take us to France. Well, it ain't fair that you should pop your watch and me keep my medal."

"We'll get enough on the watch to see us through," replied Paul. "And don't you ever talk about selling that medal again!"

"I wouldn't have sold it to have helped anyone but you," replied Jub humbly. "I ain't never thought about selling it before."

Neither had he—not even when a few coppers with which to purchase food would have been a veritable godsend to him.

Realising to the full the sacrifice which his companion had been prepared to make, Paul turned away and entered the shop.

Mr. Isaac Rubenstein was a gentleman looked upon by his brethren as a credit to the profession which he graced. He was tall and thin, with a large, hooked nose and a straggling grey beard. Beady little black eyes twinkled behind heavily-rimmed glasses with a benignity which his clients, to their sorrow, found did not emanate from the heart.

As Paul advanced towards the counter Mr. Rubenstein shuffled forward from the shadows, bowing and grinning, and rubbing his hands as though he were washing them.

"How much will you give me for this?" asked the boy, depositing on the counter the gold watch which he had inherited from his father.

Mr. Rubenstein picked it up. It was a solid gold repeater, and forty pounds would not have bought it when it was new.

"You want to sell this—yes?" questioned the pawnbroker.

"Yes," replied Paul.

He hated seeing it in those dirty, skinny fingers; hated having to part with it. But money he and Jub had to have. "I gif you two pounds," announced Mr. Rubenstein.

"Thanks!" replied Paul curtly, stretching out his hand. "You needn't bother—I'll have the watch."

Mr. Rubenstein sighed; albeit he retained possession.

"Two pounds five shillings I gif you," he said. "And if that don't suit you take your watch somewheres else."

"I will," replied Paul grimly. "Come on—let's have it!"

Reluctantly Mr. Rubenstein handed over the watch.

"Vell, how much do you



"Let's try the Foreign Legion—together!" said Paul. "I'm game!" said Majuba Smith, gripping his new-found friend's hand.

vant?" he demanded, as, slipping it into his pocket, Paul turned towards the door.

"Ten pounds," said the boy. In pious horror Mr. Rubenstein threw his dirty hands aloft.

"Oy, oy!" he wailed. "Vy, you are mad! It vill not fetch half that. Listen! I gif you four pounds—five pounds—and then I lose money."

"Ten pounds," repeated Paul stubbornly.

Mr. Rubenstein wrung his hands in despair.

"You vill not get such a price no-where!" he yelled. "Listen now! I make my last offer—eight pounds I vill gif, and I am the fool. Eight pounds—or take your vatch away."

Paul placed the watch on the counter. "It's yours!" he said, heartily sick of the haggling, and realising that the Jew had reached his limit.

"I am mad—yes," moaned Mr. Rubenstein, counting out eight greasy pound-notes. "I ruin myself—"

"Thanks!" cut in Paul, picking up the notes and stuffing them into his pocket. "Good-evening!"

Quitting the shop he rejoined Jub on the pavement outside, and the next half-hour was spent in selecting for that embarrassed and protesting individual a second-hand suit and a more or less respectable pair of boots.

That done, the two boys found a cafe where Paul gave an order which thoroughly astonished the waitress. But neither he nor Jub had had a bite since the previous day, and two plates of ham apiece, crumpets, scones, and cakes vanished with a rapidity which drew and held the fascinated gaze of the waitress.

At length, with a contented sigh, Jub leaned back in his chair.

"I ain't had a feed like that for years," he said. "It's made me feel fine. What do we do now, Paul?"

"We're going to see about catching the night train from Victoria, old chap," replied Paul, scraping back his chair. "To-morrow we'll be in Paris!"

La Legion Etrangere!

SERGEANT-MAJOR FACQUIER, of the Bureau de Recrutement, in the Rue St. Dominique, situated in the military quarter of Paris, was a cynical individual, and possessed a peculiar wit.

Anyone having business inside the gloomy, depressing building which was the Bureau de Recrutement would first perforce traverse a bare corridor until he reached a sort of ticket-office window let into the wall. And if his visit happened to coincide with Sergeant-Major Facquier's duty hours, he would, on looking through the ticket office window, be afforded the privilege of gazing upon the sergeant-major seated in the bleak orderly-room which served him as a lair.

Which is precisely the spectacle which greeted Paul and Jub as they halted at the ticket-window in the afternoon of the day following their departure for London.

Looking up from the blanket-covered table at which he was seated writing, Sergeant-Major Facquier surveyed the two boys coldly.

"What do you want?" he demanded.

"We wish to join the Foreign Legion," replied Paul, in the best French he could muster.

The sergeant-major's stare became a trifle fixed.

"You will find it unpleasant to joke with me, mes enfants," he promised grimly. "For I, also, am a great joker. I take you by the back of the collar,



"You'll find life in the Foreign Legion one of terrible hardship!" said the captain. "Many Legionnaires fail to survive their five years of service!"

match you along the corridor, and kick you out into the street. That will be laughable—for me."

"Oh, very," assented Paul. "But we don't happen to be joking. We've come here in order to join the Legion."

The sergeant-major laid down his pen. "You have not," he inquired politely, "escaped from a home for imbeciles?"

"No." "Ah!" Sergeant-Major Facquier reflectively stroked his chin. "Strange! And you offer yourselves, you say, as volunteer recruits for the Legion?"

"Yes." "You are not French?"

"No—English." The sergeant-major smiled mirthlessly. "We like the English for the Legion," he observed. "They stand the life better. And—permit me to quite understand—you offer yourselves for enlistment in the ranks of the Legion?"

"Yes, I've told you we do," retorted Paul impatiently.

"Very well," purred the sergeant-major; and Paul was somehow reminded of a tiger licking its chops.

"Very well, mes garçons. I have not asked you to join. Please do remember that when you are training in the hot desert and cursing this day, wait over there, by that door."

He indicated a door on which was painted "Commander of Recruiting."

Obediently, Paul and Jub waited beside the door. But more than an hour dragged wearily by before it suddenly opened, and the sergeant-major bade them enter.

They stepped into a plain, sparsely-furnished room in which a tall, good-looking man in cavalry officer's uniform was standing.

"Two recruits for the Legion, mon Capitaine," announced the sergeant-major, stiffly at attention.

The captain nodded, his eyes ranging from Paul to Jub, then back again.

"So you wish to become soldiers of France?" he asked, and his voice was curt.

"Yes, sir," answered Paul.

"What is your nationality?" "We are both English, sir."

"And your ages? You understand that you must be eighteen years of age before you can enlist as soldiers in the army of France?"

Paul's heart sank. Although tall for his age, he was just turned seventeen. But in that moment he found an unexpected ally. For Sergeant-Major Facquier, noticing the boy's hesitation, spoke up maliciously.

"They are both of the necessary age, mon Capitaine," he said. "I assured myself on that point before bringing them before you."

He had done nothing of the kind, but it would have hurt him sorely to see them escape now. And, satisfied, the captain addressed himself to Paul and Jub.

"Now, listen carefully," he said. "Your period of enlistment in the Legion will be for five years. The pay is a halfpenny a day. At the end of five years you may, if you wish, re-enlist. You can also, at the end of that time, claim to be naturalised as French subjects. But understand this. From the moment you enlist, until your five years of service have expired, you belong to France—to the Legion. Do you realise what that means?"

"Yes, sir," replied Paul, and Sergeant-Major Facquier grinned behind his hand.

"You will find the life one of terrible hardship at times," continued the captain. "Many Legionnaires fail to survive their five years of service. I must ask you to consider seriously this step you are contemplating."

"We have considered it, sir," said Paul doggedly. "We wish to join."

The captain hesitated. But it was no duty of his to dissuade intending recruits from enlisting in the Legion, and, with a shrug of his shoulders, he continued:

"By doing your duty as true and loyal soldiers of France you will find chances of promotion in the Legion

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which may lead to high office and distinction in the military service of this country."

Under the escort of the sergeant-major, Paul and Jub were taken to another room, more bleak and bare than the one which they had just quitted. They stripped, and were given a thorough overhaul by a bearded medic. Then, donning their clothes again, they were taken back to the room in which they had been interviewed by the captain.

"You have both been passed as fit, and accepted as recruits for the Legion," he informed them. "Your names, please?"

They gave them.
"Very well. You can go now. If you are of the same mind to-morrow, then come back here."

"But can't we join now?" exclaimed Paul, in dismay.

"No," replied the captain. "You are permitted one night in which to consider this step which you intend taking. If you do not return, we will understand. You are both free still. We have no claim upon you until you have appended your signatures to the form of service. You can sign to-morrow, if you wish. Now go!"

Paul and Jub went. And they spent that night on a seat in one of the public gardens off the Rue des Jardins, for, with the exception of the price of a meagre breakfast, their money was done.

Jub slept easily, huddled against one end of the seat. But for long hours Paul sat awake.

Well, he did not regret his course of action. From now onward he would live his own life, dependent on no one. And the family of Warren would never see him again.

He stirred with the dawn, and touched the sleeping Jub.

"Wake up, old man," he said. Then, as Jub stretched himself stiffly and yawned, he added: "We'll hunt some breakfast, and we're going to be outside the Bureau de Recrutement as soon as it jolly well opens!"

(It's the first step towards joining the Foreign Legion for Paul and Jub—the first step on the road to adventure! You'll be thrilled when you read about the startling adventures that befell these two chums in next week's gripping instalment of this powerful serial!)

THE MAN FROM SCOTLAND YARD!

(Continued from page 23.)

"Oh! Yes, rather! Quite!"
"Well, if he knows his business he will nab the Courtfield crackman to-night, most likely," said Vernon-Smith.

"How's that?" asked Bob.
"The thief will go back to where he hid the bonds, to take them away, sooner or later. They've only got to keep the place watched."

Wharton started.
"Oh, I never thought about that! I wonder—"

"Depend on it that's what they'll do," said Vernon-Smith. "If the man has the sense of a bunny rabbit he'll keep that spot by the river under observation after dusk. I shouldn't wonder if we see in the morning papers that they've nabbed the Courtfield crackman."

"My hat! I hope so!" said Bob Cherry. "The rotter's had a long run, and it's time he got it in the neck!"

"I say, you fellows—"
"Get out, Bunter!"
"Oh, really, Smithy—"
"Shut the door after you!"

Billy Bunter shut the door after him, but he remained on the inner side of the door when he shut it.

He blinked dolefully at the chums of the Remove.

"I say, you fellows, I've had an awful time! That beast Steele stuck me in the Form-room to do my lines! I've had to do the lot! I say, you fellows, I wish the police would nab that beast!"

Harry Wharton laughed.
"You can cackle!" said Bunter. "But you jolly well know what that man Steele is, as well as I do."

"Better, perhaps!" said Wharton, laughing. The suspicion that Mr. Steele was a crackman seemed rather entertaining to the captain of the Remove now that he knew who Richard Steele really was.

"I say, you fellows, I haven't had my tea," said Bunter. "Toddy's gone out to tea, and left nothing in the study for me. Selfish beast, you know! After all I've done for him, too."

"Take a paw, old fat man," said Harry. He was rather glad of the interruption to the discussion.

"Certainly, old chap! I didn't know you fellows were having tea, of course, and—"

"Of course not!" said Nugent, with sarcasm.

"But as you're so pressing I'll stay. You needn't trouble to make fresh tea, Harry, old chap—"

"I wasn't going to."
"So long as there's plenty in the pot. I say, isn't there anything left but that cake?"

"That's all."
"Well, I'll have the cake, if you fellows don't want any," said Bunter. And, without waiting to ascertain whether the fellows wanted any, William George Bunter annexed the cake.

That proceeding drew upon him the concentrated stare of six pairs of eyes. But Billy Bunter did not mind the stare.

"This isn't a bad cake," said Bunter, after filling his mouth to capacity. "Not like the cakes I get from Bunter Court, of course; still, not a bad one. I say, you fellows, you're not going out, are you? I've got some news for you. I've just heard from a fellow that there's been another burglary—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's a fact!" said Bunter. "That's what I really came here to tell you. There was a burglary last night at Topham Croft, and I hear that a lot of bonds were lifted, and a footman who got after two of the gang was shot dead in Oak Lane by one of the miscreants who—"

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

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I'll tell you fellows all about it—"

But the fellows did not stay to hear the latest news from Bunter.

THE END.


(Well, boys, and what's your opinion of this new series of Greyfriars yarns? Have you solved the mystery of the Courtfield crackman yet? No? Then you'll be waiting on tenter-hooks for "GOOD-BYE, BUNTER!" the next enthralling yarn by Frank Richards. As this is the titbit of the series, I should advise all "Magnetites" to order their copy in good time!)

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WHEN ANSWERING ADVERTISEMENTS :: PLEASE MENTION THIS PAPER ::

Frank Fearless pawed in the doorway of Jack Jolly's study at St. Sam's, with a look of

Jack Jolly's study was often making things hum at St. Sam's, but it was unusual for that self-branded apartment to be humming itself. In the ordinary way, it smelt pleasantly of fried herrings or onions or carbide. But Frank felt sure that never before had it smelt like this.

Jack Jolly and Merry and Bright, the famous clowns of the St. Sam's Fourth, looked round from the fire with cherry grins.

"You in, old scout!" said Jack Jolly, jocularly. "Perhaps you'd like to help us stir?"

"I've had the berry dickens is it?" gasped Frank Fearless. "Don't be alarmed, old chap! You'll get used to it in time. It's glue!"

"Eggheads! And something like a glue, too!" Bright invented it during the Christmas holidays.

"Why?" "Bright grinned. "I never happened to be making a rabbit-hutch and needed glue to finish it off, so I made my own."

And Frank Fearless joined in with grate good will. He was always game for a lark, was Frank Fearless of the Fourth, and the idea of japing his respected Form-master with the aid of Bright's glue made a strong appeal to his light-hearted natcher.

The clowns of the Fourth took it in turns to stir the evil-looking mixture on the hob until eventually Bright pronounced it done to a turn. After that, they set the pot on the winder-sill to cool down, and linked arms to go down to dinner, their appetites stimulated by the thought of the fun they were going to get in class that afternoon.

Jack Jolly & Co. were first in the Form-room for afternoon lessons that day. During the five minutes between their entry and the arrival of Mr. Lickham, they bizzed themselves around that gentleman's desk in a very masterly manner.

Each of the quartette carried a bottle of glue. Armed with these bottles, they proceeded to stick the Form-master's stool and the Form easel to the floor, and also to sprinkle a liberal supply on the seat of the stool and inside Mr. Lickham's mortar-board, which happened to be lying on his desk.

By the time they had achieved these results, the rest of the Form were entering into the room and the clatter of Mr. Lickham's hob-nashed boots could be heard in the distance. So Jack Jolly & Co. contented themselves with what they had

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HERE'S ANOTHER SPARKLING CONTRIBUTION BY DICKY NUGENT. THE GREYFRIARS LAUGHTER MERCHANT!



DICKY NUGENT

Old Dr. Birchmell always was "stuck up," and as with two hundred horse power glue knocking about, he's stuck up in more ways than one!



done and slipped into their places just before Mr. Lickham trotted in.

Mr. Lickham winked at the Fourth in his usual cheery fashion and put on his mortar-board.

A moment later he started. "Bless my sole! There appears to be some likwid substance in my tile!" he exclaimed, in surprise.

The master of the Fourth had made a sudden violent grab at the "doctored" mortar-board. But instead of coming off his napper as he had confidently expected, Mr. Lickham's mortar-board had refused to budge, with the result that he nearly tore his hair off.

The eggpression on Mr. Lickham's face at that moment was eggstronormary. His jaw dropped and his eyes protruded as though he was on the verge of an apologetic fit.

"Like any help, sir?" asked Jack Jolly. "Fortunately, I've brought my sculping-utle along with me this afternoon!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" Mr. Lickham frowned. "Pray refrain from indulging in potty jokes, Jolly!" he said, with dignity.

What has happened to my lid is a puzzle to me at present. But whatever it is, I shan't dream of allowing you to sculp me. Let us proceed with the lesson. And Mr. Lickham flopped into a sitting position on his stool.

That little manœuvre was fatal, had he but known it. For the present, however, Mr. Lickham remained in blissful ignorance. What had happened was to be revealed to him later in the afternoon.

During the next half-hour the lesson proceeded as per usual. The Fourth sat in a state of suspense, eggpecting every minute that their Form-master would attempt to stand up. But he didn't do so.

And then came the sudden climax, and the shape of Dr. Birchmell, the reversed and respected headmaster of St. Sam's. The Head occasionally had a provol round the Form-rooms to make sure that his sub-

ordinis were not asleep or larking about instead of spreading nollidge. By chance, he happened to choose this particular afternoon for one of those prowls.

It was the clump of his heavy boot landing on the door of the Form-room. An instant later the Head was in the room, grinning all over his dle at the thought that he mite catch Mr. Lickham bending.

He didn't egggerally do that. But he did catch him sitting, which was almost as bad.

If there was one thing Dr. Birchmell did insist on it was respect from the masters. He had always made it a firm rule that masters should stand up and doff their mortar-boards whenever he happened to breeze in.

Mr. Lickham knew this, of course, and attempted to perform the little formality. But the mortar-board still obstinately refused to budge. And to add to his predicament, he found it impossible to stand up. He was stuck to the stool and the stool was stuck to the floor. As he wrenched in vain, he felt the Head's eyes glinted to him. It was an awkward problem, and Mr. Lickham felt stuck for a solution.

"By gum!" he muttered. "Lickham!"

The Head's voice was deep and aw-inspiring. "Ye-es, sir!" gasped the unlapppy master of the Fourth.

"How dare you!" roared the Head. "I-I—!"

"How dare you remain seated, with your lid on, too, in my majestic presence?" thundered Dr. Birchmell.

"You see, sir—"

"Don't interrupt! I demand an egg-planation, sir!"

"The fact is—"

"Silence! Tell me why you are seated!"

SIX "MEAD" BICYCLES

FOR FULL PARTICULARS: SEE NEXT WEDNESDAY'S "GEM!"

12 WEMBLEY CUP-FINAL TICKETS MUST BE WON!

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