

GREYFRIARS TO THE RESCUE!

THE PLOTTER!

by
FRANK RICHARDS



The
MAGNET
*Billy Bunter's
Own Paper* 2^d

WOMAN-PAGE



This Week By
HARRY WHARTON,
Captain of the
Remove.

THIS week, for a change, I am on the front page as well as the middle pages. If you happen to be tired of seeing my name in the "Greyfriars Herald" you'll be really knocked out with this extra page. My heart aches for you, but it's the Editor's fault. All brickbats should be sent to his address per registered post.

I see Skinner has put me on a pedestal in his silly drawing. I have shown my appreciation in a way Skinner will remember. His sarcasm is due to the fact that, for some reason or other, I am expected to take the lead in everything. Come to think of it, I seem to have a good many titles to fame. If we had a Public school "Who's Who," they would put my record like this:

WHARTON, HARRY.—Head Boy of the Remove, Captain of the Form, Captain of the Junior XI, Editor of the "Greyfriars Herald," President of the Remove Dramatic Society, Chairman of the Remove Debating Society, Patrol-Leader of the Boy Scouts, General Nurse to Slackers, Honorary Guardian of Giddy Goats, Lord High Scapegoat to be Blamed for Everything, Member of the Games Committee.

Some of you may think that being a captain is a bed of roses. Well, it may be, but the chief thing I've noticed about a bed of roses is that the pillow is stuffed with thorns.

Seriously, though, it's pretty awful. Each of the jobs specified above has its own drawbacks—and, somehow, the drawbacks are more prominent than the benefits. Let's make out a List of Drawbacks and see what you think of 'em:

HEAD BOY.—The chief drawback of this job is that I'm nominally responsible for the conduct of the fellows in Form. If there's a rag on Mossos, for instance, the fellows blame me if I interfere, and Quelch blames me if I don't. Beyond the honour of being "Head Boy," there is no reward whatever in the work. This job, at any rate, gives far more kicks than halfpence.

CAPTAIN OF THE FORM.—This has plenty of drawbacks. It's my job, for instance, to round up the slackers on compulsory practice days. It's my job to prevent rowdiness in the studies. It's my job to see that Fishy doesn't swindle, or Skinner doesn't smoke, or Smithy doesn't blag, etc., all of which I include under the heading of Guardian to Giddy Goats. If a fellow is seedy—or only malingering—I have to act as General Nurse and get him to the sanny. If the Head, or Quelch, or Wingate, or any other prefect finds out anything whatever wrong with the Remove, I have to act as Lord High Scapegoat and take the blame for it. And, believe me, the Remove is not quite perfect—yet!

CAPTAIN OF THE ELEVEN.—I needn't say that, whenever I pick my footer or cricket team, there are just eleven fellows who are satisfied with it. All the rest are loudly convinced that I am either (a) a wash-out, (b) a back number, or (c) mad. If my team happens to win the match, these disgruntled critics say that it was in spite of me, and we ought to have won by more. If we should lose, they lift their voices like the Tower of Babel, and yell: "What did we tell you?" At cricket my job is worse than at footer. If I win the toss and decide to chance my arm and put the other side in first, I have to be ready to face a storm of criticism. Should they make a big score, Bedlam breaks loose. On the other hand, if we bat first and lose our wickets cheaply, my study is thronged with cricket experts who point out, gently but firmly, that I'm a fool. Then there's the question of declaring. If I were to declare too soon so that

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the other team win, even my best friends would shake their heads sadly and mutter things about having "a screw loose." But if I leave it too late, so that the match is a draw, everyone is firmly convinced that my natural place is the padded cell. Of course, the way I handle my bowling is too ridiculous for words. Fancy keeping Brown on for a dozen overs, when even a Hottentot would know enough to put Squiff on at the pavilion end, and let Inky bowl with the wind. And then the batting order—but we can't go on like this. Suffice it to say that I am a complete and utter wash-out in every possible way, and it's high time I took a back seat. (Carried unanimously.)

EDITOR OF THE "HERALD."—The most obvious drawback to this hobby is that it's dashed hard work. Writing editorials and making-up the issue takes a good time. Apart from this, I usually have to bully the fellows into writing articles or the paper would never be published at all. I except Dicky Nugent, whose inky scrawl is always delivered on time. But that's only because he writes it in class—to take his mind off work!

PRESIDENT OF THE DRAMATICS.—The one and only drawback to this job is Wibley. In fact, although I am President, I never have a say in anything. If I venture to open my mouth, Wibley gruffly tells me to shut up. The Society really exists in name only. Wibley is the President, Secretary, Producer, Manager, the whole Society and all that therein is. Our part is to stand round him and cheer while Wib plays Hamlet. The benighted blitherer!

CHAIRMAN OF THE DEBATING SOCIETY.—This job suffers from the most peculiar drawback—that there is nothing to do. The Debating Society, in all forms, has existed from time immemorial. Quelch is the



Harry Wharton

As Captain of the Remove, Wharton is a thoroughly decent fellow in all respects, but he has a good deal of character. His temper is unreliable, and on the infrequent occasions when it gets out of control, Wharton is capable of the most audacious defiance. As a rule, however, he is good-natured and thoughtful. No fellow at Greyfriars is fitter to be a captain; for Wharton has the gift of stimulating others to do their best. He is a first-rate boxer and a brilliant centre-forward. He shares Study No. 1 with his earliest chum, Frank Nugent.

(Cartoon by
HAROLD SKINNER.)

HIS MAGNIFICENCE
HARRY WHARTON

President of our Society, and my job is to give him reports of the proceedings. He selects the subjects for debate, and naturally expects a keen interest in them. But, in fact, the Remove don't give a cent for debating. There are just one or two keen fellows like Muley and Penfold. The rest steer clear of the Reading Room Annex, where the debates are held. The last debate, a fortnight ago, was on whether the assassination of Caesar was justified. I was the only member present. Accordingly, I made a speech in favour of the motion, and then turned round and hotly denied it. After an interesting debate of about two minutes, I adjourned the proceedings and went. But I still had to make a report to Quelch—and what would a fellow do? I told him the question was left unsettled. What a life!

PATROL-LEADER.—The only real drawback to this job is the maintaining of keenness among the fellows. There are many attractions to compete with scouting, and I have to see that enthusiasm is kept up. Still, this is certainly one of the more agreeable parts of my work.

MEMBER OF THE GAMES COMMITTEE.—This is a committee drawn from all Forms of the school from the Remove upwards—chiefly the Captain of each Form, the Head of Games, and the Club Secretary. It is presided over by Larry Lascelles, the Games Master. As junior member I haven't much say in anything, but I am supposed to see that junior sports are treated fairly by the Games Committee. And any junior with a grievance naturally blames me for it. It's so nice to have someone to blame!



Two different ways of saying the same thing.

A CAPTAIN'S CONFESSIONS!

Well, now, the first question to spring to your mind will naturally be this: Why take these jobs if they're all so awful? And the peculiar answer is that there is no fellow in the Remove who would not take them if he had the chance.

It's the kudos and the responsibility that counts. I am somebody, and I like being somebody. It's nice to be important. I should hate to be out of the limelight, to feel that I was a nonentity, to be "just one of the crowd."

I admit that there are fellows—quiet, placid, and contented—who have no ambition whatever to be in the public eye.

I envy such fellows—just a little; but I'm not like that. I want to be in the lead, to feel that others are looking to me for guidance. That's why I am willing to take on these arduous tasks. And I do honestly try my best to do the work well, even if I eventually fail.

Of course, I am not a born leader. Nobody knows that better than H. Wharton. I have a hasty temper, which is not always under control. And when I am not too bad-tempered I am usually too good-tempered. I let a good many things go on which I ought to stop.

Oh, well—nobody's perfect, except Bunter. That's one consolation.

By the way, a short time ago Bunter was telling us how perfect he was. He said we ought to take him as a model and do our feeble best to imitate him. And we did, too! Because Bunter received a parcel of tuck from his aunt that day, and we all immediately raided it. And even then he wasn't satisfied, though we told him we were all expecting some postal orders by the next post.

Well, I have used this page, as the Editor suggested, to tell you something of myself and my life at school. And now I must hike along to Quelch's study and explain that I have not written my lines because I was too busy writing a page for the MAGNET. If Quelch acts fairly, he will hop up to London and make the Editor bend over.

But I expect I shall be for it—as usual!

GREAT GREYFRIARS YARN STARRING HARRY WHARTON & Co. and introducing—



'KEEP A STIFF UPPER LIP, BOY! WE'RE PLAYING FOR A HIGH STAKE!'

By
**FRANK
RICHARDS**

Bunter's Catch!

HARRY WHARTON stared. Then he grinned. The captain of the Greyfriars Remove was seated on the box-seat in the window of Study No. 1.

He was reading a letter from home—a rather lengthy letter from Aunt Amy—which was the reason why he had not joined his chums at the junior nets after class.

He looked up from that lengthy letter as the study door opened quietly and the fattest figure at Greyfriars School rolled in.

On the fat face of Billy Bunter was an expansive grin. In his fat hand was a key—apparently a study door-key.

Bunter did not turn his eyes or his spectacles towards the window. Harry Wharton looked at him, but he did not look at Harry Wharton. No doubt he took it for granted that Wharton and Nugent, to whom that study belonged, were out of doors after class, like everybody else.

He did not look round the study at all. Immediately he was inside he turned and closed the door cautiously, keeping it a few inches open.

Through those few inches he peered into the Remove passage. Then softly he closed the door, with hardly a sound.

Standing by the door, he bent his fat ear to listen.

Harry Wharton, from the window-seat, stared at a podgy back.

"He, he, he!" floated to his ears.

Bunter seemed to be entertained about something, and he was obviously quite unaware that he was not alone in the study.

What Bunter was up to, and why he had somebody's study door-key in his hand, was quite a mystery to the captain of the Remove. By way of eluci-

dating that mystery on the spot, Wharton called out:

"Hallo, fathead! What's that game?"

Bunter jumped.

That sudden voice from behind him startled the fat Owl of the Remove.

He jumped, and the key dropped from his hand, clattering on the floor as he spun round.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

He blinked at Harry Wharton.

"Oh, I didn't know you were here! I thought you'd gone out with the other beasts. I say, don't make a row!"

"What are you up to?"

"Oh, nothing!" Billy Bunter hastily fielded the key, and slipped it into his pocket. "I—I only dropped in for a chat, old chap!"

"When you didn't know I was here?"

"Oh, I mean—"

"What are you doing with that key?"

"Nothing. It's not Smithy's key. I say, don't make a row! I want to hear him when he goes to his study. I don't want him to know I'm watching for him. I say, why don't you go down to the cricket, Wharton? I shouldn't slack about in a study if I were you."

"You howling ass!" said Harry Wharton. "What have you pinched the key of Smithy's study for?"

"Don't yell," breathed Bunter. "He may be up any minute. I heard him telling Bob Cherry that he wasn't going to the nets, because he had some swotting to do in his study. I say, old chap, I'd go down to the cricket. The fact is, Nugent asked me to tell you he was waiting for you."

"Look here—"

"Be quiet, will you?" hissed Bunter, as a footstep became audible in the passage outside.

That footstep passed the door of

Study No. 1. It went on up the Remove passage.

Billy Bunter cautiously opened the door a few inches and peered out. A bony figure, far up the passage, met his view, and he grunted and shut the door again.

"Only Fishy," he said. "Blow him! Smithy can't be long, now!"

"You blithering bandersnatch!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "Are you thinking of locking Smithy in his study, or what?"

"I wish you'd be quiet!" said Bunter peevishly. "Suppose he heard you? He might notice that his key was gone if he heard you. Be a pal, old chap! Look here, this is my very last chance."

"But what—"

"It's those lines, you know," explained Bunter. "You know that cad Smithy got me lines, and that beast Quelch doubled them because they weren't done, and I've had three lickings since they were doubled, and—"

"Time you did them!" said Harry Wharton, laughing.

"Well, it's four hundred," said Bunter. "Four hundred is a lot, I can tell you! Smithy ought to do them as he got me the lines. I've told him so, over and over again. Well, now I'm going to make him."

Harry Wharton laughed.

He could not quite see the fat and fatuous Owl making the Bounder of Greyfriars do anything.

"You can cackle!" said Bunter. "But I've got him on toast this time. I'm jolly well going to lock his study door on him, and tell him, through the keyhole, that I won't let him out till those lines are done. What about that?"

"Oh, my hat!"

"He seems to like swotting," said THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,641.

Bunter, with a contemptuous sniff. "Well, let him swot at lines, if he likes swotting. Smithy never used to swot, but he's taken it up lately. He's going in for a Latin prize, and old Quelch is helping him too. Bit of a change for the Bounder, ain't it? He used to rag Quelch, and Quelch would have liked to see him sacked, and now he swots, and Quelch grins at him instead of scowling. Quelch has been giving him extra toot to help him snaffle that prize. Smithy's chucked up cricket for it. Rotten slacking! Yah!"

"You know all about slacking!" agreed Harry Wharton.

"Well, I don't swot, anyhow," said Bunter. "Nobody's ever called me a swot!"

"Oh crumbs! No!"

"I've got him on toast—see?" grinned Bunter. "I know all about it. He's mugging up that beast Livy, and he's got to take the stuff to Quelch for the old bean to nose over it. Well, if he's locked in his study he can't. See? I shan't let him out till he's got those lines ready. If he ain't got them done by tea-time, I shall jolly well chuck away the key, and he can stick in the study till they get a new key. He, he, he!"

"And what will happen to you when he gets out?" inquired Wharton.

"I shall expect my pals to stand by me if Smithy gets into one of his nasty tempers," said Billy Bunter. "But what I'm thinking about now is the lines. They've been hanging over my head for weeks, like the sword of Pericles, you know."

"Not the sword of Damocles?" asked Harry

"I don't care whether it was Pericles or Damocles. That's what it was like. I'm not going to do them, when it was Smithy's fault I got them. It's a matter of principle with me. Some fellows have principles," said Bunter. "Smithy's got to do those lines. I've done one to give him a start, and left the paper on his study table. That only leaves him three hundred and ninety-nine. If he's so jolly fond of swotting, he can swot at them, and then I'll let him out."

"Now, look here, you howling ass!" said Harry Wharton. "Take a tip and let Smithy alone! Smithy's dangerous. Chuck it up!"

"I'll watch it!" said Bunter. "Wait till he goes into his study, that's all! Nobody goes into that study now except Smithy, since Redwing went away. So as soon as I hear him go in it's all right."

"I tell you——"

"Quiet!" hissed Bunter.

There was another footstep in the passage. It passed the door of Study No. 1, and Bunter listened intently.

Harry Wharton gazed at him.

Billy Bunter's antics were not his concern, but he rather doubted whether he had better not chip in, for the fat Owl's own sake. Probably Bunter might get away with locking the Bounder in his study, but Smithy's frame of mind when he got out was likely to be fearfully dangerous for Bunter.

"Look here, you fat ass——" he began.

"Will you shut up?" hissed Bunter. "Wharrer you want to butt in for? Can't you mind your own bizney, you silly interfering ass?"

"Oh, all right!"

Harry Wharton, deciding to mind his own business, resumed the perusal of Aunt Amy's lengthy epistle.

Billy Bunter listened at the door, and noted that the footsteps stopped a short distance up the passage.

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Whoever it was had gone into a study near at hand; and the Bounder's study was No. 4.

Bunter opened the door again and peered out.

The passage was empty.

Was it Smithy—and had he gone into Study No. 4?

Bunter was as good as certain of it—but he had to make sure! He grabbed the key from his pocket and tiptoed along to Study No. 4.

The door of that study was half-open. Bunter had left it shut! That was proof! Somebody had gone in! It could only be Vernon-Smith, who had the study to himself now that Tom Redwing was gone.

Billy Bunter grabbed the door-handle and slammed the door shut! He jabbed the key into the lock and turned it! It was the work of hardly a moment.

He jerked out the key! Grinning, he lowered a fat head, and placed a large mouth to the keyhole!

"Got you, you rotter!" he roared through the keyhole. "Got you, you swab! Now, you rotten worm, you can stick in that study and be blowed! He, he, he!"

Not Likely!

"VERNON-SMITH!" called out Coker of the Fifth.

The junior addressed by the great Coker did not heed the call.

He walked on, passing by the voice of Horace Coker like the idle wind which he regarded not!

Having got away from Bob Cherry, who had been urging him eloquently to join up for cricket, and let swotting go to the dickens, he was heading for the House to go up to his study when he passed Coker and Potter and Greene in the quad.

The Fifth Form men, as a rule, had nothing to do with the Remove juniors. Coker of the Fifth was, so to speak, more Fifth Formy than other Fifth Formers; and generally he disregarded the Remove as inconsiderable microbes unworthy of so great a man's notice.

But when Coker of the Fifth took the trouble to speak to a Remove fag, he expected that Remove fag to sit up and take notice.

Coker glared as the junior walked on unheeding.

"Vernon-Smith!" he bawled.

"Oh, chuck it, Coker!" urged Potter. "It's no good——"

"Don't jaw, Potter!"

"But look here——" argued Greene.

"Don't jaw, Greene! Vernon-Smith!" roared Coker.

The Remove junior walked on, still turning a deaf ear.

Coker of the Fifth was not the man to have deaf ears turned on him! He made a rush after that junior, grabbed him by the shoulder, and span him round.

The Removeite had to stop then!

"Didn't you hear me call you?" demanded Coker angrily.

"I'm not deaf!"

"Why didn't you stop, then?"

"No time to waste!"

That answer almost took Horace Coker's breath away. He gasped.

"Hear that?" gasped Coker, appealing to Potter and Greene. "Hear him? Cheekiest young scoundrel in the Remove, what?"

For a Removeite to tell Coker that he had no time to waste—on Coker—seemed to Horace a signal for the skies to fall! The skies, unheeding, did not fall; and the junior impatiently jerked his shoulder away from Coker's grasp.

"Look here, what is it?" he snapped.

"Cut it short!"

Again the skies did not fall, though a Remove fag had told Coker of the Fifth to cut it short.

"I won't smack your head!" said Coker, with great restraint. "I want you to do something for me, young Vernon-Smith, and it happens that you're the only kid here who can do it! Otherwise I'd teach you not to check the Fifth!"

"Look here," said the Removeite. "I've got to get in! My Form-master's helping me with some Livy for an exam! I can't stay here jawing! If you've got anything to say, get it off your chest, quick!"

Coker was not aware—nobody at Greyfriars was aware, or dreamed of suspecting—that the junior addressed was not Herbert Vernon-Smith, but his cousin and double, Bertie Vernon.

That answer brought a contemptuous stare from Coker.

The Bounder's reputation was rather too well known for any fellow to take seriously a statement from him that he was swotting.

That remarkable change in Smithy had been noticed in the Remove, and had excited considerable surprise and wonder in that Form; but Coker knew nothing about it.

"Don't talk rot!" he snapped. "And pack up your cheek! I can see you mugging up Livy—I don't think! More likely cutting in to smoke in your study, you frowsy little scug! Now shut up while I tell you what I want!"

Bertie Vernon waited impatiently.

He had, as he said, no time to waste. But Coker's point of view was that no junior's time could be better spent than in making himself useful to Horace James Coker of the Fifth.

As Coker was prepared to back up that opinion with a large hand and a heavy boot, Vernon decided to give him a hearing.

"Now, look here," went on Coker. "A few weeks ago you had a relation here—a cousin or something, with a name like your own—Albert or something——"

Coker probably knew that the Bounder's name was Herbert Vernon-Smith, and that his cousin's name was Herbert Vernon. But Coker disdained to appear to remember these trifles.

"Well?" rapped the Bounder's double.

He did not like discussing Bertie Vernon—as he happened to be Bertie Vernon!

His position in the place of the fellow he had supplanted would be all the safer if it was forgotten that Vernon-Smith had ever had a double in the school.

Neither could he guess, in the least, why a Fifth Form man wanted to speak on the subject.

"That kid," went on Coker, "was exactly like you to look at—people were always taking you for one another——"

"Well?"

"Don't snap at me, if you don't want your cheeky head smacked! You're asking for it!" said Coker darkly.

"The point is that your voices were just alike, as well as your ugly mugs. A fellow who heard one of you speak had to look to see which of you it was."

"Well?" howled Vernon impatiently.

"What the dickens——" He was quite mystified.

"Well, you could phone to a man, and he would think you were Bertie Vernon, from your voice!" said Coker.

Bertie Vernon stared at him blankly.

"What the thump——" he gasped.

"I'll tell you, if you'll shut up!" said Coker. "I suppose you've heard



"Oooooooh!" gurgled Coker, as Vernon jabbed him in the waistcoat.

about me dropping in at Lantham Chase a week or two ago and getting into a shindy with that black-jowled blighter, Captain Vernon, who lives there?"

Vernon's eyes gleamed. Herbert Vernon-Smith had always detested the Army man at Lantham Chase, as much as he had detested the captain's nephew. He had perpetually had something unpleasant to say about Captain Vernon as a "poor relation," a man who took an immense house that he couldn't afford, and lived in a corner of it, like a rat in a bar!

But the Bounder's double naturally felt quite different on the subject! The captain was his uncle, whom he respected, and to whom he was deeply attached.

Since Bertie Vernon had been playing the part of Herbert Vernon-Smith at Greyfriars School, no word derogatory to the captain had been heard in Study No. 4.

But he checked the angry words that rose to his lips.

Successful as his imposture was, completely as he had succeeded in passing himself off on all Greyfriars as the Bounder, he had to be very careful. Any sign of resentment on Captain Vernon's account would certainly have made fellows stare, from a fellow they supposed to be Vernon-Smith.

"I went there," continued Coker, "as civil as you please. I had a puncture, and wanted to borrow stuff to mend it—why shouldn't I, at a place where a Greyfriars man lived? And that cheeky cad—"

"Who?" muttered Vernon, between his teeth.

"That coffee-coloured Indian captain," said Coker. "cu up rusty and ordered me off. He pitched into me with a riding-whip—"

"I know all that!" snapped Vernon. "You've been telling the world about

it ever since! What the thump are you telling me for?"

"I've warned you," said Coker, "not to be cheeky! Now, that mahogany-faced swab fancies it over and done with! It isn't! I'm not the man to be whopped with a riding-whip and nothing said! I gave him a good jolt—but he got by with his riding-whip game. Well, I'm going to give him some of the same."

"What?" gasped Vernon.

"I can't walk into the man's house and thrash him," went on Coker. "He's got his man there—a tough old ruffian like himself. I want to meet him out."

"Coker, old man—" murmured Potter.

Greene gave a hopeless shrug of the shoulders.

Coker's pals, it seemed, were not fearfully enthusiastic about this great idea that was working in Horace's mighty brain.

"Don't jaw, you two!" said Coker. "Now, do you get it, young Vernon-Smith? That cousin of yours, young Vernon, left here weeks ago to go to another school. What are you grinning at? Don't grin at me if you don't want your head smacked! I don't know what school he's gone to, and don't want to, but the point is this: Suppose the old coffee-bean got a phone call from him, asking him to come somewhere, he'd come—see?"

"No," answered Vernon; "I don't see."

"You're a young fool," said Coker. "I'll try to make it plain. That cheeky ruffian, Captain Vernon, gets a phone call from you, your voice being exactly like his nephew's. He thinks it's his dashed Bertie, and turns up. I'll arrange when and where; it will have to be a half-holiday. You will be able to pull his leg without the slightest

difficulty and get him where I want him—see?"

Bertie Vernon laughed.

He could not help it.

The Bounder, had he been still at Greyfriars, would doubtless have fallen for this scheme and entered into it with keen zest.

Bertie Vernon was not likely to enter into it—though certainly he was still less likely to tell Coker why.

"Well, when we get him where we want him I give him something back for that horsewhip!" said Coker, his eyes gleaming. "I shall take a horsewhip with me. Last time he had one and I hadn't! Next time I shall have one and he won't! And if I don't make the cheeky cad hop all over the shop my name ain't Horace J. Coker!"

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Vernon.

Smithy certainly would have jumped at it! Smithy, locked up in the turret-room at Lantham Chase, was not in a position to jump at anything. His double was not likely to jump at it. The captain's nephew could not quite see himself leading the captain in Coker's masterly trap. It was not likely!

"See?" demanded Coker. "You can do it. Nobody else can. Now, it will be safer to use a telephone outside the school—you see that? I'll walk down to Courtfield with you."

"Is that the lot?"

"Yes; now come on."

Coker, evidently, took the junior's consent for granted! Coker often took things for granted.

"I don't want you to do it for nothing," Coker added graciously. "I'll stand you a feed at the bunshop after we've phoned. You fellows coming?" he added, glancing at Potter and Greene.

"No jolly fear!" replied Potter and Greene in unison.

"Well, come on, Vernon-Smith! What are you hanging about for?"

"You born idiot!" said Bertie Vernon. "You crass ass—"

"What?"

"You thumping chump, I'm not going to do anything of the kind. You'd better keep clear of Captain Vernon if you don't want another hiding. That's all!"

And with that Bertie Vernon jumped back out of Coker's reach and cut off towards the House.

Coker was after him like a shot.

"Leggo!" roared Vernon, as Coker grabbed.

Smack, smack, smack!

Coker had, he considered, been patient with this cheeky junior. But his patience was quite exhausted now. There was, so far as Coker could see, only one way to deal with cheek like this. That was by walloping the cheeky young rascal. Coker proceeded to wallop him!

Smack, smack, smack!

Bang!

Vernon was nothing like a match for the mighty Horace. A fellow could not, perhaps, be expected to submit tamely to having his head smacked by a hand like a ham. No doubt that was the reason why he drove his fist with all his force into Horace Coker's waistcoat. Perhaps the circumstances justified that jab in the "bread-basket."

Anyhow, it doubled Coker up.

He let go Vernon and staggered back, with both hands clasped to his waistcoat. He gasped and he gurgled wildly.

"Ooooh!" gurgled Coker. "Woooh! Yoooooh! Moooooh!"

He staggered, he tottered, he gasped—winded!

Vernon jumped away.

Both Potter and Greene kicked him as he jumped; they felt that that was the least they could do for their gurgling pal.

Then, leaving Coker gurgling, Vernon escaped into the House, rather late for Mr. Quelch.

Caught!

MR. QUELCH, the master of the Remove, was having the surprise of his life while Bertie Vernon was enjoying the conversation of Coker of the Fifth.

After class that day Mr. Quelch had rather expected to see that junior in his study.

That particular junior was in Quelch's good books these days.

The Bounder of Greyfriars had started that term the same old Bounder—always in a scrape, always on the verge of mutiny, often suspected of breaking the laws of the school; not infrequently caught doing so. Indeed, Smithy, who had been near the sack before had been near it again that term. And while his relative, Bertie Vernon, was at Greyfriars, he had been at his very worst.

All that was changed since Vernon had "left."

Indeed, Mr. Quelch sometimes thought that his relative must have influenced Vernon-Smith for good, in spite of the bitter feud between them.

For, ever since his relative had left, the change in Smithy had been remarkable.

He seldom or never ragged. He was no longer even suspected of smoking in his study, or breaking out after lights-out. He was never seen in any suspicious locality. If a Greyfriars cap was spotted over the fence of the Three Fishers, Quelch no longer surmised that

it was on the head of Herbert Vernon-Smith!

Never a very studious fellow, Vernon-Smith was now as studious as Mr. Quelch remembered that cousin of his had been.

Smithy had been as good a man in class as at games—when he chose! But it was very seldom that he chose!

Now, however, he did. Not only was he a quiet and sedulous worker in the Form, but he had entered for a Latin prize, and was mugging up Titus Livius with that object in view.

Mr. Quelch's natural conclusion was that Herbert Vernon-Smith had taken warning by his narrow escape from expulsion and resolved to turn over a new leaf.

Certainly it was not likely to cross his mind that Herbert Vernon-Smith had disappeared from Greyfriars and that his place had been taken by the relative who resembled him like a twin.

Quelch had been doubting at first—he knew the Bounder so well! But, convinced at last that the ragger, the mutineer, the scapegrace, really had reformed, Quelch was the man to help him on the right path.

It was not uncommon now for Mr. Quelch to give up an hour, or a half-hour, out of his scanty leisure to give that junior some extra tuition—kindness for which he seemed grateful—though it would have evoked gratitude in few members of Quelch's Form.

That afternoon, Quelch knew, the reformed bad hat of the Remove was going to swot at Livy after class. He would have been glad to see him in his study, to give him a kind, helping hand. He had, in fact, told him to come if he found himself in any difficulties.

The junior had not come.

Quelch, who had set aside half an hour for him, rather regretted that he had not come, and, in the kindness of his heart, went up to the Remove studies to give him that half-hour all the same.

Coker of the Fifth, when he bagged that junior in the quad to help in his wonderful scheme for getting back on Captain Vernon, little dreamed what the result would be!

But for Coker, Vernon would have gone up to his study. Because of Coker, Vernon didn't! Quelch did!

Mr. Quelch walked up the Remove passage, little guessing that a fat Owl in Study No. 1 was listening to his passing steps, and arrived at Study No. 4.

The door of that study was shut, and Quelch tapped—Quelch always tapped—opened it, and walked in.

The study was vacant.

Its owner was not, as Quelch had expected, sitting at the study table, mugging up Livy—though doubtless he would have been, but for Coker of the Fifth.

Quelch walked across to the window and looked out. He was prepared to wait a few minutes if necessary.

But he certainly was not prepared for what followed.

At a sound at the door Quelch turned his head, expecting to see Vernon-Smith coming in. What he did see was a fat, grubby paw grabbing the door-handle and slamming the door shut.

Quelch stared.

He heard the key click in the lock as the door was locked on the outside. He heard the key jerked out. Then he almost jumped clear of the floor as a fat, triumphant voice howled through the keyhole.

The Remove master stood transfixed.

He knew that fat voice—the dulcet tones of Bunter of his Form!

Bunter had locked him in that study and was howling through the keyhole at him. It was unbelievable! It was unheard of! It was staggering! It was flabbergasting! But there it was.

"He, he, he!"

Billy Bunter's fat cachinnation came distinctly to his ears through the keyhole.

Dumbfounded, Mr. Quelch stood, gazing at the door. Bereft of the power of speech, he just stood gazing like a cow at a train.

"He, he, he! Got you, you swab!" went on the happy Owl. "I've been waiting for you, you beast, and now I've got you! Yah!"

Quelch almost wondered whether he was dreaming.

Could any Remove boy have the impudence, the amazing effrontery to watch for his Form master, lock him in a study, and slang him through the keyhole?

Really, it seemed incredible.

"You rotter! You toad! I'll give you lines!" came Bunter's triumphant howl. "Four hundred lines, all through you! Think I'm going to do them, you swab? I'll watch it!"

Another voice was heard in the passage—that of Lord Mauleverer. The fat Owl's triumphant howl had drawn him from his study.

"What's this game, old fat man?" asked Mauly.

"He, he, he! I've bagged that cad in the study!" chortled Bunter. "I've got him locked in. I've got the key. I fancy I ain't going to do those lines, Mauly. He, he, he!"

"Oh gad!" said Mauly.

"I've got the cad all right! Sneaking worm!" said Bunter. "Nobody is going to get this key off me! He, he, he! I say, you rotten worm!" Bunter bawled through the keyhole again. "I say, I've got you! Got that, you beast? You ain't getting out of this study in a hurry! He, he, he! Now, are you going to do those lines or not?"

Mr. Quelch stood gazing, or rather goggling.

"Do you hear me, Smithy, you cad?" howled Bunter.

"Oh!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

He realised how the matter stood now. Bunter had not meant to lock him in the study. He did not know that he was there. He had meant to lock Vernon-Smith in. He fancied that Vernon-Smith was there.

"I've left some impot paper on your table, you worm!" came Bunter's howl. "I've done one line! You're going to do the rest!"

Mr. Quelch glanced at the study table.

Vernon-Smith's books were there with a Livy, and some Latin exercises. Along with these was a sheaf of impot paper, with a single line scrawled on the top page. This line was:

"Arma virumque cano, Trojae qui primus ab oris."

It was scrawled in Billy Bunter's well-known hand, like unto which there was no other in the Greyfriars Remove.

"Understand, Smithy, you sneaking outsider?" howled Bunter. "You got me those lines. You know you did. I've asked you to do them for me, as you jolly well know you ought, a dozen times. Twenty times! Well, now you're jolly well going to do them, you sneak!"

"Oh!" gasped Mr. Quelch again.

He discerned that this was not merely a lark, locking a fellow in his study. There was deep purpose in it.

"Old Quelch doubled those lines, went on Bunter. "There's four hundred to do. He's licked me three times for not doing them. The old goat says they've got to be handed in to-day, or he'll lick me again—see?"

"Oh!" came another gasp from Quelch.

He was quite unaware of bearing the remotest resemblance to a goat. He was now apprised of that resemblance, if any, by William George Bunter.

"Well, I ain't going to do them! You're going to them, Smithy!" continued Bunter, through the key-hole. "I've done one line, and you'd better make your fist like it, or it won't do for Quelch. The old goat has eyes like gimlets, and he always looks at a fellow's lines. Mind, you ain't coming out of this study till it's all right with Quelch!"

"Bless my soul!" breathed Mr. Quelch.

"I can't trust you," went on Bunter. "You're such a rotter, Smithy. You'd pull a fellow's leg as soon as look at him. Like you did Captain Vernon's going over to Lantham Chase, and making out that you were his blessed Bertie, because your ugly mugs are so much alike! You'd make out you'd done those lines to get this door open. Don't I know you?"

"Has that fat chump—" It was Harry Wharton's voice in the passage.

"You shut up, Wharton, I'm talking to Smithy! I've got him all right. Do you hear me, Smithy? Get those lines done, wrap them up in something, and then drop them out of the study window, so that I can take them to Quelch. I ain't letting you out of this study till you do! And if the lines ain't ready by tea-time, I'm going to chuck the key away!"

"You fat ass—" "Ho, he, ho! I've got him all right!" chuckled Bunter. "If he don't toe the line, he sticks in that study. He won't get any tea, unless he's got something in the cupboard. He won't get any supper. I've got him all right. I can tell you I know how to handle a sneaking swab like Smithy!"

Mr. Quelch found his voice at last. He stepped to the study door, gave a sharp rap on it, and almost roared:

"Bunter, let me out of this study at once, you young rascal!"

Hard Lines!

BILLY BUNTER bounded.

It was not easy for William George Bunter to lift his weight; but he lifted it, as he heard his Form-master's voice from Study No. 4.

He jumped clear of the floor in the Remove passage.

"Oh crikey!" he ejaculated.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Harry Wharton.

"Oh gad!" gurgled Lord Mauloverer.

"Wake snakes!" exclaimed Fisher T. Fish.

Five or six fellows had come along by this time. And they all jumped at the well-known sound of their Form-master's voice from that study.

Nobody, so far, had guessed whom Bunter had caught in that masterly trap. They had taken it for granted, as Bunter did, that it was Smithy. Evidently, however, it was not.

"Bunter!" came a thunderous roar from within the study.

"Oh crumbs!"

"Quelch!" gurgled Skinner. "He's locked Quelch in Smithy's study. Oh, my only Aunt Sempronia!"

"I—I—I say, you fellows, it—it—it can't be Quick-Quick-Quelch!" stammered Billy Bunter. "How could it be Quick-Quick-Quelch in Smithy's study? Oh crikey! I say, I thought it was Smithy—"

"Unlock that door, you fat ass!" gasped Harry Wharton.

"But—but I heard him tell Bob he was coming up to the study, and—and then I heard somebody come, and—and—and—"

"Bunter!" came a roar from Study No. 4. "Will you unlock this door instantly?"

"Oh scissors!"

"Quick, you awful ass!" breathed Wharton.

Billy Bunter, bemused with astonishment and dismay, jammed the key into the lock. He had been going to keep Herbert Vernon-Smith locked in that study. But he was not thinking of keeping his Form-master locked in it.

The key turned, and the door was jerked open from within.

Henry Samuel Quelch was revealed to view with a glinting eye, and a brow of thunder.

Billy Bunter goggled at him through his big spectacles.

"Bunter!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, I—I never knew it was you, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I—I thought it was Smithy. It—it was only a lark on Smithy, sir. I—I—I wasn't going to make him do my lines, or—or anything!"

"I heard every word you shouted through the keyhole, Bunter!"

"Oh crikey!"

"I have seldom" said Mr. Quelch; "heard of such a thing as this. It is strictly forbidden for one boy to help another with an imposition. You have not merely asked Vernon-Smith to help you, Bunter, but you have had the audacity to think of locking him in his study to compel him to do so—"

"Oh, no!" gasped Bunter. "I—I—I mean— Oh lor'!"

"I shall deal with you very severely for this, Bunter!"

"I—I—I never, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I—I mean, I—I wasn't! Besides, it was Smithy's fault I got the lines. He jolly well knows that! Not that I asked him to do them for me, sir. I—I wouldn't. I—I—I like doing lines—"

"Follow me to my study, Bunter!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"Well," said Harry Wharton, with a deep breath as the hapless Owl disappeared down the staircase in the wake of his Form-master. "Bunter takes the cake! He really bags all the biscuits."

"I'll say this is the bee's knee," chuckled Fisher T. Fish. "Yep! It sure is the opossum's side-whiskers!"

"Poor old Bunter!" sighed Lord Mauloverer.

"Ain't he a card?" chortled Skinner. "Ain't he a deep, old plotter? He sets out to bag Smithy, and bags Quelch. Oh, my hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter left a sound of chuckling behind him as he went. But he did not feel like chuckling himself. The unhappy fat Owl doubted whether life was really worth the trouble of living as he followed Quelch down the stairs.

On the middle landing they met a junior coming up.

Billy Bunter gave Bertie Vernon, alias Vernon-Smith, a blink of the deadliest animosity.

"Smithy" was coming up at last—too late for Bunter.

Mr. Quelch, on the other hand,

cleared his thunderous brow, and gave him a gracious nod.

But his brow grew thunderous again as he marched Billy Bunter into his study. He picked up a cane from the table.

Bunter eyed that proceeding sadly and sorrowfully. It was clear that that cane was going to be featured in the next act.

"Now, Bunter," said Mr. Quelch grimly "you will bend over that chair!"

Whop, whop, whop!

Mr. Quelch laid down the cane! But he was not done with Bunter yet!

The fat junior, wriggling, wriggled towards the door.

Quelch's voice stopped him.

"Bunter!"

"Ow! I mean, yes, sir—wow!" moaned Bunter.

"It is now a very long time," said Mr. Quelch, "since I gave you an imposition of two hundred lines. That imposition has been doubled! Yet it has never been handed in to me."

Bunter blinked at him! Quelch seemed to think that doubling an impot was the way to get it done! Even a schoolmaster, Bunter thought, ought to have known that the longer the beastly thing was, the less likely a fellow was to get it done.

"I have caned you three times, and yet the lines have not been done!" continued Mr. Quelch. "I am now at the end of my patience, Bunter."

"Yes, sir! M-may I go now?" numbled Bunter.

"You may not!" thundered Mr. Quelch. "You will now draw a chair to this table and sit down, here in my study, and write those four hundred lines! You will not leave this study until you have done so."

"Bu—" gasped Bunter. "Tea, sir—"

"What?"

"I should be late for tea, sir!"

Bunter thought that Mr. Quelch must have forgotten that. He did not realise that his stony-hearted Form-master did not care whether he was late for tea or not!

"If you utter another word of impertinence, Bunter, I shall cane you again!" said Mr. Quelch.

"But—but I couldn't get through four hundred lines before the tea-bell, sir!" gasped Bunter. "No fellow could!"

"Silence! Take a chair, and sit at this table, Bunter!"

It dawned on Bunter that his Form-master was absolutely indifferent to Bunter's tea! It amounted to cruelty to animals—but there it was!

Bunter, in the lowest spirits, drew a chair to the table, and sat down. He squeaked as he sat! Those three whops had made Bunter more inclined to stand for time.

Quelch kindly provided him with impot paper, a pen, and a volume of Virgil. Then he fixed a gimlet eye on him.

"If you stir from this study, Bunter, before you have completed four hundred lines, I shall not cane you again!" he said, "I shall report you to your headmaster for a flogging as an incorrigible boy."

"Oh, really, sir—"

"I advise you," said Mr. Quelch, "to lose no time! I shall expect the lines to be finished when I return! Take warning, Bunter!"

Mr. Quelch left the study and shut the door.

Leaving Bunter to his lines, the Remove master returned to Study No. 4

in the Remove—where, this time, he found that studious junior mugging up Livy—in no danger of being locked in by a vengeful Owl!

Dismissing Bunter from his mind, Quelch proceeded to give Vernon that half-hour—and the Form-master, and that excellent pupil, mugged up Titus Livius together, with mutual satisfaction.

But there was no satisfaction in the master's study downstairs, where Billy Bunter sat, and wriggled, and groaned, and copied lines of Virgil.

Those lines had haunted Bunter for weeks! Many and various had been his dodges and excuses—and he had nourished a faint hope of putting them off, and off, till the end of the term, and dodging them altogether, if he did not succeed in getting that unspeakable beast, Smithy, to do them, as that unspeakable beast ought to have done.

But he hapless Owl was at the end of his tether now!

Had Quelch dismissed him to write those lines, with orders to show them up at a specified time, Bunter would have recommenced a series of dodges and shuffles and excuses.

Quelch hadn't! Quelch had sat him down in that study with orders not to leave it till the lines were finished! It was, Bunter thought bitterly, a dirty trick! It gave a fellow no chance! It gave him no scope! Bunter could have thought of a dozen excuses for not showing up the lines—but in the present circumstances, what excuse was any good to a fellow?

Bunter dared not leave that study with his lines unwritten! He dared not let Quelch come back and find them unwritten! There was absolutely nothing for it, but to write the lines—to that last and desperate resource had Bunter now been driven!

Really, he might as well have written them in the first place! Much better, in fact, before Quelch had doubled them!

It was one of Bunter's happy customs to take twice as much trouble to dodge a job of work as he need have taken to get it done!

"Beast!" groaned Bunter.

He started at "Arma virumque cano" in dismal spirits. The beauties of Virgil, if any, were totally lost on Bunter. Never had he disliked the great Latin poet so intensely. Sad to relate, Billy Bunter actually would have liked to ram Virgil down Quelch's neck!

He groaned and he scribbled—and he scribbled and he groaned.

From the study window he could see the quad and lots of fellows who were not worried by lines! He saw five fellows in flannels—Harry Wharton, Frank Nugent, Bob Cherry, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Janset Ram Singh—going to the school shop in a bunch—and he groaned deeply! The Famous Five were probably going in for the refreshing ginger-pop after a slog at the nets. Willingly, gladly, would Bunter have rolled in with them—one of the five, at least, would have stood him a ginger-pop!

This was like the tortures of Tantalus!

To sit there, grinding lines in Quelch's study, and watch fellows going in for ginger-pop!

"That beast Smithy!" hissed Bunter. It was all Smithy's fault, from beginning to end! Even more than he would have liked to slaughter Virgil, Billy Bunter would have liked to slaughter that beast Smithy!

Lines scrawled from Bunter's pen, THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,641.

with a grunt, or a groan, for every line.

He was going to be late for tea—not that Quelch cared! He was fearfully hungry—he had had nothing since dinner—except some toffee he had found in Squiff's study, and a jam-roll he had found in Ogilvy's.

And four hundred lines seemed to drag their weary length along like a wounded snake!

Billy Bunter's feelings towards that beast Smithy were like those of a Corsican who had sworn a deep, dark, desperate, deadly vendetta!

A Spoke in Smithy's Wheel!

B UZZZZZZ! The buzz of Quelch's telephone-bell was quite a relief to Bunter. It was a break in the monotony, at least.

He left his lines and took up the receiver. Being on the spot, he might be expected to take the call and ask the caller to hold on while he called Quelch.

That, Bunter thought, was rather a good idea.

He could go and look for Quelch, and take a jolly long time finding him. It did not matter how long the caller had to wait! That was immaterial, so long as Bunter got a rest from his lines.

"Hallo!" said Bunter into the transmitter.

"Mr. Vernon-Smith speaking!" came a deep, throaty voice—a voice that Bunter knew.

It was the Bounder's father on the phone.

"Oh!" breathed Bunter.

Smithy's father was ringing up Quelch! Ten to one that meant that Smithy's father was coming down to Greyfriars!

Billy Bunter's eyes gleamed behind his spectacles.

Smithy, for some reason utterly unknown to Bunter, was dodging meeting his pater!

Once, when Mr. Vernon-Smith had been coming down to the school, he had contrived to hook on to a team going over to Rookwood, at the last moment! Then, when Mr. Vernon-Smith was at Lantham, he had contrived to get a spill on his bike, so that he could not ride over and see him there.

Other fellows knew this as well as Bunter. Why Smithy was thus dodging the "old bean" nobody knew, but they knew that he was!

He was not going to dodge him this time, if Bunter could help it! This chance of getting back at Smithy came like a windfall to Bunter.

"I should be glad to speak to my son on the telephone, if you would be so kind, Mr. Quelch!" went on the millionaire's voice from London.

Bunter grinned. Quelch, probably, would not have liked such a request, but he would have acceded to it! Bunter was not going to accede to it! Smithy was not going to have any warning, this time, that his pater was coming!

"I am sorry, Mr. Vernon-Smith," said the fat Owl, assuming a deep voice, "that your son at present is out of gates."

If the swot in Study No. 4 had finished swotting by this time, and gone out, that statement was true. If he hadn't, it wasn't! Bunter took the chance of that! He was no whale on facts at the best of times!

"Oh!" It was a disappointed grunt from the other end. "Very well, that

cannot be helped. Perhaps you would kindly give him a message from me, Mr. Quelch!"

"Certainly, Mr. Vernon-Smith." "I have not been able to see Herbert this term," said the millionaire. "Twice I have arranged to see him, but each time something seems to have transpired to prevent it. It is my intention to call at Greyfriars to-morrow afternoon. As it will be a Wednesday which is a half-holiday, I shall expect my son to be awaiting me."

Bunter suppressed a chuckle. There was a tone of annoyance in the millionaire's voice.

He could hardly have suspected that his son was deliberately dodging a meeting with him—though any man in the Greyfriars Remove could have told him so! But no doubt he did think it a little singular that "something" should have "transpired" on two consecutive occasions, to prevent a meeting; and he did not want anything to transpire again.

Something would have transpired, as Bunter was quite assured, to prevent a meeting on the morrow—if Smithy knew his father was coming! Mr. Vernon-Smith did not know that—Bunter did!

"Probably you can tell me, Mr. Quelch, whether my son will be playing cricket away from school to-morrow!" went on the voice from London.

"Not at all!" answered Bunter cheerfully. "There is no Remove match on to-morrow at all."

"Very good! If you will tell my son, sir, that I shall be at Greyfriars about three o'clock to-morrow afternoon, I shall be very much obliged. If he has made any other arrangements for the afternoon, I shall expect him to cancel them."

"Very well, Mr. Vernon-Smith!"

"I trust that my son has quite recovered from the injury he received in cycling to Lantham last week?"

"Oh! Quite!"

"I am glad of that! Pray excuse me for taking up your time, Mr. Quelch! I trust you are well!"

"Very well, thank you, Mr. Vernon-Smith!" answered the cheery fat Owl.

"You may be assured that your son will be here to see you to-morrow afternoon."

"Thank you, Mr. Quelch! Good-bye!"

"Good-bye, Mr. Vernon-Smith!"

Bunter hung up! He grinned from the window into the quad! The swot of Study No. 4 had evidently finished swotting Livy, for there he was, walking in the quad—and Bunter grinned at the sight of him.

He wondered what Smithy would have said, could he have known what had just been talked over on Quelch's telephone!

He was not going to know! Bunter was going to put a spoke in his wheel!

The fat Owl returned to Quelch's table, and his lines, feeling quite bucked! The lines were as weary and dreary as ever: but he was getting back on Smithy!

It was quite a mystery to Bunter, and to other fellows, why Herbert Vernon-Smith did not want to see his pater.

Certainly no one was likely to guess that an impostor had a lurking fear that a father's eye might discern what was so successfully hidden from all other eyes!

But, mysterious as Smithy's reason seemed, there was no doubt about the fact.

Bunter had overheard him telling "somebody," on Prout's telephone, that he would go over to Rookwood



“I’ve left some impot paper on the table, you worm!” howled Bunter. “I’ve done one line! You’re going to do the rest!”

with the cricketers, to keep out of Mr. Vernon-Smith’s way—and Bunter had told that to all the Remove. Then had followed the “spill” on the Lantham road, which had prevented Smithy from going on, so that he had been “unable” to see his father at Lantham. It was palpable enough—puzzling as it was: and Bunter jolly well knew that there would be another dodge if Smithy was told that his father was coming on Wednesday! Bunter had no doubt of that at all!

Smithy wasn’t going to be told!

His pater would barge in on Wednesday afternoon and take Smithy quito by surprise! Then, whatever his mysterious reason was for dodging the “old bean,” Smithy would be properly dished!

That happy anticipation was quite a comfort to the fat Owl as he sat scribbling, scrawling, blotting, and smearing and smudging, and wasting quite an unnecessary quantity of Mr. Quelch’s ink.

It was a good half-hour later that the study door opened and Mr. Quelch came in.

After getting through with that excellent pupil, and Livy, in Vernon-Smith’s study, Quelch had gone to tea in the Common-room—heartlessly regardless of Bunter’s tea!

Now he had turned up at last! He turned a gimlet-eye on Bunter!

“Have you completed your lines, Bunter?”

“N-n-not quite, sir!”

“You have had ample time, Bunter!”

“I—I—I’m so awfully hungry, sir!” said Bunter pathetically. “I—I think I—I should finish them much better after tea, sir.”

“Nonsense!” said Mr. Quelch.

“B-b-but, sir—”

“You need say nothing, Bunter! You

will not leave this study till you have completed four hundred lines!”

Bunter suppressed a groan, and scrawled on.

Mr. Quelch sat down on the other side of the table, drew a pile of Form papers towards him, and began correcting Latin proses.

Bunter scrawled on drearily.

More than another half-hour crawled by. Then, at long last, Bunter dropped his last blot and smeared his final smoar.

He rose from the table.

The gimlet-eyes fixed on him.

“Have you finished, Bunter?”

“Yes, sir!” moaned Bunter.

“Hand me the lines!”

Mr. Quelch looked over those lines, with an expression of the strongest disapproval. He appeared to have no special relish for blots, smears, and smudges. He snorted.

“These lines are disgracefully written, Bunter!”

Bunter trembled! Was the utter beast going to tell him to write them over again? Billy Bunter quaked at the awful thought!

Fortunately, Mr. Quelch stopped short of that. He gave another snort.

“You may go, Bunter!”

Daniel, emerging from the lions’ den, did not feel so happy and relieved as did William George Bunter, getting out of Quelch’s study!

Bunter shut the door, shook a fat fist at it and rolled away—in search of provender.

No News of Redwing!

“**B**EFORE we commence—” said Mr. Quelch, the following morning in the Remove Form-room.

The Remove sat up and took notice, at once.

“—I have a question to put to my Form—”

Mr. Quelch paused, glancing over the Remove.

The juniors waited for the question, wondering what it was going to be.

Some of them looked a little anxious.

Skinner and Snoop hoped that that question was not going to refer to cigarettes in Remove studies. Fisher T. Fish hoped that Quelch had not heard anything about money-lending transactions among the fags. Billy Bunter blinked at his Form-master in deep trepidation, dreading that Quelch was going to inquire about a pie, which Bunter knew, if nobody else did, must have been missed the previous day from the regions below.

“It refers to Redwing!” said Mr. Quelch.

There was general relief.

Tom Redwing of the Remove had, as Fishy expressed it, got Quelch’s goat! But nobody else could be possibly blamed for that.

“It is now some days,” said the Remove master, “since Redwing left the school without asking leave. Except for the telegram he sent me from Dover, I have heard nothing from him. In that telegram he asked permission to leave early for the holidays to join his father in his coasting vessel. No reply was possible.”

Quelch’s eyes glinted.

“I am convinced,” he went on, “that Mr. Redwing cannot possibly have been aware that his son was taking the law into his own hands in this manner. I am sure that he would not have allowed him to do so. It is very surprising to me that a steady, well-conducted boy like Redwing should have acted in this self-willed and irresponsible manner. He has, however, done so, and he must take the consequences.”

The Remove listened in silence.

Redwing's friends in the Form—and they were many—were rather concerned about him. What he had done did not seem like Tom Redwing at all.

It was true that, at Easter, he had been given early leave for the holidays to join his father in a coasting cruise. Such leave might have been given again, had the matter been put to Mr. Quelch for his consideration.

Redwing seemed to have taken it for granted—and this time it was not a matter of days, but of weeks!

If old John Redwing had been sailing from Dover that day, no doubt it had been a case of "now or never." Still, a fellow at school really could not do these things—at least without disagreeable consequences to follow.

The call of the sea, perhaps, had been too strong for the sailorman's son, and he had for once disregarded proper authority in a way that was more like the headstrong Bounder, than Tom Redwing.

"At the time" continued Mr. Quelch. "I asked my Form whether any boy was aware of any method of communicating with Redwing. It appeared that no one was aware of his intention, or aware of any address at which a letter might reach him."

Quelch's eyes glanced over his Form searchingly.

Perhaps he was not quite assured that no member of his Form knew anything of Tom Redwing's whereabouts.

"I should have expected," he resumed, "a letter from Redwing explaining and apologising. I should certainly have replied with a command to return to the school at once. No doubt that is why he has not written. This adds to the seriousness of his action."

The Remove did not need telling that Quelch was deeply annoyed and angered.

Tom Redwing had always been in his good books. Although he had chummed with the scapegrace of the school, his own conduct had always been exemplary.

But it was clear that he was quite out of Quelch's good books now!

"The question I have to put to my Form is this!" continued Mr. Quelch. "I require to know whether any boy has heard from Redwing since he left." Silence!

"I address myself particularly to you, Vernon-Smith, as I understand that Redwing was your most intimate friend in the Form!" said Mr. Quelch.

He fixed his eyes on the Bounder's double.

But his look was not the stern and grim look he was accustomed to fix on the Bounder—the rebel of the Form! The Bounder's double had retrieved the Bounder's reputation. Since that change of identity, Smithy was no longer a dog with a bad name!

Bertie Vernon coloured a little. "I have heard nothing from him, sir!" he said quietly.

"Please consider before you answer, Vernon-Smith!" said Mr. Quelch. "It seems very singular to me that the boy should have gone in this manner without a word to any other boy in the Form, and especially to an intimate friend. You must not suppose that you will do Redwing any harm by speaking. You may save him from being compelled to leave Greyfriars."

Vernon's eyes glimmered for a moment.

Tom Redwing, the Bounder's old chum, was the only fellow in the Remove that he feared in his imposture.

More than once he had fancied that Redwing doubted him—that some vague suspicion was in Tom's mind.

Redwing's sudden departure was a relief to him; and if that departure proved permanent, it was all to the good from the point of view of the Bounder's double. Certainly he would have been glad enough if Tom Redwing never returned to Greyfriars.

"If I am able to communicate with Redwing, and if he obey my command to return to the school immediately, the headmaster may overlook this act of disrespectful folly in view of Redwing's previous good conduct," said Mr. Quelch. "You will understand, Vernon-Smith, that it will be for Redwing's benefit to tell me anything you may know."

"I quite understand, sir; but I know no more than the other fellows," answered Vernon. "He said nothing to me before he left, and he certainly has not written. Perhaps I should mention, sir, that I have not been on very good terms with Redwing this term. We used to be friends, that is all."

"Indeed!" said Mr. Quelch, rather sharply.

Quelch was unaware of what all the Remove knew on that subject.

"I don't mean that we quarrelled, sir," said Vernon hastily. "But since I've been working for the Latin prize, we haven't got on as we used to. I dare say it was my fault. But the truth is, that we've had very little to do with one another for weeks past, and I don't think Redwing would be likely to take the trouble to write to me."

"Then he has not done so?"

"No, sir."

"Has any other boy present received a communication of any kind from Redwing?" asked Mr. Quelch, his gimlet-eye surveying the Form again.

No answer.

"Wharton! You, I think, were on very friendly terms with Redwing."

"Yes, sir!" answered Harry.

"You have not heard from him?"

"No, sir!"

"Cherry, Nugent, Bull, Hurree Singh—have you anything to tell me?"

"No, sir!"

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips.

"I will speak plainly," he said.

"Unless Redwing returns to the school at once, he will not be allowed to return at all. If any boy here can place me in touch with him, it may save him from expulsion. This is the last time I shall speak to my Form on the subject; so if any boy can give me the required information, let him do so at once."

But there was no answer.

Had any fellow in the Remove been able to give that information, undoubtedly he would have done so, to save Redwing from the sack. It was clear that not a fellow in the Form knew anything about Tom Redwing's movements.

"May I speak, sir?" said Harry Wharton, after a long hesitation.

"Certainly, if you have anything to tell me, Wharton!"

"I don't know anything about Redwing, sir—he never spoke to me before he left, and the last I saw of him was on his bike on the Lantham road the day he went. But—"

"But what?" rapped Mr. Quelch.

"After Easter, sir, his father went on a deep-sea voyage, and from what I've heard Redwing say, he was not expected home till the autumn. He must have returned unexpectedly, if Redwing joined him at Dover last week. Something very unexpected must have happened, and that may be the reason—"

"That is no excuse for Redwing's conduct, Wharton. Certainly his father would never have allowed him to leave the school without permission; and I can only think that Redwing must have deceived him on that point."

"Redwing wouldn't do that, sir!" said Bob Cherry.

"I do not desire to hear excuses for Redwing!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "I desire to know whether any boy in this Form can tell me where he can be found."

No answer.

"Very well!" said Mr. Quelch. "I can only report to the headmaster that this boy of my Form has chosen to absent himself, without leave; and I have no doubt that Dr. Locke will order his name to be removed from the Form list. We shall now commence."

And the subject was dismissed; and the Remove gave their attention—more or less—to Latin con.

Let Down!

"**B**OOTH of you!" said Coker firmly.

"Um!" said Potter and Greene

"A fellow expects his pals to stand by him!" said Coker.

"Um!" said Potter and Greene again.

Coker's pals were prepared to stand by Coker, as loyal pals should—up to a certain point!

When Coker had one of those magnificent hampers from his Aunt Judy, Potter and Greene stood by him loyally. When Coker stood a trip to Venice in the holidays, Potter and Greene rallied round him with faithful hearts.

But there was a limit!

When Coker proposed to march into a man's place, collar that man, and lay a riding-whip round his trousers, Potter and Greene could not help thinking that the limit had been reached, and a little over.

True, Captain Vernon had laid a riding-whip round Coker that day at Lantham Chase. Still, Coker had jolly well known that the Army man did not want callers there—everybody knew that.

Coker had meant no harm, it was true. Couldn't a fellow, hung up by a bad puncture, call at a place to borrow a repair outfit—a place where a chap lived who had recently been at Coker's school?

Of course Coker could! Any fellow could! And much as Captain Vernon objected to strangers barging in at Lantham Chase, it was a little surprising that he had cut up so very rusty.

Potter and Greene could not help suspecting that it was more Coker's fault than the captain's, however.

Coker was not tactful. He was seldom polite. His manners, as Potter and Greene agreed, would have been considered a bit scrappy even in a bear-garden. They themselves often thought that Coker would be all the better for a thundering good hiding—and they were his pals! So it seemed probable, to Potter and Greene, that old Horace had asked for what he had got.

It did not seem so to Horace himself.

Ever since that painful episode, Coker had talked little else. He had almost forgotten to tell Potter and Greene how to play cricket. He had been much more eloquent than usual on the subject of Prout, his Form-master—a dense man who utterly failed to spot Coker's great gifts, and even found fault with his spelling.

Only that morning, Prout had turned

on his sarc in the Fifth Form room, because Coker had added a superfluous "k" to the word "comic." But Coker had nothing to say about even that. He did not, as usual, make bitter remarks about Form-masters who could not even spell! It was Captain Vernon first, Captain Vernon last, Captain Vernon all the time!

Potter and Greene were fed-up with it—tired to the bone of the subject. But "Captain Vernon" rolled from Coker's lips with the same endless, wearisome reiteration as the words "Western Democracies" from the lips of a radio announcer.

Now besides being, as usual, fearfully bored, Potter and Greene were alarmed. Coker could not do this thing.

Potter and Greene agreed that he couldn't.

The trouble was that Coker was convinced that he could, and, more serious still, he expected his pals to rally round and lend a hand if needed.

"If that cheeky little scoundrel Vernon-Smith did what I asked him yesterday, it would come easier I know that," said Coker. "My idea was to get that cad, that ruffian, that bully, out somewhere where a chap could deal with him, man to man!"

"Um!" said Potter and Greene.

"From what I've heard the fags gabbling, young Vernon-Smith was up against that cad at Lantham Chase, and played tricks on him, too," said Coker. "Thought he would jump at it. He didn't. I smacked his head. I'll smack it again. But that washes him out. I've got to manage without him."

"Um!"

"I've taken time about it," said Coker. "I've thought it out. I see only one way of handling the matter.

If you fellows can suggest a better one I'm willing to listen."

"Why not let the whole matter drop?" suggested Potter.

"Don't be a fool Potter!"

"Forget and forgive, and all that," suggested Greene.

"Don't be an idiot, Greene!"

Potter and Greene relapsed into silence. Their suggestions did not seem to meet with favour in Coker's eyes.

"If that's all you've got to say, better shut up!" said Coker. "Now, let's go and get the bikes out. It's a good step to Lantham Chase."

"But—" moaned Potter and Greene.

"We shall call at the place," said Coker. "I shall have a riding-whip this time all ready. I'm going to give that bully some of his own medicine. You fellows will stand by and see that his man doesn't chip in. He's got only one man in that immense place. Can't make out what he's taken such a place for, to keep it nearly all empty, and camp in two or three rooms. Anyhow, that's how it is, nobody there, but his man Grunt—"

"Hunt," said Potter.

"I don't care whether it's Grunt or Hunt. All I care about is that he doesn't meddle while I'm thrashing that cheeky cad who laid his riding-whip round me. If he barges in, you fellows collar him. You can knock him down and sit on him, or boot him back into the house, or hold him by his ears—anything you like. I'm not particular about that, so long as you keep him from barging in."

Potter and Greene gazed at Coker. They were rather particular about it, if old Horace wasn't.

"Now, come on!" said Coker briskly.

"We've got nearly ten miles to do on the bikes before I get going on that black-faced blighter!"

"But—"

"I say—"

"Jaw jaw, jaw!" said Coker. "Blessed if I ever saw such fellows for jaw! Are you coming, or not?"

Potter and Greene would gladly have answered "Not," but they did not want a row with Coker.

Certainly they would have preferred a row with Coker at Greyfriars to a row with Captain Vernon at Lantham Chase. But there were other methods.

It was one of Coker's most attractive qualities that it was always easy to pull his leg. And it was easier and simpler, and much less strenuous, to pull Coker's leg than to punch his head.

Potter and Greene followed him to the bike-shed. It was a glorious July afternoon, and they did not object to a spin.

But only Coker supposed that that spin was going to land Potter and Greene at Lantham Chase. If it landed Coker there, it was going to land Coker on his solitary own!

Coker's pals wheeled out their machines after Coker. Before mounting they gave some slight attention to the tyres.

Then they rode away with Coker.

For a couple of miles all went well, but on the steep rise of Redclyffe Hill Potter uttered a sudden ejaculation.

"My tyre!"

As if those words were a signal, Greene suddenly ejaculated:

"By gum! My tyre!"

They halted and dismounted.

Coker, with an impatient snort, dismounted also.

(Continued on next page.)



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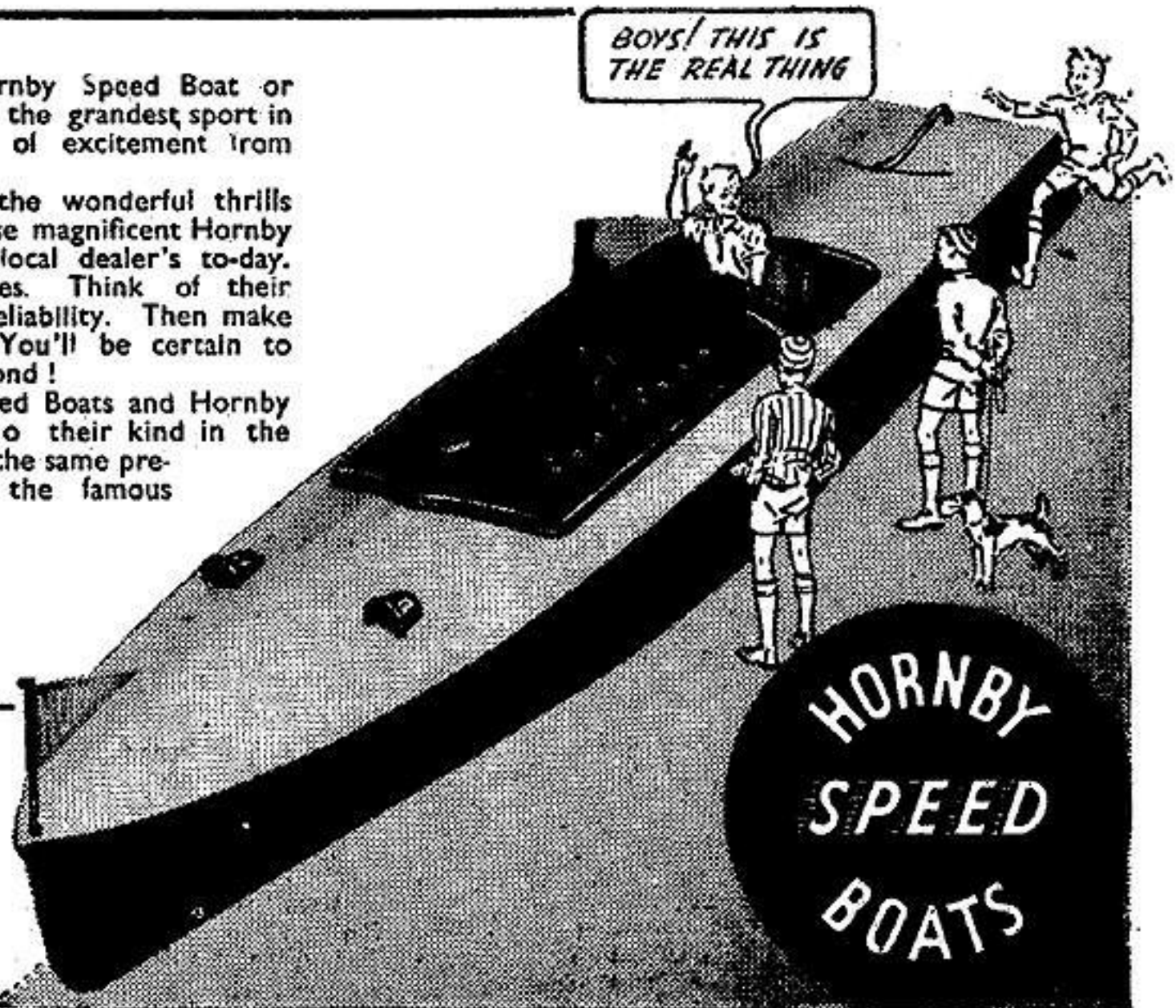
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"What's up?" he grunted.

"Look!" said Potter and Greene sadly.

They pointed to flat tyres. Both tyres on both bikes were as flat as pancakes! Flatter tyres had never been seen.

Coker gazed at them.

"Well," said Coker, with a deep breath, "of all the fools—"

"Um!" said Potter and Greene.

"Of all the blithering idiots—"

"Um!"

"Punctures all over your jiggers! You couldn't be satisfied with one puncture each!" said Coker, with bitter sarcasm. "You had to have a couple each! Just like you fellows, I must say!"

"Man can't help a puncture," Potter pointed out.

"These things do happen," said Greene.

"They do—to howling asses and blithering idiots!" said Coker. "Well, get going and mend them. I'll sit on the bank and wait."

"Got a puncture outfit?" asked Potter blandly.

"Haven't you?" roared Coker.

"No."

"Haven't you, Greene?"

"No."

"Well, luckily I have," said Coker.

"After what happened that time at Lantham Chase, when we were hung up, I never go out without one. You fellows can't learn a lesson, of course. Luckily I can. I've got an outfit all right. I'll get it out."

Potter and Greene watched Coker with friendly interest as he opened his saddle-bag.

Coker turned out a spanner and an oily rag—nothing else!

"Hand it over, old chap!" said Potter, with a private wink at Greene.

"It doesn't seem to be here," said Coker, puzzled. "I jolly well know I packed it in a week ago or more! Some silly owl must have borrowed it. It's not here!"

"Not there!" ejaculated Potter.

"No. Some barbling cuckoo's taken it out of my bag! I jolly well wish I knew who it was! I'd jolly well punch his head!"

Potter was rather glad that Coker did not know who it was. He had no desire to stop one of Coker's punches with his head.

"Well, that's the limit!" said Coker, in utter disgust. "Here we are, hung up miles from everywhere—two bikes badly punctured! My hat! I can't hang about all the afternoon waiting while you dunderheads wheel those jiggers for miles and miles! If that's what you think, you can jolly well think again!"

Coker put a long leg over his machine.

"You're not going on without us!" exclaimed Potter.

Snort from Coker

"I jolly well am!" he answered emphatically. "I've come out to ride, not to walk. If you fellows haven't sense enough to carry a puncture outfit, when you're always picking up punctures, you can't expect a fellow to go foot-slogging with you. If you do, you'll be jolly well disappointed!"

And Coker, with another snort, jammed a large foot on a pedal, and went careering away up Redclyffe Hill.

Potter and Greene watched him till he was small in the distance. Then they looked at one another and smiled.

Then they stooped and adjusted the valves which had let the air out of their tyres. Then they pumped up the tyres.

Then they remounted and pedalled.

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away, taking the direction opposite from that taken by Coker.

Potter and Greene had quite an agreeable spin that pleasant afternoon. It did not take them anywhere near Lantham Chase.

Two in a Turret!

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH, the Bounder of Greyfriars, moved about the turret-room at Lantham Chase rather like a wild animal in a cage.

Tom Redwing, quieter and more patient, stood leaning on the shutter of the window that overlooked the avenue through the park.

For weeks Herbert Vernon-Smith had been a hidden prisoner in that room at the top of the old turret. For one week Tom Redwing had been his fellow-prisoner there.

His company undoubtedly had been a comfort and a solace to the imprisoned Bounder, but it meant, at the same time, the end of all the hopes of freedom he had centred on his chum.

He had hoped and hoped that Redwing might somehow spot the imposture that was being carried on at Greyfriars. Redwing had, and he had searched for his chum at Lantham Chase, with this result. The iron grasp of the plotter had closed on him also, and he had found his chum, only to join him in captivity.

"How's this going to end, Reddy?" asked the Bounder. He came to a halt and stared at the junior leaning on the shutter. "How?"

"While there's life there's hope, old chap!" said Tom, in his quiet way. "And heaps more hope since I've been here."

"I don't see that. You were an ass to run into that villain's hands as you did," said the Bounder bitterly. "Knowing what you did, you ought to have been on your guard."

Tom coloured a little, and made no answer.

He was where he was from his loyal devotion to his chum, but not a word of complaint had passed his lips since he had been in the turret-room. But his character was stronger than Smithy's. He could endure in silence, and found no comfort in angry words.

"If you'd told my father, or even Wharton—" muttered the Bounder.

"How could I, Smithy?" said Tom quietly. "Who was going to believe that your cousin had taken your name and your place in the school? It was weeks before it dawned on my mind, and even then, up to the last minute, I could not say that I was sure. And if I'd been sure, where was the proof? Your father would have thought me off my rocker if I'd told him such a story, even if he'd have listened to it, though."

"It would have sounded steep," admitted the Bounder, "but—"

"I gave Wharton a hint," said Tom, "after that day Coker was here."

"I saw the fool, and pitched a book down from that window," groaned the Bounder. "A message was written in it. I thought he might have sense enough to do something."

"Captain Vernon kicked it out of his hand as he was picking it up," said Tom. "He laid into Coker with his riding-whip and cleared him off. And after I'd heard that I put it to Wharton—not mentioning you, of course, or he'd have thought me batty, when there was Vernon-Smith under his eyes in the Remove—but I asked him if it didn't look as if somebody was shut up

here, trying to get into communication."

"And what did he say?"

"He laughed at the idea, and told me to forget it. And—and I couldn't wonder at it, either. It sounded too fearfully steep, even to myself. Even after I was sure that that fellow at Greyfriars was not you, Smithy, I couldn't help thinking every now and then that I was a fanciful ass—that there was nothing in it. It's an unheard-of thing. Who could believe it? Bertie Vernon, so far as anyone knows, left Greyfriars weeks ago to go to another school. How could anybody believe that you disappeared the same day, and he walked back into the school in your place?"

The Bounder clenched his hands.

"The cur! The cheating cur!" he breathed. "I'll make him pay scot and lot some day!"

"I believed you were here, but I could not have said so till I came and found out," said Tom. "Even when I felt sure of it, it seemed too fantastic to be true. Not till I rapped on that door and heard your voice inside—not till then could I be sure that I was not dreaming. And then—"

"And then it was too late," said the Bounder bitterly. "And I suppose Wharton's forgotten what you said to him long ago."

"Most likely. He thought it utter rot, as any fellow would have. But there's something else he may think of."

"What's that?"

"I asked him to be present one day when I spoke to your cousin about our Easter holiday in Devonshire. I was putting the matter to the proof, and I mentioned something that never happened, and Vernon pretended to remember it."

"That made it clear enough," said Vernon-Smith. "That was pretty cute, Tom. That's a thing Wharton might remember, but he'll never guess—"

Tom shook his head.

"Nobody will guess," he said. "Nobody could. I had something to go on that no other fellow had. I couldn't feel friendly towards him. But even that didn't open my eyes for a long time. And, even up to the very end, doubts kept crossing my mind. It might have been only that you'd changed—and fellows do change. But, I know now."

"Fat lot of good that is, now you're jugged here with me! You've got landed, too. That villain will never let you run to give him away. He would have to face prison if you got out of this. You're locked. And you say there's heaps of hope—"

"I think so," said Tom quietly. "That fellow at Greyfriars, Smithy, must be a pretty hard nut to carry on a game like that. But it's no good being blinded by dislike. He is not a villain, or anything like it!"

The Bounder gave his chum a glare. "Not a villain, when he's stolen my name, trying to steal my father and my inheritance, and keeping me a prisoner in this den!" he snarled.

Redwing shook his head again.

"The whole thing was planned by Captain Vernon," he answered. "Bertie Vernon would never have dreamed of such a thing on his own. He's taken his orders from his uncle—a man he's fond of, and who's done everything for him. I'm pretty certain it gave him a bit of a shock when he was told what was on."

"Rot!"

"I'm sure of it, Smithy, and it's in that that I put 'hope,'" said Tom



"I did not expect, sir, when I telephoned, to have foolish tricks played on me. Good-afternoon. Mr. Quelch!"

quietly. "He must find out, sooner or later, that Captain Vernon is keeping me a prisoner here as well as you. I can't believe that he will stand for it."

"You fancy he'd be more concerned about you than about me?" sneered the Bounder.

"I'm sure of it. You were his enemy—and a bitter enemy. You treated him badly—very badly. It's no good mincing words, Smithy! You borrowed his name to play tricks here, passing yourself off as him. He may very likely say to himself that he's only following your own example, and giving you some of your own gruel. You played on that likeness between you, to land him in trouble. He may very likely think that he's simply following suit. But—"

"Well?" snarled the Bounder.

"But it's different with another fellow," said Tom. "I've done him no harm. I never liked him, but I never disliked him. I've never done him an ill turn, or wanted to. He may say to himself that he's only treating you, as you might have treated him. He can't think that about me. If he leaves me to this, when he knows, he's got to admit to himself that he's a rascal. And he's not a rascal, Smithy, not really."

The Bounder shrugged his shoulders.

"If that's what you pin your hopes on, you can wash them out!" he growled. "Think he doesn't know already that you're juggled with me?"

"I'm sure not. The captain will keep it away from him if he can. I'm sure of that. But, sooner or later, he will find it out, and then—"

The Bounder was silent.

His feelings towards his rival were too deep and too bitter for him to agree with Redwing's view. But if

Redwing was right, it was a spot of blue in the dark clouds.

"That Army man is as deep as a well," went on Tom. "He's planned this a long time ahead. He's got it all out and dried. He found out all about me; he got all the information he wanted. He's made them believe at the school that I've gone to sea with my father, taking French leave before the holidays. He has said so, and I've no doubt he's got by with it. No chance of my father turning up and putting paid to it. He's away on a deep-sea voyage. I've no other near relations, but—"

"You won't be looked for," said Vernon-Smith. "Everything seems to go his way."

"No," said Tom. "But for me, he had a jolly good chance of pulling this off. But now I'm in it, I don't see Captain Vernon pulling it off. His nephew won't stand for this."

"Rot!"

"Well, that's what I think," said Tom.

"If that's true, he will never let his nephew know that you're here, so it's as broad as it is long."

"Not if he can, help it. But he mayn't be able to help it. And if the fellow knew—"

"Oh, rot!" said the Bounder savagely. "Don't sing that cur's praises to me, Redwing, or we shall have a row!"

Tom Redwing made no answer.

He turned to the shuttered window to look out again at the green park, the winding avenue, in the bright July sunshine.

The bars through which Smithy had tossed the book with the message, on the day that Coker had come, were covered with a wire netting, strongly riveted now. There was no chance of

a second attempt of that kind. That attempt had had no result, except that it had helped to enlighten Tom Redwing, and bring him to his comrade's rescue—only to share his fate.

Vernon-Smith joined him at the window, scowling.

"There's that villain!" he muttered, between his teeth, as a figure came in sight below, at a little distance from the building.

It was Captain Vernon! His hard, dark face was not turned towards the turret. He was looking down the avenue, as if at some object that had caught his attention.

The two juniors, looking down, could see that black anger was gathering in that dark, sun-bronzed face.

"By gum!" muttered the Bounder. "Can anybody be coming? He's pretty careful to keep people away from here, but—"

Tom gave a start.

"Look!" he breathed.

"That fool, Coker!" exclaimed the Bounder. "What the thump is he doing here again?"

They could see now at what the captain was so grimly staring. Up the avenue came a cyclist—a big fellow on a big machine. What looked like the end of a riding-whip was sticking out from under his arm. It was Horace Coker of the Fifth Form at Greyfriars.

He could see the captain and his grim forbidding look. That forbidding look made no difference to Horace Coker. He came on regardless.

"If he could hear a shout—" muttered the Bounder miserably.

"No chance of that!" said Tom. "But—what the dickens has brought Coker here again?"

(Continued on page 16.)

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(Continued from page 15.)

"Hunting for trouble from his looks!" said the Bounder. The Bounder was right! Horace Coker was hunting for trouble—and he was not long in finding it.

Billy Bunter is Amused!

"I SAY, you fellows! What's the time?"

"Fathead!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Ass!"

"Look here, what's the time?" demanded Billy Bunter. "You know my watch don't go! It's never gone since I trod on it. Can't you tell a fellow the time?"

Really it was quite a harmless request! But, as it happened, it was about the tenth time that Bunter had asked the same question of the fellows on the Remove landing, and they were getting tired of the subject.

Why Bunter was so anxious about the time that afternoon, nobody knew. Nobody wanted to know! They only wanted Bunter to shut up.

Harry Wharton & Co. were discussing a matter of much more concern than Billy Bunter and his curiosity regarding the time. They were discussing Tom Redwing, and what Quelch had said in the Form-room that morning.

Redwing's action, in taking French leave, merely apprising Mr. Quelch by a telegram from Dover, surprised all the Form. Now it was clear that, if Redwing did not return at once, he was not going to be allowed to return—and really no fellow could wonder at that. But the idea of Tom Redwing being bunked from Greyfriars was very dismaying to his friends.

"I can't understand old Redwing making a break like this—a solemn old sobersides like him!" said Bob Cherry. "More like Smithy—at least, like Smithy was last term. He's toned down a lot this term!"

"It's pretty thick!" said Johnny Bull. "A chap can't snap his fingers at his schoolmaster like this!"

"It looks like cheek!" said Harry Wharton slowly. "But Reddy never was cheeky—he chummed with Smithy, but there never was a fellow more unlike Smithy."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"He got early leave last Easter," went on the captain of the Remove. "They say if you give a man an inch he will take an ell—but Reddy never was like that! I must say it beats me!"

"The beatfulness is terrific!" agreed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "But the sackfulness of the esteemed Reddy would be preposterously disagreeable."

"If a fellow could get in touch with him, and give him the tip—" said Frank Nugent slowly. "But nobody seems to know anything."

"Doesn't Smithy?" asked Harry Wharton, rather dryly.

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"He says he doesn't."

"Well, Smithy says things sometimes with his tongue in his cheek," said the captain of the Remove. "He's got some row on with Reddy—great pals as they used to be. Nobody seems to know why they bar one another this term. So far as a fellow can make out, Reddy seems to have taken a sudden dislike to him—and it's jolly queer; Reddy never was a fellow to chop and change. The other day—"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Dry up, you fat Owl!"

"But what's the time?"

"Five minutes to three! Now shut up!"

"He, he, he!"

The famous Five for a moment glanced at Bunter. Why the information that it was five minutes to three should cause the fat Owl to emit that unmusical cachinnation, was quite a mystery to them.

"What's the joke, you gurgling gargoyles?" asked Johnny Bull.

"He, he, he! If it's five minutes to three, it will be three o'clock in another five minutes!" chuckled Bunter.

"Oh, my hat!" said Bob Cherry. "Go and tell Quelch that, Bunter! He will be delighted to hear that you're getting on so splendidly with your arithmetic. Did you do that one in your head?"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Is anything going to happen at three?" asked Nugent, staring at the fat Owl. "Games practice with Lascelles is at four—we've got tons of time!"

"He, he, he!"

"The other day," resumed Wharton, leaving the fat Owl to chortle unheeded, "it was the day before we went to Lantham to see Mr. Vernon-Smith, and Smithy got a spill, and had to get a lift home—"

Grant from Johnny Bull.

"You mean he faked a spill to dodge his pater!" he said. "We all know that! He was making use of us to diddle the old bean!"

"He, he, he!" from Bunter.

"Well, never mind that," said Harry. "It was the day before that, I think—Redwing marched me into Smithy's study to be present while he said something to Smithy. I've puzzled a lot over it since. He spoke to Smithy about something in the Easter holidays—about getting a boat damaged at Clovelly, and having to pay for the damage."

"What about it?" asked Bob.

"Well, after we came out of the study Redwing said that it never had happened at all, and that Smithy had only pretended to remember it—he couldn't have, really, because it had never happened."

The Co. stared blankly at Harry Wharton.

"Well, that's jolly queer!" said Bob.

"The queerfulness is terrific."

"It's so jolly queer that I've puzzled over it," said Harry. "He fairly dragged me in to hear him pulling the fellow's leg like that—he wanted me to hear; but why, goodness knows. But what beats me is, Smithy making out that he remembered it, when it never happened. He had it all pat—boat damaged—man named Tregethy wanting to be paid—he even said he'd lost the man's address. And then Redwing told me that no boat ever was damaged, and that neither of them ever knew a man named Tregethy."

Bob Cherry rubbed his nose.

"No good asking me to guess that one!" he said. "I can't make head or tail of it!"

"I can't, either!" said Harry.

"Smithy can't have remembered it if it had never happened—but why he should tell fibs about it, beats me. But he did! But what the thump can have turned old Reddy against him like that? He always stuck to Smithy through thick and thin—he stood more from him than any other fellow ever would have. Now he turns against him, and seems to like showing him up as a liar before another fellow."

Bob Cherry shook his head. The rift in the lute in Study No. 4 was a mystery to all the Remove.

"As the matter stands," went on Harry, "I'm no. at all sure that Smithy would be sorry if Redwing never came back. And"—he paused for a moment—"I'm not at all sure he would help to get him back, if he could."

"Oh!" said Bob.

"You think he may know something about Reddy, that he hasn't let on?" asked Johnny Bull.

"I shouldn't wonder. They've barred one another ever since Rookwood day—but Reddy never used to have any secrets from him. If anybody knows how to get in touch with Reddy, it's Smithy."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, my hat! Is that fat frog still there?" howled Bob Cherry.

"What's the time, old chap?"

"If you say what's the time 'again, I'll burst you all over the landing!" roared Bob.

"Beast!"

Harry Wharton, who was leaning on the banisters, detached himself therefrom.

"Look here, I'm going to speak to Smithy," he said. "If there's a ghost of a chance of doing anything for old Redwing, I don't see losing it because Smithy's ratty with him. Ten to one he knows some address or other, where either Redwing or his father might get a telegram."

"Well, I should have thought so" said Bob. "But—"

"Well, no harm in putting it to him straight!" said Harry; and, having decided on that, the captain of the Remove walked up the passage, knocked at the door of Study No. 4, and went in.

"I say, you fellows—" Billy Bunter broke off as three chimed from the clock tower. "Oh! There goes three! He may be here any minute now."

Four juniors stared at him.

"He—who?" asked Bob. "Are you expecting somebody at three, you fat chump?"

"Well, he said about three!" grinned Bunter.

"Who did?"

"Oh! Nobody! I don't know anything about it, of course," said Bunter hastily. "Don't you fellows get saying that I know anything about it. Quelch would be fearfully shirty at a chap taking his telephone call."

"You've taken a telephone call for Quelch?"

"Oh, no! I wasn't in his study, and the bell never rang while I was there. But I say, you fellows, look out of this window, will you—you know I'm a bit short-sighted! You fellows can see the gates from here! I say, can you see a car coming in?"

"Lord Bunter de Grunter coming down in the family Ford?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull! Look here, will you look and tell a fellow whether a car is coming in?" hooted Bunter. "He said about three, and I suppose he knows."

Quite astonished, the four juniors moved across to the big landing window, and looked out and down.

Bunter evidently was in hilarious expectation of seeing somebody arrive, about three, in a car. Why such an expectation should have excited hilarity in the fat Owl was rather a puzzle; but clearly it did. Bunter was grinning from one fat ear to the other.

"I say you fellows, can you see anything at the gates?" asked Bunter.

"Only Gosling," answered Bob. "He's standing there, looking out."

"Blow Gosling!" said Bunter. "Still, perhaps he can see the car coming. Old Smith is always punctual—those City people are."

Bunter gave a sniff, as if punctuality was something for which he had a lofty contempt. Certainly he was not often guilty of it.

"Old Smith?" repeated Bob blankly. "Do you mean Mr. Vernon-Smith, you bad-mannered bloater?"

"He, he, he!"

"Is Smithy's pater coming to-day?" asked Nugent. "If he is, Smithy isn't up to any of his dodges this time."

"He jolly well would be if he knew!" chortled Bunter. "He, he, he! If Quelch had got that telephone call and told him, bet you Smithy would have had a pressing engagement out of gates. He, he, he!"

"You potty porpoise!" gasped Bob. "What batchy tricks have you been playing now?"

"Oh, nothing! I don't know anything about it. How could I? Still, if the old Obadiah blows in this afternoon at three, as he said, the young Obadiah won't be able to dodge him," chortled Bunter. "Perhaps he'll be sorry for getting a fellow four hundred lines. He, he, he!"

"Hallo, hello, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry suddenly.

Gosling, at the distant gates, had stepped aside. In at the gateway rolled a well-known magnificent Rolls-Royce car. In that car sat a portly gentleman with a shining silk hat.

"I say, you fellows—" squeaked Bunter.

"He's come!" said Bob.

"He, he, he!" chortled Bunter. "I say, you fellows, nobody knows why Smithy bars his pater, but he jolly well does! He, he, he! I say, the old bean will cop him this time! He, he, he!"

And the fat Owl exploded in a series of cachinnations, evidently in a state of tremendous hilarity at the prospect of Smithy being copped by the pater he barred.

Startling!

BERTIE VERNON looked up impatiently as Harry Wharton entered Study No. 4.

The Bounder's double was sitting in the window-seat in the study with an open volume on his knees.

It was "Titus Livius." He was mugging up Livy again. Vernon was keen on the Latin prize, though certainly Vernon-Smith never would have been.

But that was not his whole and sole reason for having entered for the prize. Working for a difficult exam provided him with an excuse for "chucking" cricket.

It was not agreeable for a keen cricketer to throw up the game for the season; but he was no batsman, like the Bounder, and in that line he could not possibly play his double part. He solved that difficulty by making a clean cut. Ever since he had supplanted the Bounder he had only turned up on compulsory occasions for practice.

"It's not time yet, I suppose," he said, before the captain of the Remove

could speak. "Lascelles' notice on the board said four."

It was compulsory cricket that afternoon with the games master. Vernon was not able to avoid that when the time came.

"It's hardly three yet," he went on. "I'm coming down at four. Give us a rest till then."

"I haven't come about the cricket," answered Harry. The captain of the Remove had got used, by this time, to leaving that particular man out of the Form eleven, and he had dropped argument on the subject.

"Well, look here, I'm busy," said Vernon. "I want to bag that prize if I can. My—my father's keen on it." He very nearly said "my uncle," but checked himself in time.

"Yes, we all know exactly how keen you are to please your father, Smithy," answered Wharton with a curl of the lip. "Keeping out of his way when he wants to see you is your original way of doing it, I dare say."

"That's no bizney of yours!" snapped Vernon. "If you've come here to give me a lecture, you can stop right there."

"I've come here to ask you about Redwing."

"Redwing?" Vernon stared. "I know nothing about Redwing. You heard me tell Quelch so in the Form-room this morning."

"Oh, yes, I heard you! I want to ask you, all the same!" retorted Wharton. "You may not care whether your old pal is bunked from Greysfriars, but some of us do. You heard what Quelch said. If we can, get in touch with Reddy there's a chance of saving his bacon. I believe you can help."

Bertie Vernon laid down Livy, and fixed his eyes on the captain of the Remove, with a glint in them.

"Have you come here to call me a liar?" he asked.

"Oh, don't talk piffle!" snapped Harry. "You've never made a secret of it that you'd as soon tell lies to a beak as not."

Vernon gave him a bitter look, but he made no rejoinder. As he was playing the Bounder's part he could hardly complain of having to take the Bounder's reputation along with his identity.

"You must know something about it," went on Harry. "Old Redwing had no secrets from you—till quite lately, when you started barring one another."

"I know nothing about it, and don't want to. I saw him on his bike on the Lantham road that day, the same as you did. That's the last I've seen or heard of him."

"Very likely. But what about some address where he or his father could get a letter or a telegram?"

"You know his home address as well as I do."

"I know that. There's nobody at the cottage at Hawkscliff. It's been shut up ever since John Redwing went on his voyage. He must be back now, as it seems that Redwing joined him at Dover for a coasting trip. Did Redwing tell you anything about his father giving up the voyage?"

"No."

"Well, it seems that he's on a coasting trip now. Do you know anything about that—the places he may put in at, and so on?"

"No."

"What about shipping firms or agents that he does business with?" asked Harry. "We don't know anything about them, but you do, Smithy. The name of some shipping firm would be enough. I'd get them on the phone and ask them if they could tell me anything."

Vernon sat silent, breathing hard.

Redwing's departure was a relief to him, but it was bringing difficulties in its train.

Vernon-Smith, there was no doubt, could have given the captain of the Remove the information he wanted.

"Last Easter, as you know, John Redwing was on a coasting trip like this. We all met in Devonshire," said Harry. "He must have been in touch with some shipping firm. What firm was it?"

Vernon did not answer. Vernon-Smith undoubtedly knew. Vernon did not.

"You could tell me that, and a good many more things," said Wharton, his temper beginning to rise. "And we jolly well want to get in touch with Redwing or his father, somehow, and warn them that it means the sack for Reddy if he doesn't come back. Look here, Smithy, you're not friends with Reddy now, but you can't be rotter enough to want him ruffed out of the school. You needn't act in the matter yourself if you don't want to; but tell me what you can, so that I can do something."

Vernon drew a deep breath.

"If Redwing ever told me anything about it, I've forgotten," he said. "I'd help you if I could. I can't."

"You've got a pretty queer memory, Vernon-Smith!" said the captain of the Remove contemptuously. "You can't remember what any fellow would remember easily enough, but you can remember things that never happened at all."

"What the deuce do you mean by that, you fool?" snapped Vernon, staring at him.

"I'll tell you what I mean!" exclaimed Wharton angrily. "You remembered the day before Redwing went about Tregethy and that damaged boat at Clovelly."

"Why shouldn't I?"

"Why shouldn't you?" said Harry. "Do you mean to tell me that you really remember about Tregethy and the damaged boat at Clovelly?"

"Of course I do!"

"Well, my hat! And you grouse at a fellow doubting your word!" exclaimed the captain of the Remove. "You seem to tell lies for the fun of it, so far as I can make out. Redwing told me he was pulling your leg, though I don't know why. There never was a damaged boat at Clovelly, and there never was a man named Tregethy, either!"

Vernon gave a violent start.

Then he sat very still, looking at Wharton.

His heart was beating painfully.

Like a flash it came into his mind. He knew what this meant.

Redwing had referred to an entirely fictitious incident in the Easter holidays, when he had been with Smithy. Vernon had affected to remember it—never dreaming that it was fictitious.

Why had Redwing done it?

There could be only one reason! He suspected that the Bounder's double was not the Bounder—and he had been testing him.

And he must know now!

Vernon-Smith, of course, would have known that no such incident had occurred in the Easter holidays. Vernon had not known. He had fallen into the trap, affecting to remember something that had never happened.

Redwing must have suspected him and done this to put the matter to the proof. There was no other explanation.

Redwing knew!

"If you've got such a jolly good memory that you remember things that never happened," Wharton was going on sarcastically, "you ought to be able to remember a few facts as well, Smithy."

Vernon set his lips. It was not easy for him to pull himself together under such a shock. But he did it.

"I've told you I've nothing to say!" he said. "I don't know, and don't care, anything about Redwing's affairs. Now leave me alone!"

And he turned his back on the captain of the Remove and looked out of the window.

Harry Wharton's face flushed with anger. He made a step towards the junior in the window-seat.

But he stopped in sheer amazement the next moment.

Vernon started to his feet, staring into the quad at something that had suddenly caught his eyes as he turned away from Wharton.

The sight of his face as he stared arrested the captain of the Remove.

That face had gone suddenly white and sudden terror was imprinted on it, utterly startling Harry Wharton. The fellow looked as he might have looked, if a grisly spectre had suddenly appeared before his eyes.

"What—" ejaculated Harry

What more could be below to cause that look on the fellow's face was an utter mystery to him. He stepped quickly to the window and looked down.

A Rolls-Royce car was coming up the drive to the House. In that car sat Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith, his plump and portly face plain to the view under his shining silk hat!

It was upon that portly face that Bertie Vernon's eyes were glued—and it was, undoubtedly, as startling as a spectre to the impostor who now, whether he liked it or not, had to face the father of the fellow whose identity he had stolen.

Wharton glanced down at Mr. Vernon-Smith. Then he looked at the junior at his side. He was dumbfounded.

All the fellows knew that "Smithy" was dodging a meeting with his father, though for what reason nobody knew. But for what imaginable reason could a fellow's face blanch with sudden terror at the sight of his father?

"Smithy!" exclaimed Wharton blankly. He forgot his anger in his utter amazement.

Vernon did not answer—he seemed to have forgotten that Wharton was in the study at all. He turned from the window, crossed quickly to the door, and left the study.

The captain of the Remove was left dumbfounded.

Not as Per Programme!

HORACE COKER pedalled up the avenue at Lantham Chase.

The sight of Captain Vernon standing there with grim eyes fixed on him, did not deter Coker. Rather it drew him on.

That other eyes were on him from the high window of the turret, Coker did not know. So far as Coker knew, there was nobody at Lantham Chase excepting the captain and his man Hunt.

He had a wary eye open for Hunt. But the captain's man was not to be seen. It was satisfactory to Horace to meet the captain at a little distance from the building without his man in the offing.

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Even Horace did not fancy that he was a match for the two of them!

Coker's plans for that meeting had gone awry, as Coker's plans generally did! Had that cheeky young rascal, Vernon-Smith, played up as Coker had wanted him to, he could have met this high-handed Army man in some sequestered spot—man to man, as Coker put it. Had his pals come with him to Lantham Chase instead of being halted on the way by imaginary punctures, they could have looked after Hunt while Coker dealt with the captain.

As matters stood, Coker was left to carry on alone and take his chance of the captain's man barging in.

So it looked like luck to Coker to find the captain standing there on the avenue and no sign of Hunt to be seen.

Coker was not going to stay long—only long enough to give the captain what the captain had given Coker!

Coker had the riding-whip this time—and that was going to make all the difference—at least, Coker had no doubt of it.

So on came Horace, quite cheerfully, undeterred by the grim, dark face that grew black and blacker as he came.

He dismounted from his machine within a dozen paces of the staring Army man and slung it against a tree at the side of the avenue.

Then, slipping the riding-whip into his hand, Coker strode on quite briskly towards Captain Vernon.

"You have come here again!" The captain spoke quietly. "What do you want here, you young blockhead? I warned you to keep clear of my property."

"That for your warning!" Coker snapped his fingers at the dark face. "Didn't you expect to see me again, you cheeky rotter?"

Apparently the captain hadn't! One horsewhipping would have been enough for an ordinary fellow! But Horace was no ordinary fellow! He was, indeed, rather an extraordinary fellow.

"You had the cheek to lay into me with a horsewhip the day I came here," said Coker. "I was civil enough, I think! You had the cheek to pitch into me! Well, sauco for the goose is sauco for the gander, see?"

The captain looked at him.

He could see the riding-whip in Coker's paw! He could read the aggressive glare in Coker's rugged features.

But Coker's intention did not seem to dawn on him. It was, perhaps, a little difficult for the Army man to realise that this burly schoolboy had called at Lantham Chase, with the fell intention of horsewhipping him!

"Why are you here?" The captain still spoke quietly. "You are trespassing here."

"Rats!" said Coker.

"What?"

"Fat lot I care about that!" jeered Coker. "I said rats! If you're deaf, I'll say it again—rats! See? Rats! I've come here to whop you—"

"What?" yelled the captain.

"And here goes!" said Coker.

"Think you can whop a Fifth Form man of Greyfriars and get by with it? Not much! Here goes!"

Coker rushed!

He whopped!

Captain Vernon bounded back. He understood at last what this extraordinary youth was up to!

The captain, no doubt, had supposed that the horsewhipping of Coker was the end of the affair. It wasn't! It

was, in fact, only the beginning! Coker had come back to return the compliment.

Quickly as the captain bounded, he did not escape that whop! It came down on his shoulder with a terrific swipe.

That was the first! Coker was going to follow it up with dozens more of the same! But that part of the programme was never carried out.

The captain made only that one backward bound under the whopping whip! Before Coker could raise the whip for a second smite the captain made a forward bound.

Then earth and sky, green woods and turret, swam before Coker's eyes as he went head over heels.

It was a thump on Coker's manly chest that produced that sudden effect.

Coker landed on his back on the earth. The riding-whip flew from his hand! Coker rolled and spluttered.

The next moment the captain had picked up the riding-whip!

One moment more and it was ringing on Coker!

Whop, whop, whop, whop!

Coker roared.

Whop whop, whop!

On the previous occasion the captain had had rather a heavy hand. But Coker's former whopping was nothing to this—it was as moonlight unto sunlight, as water unto wine, compared with this whopping.

The captain's face was black with fury, his eyes blazed, and he laid on that riding-whip with tremendous energy.

Whop whop, whop!

Coker had not foreseen that the riding-whip might change hands! This time, as he had told Potter and Greene, he had the riding-whip, and the captain hadn't. But that happy state of affairs had not lasted long! Now the captain had it and was using it with terrific vim.

Coker rolled, and squirmed, and roared, and yelled.

Old Hunt came out on the stone terrace below the turret and stared. Potter and Greene were not needed to keep him off. He did nothing but stare and grin! Clearly the captain required no assistance from his man! He was quite capable of dealing with Coker on his own!

Whop, whop, whop!

Coker got on his feet at last! Roaring, he bounded away! There was no arguing with a raining riding-whip! Even Coker realised that!

Coker had only one idea in his rather solid head now—and that was to get away from the riding-whip which he had so unfortunately brought with him to Lantham Chase.

But it was not easy to get away from.

The enraged captain followed him up, still swiping!

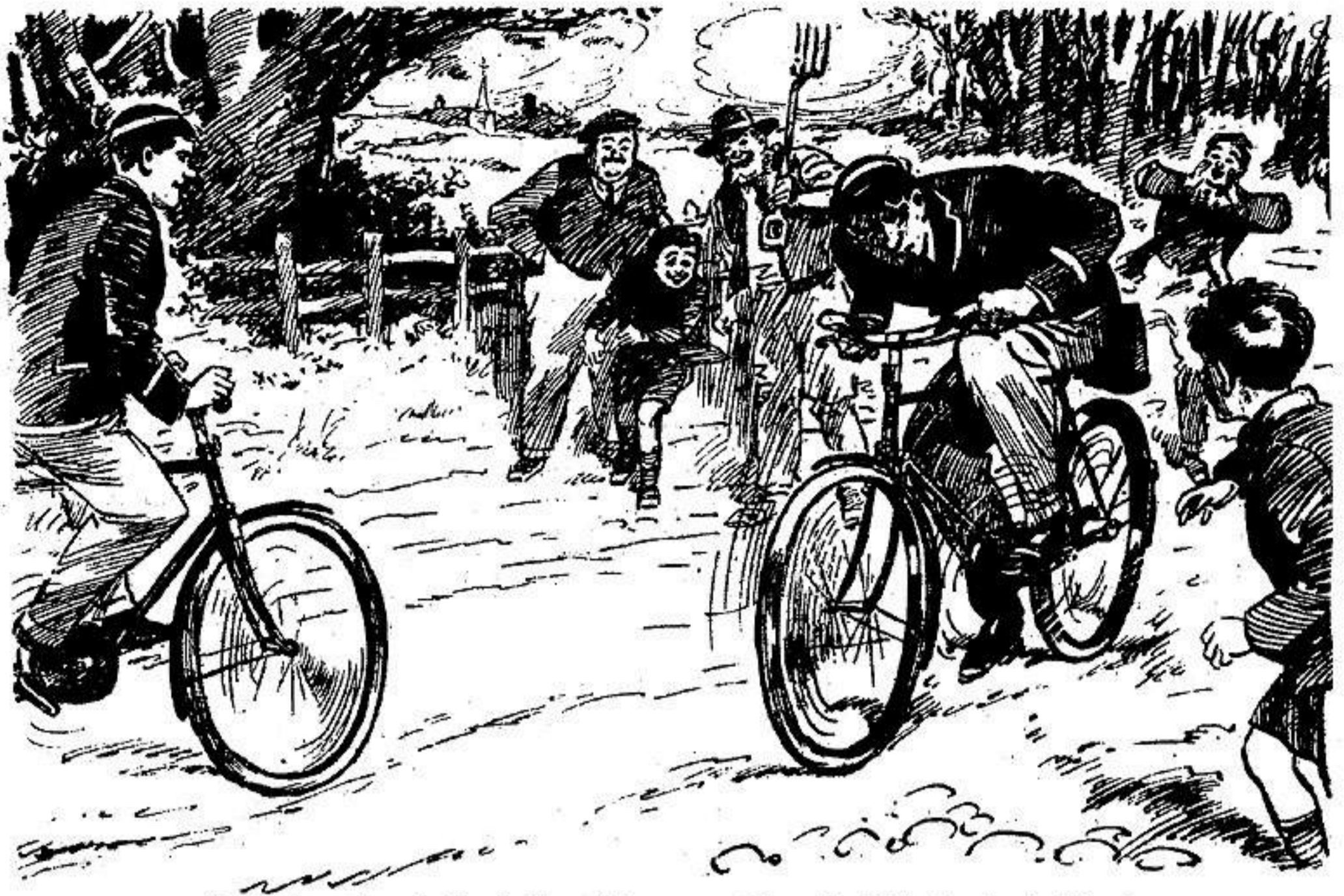
Coker made one desperate attempt to rush him—but raining swipes drove him back! The captain did not seem to care where those swipes landed, so long as they landed on Coker. They landed—hard!

Coker bounded, and bounded, and bounded again! After him came the swiping riding-whip!

He did not head for his bike, leaning against the tree beside the avenue. He had no time to get on that bike. He had, indeed, no time to dodge the swiping, though he did his best.

Coker found himself running!

Had anybody suggested to Coker, before he started on the war-path, that he would end up by running at top speed down the avenue at Lantham Chase, with his own riding-whip scoring



Small boys inquired whether Coker was riding his little brother's bike!

his back as he ran, Coker would have repudiated the suggestion with scorn.

But that was what was happening! Coker ran! Really, there was nothing else for a fellow to do—a fellow who had discovered that two or three of him could not have handled that Army man, and whose single cut was being repaid with such overwhelming interest.

Behind Coker came the captain, still swiping! The single cut that Coker had given him seemed to have enraged the Army man to absolute fury. Really, Coker might have expected it—though he hadn't!

The long, long avenue was before Coker—behind him, the swiping whip! Coker did not do the length of the avenue. It was altogether too long a trip, in the painful circumstances. He swerved and cut into the wood, in the wild hope of shaking off the Army man and the riding-whip!

Gasping, spluttering, perspiring, Coker charged through the wood.

But the tenant of Lantham Chase did not seem satisfied. He charged after Coker, still swiping!

And Coker, expending what breath he had left in anguished yells, dodged frantically among the trees and thickets—thinking only of escape!

Hunting Horace!

"Oh, gum!" breathed Coker. He did not breathe the words aloud.

He did not want to be heard!

He had charged the captain at last, or else the captain thought he had had enough, and had given up the pursuit.

Breathless, spent with his efforts, aching all over from the swipes of his own riding-whip, Horace Coker took a much-needed rest, mopping streaming perspiration from his brow.

But, as he rested, he watched and listened warily—ready to dodge again if the Army man turned up with the whip.

Exactly where he was, Coker did not know, except that he was in the thick and over-grown park of Lantham Chase, and he fancied that he was somewhere near the public path that ran through the estate.

He threw himself down in the shade of a great mass of hawthorn bushes. Slowly his wind came back.

Coker was in quite a dizzy state! Never had he had such a whopping—probably no fellow ever had had such a whopping! What had happened was utterly unlike what Coker had intended to happen.

But one thing was clear to Coker's dizzy brain! He had to get away from Lantham Chase without meeting the captain again! His desire for a meeting with the captain was absolutely gone.

His bike was where he had left it, at least a quarter of a mile away, probably more. He realised that he could not return for his bike—in sight of the house on the open avenue. He could not do so without falling in with Captain Vernon again. A walk to Lantham, and the train home, was better than that!

Coker was not bothering about his bike. That could be sent for later, if the man did not send it after him. Not for a warehouse full of bikes would Coker have faced that swiping riding-whip again!

"Oh!" breathed Coker. "Ow! Oh gum! Wow!"

He wriggled painfully. Coker of the Fifth did not always know when he had had enough! But he knew this time!

What Coker had to do now, was to get away quietly, as soon as he had recovered his wind—carefully, very care-

fully, avoiding another encounter with the captain.

And Coker suddenly sat up, like a startled hare, at the sound of a voice. It came through the thick mass of hawthorn, from the other side.

"He's gone, sir!"
"Has he?" came an angry bark, and Coker recognised the captain's voice. The first voice, no doubt, was Hunt's.

"I don't think he'd want any more, sir!" Those words were followed by a husky chuckle, as if old Hunt was amused.

"By gad! I never gave him enough! By gad! The insolent young scoundrel! He is not gone, Hunt! I have been through this path as far as the road, and seen nothing of him. He is hanging about in the wood somewhere."

Coker breathed hard. From those words, he knew that the path he wanted was on the other side of that thicket of hawthorns. That was the public path which led back to the Lantham road. But that discovery was of no use to Coker, so long as the captain and his man were there.

"Go back to the house, Hunt!" The captain's voice came again. "I do not like the place left with no one there."

"I've locked up safe, sir—"
"Yes, yes; but go back—I will look through the wood for that young scoundrel, and, by gad, if I come across him I'll wear out this riding-whip on his back!"

Coker rose to his feet. If the captain entered the wood again at that point, and came round the hawthorns, there was Coker—right under his eyes; worse still, right under his riding-whip!

Even in those perilous circumstances, it cost Coker an effort to hunt cover. Coker was no man to hide from an enemy.

But—Coker did not want any more!
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He was aching all over—he had, as he knew now, no chance whatever in a scrap—and he could not stand the prospect of further whops.

With deep feelings, Coker hunted cover! It was at hand—he backed into the mass of clinging hawthorns, careless of thorns—thorns were not so painful as the whops of that riding-whip!

It was not easy for Coker to be cautious. He was too big and clumsy and bull-headed for caution. But he was cautious now. He had to be. Coker had not only had enough! He had had more than enough!

Cautiously he threaded his way into the middle of that hawthorn thicket, where he would be safe out of sight till the brute was gone.

Bang!

Coker suppressed a howl!

His shin had banged on something—something utterly unexpected in a thicket! Coker almost wondered whether he was dreaming, as he saw that it was a bicycle pedal!

His shin was hurt! But Coker was not so much hurt as astonished! How on earth a bike came to be parked in that thicket was a mystery.

He came to a halt! That bike was in his way, and he dreaded to make some sound by squirming round it among the hawthorns.

He listened—hardly breathing.

Footsteps came to his ears, and a muttering voice, at a little distance.

"Fool—impudent young scoundrel—by gad!" It was the captain's voice, and the captain was evidently intensely and savagely angry.

Coker stood quite still.

He was completely hidden, unless the captain plunged into the hawthorn bush to root through it! That was not likely, as he could not know that Coker was there. And that thick, thorny bush was not inviting.

He heard a rustling—but it was farther away! The captain was going! He had, in fact, passed over the very spot where Coker had been taking his rest a few minutes ago. Now he was going deeper into the wood—the riding-whip gripped in his hand, for further use on Coker if he found him.

Coker breathed more freely when the sound of him died away in the distant depths of the wood.

"Oh gum!" murmured Coker.

He was safe, at last! Now that the brute had gone, he had only to emerge from his hide-out, go round the bush to the path, and start for the Lantham road.

The danger being over, Coker gave his attention to the bicycle he had so unexpectedly discovered parked in the heart of the hawthorns.

It was a smaller machine than his own, but he could ride it! Astonishing as the discovery was, it came as a wind-fall to Coker.

From its look, the bike had evidently been there some time—there had been rain a few days ago, and the machine showed signs of it. It was really astounding that anyone should hide a bike in the middle of a thicket at Lantham Chase, and leave it there in all weathers. Coker wondered how on earth it had got there, and whose it was. Anyhow, he was going to borrow it as it was there!

He opened the saddle-bag, to get out something to wipe the damp mildew from the saddle.

Then he jumped.

It had not occurred to him that it might be a Greyfriars bicycle, at such a distance from the school. So the name "T. Redwing" plainly inscribed

inside the flap of the saddle-bag was quite a surprise to him.

"Well, the young idiot!" said Coker, staring at it.

T. Redwing, he knew, was the name of a Remove fellow. This was Redwing's bike!

For some reason, the young ass had ridden that bike to Lantham Chase, hidden it in the heart of the thicket and left it there—for days at least! Why he had left it there, and why he had not come back for it afterwards, Coker could not imagine.

It would be doing him a good turn to take it back to the school.

Anyhow, Coker was going to borrow it to get back as he could not get his own machine.

He listened again—but there was no sound, but the trill of the wild birds in the wood. He wiped the saddle dry, and wheeled the bike out of the thicket, with watchful eyes for a dark face glaring from the trees.

The path, he knew now, was near at hand. In a few minutes he had wheeled Redwing's bike into the path. There he mounted it, glad to be able to put on speed, in case that blighter turned up again! He had to tuck in his long legs to ride a junior's bike—but he put on a good speed, and in a few minutes more, whizzed out into the Lantham road.

He was glad to get away! In other respects he was not glad. In fact, his feelings were unexpressible, as he rode Tom Redwing's bike back to Greyfriars School.

Serve Him Right!

"HE, he, he!"

Billy Bunter chuckled, as a junior came hurriedly out of Study No. 4 and hurried down the passage to the landing.

Bob Cherry and Nugent, Johnny Bull and Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh, said nothing, looking at Vernon in silence as he came.

The strange look on his face startled them.

He did not heed them, or the chuckling fat Owl. Without a glance at the juniors he cut across the landing towards the stairs.

Then Bob, always good-natured, called to him.

Why the fellow did not want to see his father, Bob had no idea—but he knew there must be some reason. He had to see him now: and, if he did not know that Mr. Vernon-Smith was below, it was only good-natured to tell him so, so that he would not run into the millionaire without warning.

Some family row or other, Bob supposed, was at the bottom of it—the Bouncer was the man for rows!

"Smithy, old man, your pater's come!" called out Bob.

"He, he, he!" from Bunter.

Vernon did not heed. Without looking round he hurried down the stairs.

"Fathead!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Well, why not give him the tip, as he's going to run into the old bean downstairs?" said Bob.

Grunt, from Johnny Bull! He had seen more in Vernon's face than Bob had dreamed of seeing.

"Think he doesn't know?" he granted.

"Oh!" said Bob.

"He saw him from his study window, you bet, same as we saw him from this window!" Johnny gave a contemptuous snort. "That's why he's cutting down in such a hurry, all of a sudden."

"Oh!" said Bob again. "Well if he's

cutting down to meet the old boy at the door, that doesn't look as if he wants to dodge him."

"Ass!" was Johnny's comment on that.

"Look here, what do you mean?" demanded Bob.

"I mean that that worm is wriggling out of his father's way," grunted Johnny. "He must have done something or other that makes him afraid to face his father! He's dodging!"

"Oh!" gasped Bob.

"He, he, he! I say, you fellows, old Smith's in the House now! I say, that beast will be copped—he, he, he!" chortled Bunter. "I say, serve him jolly well right! Low cad, I call him, dodging his pater like that!"

Harry Wharton came out of Study No. 4 and joined his friends on the landing. There was an expression of almost dazed astonishment on his face.

"Smithy passed you?" he asked.

"Yes—cutting down as if the House was on fire!" said Johnny Bull, with a sniff.

"You chaps, what on earth is up with the fellow?" asked Harry. "He saw his father from the study window and turned as white as chalk. Why on earth should Smithy be afraid to face his father?"

"What the dickens can he have done?" asked Frank Nugent. "Johnny thinks he's cut down to dodge him now—"

"I know he has!" said Johnny Bull. "He won't run into him—he will dodge him, and get out of the House—that's his game—sneaking off by a back door. I expect! His pater won't see him—I'll bet my hat on that!"

"I think you're right!" said Harry. "I can't make him out! Smithy was in a row with his father some time ago—but that blew over! It's not a row this time—it beats me hollow! I mean, his pater's not shirty with him about anything—we saw him at Lantham last week; he asked Smithy to come over there, and bring some friends to tea at the Pagoda—and he was worried when he heard that the chap had had a spill on his bike, and couldn't come! He can't have come down to rag Smithy for anything."

"No!" said Bob. "But—something may have happened since that day at Lantham—"

"But Smithy was dodging him before then—Rookwood day—"

"So he was! Blessed if I make it out!"

"Something's wrong with Smithy!" said Harry Wharton. "I can't understand him this term at all! He's improved in a lot of ways—Quelech thinks much more of him than he did—but—but—"

"Let's get out!" said Bob uneasily. "If Smithy's dodging the old bean, we don't want to be asked if we've seen him! It's putrid of a fellow to be treating his father like this—but we don't want to have a hand in landing him in a row."

"Yes, that's so—let's get down to the cricket—no need to wait for Lascelles."

The Famous Five hurried down the stairs, rather anxious to be off the scene before inquiries could be made of them.

Probably Mr. Vernon-Smith was now with Quelech or the Head; but it was certain that Smithy would be sent for soon, unless his father came up to his study to see him there, as he sometimes did when he came to the school.

Harry Wharton & Co. had their own opinion of a fellow who treated his father in this manner; but they did not want to add fuel to the flames of family trouble.

If Smithy was dodging, no doubt he hoped that his father would suppose that he had been already out; which was plausible enough, as he obviously had not been aware that Mr Vernon-Smith was coming that day.

The Famous Five lost no time in getting down to the cricket ground, where they were out of reach of inquiries on the subject of Herbert Vernon-Smith.

Billy Bunter was left grinning on the Remove landing.

Even the short-sighted fat Owl had been struck by the expression on Vernon's face, as he cut across the landing and down the stairs. He had intended to give Smithy a jolt, by preventing him from dodging that meeting with his father—but he realised now that he had given him a harder jolt than he had dreamed of. The fellow had looked quite sick.

Serve him jolly well right, was Bunter's opinion! If he had done something and his pater had come down to jaw him—which Bunter supposed must be the case—serve him jolly well right! A fellow who had caused Billy Bunter to sit for weary hours in Quelch's study, grinding out lines, deserved anything that came to him, and some over!

Trotter, the House page, came up the staircase, about five minutes later.

Bunter grinned as he went along to Study No. 4, tapped, and looked in.

Trotter came back to the landing.

"Can you tell me where Master Vernon-Smith is, sir?" he asked.

"He, he, he!" chortled Bunter. "He went down about five minutes ago—in rather a hurry! He, he, he!"

Trotter blinked at him. He could see no cause for the fat Owl's amusement.

"I say, though, hasn't the old bean seen him?" asked Bunter. "He ain't far away, Trotter—you'll find him all right, if you look for him! He, he, he!"

Trotter stared, and went down again. Bunter was left chortling.

Smithy was for it now! If his pater had come to jaw him, Smithy was going to get that jaw. Whatever it was he had coming, he was going to get it now! And serve him jolly well right!

Bunter chuckled and chuckled!

in his character seemed to have been corrected, and he had even, with his Form-master's warm approval, entered for a difficult examination and a Latin prize.

This was quite pleasant hearing for Mr. Vernon-Smith.

At the same time, his eyes wandered occasionally to the clock, Mr. Vernon-Smith's time being of immense value, and portioned out almost to the last minute among endless appointments and engagements.

He had called at Greyfriars at three. At four he was due at Canterbury on some special business that could not be postponed.

So he was going to spend a quarter of an hour or so with his son, and then take him in the car to Canterbury, which would be a pleasant drive for the schoolboy, and enable his father to have a talk with him without wasting any of that immensely valuable time.

But a quarter of an hour had now elapsed; and Mr. Vernon-Smith, much as he liked the pleasant things the Remove master was saying about his son, was getting impatient.

The House page had been dispatched to call his son, and a few minutes should have been enough. He had not arrived at the study in a quarter of an hour. Mr. Quelch was a little surprised; his own time was of value as well as Mr. Vernon-Smith's, and that chat had lasted long enough.

There was a tap at the door at last. But it was not the expected schoolboy; it was Trotter.

"Have you not told Master Vernon-Smith, Trotter?"

"I can't find him, sir."

"I told you he was in his study."

"I've looked there for him, sir. Master Bunter told me he'd seen him go downstairs; but I can't find him anywhere, sir. I think he's gone out of gates. I've looked, and his bicycle's gone, sir."

"Very well, Trotter."

The House page departed.

"This is very unfortunate, Mr. Vernon-Smith," said the Remove master. "I had reason to believe that your son was in his study working for the Latin examination. I certainly supposed so. But on a half-holiday, of course, a boy is at liberty to go out as he pleases—"

Mr. Quelch broke off at the thunder that loomed in the millionaire's plump brow.

"I do not understand this, Mr. Quelch!" barked the millionaire. "Am I to understand that you did not warn Herbert that I was coming this afternoon?"

"I could hardly have done so, sir, as I was totally unaware that you intended to call!" answered Mr. Quelch, with some tartness.

"You were unaware that I intended to call, sir?" ejaculated Mr. Vernon-Smith.

"Totally so."

"Mr. Quelch, will you tell me what you mean? How could you have been unaware that I intended to call when I specially telephoned to you yesterday to request you to inform Herbert of my intention?"

Mr. Quelch raised his eyebrows.

"Possibly you intended to telephone, sir, but omitted to do so," he said. "Certainly I received no call from you yesterday."

"Are you telling me that you did not take my call, Mr. Quelch?"

"Certainly I did not."

"Then who did?" hooted Mr. Vernon-Smith. "Someone—whom I supposed to be yourself—took my call, and

assured me that my son would be told of my intention to call here to-day."

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Quelch blankly.

"Twice, sir, of late I have been disappointed when I desired to see my son!" exclaimed Mr. Vernon-Smith. "On this occasion, in order that there should be no mistake or misapprehension, I telephoned to you, sir, asking you to warn Herbert to be present and to cancel any other engagement he might have. Now I find that he has not been told, and that he has gone out for the afternoon, as he was entitled to do if he knew nothing of my intention. I should like to know what this means, Mr. Quelch?"

Mr. Quelch gasped.

"I can only say, sir, that I did not take the call," he said, reddening; "neither can I understand why I was not called to the study if the telephone-bell rang. I am quite perplexed."

"It appears, then, that I cannot see my son!" exclaimed Mr. Vernon-Smith. "If he has gone out on his bicycle there is no telling when he may return."

"I—I suppose not! I hardly understand this!" said Mr. Quelch, very much perturbed and flurried. "It is—extraordinary! As it happens, there was a boy of my Form in this study yesterday afternoon all the time that I was absent from it. He must have heard the telephone-bell if it rang."

"I have told you, sir, that the call was taken and answered by some person whom I naturally supposed to be yourself!" barked Mr. Vernon-Smith.

"I—I—I fail to understand, unless—unless the boy who was here may have taken the call and—forgot to report it. But that would be very—Upon my word, I am quite perplexed!"

Quelch fairly stammered.

Mr. Vernon-Smith rose to his feet.

"It is useless for me to waste time here!" he said. "I intended to take my son in my car! I cannot do so now! I am bound to say, Mr. Quelch, that this appears to me very singular! I did not expect, sir, when I telephoned to a Form-master to have foolish tricks played on me by some boy who happened to be in the study! I cannot see my son, after coming here specially, and—"

"I—I—I regret—I—"

"Good-afternoon, Mr. Quelch!"

Mr. Vernon-Smith stalked out of the study. He was deeply annoyed and irritated, and did not take the trouble to conceal it. Really, Mr. Quelch could hardly blame him. He had telephoned to his son's Form-master to give notice of his coming; he could hardly have done more. He had a right to expect that his son would be told, and would be waiting for him.

"Bless my soul!" murmured Mr. Quelch, greatly worried and distressed. He heard the Rolls drive away.

How had this happened? The call, evidently, must have come when Bunter was in the study doing his lines.

Mr. Quelch thought it out. The telephone had been answered; Bunter must have answered it. Either Bunter must have answered it, or someone must have come in and done so while Bunter was there.

Quelch's puzzled and perplexed face grew grimmer in its expression. It must have been Bunter, though why the fat junior had played such an extraordinary trick he could not begin to understand.

But there was no doubt that it must have been Bunter.

Quelch's jaw shut hard.

It was irritating and disappointing to

A Disappointment for Mr. Vernon-Smith!

MR. VERNON-SMITH sat in an armchair in Mr. Quelch's study, chatting with the Remove master, while he waited for his son.

The portly City gentleman was in quite a good temper, and he listened with obvious satisfaction, to what Mr. Quelch had to say about Herbert Vernon-Smith.

Smithy had been in trouble often enough at school, and more than once he had been in danger of having his career at Greyfriars cut suddenly short. So it was rather agreeable to the millionaire to hear that his Form-master's opinion of him had very much improved!

It was agreeable to Mr. Quelch also to be able, for once, to say pleasant instead of unpleasant things about that member of his Form.

Herbert, his father was pleased to hear, had been really quite a changed boy for several weeks past. Instead of being the worst boy in the Lower Fourth, he was now one of Mr. Quelch's best pupils; certain very serious faults

Mr. Vernon-Smith to miss seeing his son. It was distressing to Mr. Quelch for the millionaire to leave disappointed and in justifiable irritation. And it was all caused by some utterly fatuous prank on the part of Banter.

Quelch rang the bell, and sent Trotter to call Banter to the study.

While he waited for him, he selected a cane.

A False Alarm!

BERTIE VERNON drove at his pedals.

His bike fairly flew along the Lantham road.

Captain Vernon had warned him—and he had heeded the warning—to keep clear of Lantham Chase now he was playing the part of Herbert Vernon-Smith at Greyfriars. But he was heedless of that now. He had to see his uncle, and nothing else mattered.

It was with real terror that he had seen Mr. Vernon-Smith's face from his study window at Greyfriars—after what he had just heard from Harry Wharton.

At any time the millionaire's presence would have made him deeply uneasy and afraid; he dreaded to meet the eyes of Smith's father. But after what Wharton had said, he dared not.

Wharton himself knew nothing, but his words had revealed that Redwing knew. On that point Bertie Vernon now had no doubt. Redwing knew. And, with that discovery fresh in his mind, he had looked down and seen Smith's father, appearing suddenly, like a bolt from the blue, without having—so far as Vernon knew—given a hint of his intention of coming.

Redwing had told him!

That was the instant thought in the mind of the impostor.

Redwing knew! And if he knew he had told Smith's father what he knew, and Smith's father was there to denounce the impostor—to demand to know where his son was!

That, to the startled and terrified mind of the fellow who was using another fellow's name, was the cause of Mr. Vernon-Smith's sudden and unexpected appearance at Greyfriars!

There was only one thought in the unhappy fellow's mind—to avoid the millionaire at all costs, and to get across to Lantham Chase and warn his uncle that the game was up.

He was not likely at such a moment to think of the effect of his looks and his actions on Harry Wharton & Co.

If Smith's father knew the truth, he might, for all the hapless boy knew, hand him over to the police. His one thought was to get away and he got away without the loss of a moment.

He had, as Johnny Bull surmised, cut by a back door. He had run for the bike-shed, dragged out his bicycle in frantic haste, and ridden away from the school, only too glad that he was able to get away—glad that he was able to go without a hand falling on his shoulder.

He rode furiously up the Lantham road.

He had reason to believe as he did, mistaken as he was. Of what really had happened to Redwing he knew nothing.

Captain Vernon, as Redwing himself did not doubt, had told his nephew nothing of that. Bertie had not the remotest suspicion that there were now two prisoners in the turret-room at Lantham Chase.

He supposed—as all the Remove supposed—that Tom Redwing had gone to sea with his father, old John Redwing.

But if that was the case, he had gone knowing that his chum's place at Greyfriars had been taken by his chum's double—that his chum must be a hidden prisoner somewhere, and could he have gone without warning Smith's father? That was impossible!

Had he been aware of the measures the Army man had taken, he would have been aware that his terrors were unfounded. But not for a moment did he dream that Redwing, seeking to verify his suspicions at Lantham Chase, had fallen into the captain's hands—and had, therefore, been unable to tell what he knew.

He drove savagely at his pedals.

Half-way to Lantham his eyes fell on another cyclist, coming towards him. Dozens of cyclists had passed him on the road unheeded, but this particular cyclist drew a second glance.

It was Coker of the Fifth, bunched up on a cycle much too small for him. Coker, riding Redwing's bike, seemed not to know what to do with his lengthy legs.

Many people on the Lantham road had glanced at Coker with smiling faces—some small boys had inquired whether he was riding his little brother's bike!

Coker's face was red with wrath and discomfort.

At any other time Vernon would probably have grinned at the sight of the burly, beefy Horace bunched on that bike.

Now he only gave him an astonished stare and shot on, forgetting Coker's existence the next moment.

The miles fairly raced under Vernon's wheels.

He reached Lantham Chase at last, and rode up the path to the avenue.

He was riding on towards the mansion when a sharp voice called to him from the wood, and Captain Vernon stepped out.

The captain's face was grim and angry, and there was a riding-whip under his arm. And his angry brow did not clear at the unexpected sight of his nephew.

"Stop!" he snapped.

Vernon braked and jumped down.

"What does this mean?" snapped the captain. "What are you doing here, Bertie? Have I not warned you—"

Vernon panted.

"I've come to warn you!" he breathed.

The captain gave him a long, hard look. Then he signed to him to step into the trees. Solitary as the Chase was, he did not care to take the slightest risk of a chance eye seeing him in talk with the schoolboy who was supposed to be Herbert Vernon-Smith.

"It's useless—now!" muttered Bertie. "I tell you—"

"Leave your bicycle there—come!" snapped the captain.

Vernon followed him, panting in the trees. He leaned on a trunk panting and panting for breath. That rapid ride from the school had spent his strength.

The captain eyed him coldly, almost contemptuously.

"Now, what has frightened you?" he snapped.

"The game's up!" muttered Bertie.

"Nonsense!"

"I tell you it's up! It was a rotten game. I've been sick of it ever since you forced me into it—and now it's up!"

"What has happened?"

"Redwing—that cad's pal—he knows!" breathed Vernon. "I've just found that out, from a fellow—"

"Redwing knows, does he?" said

Captain Vernon, with a bitter sneer. "Do you mean that he's told some other Greyfriars boy what he suspects?"

"No. Wharton knows nothing. He never dreamed what it meant to me when he told me—"

"What did he tell you?"

Vernon panted it out.

The captain listened, with a blackening brow. But there was relief on his face.

"You see how he tricked me?" muttered Vernon. "He must have suspected that I was not Smith—you see that? That's the only reason why he could have played such a trick on me, making me believe that something had happened in the Easter holidays, and I—I played up, never guessing, and— What did he think—what must he have thought? He must have known that I was not Vernon-Smith, after that, as plainly as if I'd told him."

"He had, at least, something to go upon—something to make him look for tangible evidence?" said the captain grimly.

"He must have told Smith's father. What else would bring him to the school suddenly, and without warning?" panted Vernon. "I—I got away. Goodness knows what would have happened if I had lost time. Now he knows—"

"He does not know."

"He must!"

"He knows nothing!" said the captain coldly. "Redwing suspected, and he came here to make sure. Until he was sure, he dared not tell such a wild tale, least of all, to a hard-headed City man like Mr. Vernon-Smith! It was simply by chance that Mr. Vernon-Smith came to the school to-day, though I admit I cannot understand why he did not let you know he was coming! But it had nothing to do with Redwing, or what he knew."

Bertie clenched his hands.

"Have you no sense?" he panted. "You admit that Redwing knew—that he must have known! He was that cad's pal. He liked him, though nobody else ever did. Do you think he would clear off to sea for a holiday trip and leave him to it? Have you no sense?"

"No," said the captain. "He would not; but that is not how the matter stands. I have told you that Redwing came here, hoping to make discoveries. I saw him when he came, and arranged matters with him. He has said nothing."

Vernon stared at the dark, saturnine face blankly.

"Have a little sense, as you've advised me!" said the captain. "It is a week since Redwing left the school! Do you fancy that Mr. Vernon-Smith has known this so long, and postponed taking action till to-day?"

"I can't understand that, but I tell you Redwing would not clear off like that without saying a word, when he knew—"

"Not of his own accord. But I repeat that I was able to arrange matters with him. I have prevailed upon him to keep his own counsel."

"Impossible!"

The captain shrugged his shoulders.

"But—but why should he?" exclaimed Vernon, bewildered. "I tell you he went off to sea with his father and sent a telegram from Dover, and if he knew—"

"What Redwing has done has been by my planning," said the captain coolly. "I was able to make him understand that nothing must be said of his wild suspicions; and he has gone, and said nothing."

"Do you mean that you threatened him, and that he was coward enough to be frightened by threats?"



“Ain’t that fearfully insulting?” chirruped Billy Bunter. “Not the sort of thing I’d put up with!”

“It is quite unnecessary to go into details,” said the captain. “The less you know of the details, the better. I presume that you can take my word when I tell you that I have so arranged matters with the boy Redwing that no word is to be feared from him. Whatever he may have suspected, whatever he may even have known, is a dead secret. I have no fear, and if I have none, you need have none.”

Vernon leaned on the tree, staring at him.

The captain’s words brought relief and comfort to his harassed mind. But he could not understand.

“The fellow must be a cur if he’s agreed to keep it dark when his pal—” He muttered. “I’d never have thought—”

“There is no need for you to think about it at all.”

“I can’t understand! Redwing’s gone to sea and left word with nobody. If he doesn’t come back before the end of the term he won’t be allowed back at Greyfriars. It means the sack for him.”

“So I should imagine.”

“And—and you’ve induced him to stand for that?”

“Exactly!”

“Well, he’s a cur if he stands for it!” said Vernon bitterly.

“Never mind that! You have been scared by a totally imaginary danger—now get on your bicycle and ride back to the school. As you never knew that Mr. Vernon-Smith was coming you cannot be blamed for having been out on your bike when he came. That sees you clear in that direction!”

Bertie nodded, without speaking.

“Do not get scared so easily again!” added the captain, with a touch of contempt. “We are playing for a high stake. It is worth while to keep a stiff upper lip to be a millionaire’s heir

and to leave the place of poor relation to that jeering young rascal, Smith.”

Bertie Vernon rode back to Greyfriars much more slowly than he had ridden away from the school. He rode with an easier mind—as easy a mind as a fellow could have who was living a lie under another fellow’s name. But he was sorely puzzled. How had the captain induced Redwing to keep silent about what he suspected, what he knew? He thought and thought over that, but he was quite unable to guess.

And the captain, as he watched him go, was determined that he never should guess.

Unexpected!

BILLY BUNTER blinked cheerfully into his Form-master’s study.

Bunter was feeling quite merry and bright.

Why Mr. Quelch had sent for him Bunter did not know. The lines—those four hundred lines that had haunted the fat Owl so long and so wearily—were over and done with. Nothing had transpired, so far, about a missing pie, and Bunter had forgotten that trifle. So the fat ornament of Quelch’s Form was not anticipating trouble.

And he had, after so many failures, paid that beast Smithy out. Smithy was getting that jaw, or whatever it was his pater had up his sleeve for him. At least, Bunter had no doubt of it. This time Smithy hadn’t been able to dodge—not knowing that his pater was coming till his pater came. So Bunter was quite cheery as he arrived.

The expression on Quelch’s face banished that cheeriness, however. It boded trouble, little as Bunter had anticipated it.

That he was sent for in connection with Mr. Vernon-Smith’s telephone call

never occurred to Bunter for a moment. There was no reason, so far as Bunter could see, why that should be mentioned—as, of course, it would not have been had Mr. Vernon-Smith found his son at the school, as Bunter supposed that he had.

At that grim look on Quelch’s face, the pie recurred to Bunter’s mind. He spoke before Quelch could speak.

“It wasn’t me, sir!” said Bunter hastily.

“What? Then you know why you are sent for, Bunter?” exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

“Oh, no! I mean, I never took it, sir!” said Bunter. “If it was taken at all, I certainly never took it!”

“You were in this study at the time, Bunter.”

“Yes, sir,” said Bunter eagerly, “and—and being in this study at the time, sir, I couldn’t have taken it, could I?”

“What?” Quelch was referring to the telephone call. Bunter was thinking of a pie. So there was a slight misunderstanding. “Do you mean to say that someone else came into the study and took it while you were here, Bunter?”

Bunter blinked at him.

“Eh? Oh, no! It wasn’t in the study at all, sir!” he stammered. “It was in the larder.”

“In the larder!” repeated Mr. Quelch blankly.

“Yes, sir. I mean, I don’t know anything about it, of course. I certainly never took it. If it was taken—I mean, taken—it wasn’t me, sir. I never went anywhere near the place.”

“You were here, Bunter—”

“Yes, sir. Here all the time. I never went downstairs after I left your study, sir—I went to games practice.”

“Did any person enter this study?”

while you were here yesterday, Bunter?" demanded Mr. Quelch.

"Eh? Oh, no, sir, not till you came in."

"Then as it was taken by some person it must have been taken by you," said the Remove master.

"But it wasn't here, sir!" said the bewildered Owl. "There wasn't any pic in this study, sir, while I was here."

"Pie!" said Mr. Quelch. "Did you say pie, Bunter?"

"Yes, sir. Being here when it was took—taken—I couldn't have tooked—I mean, taken it, sir!" stammered the bewildered Bunter. "It wasn't in this study—"

"I am not referring to a pie, Bunter!" thundered his Form-master.

"Oh, ain't you, sir?" gasped Bunter.

"I am referring to a telephone call."

"Oh crikey!"

"You must have taken it, Bunter, as you wore here, and no one else entered the study. You answered Mr. Vernon-Smith on the telephone. You did not report this to me, and the matter has only just come to my knowledge. Owing to your action, Bunter, Mr. Vernon-Smith, after specially visiting the school, has had to leave without seeing his son."

"Oh crumbs!"

"This foolish trick—"

"Ain't—ain't old Smith seen young Smith, sir?" gasped Bunter. "Oh lor'! I—I thought he was sure to see him, sir, as Smithy never knew he was coming."

"You utterly stupid boy!" said Mr. Quelch. "As Vernon-Smith was not aware that his father was coming to the school this afternoon, he appears to have gone out on his bicycle, and Mr.

Vernon-Smith, therefore, was unable to see him."

"Oh, crikey!"

It dawned on Bunter that Smithy had succeeded, after all, in dodging at the very last moment.

He blinked at his Form-master in dismay.

Had the millionaire found his son in the school, as Bunter had supposed to be a certainty, his visit being a surprise to Smithy, there was no reason why the telephone call should have been referred to at all.

Mr. Vernon-Smith would naturally have supposed that his message had been passed on to his son, and Smithy, of course, did not know that there had been a phone call, so could not have mentioned it.

But as Mr. Vernon-Smith had not, after all, seen his son, matters had taken on quite a different complexion.

Smithy had dodged, and as he was not there the millionaire had wanted to know why his son had not been warned that he was coming. So it had inevitably come to light.

Billy Bunter's podgy jaw dropped. He knew now why he was sent for to Quelch's study.

He hadn't, after all, dished that beast Smithy. He had only—quite unintentionally—provided him with an excellent excuse for not being present to see his father.

"I cannot imagine," Mr. Quelch was going on "why you should have played this senseless prank, Bunter. You have caused Mr. Vernon-Smith great inconvenience and disappointment. You have prevented Vernon-Smith from seeing his father—which he must have been, naturally, very anxious to do, as it was Mr. Vernon-Smith's first visit this term."

"Oh lor'!"

"You have placed me, your Form-master, in a very awkward position. I shall punish you very severely for this utterly unfeeling and stupid prank, Bunter."

"Oh crikey!"

Mr. Quelch swished the cane.

"Bend over that chair, Bunter!"

"But I—I—I didn't, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I—I—I thought old Smith—I—I mean Mr. Vernon-Smith, would be sure to see him, as Smithy never knew that he was coming—"

"Upon my word!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "I almost doubt whether you are in your senses, Bunter!"

Really it sounded rather absurd to Quelch, who knew nothing of the dodging of the millionaire that had been going on.

"I—I mean, sir, I—I—I never did it at all, sir!" gasped Bunter. "The—the telephone-bell never rang while I was in the study, sir! I never answered it, sir—"

"Bunter!"

"Besides, I thought you'd like me to take the call, sir, as you weren't here—"

"Bless my soul! Bunter, bend over that chair at once!"

"But—but as I never did it, sir—Yaroooh!" roared Bunter, as a lick from the cane interrupted him.

He bent over the chair.

Six times the cane rose and fell. Six times an ear-splitting yell rang through Mr. Quelch's study.

Then a fat Owl wriggled woefully out. It was not, after all, Billy Bunter's lucky day!

Very Queer!

"HERE, Wharton!" grunted Coker of the Fifth. Harry Wharton glanced round.

After games practice with Mr. Lascelles, the Famous Five had gone down to the bike-shed to fill in the time till tea.

They were getting out their machines when a tired and weary Coker limped in, pushing a bike that was much too small for him.

What the longest-legged member of the Fifth Form had been doing on a junior bike was rather a mystery to the chums of the Remove. They looked very curiously at Coker and the bike.

"Take the beastly thing!" grunted Coker. "You can tell Redwing I've brought it back."

"Redwing!" repeated Harry.

"Yes; it's his bike. And you'd better tell the young ass that it doesn't improve a bike to leave it out at night," grunted Coker. "Must be dotty, I should think. Anyhow, there it is! Take it, you young ass!"

Coker pushed the bike over to Wharton, who caught it, in such a state of astonishment that he fairly goggled at Coker.

Horace was turning away when all the Famous Five yelled together:

"Hold on!"

Coker glanced back at them impatiently.

"What do you want?"

"Did you say that was Redwing's bike?" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

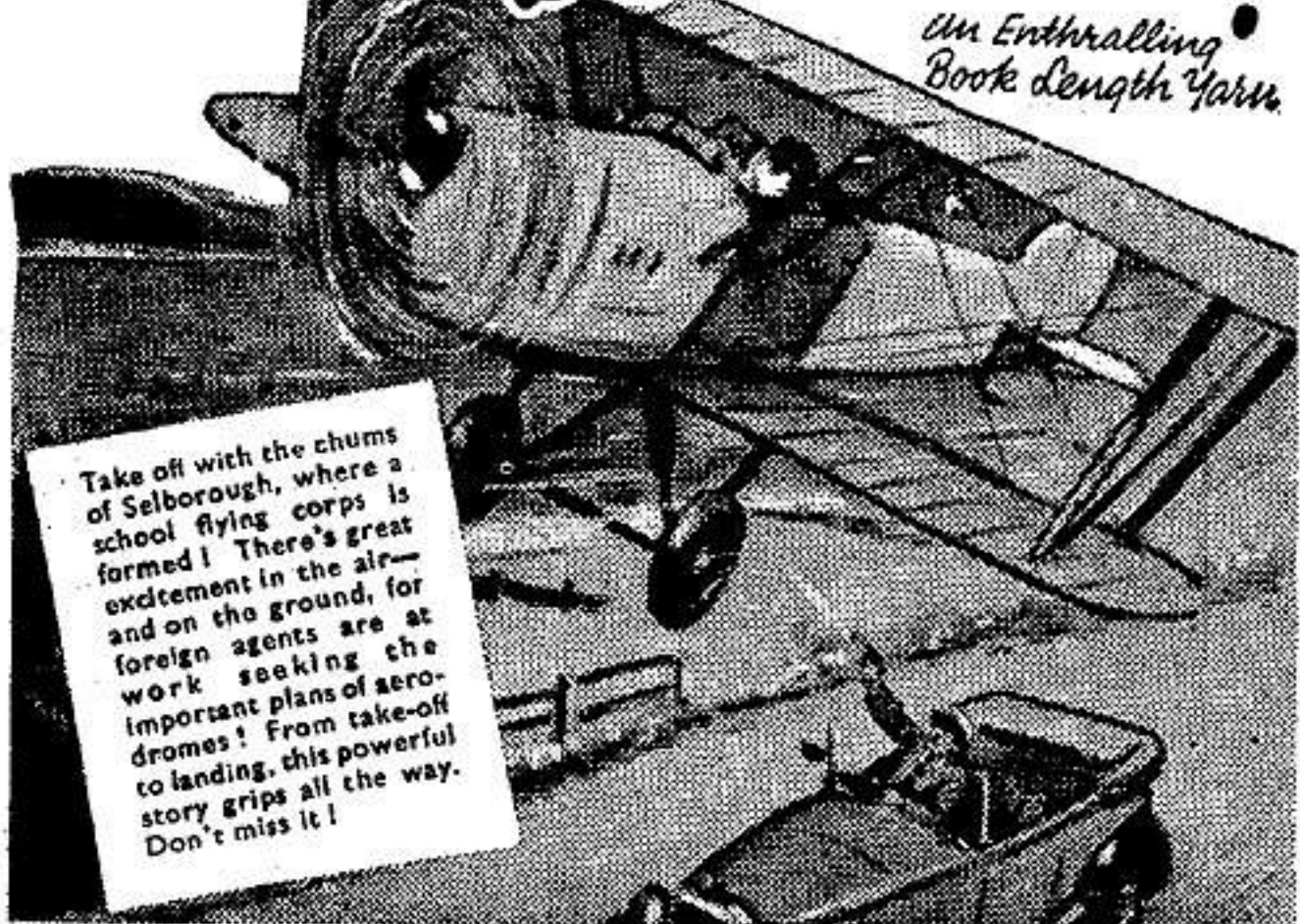
"Deaf?" snorted Coker. "I suppose it's his, as his name's on it!"

"His name's on it!" stuttered Bob Cherry.

"Yes, you young ass—inside the saddle-bag! That's how I know!" snapped Coker. He stared at the staring five. "What's the matter with you? Think I'm a ghost, or what?"

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Harry Wharton opened the flap of the saddle-bag. There was the name "T. Redwing." It was Redwing's bike.

"Where on earth did you get this jigger, Coker?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Where the young ass left it!"

"But—but—where?"

"Parked in the wood at Lantham Chase! What the thump are you blinking at?" exclaimed Coker. "I suppose the young idiot didn't want it left there, did he?—It looked as if it had been out in the open for days! Anyhow, I wanted a bike back, and I brought it in. You can tell Redwing."

"Don't you know Redwing's gone?" exclaimed Nugent.

"Is he? How the thump should I know whether he's gone or not? Think I notice whether there's a fag more or less rooting about?" snapped Coker.

"Well, he's gone, whether you've noticed it or not," said Johnny Bull. "He's been away a week."

"Has he?" grunted Coker. "Looks as if the young ass left his bike there before he went, then! A kid ought to take care of his bike!"

"Stop a minute, Coker——"

"I've no time to waste——"

"Stop, I tell you!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "This is a jolly queer thing, and it's got to be explained! Redwing was seen on this bike this day last week riding to Lantham. How the thump did his bike get into Lantham Chase?"

"I suppose he left it there."

"But why should he?" exclaimed the captain of the Remove. "Why should a fellow cutting off to catch a train for Dover, stop a mile short of the railway station, and park his bike in a wood?"

"Was he going to the station?"

Coker of the Fifth had plenty of more important matters to think of—especially the effects of that tremendous whopping from his own riding-whip. But he could not help being struck by this.

"So far as anybody knows," said Harry, "he sent Quelch a telegram from Dover that afternoon. He must have got the train from Lantham to Dover, as we saw him heading for Lantham. I never thought about his bike, but I should have supposed that he left it at the station. But——"

"This is jolly queer!" said Bob.

"The queerfulness is terrific."

"Just where did you find the bike, Coker?" asked Harry.

"Stuck in the middle of a lot of hawthorns, close by the path through Lantham Chase," answered Coker. "It was jolly well hidden—I came on it by accident—banged my shin on a pedal."

"Redwing must have parked it there," said Harry. "It's the bike he was riding that day. You say it was hidden out of sight?"

"Yes; might have stayed there for years and never been seen, only I found it by accident. The young ass must be off his rocker, I should think," grunted Coker. "You'd better drop him a line and tell him his bike has been found and brought in if he's away."

And Coker tramped out of the biko-shed, leaving the Famous Five staring at one another, and at the bike, in amazement.

"What does this mean, you fellows?" asked Harry Wharton. "Redwing never left his bike in a wood to walk on to the station—that's not sense."

"No!" said Bob.

"Come to think of it, why did he bike to Lantham at all that day to get a train?" said Frank Nugent. "He could have got a train at Courtfield without riding ten miles for it—it's the Courtfield train goes through Lantham."

"He might have had some reason for making it Lantham—but, if he did, he

would ride into Lantham! Why should a fellow get down, go out of his way to hide his bike in a wood, and then walk the other mile?"

"The whyfulness is terrific."

"No fellow would do that unless he was potty!" said Johnny Bull. "Redwing wasn't potty, so he never did it! Reddy was always careful of his bike—he can't afford a new one every summer like Smithy. He never meant to leave his bike out all night."

"It's been out every night since last Wednesday!" said Bob.

"Must have been!" said Harry. "He had to get shut of it taking a train for Dover—but he could have left it at the station, or at the cycle-shop in Lantham—or he need not have gone on it at all. He's left his box and everything else behind him—why not his bike? It would have been less trouble to pick up the motor-bus for Courtfield and take the train there. But leaving the bike hidden at Lantham Chase, and walking the other mile—that's not sense."

"I don't make this out!" said Bob Cherry.

"And I don't, either!" said Harry, his face very grave. "It's jolly well got to be explained. It was very odd Redwing going off like that—sending Quelch a telegram and not a word since to a soul. And now—this! I should jolly well think that something had happened to him, but——"

"Well, he must have got to Dover all right, or he couldn't have sent that wire to Quelch!" said Bob.

"Yes! But——" Wharton paused. "I can't make it out. I'd better report to Quelch that his bike has been found, and where it was found—and perhaps Quelch may be able to make out what it all means."

And Harry Wharton, leaving his chums, went at once to the House and to his Form-master's study, where Mr. Quelch listened in blank astonishment to the story of Coker's strange discovery at Lantham Chase.

Washed Out!

"**W**OW!" said Coker.

Potter and Greene smiled.

Horace did not seem very comfortable at prep in the

study that evening.

The Army man at Lantham Chase had laid on that riding-whip not wisely but too well.

Coker was still feeling the effects. He was feeling them severely. Every minute or two, as Coker felt a painful twinge, he ejaculated: "Wow!" or "Ow!" or "Yow!" It was really like the unending melody in Wagner, though not perhaps so melodious.

Potter and Greene were sympathetic. But they could not help smiling. That there was anything of a comic nature in what had occurred, Coker certainly did not realise. But to his friends it seemed rather entertaining for old Horace to have carted a riding-whip to Lantham Chase, to get a terrific whopping with it!

Coker merely toyed with his prep. He was in no state for prep.

"That rotter!" said Coker. "That cad! That swab! I can tell you, he pitched into me! I got in only one whop! And then—wow!"

"You made a single, and then the captain scored a century!" remarked Potter.

Greene giggled.

Coker glared at them across the table. "It's not funny!" he hooted.

"Oh, no! Not at all!" agreed Potter.

"Pass that die when you've done with it, Greeney!"

"Prep!" said Coker bitterly. "Go it! Think about prep! I've been whopped like a fag! And all you fellows can think about is prep! That's what you call being pally, I suppose."

Potter and Greene made no reply to that. Really, a fellow had to think about prep! There was Prout in the Form-room in the morning to be considered. And that licking that Coker had had, did not seem, to his friends, the overwhelming and tremendous event that it seemed to Coker!

Indeed, Potter had remarked privately to Greene, that he hoped it would do Coker good. And Greene charitably agreed that he hoped it would.

"If you fellows hadn't let me down," said Coker, "it wouldn't have happened like that. Of course you had to bag punctures on the road—it was like you! What are you grinning at now?"

"Was I grinning?" murmured Potter.

"Yes, you were, and Greene, too! If you want this inkpot across the table, you've only got to go on grinning!"

Potter and Greene became serious at once. They became as solemn as owls. They did not want the inkpot across the table.

"Next time——" Coker said darkly.

His friends glared at him. They had fancied that even Horace Coker would be satisfied with what had been handed out. They did not expect even old Horace to ask for more. But there was, it seemed, to be a next time!

"I say, old man, I'd chuck it if I were you!" murmured Potter.

"You're not me!" Coker pointed out. "If you were you'd have a little sense!"

"A very little!" murmured Potter.

"Eh? What did you say?"

"Nothing, old chap! Carry on!"

"Next time," said Coker, "I'll make that rotter squirm! It can't rest where it is! But I don't mind admitting that he's too much for me single-handed. I was going to whop him. If he kicked at that, I was going to knock the fellow down, and then whop him! I had it all cut and dried, really. But as it turned out he knocked me down and whopped me—exactly the opposite of the way I planned it, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you cackling at?" howled Coker. "Anything funny in that?"

"Oh, no! Ha, ha, ha! Not at all!"

"Not at all, old fellow! Ha, ha, ha!"

"All right," said Coker gloomily.

"Cackle! You let me down, and I got it. Next time I'll take jolly good care that you don't let me down in that fatheaded way—getting punctures. We'll take the train to Lantham next time."

"Oh!" said Potter and Greene.

Visions of losing trains floated before their minds.

"I'm going to give him," said Coker, "a dozen, at least, on his trousers. When I've given him a dozen on his trousers, I'll be willing to call it a day. Not till then. You will lend me a hand, if I need one. We take the three train from Courtfield on Saturday."

"Do we?" murmured Potter and Greene.

"That means leaving here at half-past two. And, for goodness' sake, don't go wandering off somewhere, and giving me a hunt for you, when we've got to start and catch the train!" snapped Coker.

Potter and Greene exchanged a surreptitious glance. They did not speak, but that glance revealed that on Saturday they were going to be missing.

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and undiscoverable at a quarter-past two at the latest.

"And when I get going next time—" said Coker.

Coker paused at the sound of a heavy tread in the Fifth Form passage. Either an escaped elephant had somehow got into Greyfriars, or else Mr Prout was coming up to the Fifth Form studies.

Even Coker realised that he had better not let his Form-master hear of his warlike intentions towards the tenant of Lantham Chase. Coker was seldom silent; but he was silent as that elephantine tread stopped at the study door, and there was a sharp knock.

The door opened, and Mr. Prout rolled in.

The three Fifth Formers rose to their feet. It was unusual for Prout to roll in in prep, and they wondered what he wanted.

He fixed a baleful eye on Horace Coker. Apparently it was Coker that he wanted.

"Coker!" boomed Prout.

"Yes, sir!" grunted Coker.

"A bicycle," said Mr. Prout, "has been delivered at the school by the local carrier. This bicycle, Coker, belongs to you. Your name is on it."

"Oh!" said Coker.

He had rather wondered how he was going to get that jigger back from Lantham Chase. Apparently Captain Vernon had solved that problem for him by returning it by the carrier.

"This bicycle," resumed Prout, with a deeper boom, "has been sent here from Lantham Chase. It seems that you left it there this afternoon, Coker."

"Yes, sir. I—I left in rather a hurry—"

"With the bicycle," resumed Prout. "I have received a note, written by Captain Vernon, the tenant of Lantham Chase. Captain Vernon sent this note to your headmaster, who has handed it to me, as it refers to a boy in my Form, Coker."

Potter and Greene exchanged a glance.

"In this note," boomed Prout, "Captain Vernon complains very seriously of your conduct to-day, Coker."

"Does he, sir?" asked Coker.

"He states that you visited Lantham Chase, and that you made a disturbance there, and that he chastised you!" boomed Mr. Prout. "He requests the headmaster to see that no such conduct is repeated."

Coker breathed hard.

"Why even so obstreperous, so foolish, and so unruly a boy as you, Coker, should visit a mansion ten miles' distant for the purpose of creating a disturbance, is beyond me!" said Mr. Prout. "Why did you do this, Coker?"

"I was only going to whop him, sir."

"Eh?"

"You see, sir—"

"Coker!" gasped Mr. Prout. "Listen to me, Coker! The headmaster has left this matter in my hands. Otherwise, I have no doubt, that you would receive a flogging."

Coker blinked at him.

"You don't seem to understand, sir," he said; as patiently as he could. "The man was a cheeky swab—an absolutely cheeky ruffian, and I was going—"

"Silence, Coker!" roared Prout.

"Listen to me! You will be given detention for every remaining half-holiday this term. If you should ever set foot within the precincts of Lantham Chase again, I shall request Dr. Locko to send you away from Greyfriars! Take warning, Coker! Another complaint from the tenant of Lantham Chase will mean that you leave Greyfriars the same day!"

With that Prout turned to the door, to roll away.

"But I say, sir—" gasped Coker.

"Not another word, Coker!"

"But if you'll let me explain—"

"Take a hundred lines, Coker!"

"But I was going to say—"

"Take two hundred lines, Coker!"

"But—"

"Take three hundred lines, Coker!"

Coker said no more. Three hundred lines were, it seemed, enough for Coker to go on with.

Prout rolled from the study.

"Well," said Coker, with a deep breath, when he was gone—"well, that tears it! Did you fellows ever hear anything like that? I'm getting used

to Prout's potty ways, but that's the limit!"

Potter and Greene, having exchanged a surreptitious wink, sat down to prep again.

Coker sat down, though not to prep. He sat in gloomy meditation.

When prep was over, and Coker's friends rose, Potter favoured Greene with another wink, and turned blandly to Coker.

"Half-past two on Saturday—what?" he said.

And Greene smiled.

Coker looked at him.

"You can wash that out," he said.

"I've decided what I'm going to do. I'm not taking any notice of Prout and his rot, of course. The man's a fool! But—"

Coker was taking no notice of Prout—but it seemed that there was a "but."

"I shall treat that fellow at Lantham Chase as he deserves," said Coker, with dignity. "I shall ignore him! I shall treat him with contempt!"

"Oh!" said Potter. "I—I should, old chap!"

"Jolly good idea!" agreed Greene.

"I don't want any advice from you fellows!" said Coker. "I'm able to think out the dignified thing to do for myself, I hope. The fellow's beneath my notice, and I shall simply ignore him—ignore him utterly! I shall take absolutely no further notice of him! I shall simply treat him with contempt!"

And Coker did.

Deep!

"BOB, old chap!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"No."

"I'd go," said Bunter.

After class the following day the Famous Five were in Study No. 1 in the Remove.

They were discussing the strange affair of Redwing's bike which, the more they puzzled over it, puzzled them the more.

Billy Bunter rolled down the passage and blinked into the study through his big spectacles, interrupting the discussion.

There was a grin on Bunter's fat face. There was also a smudge of ink, and several more smudges on his fat paws.

Bunter was generally more or less inky, but he seemed a little inkier than usual.

"You'd go?" repeated Bob. "Well, you can go if you like, old fat man. In fact, the sooner you go the better. It doesn't really matter much where you go, so long as you do go."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"The gofulness is the proper caper, my esteemed fat Bunter," remarked Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"Oh, all right!" said Bunter. "I thought I'd mention it. But if you like to let a chap insult you, all right."

"Eh?"

"What?"

All the Famous Five sat up and took notice at that—the topic of Redwing's bike being dismissed for the moment.

"What's happened in my study, fat-head?" asked Bob. "Anybody been larking in my study?"

"I shouldn't call it a lark," said Bunter, shaking his head. "If a fellow insulted me like that, I'd whop him. I'd jolly well go straight to Smithy's study and give him a jolly good hid-

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ing! That's what I'd do! But perhaps you don't care if a fellow insults you."

"Smithy!" repeated Bob.

"What the thump—" said Harry Wharton.

"No bizney of mine," said Bunter loftily. "As a pal, I thought I'd mention it as I passed your study and happened to see it. I haven't been in your study, you know. I just passed the door."

"What have you been doing in my study?" asked Bob.

"Eh? Nothing. Haven't I just said that I haven't been in your study?"

"That's how I knew you had."

"Oh, really, Cherry! I say, I'd go and look at it if I were you! I can jolly well tell you that it's fearfully insulting! The sort of thing Smithy would do! I'd jolly well thrash him for it!"

The Famous Five gazed at Bunter.

That fat youth's feud with Smithy was still going strong. It was going, in fact, stronger than ever since the disastrous result of his latest scheme for making Smithy sit up.

After that six from Quelch, there was no doubt that Bunter had been a fighting-man, would have mopped up the Remove passage with the Bounder's double.

Unfortunately, Bunter wasn't. But what Bunter lacked in brawn he made up, he fancied, in brains. Smithy was going to get a hiding, by proxy, as it were.

Bob Cherry slipped off the corner of the study table, on which he was seated.

"I think I'll trot along and look in my study," he remarked. "If any cheeky cad has been larking there, I'll give him larks!"

"I jolly well would!" said Billy Bunter eagerly. "Give him a jolly good hiding, old chap! I'll hold your jacket! You ain't a fellow to be insulted with impecuniosity—"

"With what?" gasped Bob.

"Impunity, perhaps?" suggested Harry Wharton, laughing.

"Oh! Well, I ain't the man to be insulted with either impunity or impecuniosity!" chuckled Bob. "Come on, you men, and let's see that insult! You come, too, Bunter—I want you to hold my jacket while I whop the cad who did it!"

"Pleasure, old chap!" grinned Bunter.

The Famous Five walked up the passage to Study No. 13, Billy Bunter rolling after them with a fat face full of happy anticipation.

Study No. 13, which belonged to Bob and Hurree Singh, Mark Linley, and Wan Lung, was at the moment vacant. The door stood wide open.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked in at the doorway—Billy Bunter grinning behind them.

"Oh!" gasped Bob.

There was a looking-glass over the fireplace. On that looking-glass, a finger dipped in ink had written a message in straggling capital letters.

The Famous Five gazed at that message.

It was, as Bunter had informed them, fearfully insulting. It was something for which the perpetrator had to be whopped. It ran:

"R. CHERRY IS A MEEZLY PHUNK!

"IF YOU WANT A WOPPING, CUM TO NO. 4 STUDDY.

"SINED,

"SMITHY."

"I say, you fellows, ain't that fear-

fully insulting?" chirruped Billy Bunter. "Not the sort of thing I'd put up with!"

"My only hat!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Ha, ha, ha!"

It was barely possible that Smithy, if in one of his most cantankerous and quarrelsome moods, might have inked those words on the glass in Study No. 13. But it was not possible that Smithy would have spelt them like that.

Bob Cherry looked round at Bunter. There was ink on Bunter's fat fingers and a smudge of it on his fat face. And there was Bunter's original and striking orthography on the glass. It did not require a Sherlock Holmes, or a Ferrers Locke, to deduce that this was a deep-laid scheme of vengeance on Smithy; and that Bob Cherry, the champion fighting-man of the Remove, was to be the fat Owl's catspaw to pull Bunter's chestnuts out of the fire.

"Taking off your jacket, old chap?" asked Bunter. "Smithy's pretty tough, you know! You'll have to go all out to whop him! I'll hold your jacket, old fellow!"

"Oh!" gasped Bob. "I don't know whether I shall need my jacket off to whop the cad who spilled that ink in my study! I fancy I can whop him with my jacket on! I'm going to whop him all right! What do you fellows think?"

"Whop him!" agreed Johnny Bull.

"The whopfulness is the proper paper!"

"Hear, hear!"

"I say, you fellows, I'm glad you're backing up Bob in this!" said Bunter. "I'm backing you up, too, old chap! Let's go straight to Smithy's study. I wouldn't say a word to him—just cut in and punch the cad! He might make out that he hadn't done it! Just go for him!"

"Ain't he deep?" gasped Bob. "Ain't he a deep old Machiavellian plotter? I'm not to give Smithy a chance to say he hasn't done it!"

"I wouldn't!" advised Bunter.

"Smithy's untruthful, you know! He might make out that he knew nothing whatever about it—it would be like him! If you'll take my advice, old chap, you'll simply just go for the rotter who's insulted you like that!"

"Jolly good advice!" agreed Bob. "I'll take that advice, Bunter! Here goes!"

"Yaroo!" roared Bunter, as the heftiest fist in the Remove tapped him on his fat little nose.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter bounded like a kangaroo. His backward hop covered quite a distance.

Bob, grinning, followed him up.

"I say, keep off!" roared Bunter. "Wharrer you punching me for, you silly ass? It's Smithy you're going to punch! I say—yaroo!"

Tap!

"Ow! Keep off! Gone potty?" yelled Bunter. "Wharrer you mean? Wharrer you pitching into me for? Keep off, blow you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm whopping the cad who spilled that ink in my study!" explained Bob. "Isn't that what you advised me to do?"

"It wasn't me, you idiot!" howled Bunter. "Can't you see Smithy's name signed to it? If you punch my nose again, I'll—yooo—hooo—hooop! Wow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tap!

"Wow! Oh crikey! Will you keep off?" shrieked Bunter. "It wasn't me, you fathead! I never inked that on the glass to make you go for Smithy! I haven't been anywhere near the study! It was Smithy—I—I saw him doing it!"

"When you weren't anywhere near the study?"

"Oh! I—I mean—"

"Yes, I know what you mean!" agreed Bob. "And what I mean is to whop the cheeky cad who did it, just as you advised me to! Have another!"

Tap!

"Yarooooooooh!"

"And another!"

Tap!

"Wow! Oh crikey! Ow!"

Billy Bunter shot along the Remove passage to the stairs.

That deep-laid scheme seemed to have been a failure—Bunter did not know why. But it was clear that it was not Smithy who was going to get the whopping—it was Bunter; and Billy Bunter stood not upon the order of his going, but departed in haste.

"Don't go!" roared Bob. "I haven't finished whopping you yet! I've hardly started! Come back and have the rest, Bunter!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter vanished into space.

(Continued on next page.)

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The Last Straw!

“WHARTON!”
“Well?”

Harry Wharton stared at the fellow in the doorway of Study No. 1.

The captain of the Remove was alone in the study when Bertie Vernon stepped in.

Since the episode in Study No. 4 the previous day Wharton had not exchanged a word with the Bounder's double. He was fed-up to the chin with Smithy, and he did not take the trouble to disguise the fact. He was startled as he looked at him now. Vernon's face was savagely set, his eyes glinting, his hands clenched. He looked like a fellow who had come in for a row—in which case, the captain of the Remove was not unwilling to give him what he had called for!

“You fool!” said Vernon. “I've just heard—you fool, what do you mean by spinning such a silly yarn?”

Wharton could only stare at him. He had not the faintest idea to what the fellow was alluding.

“I just heard some fellows talking on the landing! They were saying that Redwing's bicycle was found yesterday—at Lantham Chase—and that you said so! What do you mean by it?”

“Only what I said!” answered Harry angry, but more wondering than angry. “What the dickens do you mean, Smithy? Nothing to do with you, is it? From what you said yesterday, you're not much concerned about Redwing.”

“If his bike's been found, where did you find it, and why have you made out that you found it hidden at Lantham Chase?”

“His bike has been found, and it was found hidden in a hawthorn thicket off the path through Lantham Chase!” answered Harry. “It has been hidden there ever since the day Redwing went. Redwing must have left it there—”

“He did not leave it there—he could not have left it there—and if you say you found it there, you are lying!”

Vernon almost hissed out the words. “If Redwing went to Lantham Chase, why should he leave his bike behind when he left? And hidden! It's false, and you know it's false! You never found it there!”

“I never said I found it there!” answered Harry. “It was found there by a Fifth Form man, Coker, by accident.”

“Coker!” repeated Vernon.

“He brought it in, and told us, and I reported it to Quelch! For goodness' sake, what's the matter with you, Smithy? Do you think that some-

thing's happened to Redwing, or what?”

“Something happened to him!” repeated Vernon almost wildly. “Something happened to him! Oh! You say it was Coker—I remember now, I saw him yesterday afternoon, riding a bike too small for him—did Coker say that he found it at Lantham Chase—hidden?”

“Yes.”

“Is that the truth? Tell me the truth, you fool!”

“It's the truth!” said Harry. “Blessed if I make you out, Smithy! You don't care twopence about old Reddy—you won't help a fellow to get in touch with him, and I believe you

make out what's been puzzling all of us—”

Vernon did not stop or look back. He went out of the study without another word.

He tramped heavily up the passage to his own study, went in, and slammed the door.

Harry Wharton was left staring. Smithy had puzzled him and other fellows a good deal the past few weeks—but never so much as now.

He little dreamed of what was in the mind of the unhappy impostor as he paced Study No. 4 with hurried, irregular steps, unable to keep still.

The discovery of Tom Redwing's bike hidden at Lantham Chase perplexed Harry Wharton & Co. deeply! But it did not perplex Vernon! It let in light on what had perplexed him! It had given him so startling a shock that he would not believe it—but he had to believe it!

He knew—he could not doubt—what it meant!

The captain had told him that he had secured Tom Redwing's silence. He had not told him how! But Bertie did not need telling now!

Tom Redwing had gone to Lantham Chase that day! He had gone on his bike! He would have left on his bike—had he left! He had not left!

Vernon knew it—he realised that it could only mean that—that and nothing else! That was how Redwing's silence had been secured! He had walked into the trap like Herbert Vernon-Smith, and the trap had closed on him! That was what it meant—he knew that that was what it could only mean! It was the last straw!

He threw himself into a chair at the table at last and picked up a pen.

With an unsteady hand he dashed a few sentences on a sheet of paper.

“I know now what you would not tell me yesterday. I will not stand for it! It must end—now.”

Feverishly he crumpled the sheet into an envelope, sealed it, and addressed it to Captain Vernon at Lantham Chase.

Then he thrust the letter into his pocket and left the study.

Wharton was in the doorway of Study No. 1. He called to him as he passed:

“Smithy!”

Vernon did not even hear him. He hurried down the stairs and hurried to the school letter-box.

The letter was dropped into the box—the die was cast!

He had yet to deal with the plotter of Lantham Chase! But it was the end—he was resolved that it was the end.

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could—and now you jump into the jitters because his bike's been found! What the dickens—”

“Oh, you're a fool! If Redwing went to Lantham Chase on his bike that day, why didn't he leave on it? Why should he leave it hidden there?”

“Nobody knows! We've been trying to puzzle that out ever since Coker brought it in! If you've an idea—”

Bertie Vernon laughed—a discordant laugh.

Harry Wharton stared at him in utter amazement. The fellow was deeply disturbed—utterly shaken—by what he had heard, and was unwilling to believe; but why, was a mystery to the captain of the Remove.

Vernon turned to the door.

“Hold on a minute, Vernon-Smith!” exclaimed Wharton. “Look here, if you know anything about it—if you can

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All applications for Advertisement Space in this publication should be addressed to the Advertisement Manager, The MAGNET, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street London, E.C.4.

By H. VERNON-SMITH

Cricket in the term now ending has had a very successful innings at Greyfriars. The First Eleven won nine games out of thirteen. Two were drawn and two lost. Wingate topped the batting list and North was the "star" bowler. The Remove won ten games out of fifteen, and of the remaining five three were lost and two drawn. Wharton was the best run-getter, and Hurree Singh, in accordance with expectations, came out best among the bowlers.

Our record at the summer game bears not quite so favourable a look as our footer record for last season. But the team has gone through some vicissitudes in the course of the term, and on the whole, I think we may be said to have done very well.

Squiff won the Remove sculling race midway through the term, Bull, the favourite for the honour, being beaten by several lengths. Squiff's success was the result of a course of intensive training for the event, and only shows what proper preparation can do.

Another unexpected result was the winning of the Remove swimming championship by Peter Todd. What were Wharton, Cherry, and all the other strong swimmers doing to allow Toddy to get away with it? Here again we see what specialisation can do. Toddy set himself out to win the race, trained thoroughly for it, and won!

Without reflecting in any way on the merits of Todd's performance, I don't think he would have pulled it off if the other competitors had trained as seriously as he did.

The long summer vac will end all the rivalries of a full term of sport. But Remove men are earnestly requested to keep fit whilst on holiday. Remember the coming footer season—and the stern struggle we shall have to remain top team in the table for the second year in succession!

Answers to Correspondents

"CURIOUS" (Third).—"Is it true that Bolsover major is a vegetarian?" No: the rumour probably arose because he has cauliflower ears, a fruity voice, and a face like a beetroot. He is also, of course, always full of beans!

"FOURTH-FORMER."—"Why is it that Temple fails to bring the Fourth up to the level of the Remove?"

We fancy he lacks push because of his pash for being posh.

"INDIGNANT" (Remove).—"There's a big difference between a cricketer who drops catches and a swot who ties blocks of ice round his napper."

Exactly. One has "butter" fingers and the other has a "dripping" head!

G. L. (Sixth).—"When I do jump on Dicky Nugent, I'll give him socks and boot him all round the quad!"

We have sent on your threat to Dicky, who writes back: "The feet will be very difficult!"

S. J. S. (Remove).—"Angel said it wasn't till he got to Friarale Station that his governor gave him the fiver."

Presumably it happened on the spot where the o's a notice reading "Rubbish may be tipped here!"

R. RAKE (Remove).—"He told me that if ever I started to nose round or give him any lip, should get a thick ear; but that's all my eye."

Well, there's nothing like looking facts in the "face"!

O. B. (Fifth).—"I like your paper because it's light."

Don't spoil yourself by "keeping it dark"!



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THE MYSTERY OF THE "MARY ANN"!

A Thrilling and Dramatic School Story of Jack Jolly & Co., the Chums of St. Sam's.

By DICKY NUGENT

"Avast there, ye lubbers! Jom-metry class aboy!"

Dr. Alfred Birchmalt, the Head of St. Sam's, bawled out these words across the deck of the good ship "Mary Ann."

Jack Jolly & Co. rose hastily from their deck-chairs and moved towards the quarter-deck, where a blackboard and four desks had already been set out for their bennyfit.

It was a bit thick, in the opinion of the heroes of the Fourth, that they should have to keep up their lessons in mid-ocean just as if they were still at St. Sam's. The Head, however, had simply insisted on it before allowing them to start on the trip.

Probably the cunning old rascal had been thinking more of getting a free trip for himself on Mr. Ferdinand Fearless' luxury yacht than of his pupils' education. But, whatever his object, he was giving Jack Jolly & Co. lessons galore!

Dr. Birchmalt was grinning cheerfully, as he rolled across the deck to his blackboard. He walked with a nautical gait and he was dressed in a nautical style. In fact, ocean travel seemed to be affecting him to a remarkable extent. The academick cap and gown he usually wore was now replaced by a sailor's cap and bell-bottomed trousers; while in place of his customary birch, he carried a length of rope with a nasty-looking knot at the end of it. He gave Frank Fearless a playful flick with it as he passed his desk, and Fearless uttered a yell.

"Yarooooo! Chuck it! That hurt, sir!"

"It will hurt still more if you don't mind your p's and q's, Fearless!" grinned the Head. "Sit down, my barties, and we'll get on with om-metry. Jolly! What is a try-angle?"

"A figger having three angles, sir."

Dr. Birchmalt recoiled, as from a blow.

"A—figger having three angles? Jolly! Jolly! Where are your branes? How many more times am I to drum it into your wooden head that a try-angle is a four-sided figger having equal sides! Shiver my timbers! The next thing you'll be telling me is that two and two make four!"

"But they do, sir!" yelled Jolly. The Head frowned fiercely.

"Mutiny, eh? What you need, you young lubber, is a touch of the rope's end—and that's just what you're going to get! Stand out and bend over!"

Jolly pulled a ryo face and stepped out reluctantly before the class.

Just as he touched his toes, a newcomer appeared behind the Head in the person of Mr. Bilgewater, the first mate of the "Mary Ann." But the

Head was too busy taking aim to notice Mr. Bilgewater. He raised the rope and brought it down with terrific force.

At the same moment, however, Jack Jolly, with a litening-like movement, skipped out of the way just when the Head was least expecting it. The result was very commical. The rope's end whizzed on and wacked the first mate's legs so hard that it swept him clean off his feet; and the Head overbalanced and hit the deck a resounding blow with his nose!

"Crash! Bang! Wallop!"

"Yarooooo!"

"Ow-ow-ow! By dose! Wooop!"

side of the yacht and gone for a swim, Mr. Fearless!

"He would have to be a super-swimmer to keep up with the yacht while she's doing twenty-five knots!" retorted Mr. Fearless, with a grim laff. "No, it's not that. My own opinion is that it's a case of towl play. I trussed I am wrong, but I fear I am right. In any case, I want all hands on deck to join in the search."

"I, I, Mr. Fearless! The class is dismissed—and I'll see you later, Jolly!" added the Head, with a skowl at the kaptin of the Fourth.

"Come on, you chaps!" grinned Jack Jolly.

Merry and Bright and Fearless rose from their desks with grate cheerfulness and joined in the search eagerly—only too glad to break away from Dr. Birchmalt's beastly class!

They hunted high and low. They inquired here, there, and evorywhere. But there was no trace anywhere of Kaptin Goodfellow.

Not all of the crew seemed to be unhappy over the skipper's mysterious disappearance. Some of them—all members, the juniors notised, of the ugly-looking gang Dr. Birchmalt had engaged for the yacht at Sandport harbour—grinned leeringly at the Co.'s question. But they all denied nollidge of their skipper's whereabouts.

It was ten minnits after Jack Jolly & Co. had started searching that Mr. Piper, the second mate, stopped them near the fourcastle. There was a look of anxiety on the second mate's face.

"Eggsouse me, young gentlemen," he said. "But have you seen Mr. Bilgewater lately? I believe he has disappeared!"

"Well, this beats the band!" ejaculated Frank Fearless. "If things go on like this, the next thing to happen will be my pater disappearing!"

"Seen Mr. Fearless, boys?" asked Mr. McTavish, the engineer, appearing from below. "He seems to have vanished!"

"Wha-a-at?"

It was true! No sign of Mr. Fearless could be found. Nor was this the last shock they received. A little later, Mr. Piper disappeared; and after him, Mr. McTavish, the engineer; and after him, several seamen.

The mystery was deepening.

Jack Jolly & Co. looked grim as they held a confab half-way up the rigging.

"There's something sinnister about all this you chaps," remarked Jolly, as he gazed thoughtfully over the eggspanse of ocean through which the yacht was sailing. "It looks to me as if some plot is afoot to prevent us catching up with—"

"The Saucy Sal!" eggscalded Frank Fearless suddenly.

"What?"

"It's the Saucy Sal!—Hymer Kerr's boat!" yelled Fearless, as he gazed at a speck on the horizon through his pocket telescope. "We've caught her up at last. Let's tell the steersman!"

"Stow that, you young swab!"

All four looked down at the sound of that brootal, wapping voice below them. They fairly wissled, as they saw half a duzen of the hands looking up at them with leering grins on their faces.

"Stow that, you young swab!" repeated the leader of the gang—a hulking grato broot with trotchery and villany written in evry line of his face. "You're telling the steersman nothing! Because at v? Because I'm the kaptin of this vessel now, and wot I says goes! Come down, you swabs!"

But Jack Jolly & Co. did not come down. They stayed where they were—paralysed with astonishment, as the appalling fact forced itself on them that Mr. Fearless' pater—their floating home—was in the hands of a raskally gang of mutineers!

(The fun is fast and furious in the sequel to this yarn next week's number. Note the title: "At the Mercy of the Mutineers!")

HARRY WHARTON CALLING!

When Frank Nugent's pater was at Greyfriars for the recent Pageant, he expressed the opinion that Greyfriars juniors are far too slangy in their speech. "Great pips!" and "Oh, my hats!" figure far too frequently in the average Romovite's conversation for Nugent senior's liking!

Do you think he's right? Personally, I don't. Slang in moderation brightens up the speech and keeps the language alive. It is only when you carry it to extremes that slang deserves censure.

If I overstepped the limit and spilled the beans every week in the slangy kind of lingo I'm using in this paragraph, it would nark my fans like one-o'clock, and they'd soon start chucking brickbats. Unless I cheesed it pronto, I should quickly get it where the chicken got the chopper!

Whew! How do you like that, chums?

On the other hand, if I regularly indited my editorial missive in impeccable phraseology, paying due regard to grammatical usage and the rules of syntax, I might conceivably anticipate the emergence of a style of somewhat stilted character which would prove inappropriate to the particular character of the journal to which I was contributing.

Wow! Nice work that, for a hot day, eh—what?

You see what I mean? Too much slang is wrong. But it can be equally wrong not to use slang at all.

We Remove chaps are admittedly rather slangy. But if Mr. Nugent insists still that we are too slangy, then, on behalf of the Form, I hereby enter a plea for "Not Guilty!"

Now that I have put the other point of view, I sincerely hope the prosecutor will withdraw the charge!

Cheerio, till next week, chums!

HARRY WHARTON

FISHY'S VALET SERVICE BEATS EVERYTHING!

says SQUIFF.

You never lack excitement when you share a study with Fisher T. Fish. Fishy can be relied on to give you something fresh evry week at least. This week, he started a valet service!

"I'll say it's a wow!" he told me enthusiastically, when I came in to tea to find clobber's evry description lying all over the study and Fishy pressing somebody's bags with a hot iron.

"All you chaps are going on vacation an' I guess you all wanna look as ritzy as you can. Hyer's how!"

And Fishy ran his iron over somebody's bags with terrific zest.

I waded through piles of miscellaneous clothing to the centre of the study.

"And what about tea?" I asked, in a cold, remorseless sort of voice.

"Do we have tea on the window-sill?" Fishy paused in his pressing operations to give me a look of withering scorn.

"Tea, hun?" he snapped. "I start a swell business that's gonna put me right in the durreck, you talk about tea! Do I give you'n about tea? No, sir! I should worry!"

"I'll jolly well make you worry if you turn out rusty on an old clo' shop for the last few days of the term!" I said grimly. "Were the dickens did you find all this clobber?"

"My customer's turned it all in," Fishy explained proudly. "I guess those guys know a good thing when they see it—yes, sir! Pants sponged and pressed, one-and-sixpence—and dirt cheap at the price!"

Dirt's decidedly cheap, judging by the atmosphere, ya tame lunatic!

I remarked. "Who does it all come from?"

"From my client's reach-me-downs, I guess!" grinned Fishy. "When a

guy's pants go through the Fish Cleaning Process, I'll tell a man the dirt's all left behind in this study—yes, sirc! Just fix your peepers on these an' you'll see!"

Fishy hung a pair of flannels over an improvised line across the study and started beating clouds of dust out of them with an old tennis racket.

"Oh, boy! Does Fishy get rid of the dust? I'll say!" he chortled.

"I'll tell the world the Fish Valet Service beats everything! Whoopee!"

Choking and coughing, I staggered to the door.

"You—you maniac!" I gasped, from the comparative safety of the doorway.

"Look at that iron! It's burning through the trousers!"

Fish left off beating the flannels and made a dive for the iron.

Dense clouds of smoke were ascending from under that iron, but Fish didn't turn a hair.

"Say, that's nothing!" he said cheerfully. "A sprinkle of Rubitoff Cleaning Powder and a good hard brush an' those pants will be as good as noo, I guess! Now, listen, bo. Wanna make yourself easy greenbacks? All right. Go and get all the clothes you can rustle up from your pals an' bring 'em along to the Fish Valet Service, an' I guce you're on a ten per cent cut. It's a cinch! Tell the galoots I guarantee a knife edge to evry pair of pants an'—"

But I didn't wait to hear the rest. Even from the doorway, the air of No. 14 was becoming a little too sultry. I mizzled and had tea with Peter Todd.

After tea, I went back to No. 14. I found a small army of Lower School men there, struggling in the doorway and lots of excited argument going on inside the study.

"My coat! Look at it! Look at this hole burned right through the shoulder!"

"What about my bags, you imbecile! You've pressed 'em sideways and I'll never get 'em right again!"

"Look at this waistcoat! Look at this big white patch!"

"I guess that's Rubitoff!" I heard Fishy shrieking above the din. "No extra charge, an' I've made it cleaner than when it was noo! Where's your grouch?"

I left them to it and went for a stroll round the quad.

When I came in for prep, the crowd and the clobber had melted away from No. 14, though a legacy of dust and smoke still remained. Fishy was reclining in the arm-chair, rubbing himself and groaning. His collar was hanging limply from his neck, his hair was standing up on end, and his jacket had been ripped in half.

"How's the valet service?" I asked. "Trade still booming?"

Fishy groaned.

"I guess those guys surely are slab-sided panhandlers! I guess they don't deserve the benefits of a slick modern business service! I guess I'm through! Yep."

But you can't keep a good man down. Fishy is bound to find another outlet for his energies before breaking-up day.

As I remarked, you never ack excitement when you share a study with Fisher T. Fish!

