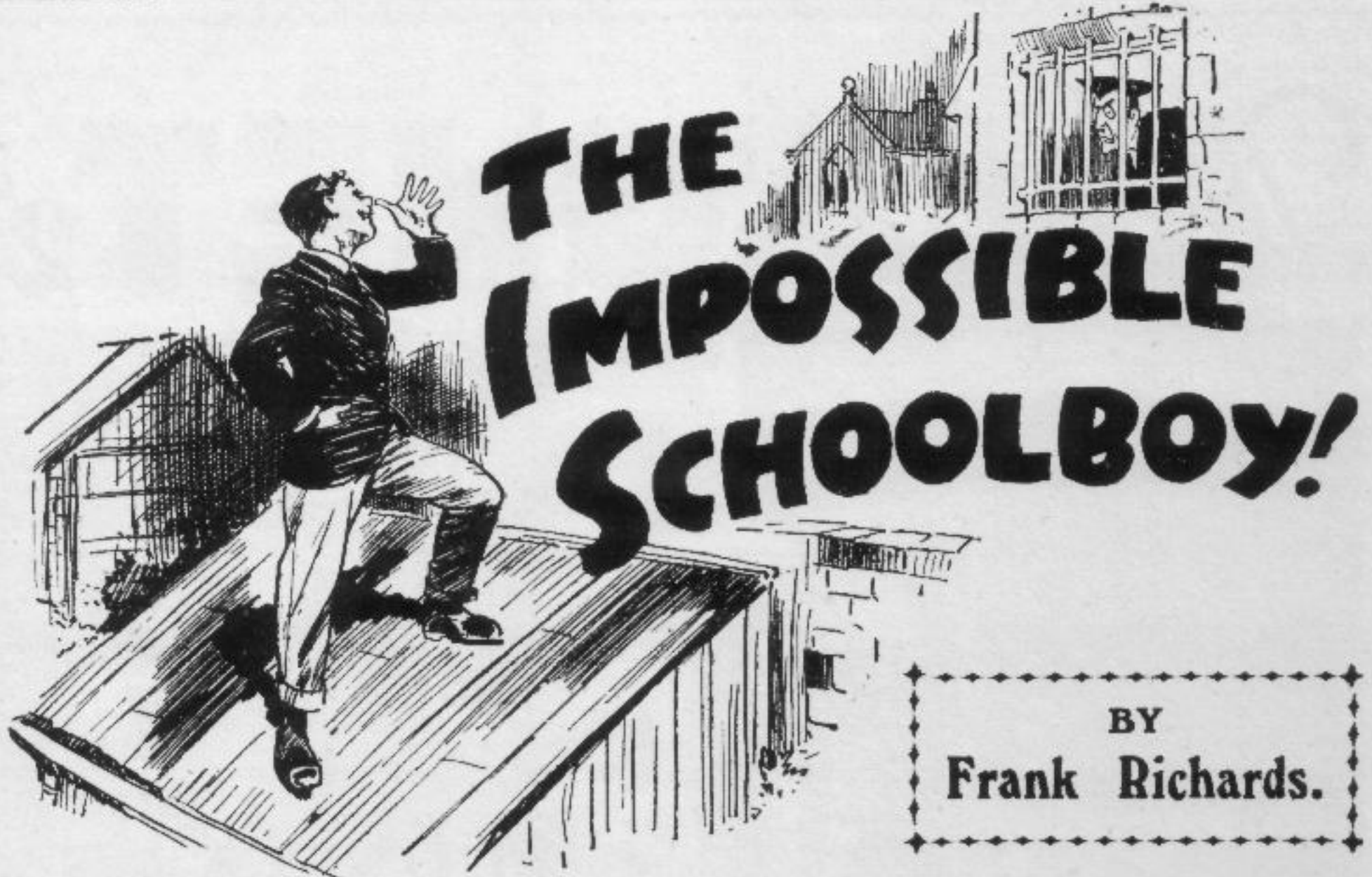


"THE IMPOSSIBLE SCHOOLBOY!" LAUGHS AND THRILLS IN THE COMPLETE SCHOOL YARN OF GREYFRIARS—INSIDE.

# The MAGNET 2<sup>D</sup>



*For Life  
or Death!*



BY  
Frank Richards.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Under Sentence!

**"BUNKED!"**  
"Sacked!"  
"Turfed out!"  
"Booted!"

Many and various were the expressions used. Hardly a man used the word "expelled," though that was what it came to.

An expulsion was rare at Greyfriars School.

Seldom—very seldom, indeed—did the Head feel called upon to administer that last and most drastic of punishments.

But it had happened now; and it sent a thrill of excitement through Greyfriars from the Sixth to the Second. Smithy was bunked!

Herbert Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, was "up" for the sack.

Even his best friends admitted that he had asked for it. He had, indeed, asked for it time and again. How he had dodged it so long, after asking for it so often, was a puzzle to many fellows. Now Smithy had got what was coming to him.

"Bunked!"  
"Smithy, you know—the old Bounder!"  
"He's got it at last!"

The news ran like wildfire. Even great men of the Sixth Form—high and mighty personages who affected hardly to know that there was such a Form as the Remove in existence—condescended to be interested.

A Remove man was up for the sack! That drew general attention to the Form to which the Bounder belonged.

Mr. Quelch, the expelled junior's Form master, had a grim and serious face that evening. Fellows who had seen the Head announced that the old scout was looking frightfully solemn. Masters' Common-room, it was known, was agog with it.

The news had got out before prep that evening; and in the Remove studies, at least, little attention was given to prep.

Utterly neglecting prep, the juniors discussed the Bounder—the fact that he was going, and why he was going, and when he was going.

Heedless of the fact that they were supposed not to leave their studies during prep, fellows came along to Study No. 4 in the Remove—Smithy's study—to see the Bounder, to see how he was taking it, and to sympathise more or less.

But they did not find the Bounder there.

Tom Redwing, his study mate, was there. Redwing, generally careful with his preparation, was giving it no heed now. His books lay on the table, not even looked at. His face was darkly clouded. In answer to many questions, he only said that Smithy was not there, and that he did not know where he was. But he was not gone yet; it was known that he was not going till the morning.

Skinner remarked that the Beak couldn't send a man home in the middle of the night. He had to let Smithy take a morning train. That meant another night at Greyfriars. No doubt a letter from the headmaster would precede his arrival at his home, apprising his father of what had happened. Nice for the Bounder when he got home, as Skinner remarked, with a cheery grin. Skinner was one of those fellows who found something entertaining in the disasters of others.

But where was the Bounder? He had been seen in the Rag that evening, where he had told the fellows that he was "bunked"; after that, he had packed. Since then he had not been seen.

Apparently he was now separated from the school, of which he was no longer a member—segregated, as Skinner expressed it.

"Bad example for us nice fellows, you know!" said Skinner, in the Remove passage. "We might learn from the naughty old Bounder to kick over the traces and not to love our kind teachers. Might catch Smithy's cheek, you know, as if it was measles. So they've segregated him. It's rather a shame, though—a man can't even express his jolly old sympathy."

"And you feel such a lot of sympathy!" sniggered Snoop.

"Oh, frightfully!" said Skinner.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Here's Bunter!" said Skinner. "Bunter knows where Smithy is, ten to one! So long as they make keyholes to doors, you can always rely on Bunter for information."

"Oh, really, Skinner!"

"Where's Smithy, Bunter?"

Billy Bunter grinned.

"I jolly well know where he is!" he said. "I happened to hear Quelch speaking to Wingate of the Sixth. They've bunged poor old Smithy in punny."

"Isolated him, in case we should catch it, just as I told you," said Skinner. "Well, Smithy's been in punishment-room before. It must be a comfort to him to know that this will be the very last time."

"He's not going to see any of the fellows again," said Bunter. "Quelch's got his rag out, you know! Never seen him looking so waxy! I heard him tell Wingate that Smithy's as cheeky as billy-o, though he's going to be hoofed out in the morning."

"Yes, I think I can hear Quelch putting it like that!" grinned Skinner. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, they weren't his exact words," explained Bunter. "He said that Vernon-Smith was still maintaining an attitude of unrepressed impertinence, in spite of the fact that he was under sentence of expulsion."

"That sounds more like Quelch!" chuckled Wibley.

"Smithy's got a neck," said Skinner admiringly. "The old Bounder's got nerve. He will go with his ears up. They won't hear him whine."

"All the same, he's an ass!" said Bolsover major. "It's no joke to be bunked from school. Smithy makes out that he doesn't care a straw. But he jolly well does, all the same."

Redwing looked out of Study No. 4. He had caught Billy Bunter's fat voice in the passage.

"You're sure Smithy's in the punishment-room, Bunter?" he asked.

"Yes, rather! I heard Quelch—"

Redwing came out of the study, and went along the Remove passage. A dozen fellows in the passage stared after him.

"Reddy's rather cut up!" said Ogilvy.

"Well, he was the Bounder's pal," said Russell. "Blessed if I ever saw what he liked about Smithy—but he did like him a lot."

"Damon and Pythias, and all that!" yawned Skinner. "After all, Smithy's father's a millionaire."

"Oh, rot!" grunted Russell. "Redwing wouldn't care about that. You're rather a rotter, Skinner!"

"Thanks, old bean! Same to you!"

"I say, you fellows, he's gone into Wharton's study," said Billy Bunter, who was blinking after Tom Redwing through his big spectacles. "I say, Wharton's not there—I saw him go down to Quelch's study."

Skinner chuckled.

"I fancy Wharton's gone to put in a word for the Bounder," he said. "Blessed if I see why he should—they were never really friends. And, anyhow, it won't do any good. Quelch is fairly on the war-path."

"The fact is, he's had his eye on Smithy for a long time, and I fancy he's rather glad to start him on the long jump," said Ogilvy.

Redwing came out of Study No. 1. He went down the Remove staircase, the eyes of the fellows in the passage following him curiously. Tom Redwing was not a fellow to wear his heart on his sleeve; but it was easy enough to see that he was deeply cut by the disaster that had fallen on his chum.

"He's going to speak to the Bounder," said Skinner. "He will get licked if he's spotted talking to a man in punny."

Tom Redwing was as well aware of that as Skinner was; but he did not give it a thought as he made his way to the secluded corridor that led to the punishment-room. With a clouded face and a heavy heart, Redwing reached the massive oaken door that was locked on his chum and tapped on it.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### Nothing Doing!

**H**ARRY WHARTON, the captain of the Remove, stopped at the door of Mr. Quelch's study, and hesitated there a few moments.

He could hear the rustling of papers in the study, which told that the Remove master was there.

It was not a pleasant interview that lay before the captain of the Remove.

That Mr. Quelch was deeply incensed with the Bounder, and that he had cause to be deeply incensed, Wharton was well aware.

In the eyes of the Removites, there

were excuses for what the Bounder had done; but it was pretty certain that there were none in the eyes of the Form master whose authority he had flouted.

But the Famous Five had discussed the matter, and agreed that a word should be put in for Smithy. As Bob Cherry had remarked, if it did no good it could do no harm. Johnny Bull, Frank Nugent, and Hurree Janset Ram Singh were of the same opinion. It was left to Wharton, as captain of the Form, to speak to Quelch—to beard the lion in his den, as it were. His friends did not envy him the task.

Harry Wharton raised his hand to tap—and paused. For several seconds he hesitated at Mr. Quelch's door. Then, taking his courage in both hands, so to speak, he tapped.

"Come in!"

Mr. Quelch's voice seemed unusually deep.

Harry Wharton entered the study.

The Remove master, sitting at his writing-table, fixed his eyes on the head boy of his Form. His face was grim. Possibly he guessed why Wharton had come.

"Well?"

He shot the monosyllable out like a bullet.

Wharton, standing under the uncompromising glare of a pair of gimlet eyes, coloured uncomfortably.

"I—I hope you will excuse me, sir—" he stammered.

Mr. Quelch raised a hand.

**Detention, canings, floggings—all have been tried in vain to bring the Bounder to a proper state of mind; and now expulsion stares the "hardest case at Greyfriars" in the face!**

"Have you come here to speak about Vernon-Smith, Wharton?"

"Well, yes, sir."

"It is useless. You may go."

Wharton had expected it; there really was nothing else to expect. But he stood his ground. He had not come there to retreat at the first shot.

"If you'll allow me to speak, sir—"

"I have said that it is useless."

"Yes, sir. But—"

"I trust, Wharton," said Mr. Quelch, in a deeper voice than ever, "I trust that you, the head boy of my Form, do not uphold in any way, the conduct of which Vernon-Smith has been guilty?"

"Oh, no, sir! But—"

"I am glad of it!" said Mr. Quelch.

"You may go, Wharton."

Wharton did not go.

"Excuse me, sir," he said. "As head boy of the Form, and as Vernon-Smith's Form captain, I have a right to speak."

"What? What?"

Mr. Quelch's glare was positively petrifying. The basilisk of old must have looked somewhat like Henry Samuel Quelch at that moment.

But Wharton stood his ground. He had come there to say what he could for the expelled junior, and he was going to say it, unless Quelch took him by the shoulders and slung him out of the room. And that was not probable. Quelch contented himself with glaring.

"Really, Wharton! I may tell you that Redwing has already been here to plead for Vernon-Smith, and I gave him a hearing because the boy was his

best friend. I had to tell him, however, that there was nothing to be done. Vernon-Smith, I believe, was no great friend of yours."

"No, sir! Not exactly! But if he'd been my enemy, I should be bound to say what I could for him now, as his Form captain."

"Um!" said Mr. Quelch.

He was silent for a moment. Then he signed to the junior to proceed. His expression indicated, however, quite plainly, that it would be of no use.

"I know Smithy's played the fool," said Wharton. "I'm not excusing him in any way. But—but—I know he was under detention to-day, and I know that it was just. If he'd broken detention for any rotten reason, I shouldn't say a word. But I think it's in his favour, sir, that he broke detention to play in a cricket match, and especially as we had to take a rather weak team over to Highcliffe, and we should have been hopelessly beaten if Smithy had stood out."

"If Vernon-Smith had merely broken detention, Wharton, he would not have been expelled. He would have been caned or flogged."

"I know, sir—but—"

"He caused a false telegram to be sent to his headmaster," said Mr. Quelch. "He bribed some person to dispatch a telegram signed by his father's name, asking leave for him for the day. The headmaster was deceived—I was deceived. A telegram signed by a false name, Wharton, practically amounts to a forgery. It is a punishable offence."

"I'm sure Smithy never thought of that, sir—"

"And I am equally sure that he would have cared nothing had he thought of it," said Mr. Quelch.

Wharton made no reply to that. He knew that the Remove master was right. There was no doubt that Herbert Vernon-Smith had been utterly reckless and unscrupulous in his scheme for getting off detention that day.

But his object, at least, had been good, though his methods had been more than questionable. The Bounder might have played such a trick to get away for a visit to the races, in which case the captain of the Remove certainly would have had nothing to say for him. But his object had been to get away to play cricket for the Remove, and his game at Highcliffe had saved the side from certain defeat. That made a great deal of difference.

"The deception of the Head is too serious a matter to be passed over," said Mr. Quelch, "and this act is only the culmination of a long process of reckless and insubordinate conduct. On more than one occasion, I have had to consider whether Vernon-Smith could be allowed to remain at Greyfriars. He has been given every chance, and this is the result. Dr. Locke considers that the expulsion of this rebellious boy is the only possible course, and I fully agree with him. Indeed, should he incline to leniency, I should use all my influence to oppose it. I am satisfied that my Form will be better without such a member. The matter is closed, Wharton."

"But, sir—"

"That will do."

"I only want to say, sir, that without making any excuses for Smithy, I

believe he felt that he was bound to back us up in the Highcliffe match, and—"

"I cannot believe that he was deeply concerned about the cricket match, Wharton, or he would not have risked detention on the day it was played. But even if I believed so, it would make no difference. You may go."

"But, sir—"

Mr. Quelch rose to his feet and pointed to the door.

"Leave my study, Wharton!" he said.

There was no more to be said. In silence, the captain of the Remove left the study. He had done his best, but he had foreseen that it would be useless.

He came back into Study No 1 in the Remove, and found the Co. waiting for him there. They eyed him inquiringly.

"Nothing doing!" said Harry.

"You put it to Quelch?" asked Nugent.

"As well as I could. But—his back's up."

"The upfulness of his esteemed back seems to be terrific," remarked Hurreo Janset Ram Singh, with a shake of his dusky head.

"That's not to be wondered at," grunted Johnny Bull. "Smithy's asked for it—begged for it! Still, I'm sorry."

"Poor old Smithy!" said Bob Cherry. "We shall miss him from the games. Poor old Smithy! He was a good chap, in his own way."

"It's rotten," said Harry. "I suppose the Head can't do anything else, really—it was too awfully thick! But it's rotten!"

And the Co. agreed that it was rotten. But rotten as it was, it was evident that there was no help for it; the Bounder had asked for it, he had got it, and he had to go.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER.

#### The Bounder's Nerve!

**H**ERBERT VERNON-SMITH stood at the barred window of the punishment-room, and stared out into the glimmering evening. Stars were coming out in the summer sky, but there was still a glow of the setting sun. From the high window crossed by bars, the Bounder of Greyfriars stared, with a gloomy brow.

Under the eyes of the other fellows, under the severe glance of Mr. Quelch and the Head, the Bounder kept up an attitude of devil-may-care coolness and carelessness.

It was not wholly a pose, for the Bounder's recklessness was deeply-grained. But a good deal of it, at least, was assumed, and it dropped from him in the solitude of the punishment-room.

Alone, with no eyes to witness and wonder at his nerve and daring, the Bounder had no object in keeping it up. Alone, he was thinking—and reflection was bitter. Alone, he was able to see things as other fellows saw them, and their aspect was not pleasing.

The game was up for him at Greyfriars! He had risked it often enough, and now the chopper had come down. He was not the fellow to whine, but he could have kicked himself for his folly.

He had done wrong. He knew that he had done wrong, and he had recklessly rejoiced in wrong-doing. Yet he had a feeling that he was hardly used.

Many a time he had broken bounds, broken detentions, to follow shady pursuits, and his luck had always held good. This time he had done it to play

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cricket for his school, to save a match that was otherwise lost, and the chopper had descended. It did not seem fair, somehow.

Reckless bravado could not help him, now that he was alone. He thought of his chum, Redwing, whom he was to leave. He thought of his father, who was to see him sent home in disgrace, all his hopes disappointed, all his plans scattered to pieces. He wondered a little that he had not thought of them earlier, while there was yet time. Unstable as he was, his friendship with Tom Redwing was deep. He did not want to lose his friend. And for his father the Bounder had an affection, strange enough in one of his hard character, of which few would have deemed him capable. Yet in following his own wilful way he had given neither a thought.

A dreary evening, a dreary night, lay before him.

After that the prospect was black enough—the home-coming, his father's surprise and, perhaps, anger. But it was of the present that the Bounder chiefly thought.

His only consolation, in the pass things had come to, was to carry off his disaster with a high head; to go out in style. Cool, careless, impertinent, defiant to the last, the cynosure of all eyes, the wonder of all beholders. There would be comfort in that. He would have left all the fellows talking about his name. His name would have been long remembered. New fellows for many a term would have been told how the Bounder had been sacked and how he had carried it off. And Mr. Quelch, probably reading the rebel junior's thoughts quite easily, had marched him off to "punny," isolating him from the rest of the school, and he was to see no Greyfriars man again before he went.

A night in "punny"; an early train while the school was at class in the morning; a quiet departure, without any fireworks; not even a public expulsion, merely a noiseless, unnoticed dropping out! It was a hard blow for the Bounder, who loved the limelight; and could hardly live without it. Half his recklessness, as he cynically admitted to himself, was due to his desire to make fellows stare, to make the school talk about him, to make everybody realise that he mattered.

If the Bounder thought of resisting—as he certainly did—he had no chance. Two prefects had walked with him to the punishment-room—Wingate on one side, Gwynne on the other. And Mr. Quelch had locked him in and left him to his reflections, which were bitter enough.

The game was up, and he was left alone to chew the bitter cud of reflection, to fall out of the life of the school as unnoticed as a drop of water in the sea, forgotten by his friends, neglected by all.

Even his chum—his best chum, the chum he had always liked, often as he had quarrelled with him—did not care. It was risky to get a word with a fellow locked up in "punny," and Redwing was not risking it. The Bounder's lip curled bitterly. Even Redwing—

Tap!

Vernon-Smith spun round from the window towards the door.

He had been little more than an hour alone, but it seemed to him like a century. Friend or foe was welcome to break the solitude.

He stepped across to the door.

"Hallo!" he called out.

"You're there, Smithy?"

It was Tom Redwing's voice. The Bounder felt a twinge of shame. It was Redwing, whom, a minute before, he

had been mentally accusing of having forgotten him.

"Reddy, old bean! That you?"

"Yes, Smithy!"

"Glad to hear your toot, old thing! Has Quelch let you come to see me?"

"No. I did not know where you were till I heard it from Bunter. He found out somehow."

"He would!" chuckled the Bounder.

"Smithy, old fellow—" There was a shake in Redwing's voice. "Old chap, I—I suppose there's nothing a fellow can do?"

"Not a thing that I know of."

"I—I saw Quelch and—and tried to soften him a bit, but—but—"

Tom Redwing stammered.

"Might as well have tried to soften a jolly old rock," said the Bounder. "Hannibal must have struck something softer than Quelch when he did his vinegar trick in the Alps."

"The thing's settled, Smithy. But—but, oh, old chap, it's rotten! I—I suppose your father can't do anything with the Head?"

"The Beak's not givin' him a chance! I shall be home soon after the pater gets the Head's letter statin' that I'm comin'. But the chief beak seems as set on it as Quelch. Pair of old blighters, what?"

Redwing did not answer.

"Quelch has been lookin' for a chance like this," said the Bounder. "He's jumped at it with both feet now it's come. The good man doesn't want me in his Form, Reddy. He wants nice boys like you, who can say 'Yes, sir,' and 'No, sir,' and 'Please, sir,' and 'Oh, sir!' What?"

"Smithy!"

There was a note of pain in Redwing's low voice, through the oaken door.

"Sorry, old chap!" The Bounder was remorseful at once. "Can't help givin'. It's my way, you know. Don't mind me!"

"I don't, old chap. But I—I wish—I wish— Oh, Smithy, if there was only something a fellow could do!"

"There's nothin', old bean, unless you can soften old Quelch's heart and make him understand what a really nice fellow he's losin'."

"I know there's nothing I can do. But I thought I'd come and speak a word as soon as I knew you were here."

"Good man! It's pretty dismal, alone here," said the Bounder. "I'd have kicked, only Quelch had a couple of prefects with him when he bunged me in. He isn't goin' to give me a chance to go out with dramatic effects. Nipped me right in the bud!" The Bounder laughed bitterly and harshly. "I'm a contaminatin' influence in the Form—isolated like a jolly old infectious case in sanny. All because I played cricket instead of stickin' in the Form-room! They couldn't have come down harder if they'd caught me moppin' up whisky-and-soda at the Cross Keys!"

"Smithy, there might be a chance of coming back later if you're careful—if you own up that you've been to blame, and tell Quelch you're sorry before you go."

"But I'm not sorry!"

"Old chap—"

"I'd do the same again, and jump at the chance! I'm not goin' to whine because I've got it in the neck. Quelch won't see me weaken, at any rate!" said the Bounder savagely.

"Smithy, old chap, you're mistaken in thinking that Quelch is down on you. It's only that he can't stand your cheek. You will admit you've given him plenty to stand."

"I'll give him more before I go!"

"Old fellow, there might be a chance if—if—"

"If I'd eat humble pie and bow the knee to him!" The Bounder laughed disdainfully. "No fear! If I'm goin', I'm goin' with my ears up!"

"Look here, Smithy!"

Redwing broke off suddenly. The Bounder heard another voice—the deep, angry voice of his Form master.

"Redwing, what are you doing here?"

"Speaking to Smithy, sir," answered Redwing quietly.

"How dare you!"

Redwing made no answer to that. He turned from the door and faced his Form master in the dim corridor. Mr. Quelch frowned at him in deep wrath. But Redwing, generally one of the most orderly and respectful fellows in Mr. Quelch's Form, cared little for his wrath just then.

"No one is allowed to speak to Vernon-Smith!" said Mr. Quelch sternly. "He belongs to this school no longer. To-morrow he will be gone. Go away at once, Redwing! And if you come here again you will be severely punished!"

Tom Redwing went slowly down the corridor, turned the corner at the end, and disappeared.

Mr. Quelch, with knitted brows, watched him out of sight. Then he drew a key from his pocket, inserted it into the lock, and unlocked the door of the punishment-room.

He rustled into the room, to meet the cool, mocking, defiant stare of the Bounder of Greyfriars. Whatever doubts and regrets Smithy might have had were banished now. He was once more the cool and insolent Bounder. In Mr. Quelch he had an audience, though an audience of only one, and in the presence of an audience it was the Bounder's way to play up to his character, half genuine and half assumed.

"Trot in, old bean!" he said.

Mr. Quelch jumped.

"What?" he ejaculated. "What?"

"Trot in! Don't be shy!" drawled the Bounder.

"Vernon-Smith! How dare you?" gasped the incensed Remove master.

The Bounder laughed.

"Why not?" he asked. "You have just told Redwing that I no longer belong to Greyfriars."

"That is correct!" said Mr. Quelch sternly.

"Well, in that case, you don't expect me to treat you as a Form master, do you?" asked the Bounder coolly. "Isn't that expectin' rather a lot?"

Mr. Quelch stared at him, dumb.

There was something of reason in what the Bounder said; though his cool impudence was intensely exasperating.

"You're no longer my Form master!" continued the Bounder. "I'm not treatin' you as if you were, Quelch! Why should I? I'm treatin' you as what you are—a bad-tempered old gentleman."

"Wha-a-at?"

"A jolly bad-tempered old gent, with a down on me," said the Bounder. "Now, what do you want, Quelch? When I was a member of your Form, I was too jolly respectful to tell you that you were a windbag and a bore. I feel that I'm free to tell you now. You're a windbag, Quelch."

"Boy!" articulated the Remove master.

"And a bore!"

"Boy!"

"So whatever you've come to say, cut it short, and clear!" said Vernon-Smith.

And taking a loose cigarette from his pocket the Bounder struck a match and

lighted it, and blew out a little cloud of smoke, almost in the face of his amazed Form master.

## THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

### Turning the Tables!

**M**R. QUELCH stood rooted to the floor, quite silent.

The Bounder seemed to have taken his breath away.

Herbert Vernon-Smith lounged to the table, sat on a corner of it, swung his legs, and puffed out smoke from his cigarette. Through the smoke he grinned at the astonished, almost dazed face of Henry Samuel Quelch.

"Upon my word!" ejaculated Mr. Quelch at last. It was a full minute before he found his voice.

He made a stride towards the

conversation as "jaw." If not, he learned it now.

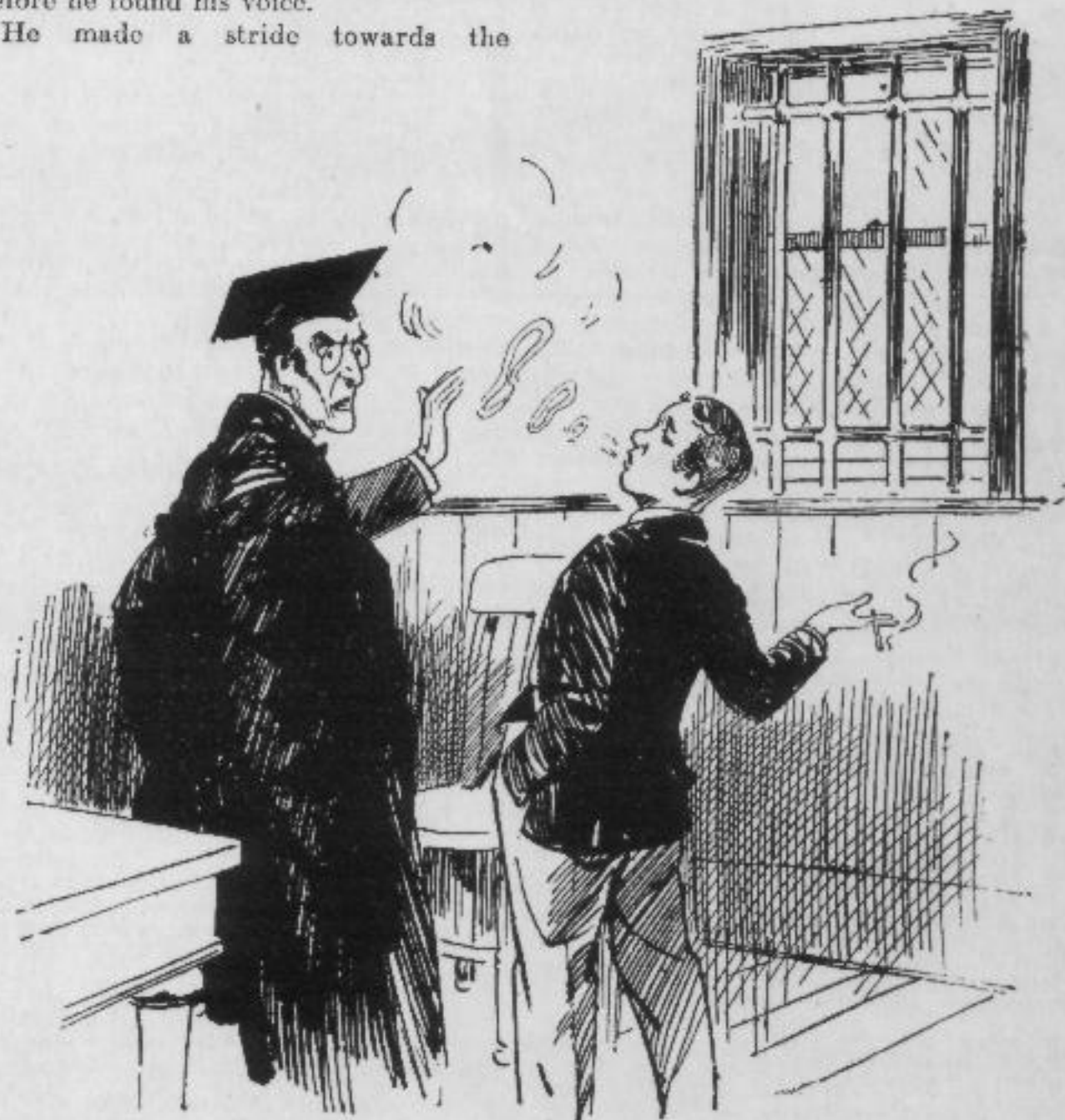
"Jaw!" said Smithy. "Cackle! Chin-wag! Keep it for the fellows who have got to stand it! I'm fed-up with it."

"Bless my soul!"

"You haven't come here to tell me that you've changed your mind, and that you want me to stay, I suppose?" grinned the Bounder.

"Certainly not!" hooted Mr. Quelch. "I have come here to see that you are provided with the necessaries for the night; and to lock the door after your supper is brought in. That is all."

"Well, you'd better send along my pyjamas, unless you want me to sleep in my clothes," said Smithy. "You might send me a few cigarettes—this is my last. You'll find a box of them behind the



"Now that I'm free to talk, Quelch," said Vernon-Smith, "you're a bad-tempered old gent, a windbag, and a bore!" Lighting a cigarette, the Bounder of Greyfriars blew out a cloud of smoke, almost in the face of the amazed Form master.

Bounder. He regretted that he had not brought his cane with him. He had not supposed that it would be wanted; now he realised that it was wanted very badly.

"Vernon-Smith! Throw away that cigarette."

"Rats!"

"You insolent young knave!" roared Mr. Quelch, completely losing his temper at that reply.

"You insolent old knave!" retorted the Bounder.

"Boy!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"Man!" mimicked the Bounder.

"You—you—you dare—"

"Oh, can it, Quelch!" said Smithy coolly. "Do you think your jaw matters anythin' to me now?"

"My—my what?" stuttered Henry Samuel Quelch. Perhaps Mr. Quelch did not know that the fellows in his Form described his valuable and majestic

books in the second row in the bookcase in my study."

"Vernon-Smith! This insolence—"

"Oh, cheese it," said the Bounder. "Don't I keep on tellin' you that I don't give a rap for your jaw, Quelch?"

"Throw away that cigarette this instant!" roared Mr. Quelch.

"Go and eat coke!"

The next moment the offending cigarette dropped from the Bounder's mouth as he jumped off the table to clude an angry grasp.

He dodged round the table, laughing.

Across the table Mr. Quelch glared at him, breathing hard and deep. Had the Bounder been within reach, there was no doubt that his Form master would have boxed his ears severely, though the boxing of ears was taboo at Greyfriars. But the Bounder was out of

reach, and evidently intended to keep out of reach, and Mr. Quelch, angry as he was, refrained from an undignified chase round and round the table. He could guess that the Bounder would have enjoyed such a chase.

There was a step in the passage. The door was pushed open and Trotter, the House page, appeared with a tray. It contained the Bounder's supper.

The Bounder gave him a cool nod.

"Trickle in, Trotter," he said genially. "I hope you've brought me something decent, as it's the last time. Dish-water and doorsteps as usual, I see—by gad! Now we're on the subject, Quelch, I may as well mention that supper's cut rather too fine. I suggest puttin' some cocoa in the cocoa, and some butter on the bread-and-butter. What do you think, Henry, old bean?"

Trotter almost dropped the tray. He could hardly believe his ears when the Bounder addressed the exasperated Form master as "Henry."

"Place the tray on the table, Trotter," gasped Mr. Quelch, "and go away at once!"

"Yessir."

"Don't hurry, Trotter," said the Bounder. "Your company isn't exactly fascinatin', but it's better than Quelch's. Of the two, I prefer yours."

"Oh, Master Vernon-Smith!" gasped Trotter.

"Do not answer that insolent boy, Trotter!" hooted Mr. Quelch. "Place the tray on the table and go away at once."

Trotter placed the tray on the table.

"Ain't I to wait for the tray, sir?" he asked.

"No! No!"

"Shall I come back for it, sir?"

"No!" hooted Mr. Quelch. "Go at once, and do not come back."

"Yessir!"

"Good-bye, Trotter," said Vernon-Smith; "I may not see you in the mornin'. You're goin' to lose me, Trotter! I can only say that I hope you will survive it somehow."

"Oh, sir!" gasped Trotter.

"Silence! Go at once, Trotter."

"Yessir!"

"Give Mrs. Kebble a last message from me, Trotter," called out Smithy, as the page went to the door. "Tell her I'm sorry not to be able to kiss her good-bye—"

"Silence!" roared Mr. Quelch.

Trotter, almost in convulsions, left the punishment-room. He was distinctly heard to giggle as he went down the passage. He departed with sensational news for his friends below stairs—how that there Mr. Vernon-Smith had cheeked old Quelch, and how Quelch had looked as if he was going to have a blooming fit. Such was Trotter's description.

After he had gone, Mr. Quelch fixed a grim and gleaming eye on the Bounder. Smithy smiled in return.

"You may have your supper now, Vernon-Smith," said the Remove master. "I shall now lock you in for the night. You will leave in the morning without seeing any of the boys. You will not be allowed to carry off your expulsion with insolent bravado. I had hoped to hear from you some expression of regret—"

"Would it get me off the sack, sir?"

"Certainly not."

"Then you jolly well won't hear it," said the Bounder. "I'm prepared to gammon to any extent if there's anythin' doin'. Not otherwise."

Mr. Quelch breathed hard.

"Words are wasted on you," he said.

"I realise more clearly than ever that Greyfriars is no place for you. I will leave you, Vernon-Smith, to your meditations, and to such repentance for your bad conduct as you are capable of."

The Bounder eyed him coolly, coldly, calculatingly.

Mr. Quelch turned to the door.

As he did so the Bounder made a sudden movement. Mr. Quelch did not even know that he had moved, so swift was the Bounder, until a butting head charged him in the middle of the back.

"Oh!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

He staggered forward, and sprawled on the floor. That sudden and unexpected attack in the rear took him wholly by surprise.

He sprawled, gasping.

In the twinkling of an eye, the Bounder leaped past him, dashed out of the punishment-room, and slammed the door.

"Bless my soul!" gurgled Mr. Quelch.

He staggered to his feet.

Click!

It was the turning of the key in the lock outside. Then there was a scraping sound, as the key was withdrawn in the Bounder's hand.

For a moment the amazed Form master could hardly realise what had happened. Then he fairly bounded to the door. He grasped the handle and pulled.

"Boy!" he gasped.

There was a chuckle outside.

"Vernon-Smith! Have you locked this door?"

"You've guessed it."

"Unlock it at once!"

"I don't think!"

"You—you—you young rascal! You young knave! You shall be flogged for this before you are sent away—"

"Go hon!"

"Unlock the door this instant!"

"Fathead!"

"Wha-a-at?" stuttered the Remove master.

"Fathead! Do you think I've locked you in for fun?" The Bounder's mocking laugh rang through the oaken door. "Why, you old ass, I've been waitin' and hopin' and watchin' for a chance like this! You fancied you were goin' to bar me off from the school on my last night here? Not in your lifetime, Quelch!"

"Vernon-Smith!"

"You can have my supper, Quelch! Sorry it isn't a bit more tasty; but I'm not responsible for that! Ta-ta, old bean!"

"Vernon-Smith! You—you will not dare to leave me here! You—you will not have the audacity—"


"Guess again!"

Mr. Quelch almost staggered. He heard the Bounder's footsteps retreating along the corridor. Like a man in a dream he heard the faint sound of the door half-way along the corridor closing. He heard the click of another key.

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

He was locked in the punishment-room, and the Bounder was free! The room door was locked on him, the corridor door was locked, and the Bounder was gone. Mr. Quelch sank helplessly into a chair, quite overcome. There was no escape from the punishment-room; a locked door and a barred window cut off all hope of that. The Remove master was a prisoner for the night, unless the Bounder relented. And he did not need telling that the reckless rebel of Greyfriars would not relent.

"Bless my soul!" repeated Mr. Quelch.



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THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Smithy in the Limelight!

**H**ARRY WHARTON laid down his pen, and pitched P. Virgilius Maro across Study No. 1. The great Mantuan dropped unheeded in the corner. Prep had palled on the captain of the Remove. Prep never did appeal to a fellow much, after a day at cricket. But it was of the Bounder that Harry Wharton was thinking, and he was troubled in mind.

He had never been exactly friends with Smithy, and more than once they had been foes. The captain of the Remove would never have supposed that he would feel so much the blow that had fallen on the Bounder. Now that it had come, he realised what a gap the Bounder's dropping out would leave in the life of the Remove. Popular or unpopular, liked or unliked, Smithy filled a large space in the public eye. He never had been a fellow who could be disregarded. Greyfriars would not seem the same without the Bounder.

Wharton rose from the table. Frank Nugent looked up at him with a faint smile.

"Not finished?"

"No. Blow! I'm worried about the old Bounder, Frank."

"Same here," said Nugent. "I hate Smithy going. I wish Quelch would come round; but, of course, there's no chance of that."

"None at all! It's no good denying that Smithy asked for it, and deserved it," said Harry. "Fellows have been sacked for less. But—but if he'd been caught blagging, or anything like that, it would be different. It does seem hard that he should be sacked for having done what was really a decent thing, though his methods were rotten. We should have been mopped up at Highcliffe if Smithy had let us down. Of course, the silly ass ought never to have got himself detention. Still—"

"It was fooling the Head that did it," said Nugent. "The Beak can't overlook that. Dash it all, Harry! A spoof telegram—in his father's name—making a fool of the Head! No Beak could look over a thing like that!"

"No," said Harry.

He moved restlessly about the study. There was no hope for the Bounder, and he knew it; but he could not reconcile himself to the idea that Smithy was to go, never to return. He would have given a great deal to stop the "bunking" of the Bounder.

"I say, you fellows!"

The door opened, and Billy Bunter blinked in through his big spectacles. Bunter's face was excited.

"I say—" he gasped.

"Oh, run away and play," said Wharton, "or go back to prep! You ought to be at prep, Fatty."

"I came here to tell you—"

"Bow-wow!"

"Smithy—" gasped Bunter.

"Oh, what about Smithy?" The captain of the Remove was interested at once.

"He's out!"

"Out?" repeated Wharton.

"Yes. Quelch's let him out!" gasped Bunter. "Fancy Quelch letting him out of punny! I heard him tell Wingate that Smithy was to be kept away from the rest of the school till he left. Now he's let him out!"

"My hat!"

It was surprising news.

Wharton had quite understood Mr. Quelch's motive in keeping Vernon-Smith isolated from the school, now that he was under sentence. The

Bounder was not to be allowed to swank in the eyes of his Form-fellows, bringing authority into contempt, making light even of the dread sentence of expulsion. It was easy to understand why Smithy had been locked up in the punishment-room, but it was not at all easy to understand why Mr. Quelch had changed his mind and released him.

"Gammon!" said Frank Nugent. "Quelch can't possibly have let the Bounder out."

"He's here!" howled Bunter.

"Rot!" said Nugent.

"I tell you he's in the passage now!" roared the Owl of the Remove.

Harry Wharton stepped to the door of Study No. 1, and glanced out. There were ten or twelve fellows in the passage, drawn out of their studies by the news that the Bounder was there. In the midst of an excited crowd of

ONE UP FOR LIVERPOOL!  
STEP IN AND WIN  
A POCKET KNIFE

like Edward Simmons, of 65, St. Domingo Grove, Everton, Liverpool, who sent in the following rousing ribtickler.



Tommy: "Is it true, mother, that an apple a day keeps the doctor away?"

Fond parent: "Yes, darling. Why?"

Tommy: "Well, I've kept about ten doctors away this morning; but I'm afraid one'll have to come soon!"

LET'S HAVE YOUR  
JOKE TO-DAY!

Removites stood the Bounder, cool and smiling.

"Smithy!" exclaimed Wharton.

Vernon-Smith looked round at him and nodded.

"Here I am!" he drawled.

"Then Quelch's let you out?" exclaimed the captain of the Remove.

"Looks like it, doesn't it?" grinned the Bounder.

"Well, I'm glad," said Harry. "I wish you weren't going, Smithy; but I'm glad to see you again before you go, anyhow."

"Thanks! Always a pleasure to confer pleasure!" grinned Smithy. "Hallo, Reddy! I'm not a ghost, old bean!"

Tom Redwing was staring blankly from the doorway of Study No. 4. He was most amazed of all to see the Bounder there. Certainly Mr. Quelch, when Redwing had seen him at the door of the punishment-room, had not looked as if he intended to release the culprit.

"Did Quelch really let you out, Smithy?" asked Skinner.

"Well, I'm here," said Smithy. "Do you think I got out through the key-hole?"

"Blessed if I can make it out! I know Quelch is frightfully ratty!"

"Oh, I had a heart-to-heart talk with the old bean," drawled the Bounder, "an' I've trickled back for a last touchin' interview with my beloved school-fellows. Hallo, here's Wingate!"

Wingate of the Sixth came up the Remove staircase. He had his ashplant under his arm.

"What are you young sweeps doing out of your studies in lock-up?" he demanded. "Why—what—is that you, Vernon-Smith?"

"I believe so," assented the Bounder. "I won't ask you to take my word, Wingate. Quelch says that my word isn't to be relied upon. But to the best of my belief, it's little me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wingate stared blankly at the Bounder.

"Did Quelch let you out, then?"

"He came specially."

"Oh!" Wingate was very much puzzled. "If you're out of the punishment-room without leave, Vernon-Smith—"

"Am I the fellow to do anythin' without leave?" asked the Bounder, in a pained voice. "Oh, Wingate!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, I don't understand this," said the Greyfriars captain. "I think I'll ask Quelch whether he happened to leave the door unlocked. What are you grinning at, you young sweep?"

"Only the pleasure of seeing you again, Wingate. It's nice. You're too modest to realise how much you improve the landscape."

There was a chuckle along the passage, and Wingate frowned.

"I don't want to lick you on your last night here, Vernon-Smith. But you'd better shut up. You others, get back to prep."

The Removites dispersed to their studies. Smithy went into Study No. 4 with Tom Redwing.

Wingate, perplexed, went downstairs, and repaired at once to Mr. Quelch's study, to inquire whether the Bounder had leave to spend his last evening with his Form.

But Mr. Quelch was not in his study. The Greyfriars captain looked into Masters' Common-room. Several members of the staff were there, and Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth, was laying down the law, as usual—subject, Quelch's Form, the mismanagement thereof, and Prout's total lack of surprise that one of Quelch's boys had been expelled. But Mr. Quelch was not there.

Wingate concluded that the Remove master was with the Head, and gave it up. He little dreamed where Mr. Quelch was at that moment.

Neither did any of the Removites.

Many of them suspected that Quelch must have left the door of "punny" inadvertently unlocked—though that certainly was quite unlike Quelch. Some expected Quelch to arrive any moment, to march the Bounder back to his incarceration. Nobody dreamed that the Remove master was raging, a good deal like a wild animal in a cage, behind the locked door of the punishment-room.

Certainly he did not come for the Bounder.

Prep over, most of the fellows went down to the Rag. In the midst of a crowd the Bounder sauntered, his hands in his pockets, and a smile on his face.

Fellows of all Forms stared at him.

"That kid's sacked!" said Loder of the Sixth to Carne. "Looks like it, doesn't it?"

"The young scoundrel's got nerve!" said Carne.

Walker of the Sixth, a prefect, came up to Vernon-Smith.

"What are you doing here?" he asked.

"Takin' a last sad farewell of the dear old school, and the jolly old familiar sights of innocent boyhood," answered the Bounder gravely. And there was a shriek of laughter.

"I thought you were locked up for the night."

"Quelch came and baled me out!" explained the Bounder.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I can't understand Quelch letting you out!" said Walker, with a stare.

"Blessed if I understand it!"

"That's all right," said Smithy. "Sixth Form men are not expected to understand anythin'."

"Wha-a-at?" gasped Walker.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Smithy, old man—" murmured Redwing.

"Well, the sack doesn't seem to have cured you of cheek," said Walker grimly. "You're asking for six before you go! Bend over, Vernon-Smith."

"Shan't!"

"What?"

"SHAN'T — shan't!" said the Bounder coolly. "I don't belong to Greyfriars now, Walker. I'm stayin' the night as the Head's guest. I'm not a Greyfriars man now, but a common-or-garden member of the great British public. You can't whop me."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Coker of the Fifth. "You can't whop a man that doesn't belong to the school, Walker!"

"You shut up, Coker!" snapped the prefect. "I don't want any cheek from the Fifth! Vernon-Smith, you cheeky little rascal—"

"Walker, you cheeky big rascal—" mimicked the Bounder.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the juniors.

"You'd better bend over when a prefect tells you!" gasped Walker.

"You're not a prefect now, old bean—you're simply an overgrown and rather fatheaded schoolboy," said the Bounder. "You're a prefect to these Greyfriars chaps. To me, only a hobble-de-hoy."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Walker of the Sixth really was not sure how the matter stood, and whether a Sixth Form prefect had a right to "whop" a fellow who had been expelled and therefore belonged to the school no longer. He was not at all sure of that. But he was sure that he was going to whop the cheeky Bounder, whether he had a right so to do or not. Walker had no doubt about that.

He made a jump at Vernon-Smith, with his ashplant swishing in the air. The Bounder leaped back actively.

"Come here!" shouted Walker.

"Rats!"

"Why, I—I—I'll—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Bounder ran lightly into the Rag. Walker rushed in pursuit. A crowd of fellows swarmed after them.

"By gad!" said Temple of the Fourth.

"What a game!"

"Smithy's goin' it!" chuckled Fry.

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"Stand up to him, Smithy!" shouted Hobson of the Shell. "He can't whop you now you don't belong here!"

Walker, panting in pursuit of the Bounder, overtook him in the Rag. Vernon-Smith had caught up a long and heavy poker from the fender. He faced the exasperated prefect in a fencing attitude.

"Come on, old bean!" he said invitingly.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bob Cherry.

Crash, crash, crash! Ashplant and poker came into violent collision, and the poker had the best of it. The ashplant went whirling away through the air. There was a yell from Walker of the Sixth as the end of the poker lunged into his ribs.

"Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it, Smithy!" yelled a score of voices.

"You young demon! Keep off! Yow-ow-ow! Oh, my hat—" Walker backed to the door under the ruthless lunges of the poker. He felt as if he had been punctured in a dozen places by the time he dodged out of the Rag.

Walker's retreat was followed by yells of laughter. The Bounder flung the poker into the grato with a clang. The Rag rocked with merriment.

"I say, you fellows, Smithy's going it!" chortled Billy Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess this is the elephant's hind leg!" chuckled Fisher T. Fish.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was the Bounder's last night at Greyfriars, and on his last night he had desired the spotlight to be concentrated on him. And there was no doubt that he was getting what he wanted.

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## THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

### Swank!

"SCANDALOUS!" said Mr. Prout.

Mr. Capper nodded assent. He agreed that it was scandalous.

"What," demanded Prout, "can Quelch be thinking of?"

Mr. Capper shook his head, implying that he was far from guessing what Quelch could possibly be thinking of.

It was the sight of Herbert Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, that roused Prout's majestic ire.

The Bounder was sauntering along by Masters' Studies, with his hands in his pockets, looking like a fellow who had not a care in the world. If he was taking his last look at the old school, he did not seem to be saddened thereby. Fellows were watching the Bounder and grinning, and rather wondering what he would do next. It was pretty clear that Smithy meant to make his last night at Greyfriars as sensational as he could.

Why Mr. Quelch allowed it was a mystery to everyone else, as well as to Prout. These proceedings were subversive of all order and discipline. Yet Quelch seemed to be taking no heed. The unfortunate Remove master was, if they had only known it, not in a position to take heed of what the Bounder did.

"Scandalous!" repeated Prout. "This boy is under sentence of expulsion. Yet he is at large."

"Evidently, at large!" agreed the master of the Fourth.

"Unrestrained!" said Prout.

"Quite!" said Capper.

"Deliberately displaying a swaggering insolence!" said Prout. "What can Quelch be thinking of? I have looked into his study to speak to him on the subject, but he is not there. He seems to care nothing."

"Apparently nothing!" said Capper.

The Bounder glanced at the two masters, and smiled. It was not a respectful smile. Rather it was derisive.

It was too much for Prout. The Fifth Form master rolled ponderously towards the expelled junior.

"Vernon-Smith!" he boomed.

"Hallo, Prout!" said the Bounder cheerfully.

Mr. Prout stood, for a moment, petrified by that address. From the distance came a howl of laughter.

"What—what—what did you say, Vernon-Smith?" articulated Mr. Prout, at last.

"I said: 'Hallo, Prout!' Getting deaf?" asked the Bounder.

"Deaf?" repeated Prout.

"As well as silly?" added Vernon-Smith.

"As—as—as well as—as—as silly!" almost gibbered Prout. "Good gad! Goodness gracious! Is the boy mad?"

"Is the man mad?" asked Vernon-Smith.

"This—this—this insolence!" gasped Prout. "This—this audacity, Vernon-Smith!"

"Can it, old bean!" said Smithy. "Keep it for the Fifth! The Fifth have to stand it."

"This impertinence, Vernon-Smith is—" began Mr. Capper.

"Cheese it, Capper!" said the Bounder coolly. "You talk too much."

Smithy walked on, leaving the two masters petrified. They gazed after him, and gazed at one another.

"That," gasped Prout, "is the outcome of Quelch's methods with his boys! Yet he is positively ungrateful for a word of advice from a senior master! That—that wretched boy should be under restraint."

"Undoubtedly!" gasped Capper.

"In the circumstances, Capper, as Quelch is obviously neglecting his plain duty, I shall take it upon myself to place that insolent boy under restraint."

"Um!" said Capper. "It is really Quelch's affair—and he is touchy—extremely touchy!"

"But in the circumstances—"

"Um!" said Mr. Capper again.

"At least I shall speak to Quelch—I shall represent the matter to him very strongly!" snorted Prout. "But where is Quelch? He is neither in his study, nor in Common-room! He seems to have disappeared. Apparently he has gone out, leaving that audacious boy to his own devices. It is scandalous, Capper."

"It is unparalleled!" agreed Capper. "However, I do not feel disposed to intervene in Quelch's business. He is so very touchy."

"Perhaps I had better see the Head?"

"The Head would certainly refer the matter to Quelch!" said Mr. Capper. "It is undoubtedly Quelch's affair. He seems to have withdrawn himself. No doubt he feels that this boy is too much for him to deal with. An extraordinary abdication of authority, Prout."

"Extraordinary, indeed!" snorted Prout. "I shall speak to Quelch very plainly."

And the Fifth Form master rolled away in search of Mr. Quelch.

He did not find him. Naturally, he did not think of investigating the punishment-room. And Mr. Quelch was to be found nowhere else.

Mr. Quelch's coy retirement from the public eye puzzled all the staff. It seemed that either he had gone out, or gone to bed early. Certainly, he was not to be discovered in his usual haunts.

Meanwhile, the Bounder was left to his own devices. When he walked into Hall to supper he was the cynosure of all eyes. Many fellows, as a rule, had supper in their studies, but on this particular evening nearly every man at



Greyfriars turned up in Hall, simply because the Bounder was there.

The Bounder was enjoying the spotlight.

Even prefects of the Sixth Form eyed him curiously. Fifth Form men stared at him. Juniors hung on his looks and his words.

"There's Smithy—"

"Sacked, you know!"

"Turfed out in the morning—"

"Lot he cares!"

"What a nerve!"

"What a neck!"

"Quelch can't handle him! He's letting him rip!"

It was like meat and drink to the Bounder. If the thought of the morrow lurked in his mind, he banished it. He was enjoying his last night, at all events.

Bed-time for the Remove came all too soon for Smithy. He would have liked to prolong that evening indefinitely. It was Wingate's duty to see lights out for the Remove; and he eyed the Bounder rather dubiously when the juniors went to their dormitory.

"I understood that you were to sleep in the punishment-room to-night, Vernon-Smith," he said.

"Dear me!" said Smithy.

"Quelch said so, at any rate."

"Looks as if he's changed his mind," suggested the Bounder. "Still, perhaps you'd better ask him."

"I should have asked him before this, but he seems to have gone to bed early. You'd better turn in here, as usual, I suppose."

And the Bounder turned in with the Remove, as usual. Wingate put the lights out, and left the dormitory, a much puzzled prefect.

After lights out it was long before sleep visited the Remove dormitory. A buzz of talk ran from bed to bed, and sounds of laughter.

But when the juniors settled down to sleep at last there was one whose eyes did not close. With the other fellows sleeping round him, and the sound of regular breathing, the Bounder lay awake—thinking! In the silent watches of the night "swank" could not help him; he was left to his thoughts, and his thoughts were dark and bitter.

"Must be awfully jolly to be bunked!" sniggered Snoop.

"Quite!" said the Bounder. "I'll let you in if you like, Snoopey! I could mention a few things to the Head—"

Sidney James Snoop turned quite pale.

"Smithy! You wouldn't be such a rotter!" he gasped.

"S-Smithy, old man!" stammered Skinner.

The Bounder chuckled.

"You silly owls, do you think I'd give you away because I've got the chopper myself? Keep your pecker up!"

And the black sheep of the Remove breathed again.

The Bounder went down to prayers with the rest of the Form. One master was absent from prayers. It was Mr.

before had already made him the talk of the school; but a bigger sensation was to come when it transpired what he had done with his Form master.

As yet, however, nothing was known of that. Fellows wondered where Quelch was, but did not dream of guessing.

"Coming for a trot round the quad, Smithy?" asked Bob Cherry, when the fellows left Hall after breakfast.

"No; I'm goin' to phone home." Smithy's face became grave for a moment. "The pater must have had Dr. Locke's letter by now; and I'm rather curious to know how he's taken it."

He walked away to Mr. Quelch's study. He was well aware that he would find that study unoccupied.

The Bounder rang up the exchange on Mr. Quelch's telephone, asked for a trunk call, and gave the number of his



As Mr. Quelch turned to the door, Vernon-Smith made a sudden movement, lowered his head, and butted the Form master clean in the middle of the back. "Oh!" gasped Mr. Quelch, taken suddenly by surprise.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Last Morning at Greyfriars!

CLANG! Clang! The rising-bell rang out over Greyfriars School.

It was a bright July morning.

In the Remove dormitory all eyes turned on the Bounder, when the Lower Fourth rose at the clang of the bell.

Smithy was one of the first up.

If he had not slept well his looks did not reveal the fact. His chum, Redwing, looked much more ill-at-ease than the Bounder. Vernon-Smith, whatever he was thinking, and whatever he was feeling, was outwardly as cool, calm, and careless as the Removites had ever seen him.

"Feelin' jolly, old bean?" asked Skinner, with a grin.

"Oh, no end!" yawned the Bounder.

Quelch. It was rare for the Remove master to be absent, and it was concluded that he had overslept himself. If so, he seemed to be keeping it up, for he was not seen at the breakfast table, where he always breakfasted with his Form.

After brekker the fellows had another topic, as well as the "bunking" of Smithy! They were wondering where Quelch was. Herbert Vernon-Smith could have told them; but he was keeping his own counsel.

Mr. Quelch had passed a night in the punishment-room, in the place of the expelled junior. He had no breakfast there, unless some remnant was left over from the frugal supper of the previous night.

The Bounder wondered what he was feeling like, and grinned as he wondered. His "swank" of the evening

father's house in Courtman Square, London.

He had no doubt that Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith had already heard from the Head of Greyfriars; in which case he was not likely to have left for his City office as usual. Even Mr. Vernon-Smith's immense financial operations weighed little in the balance, in comparison with his son at Greyfriars, as the Bounder well knew.

Indeed, he knew it so well that there was a bitter pang of remorse in his heart. Why had he not thought of this before? Why had he not considered how heavy a blow his expulsion from school would be to his father? But it was too late to think of that now.

A familiar voice came through on the phone—that of the butler at his father's house.

"Ask my father to come to the phone, Larkin," said the Bounder.

"I am sorry, Master Herbert; Mr. Vernon-Smith has gone out."

"Not to the City?"

"I think not, sir; I gathered, sir, that he was intending to visit the school, from some remarks—"

"He's coming to Greyfriars?" exclaimed the Bounder.

"So I gathered, Master Herbert."

The Bounder breathed hard.

"Do you know whether my father had a letter from the school this morning, Larkin?"

Smithy heard a discreet cough on the telephone.

"I believe so, sir, from some remarks—"

"Did it upset the pater?"

Another cough.

"Mr. Vernon-Smith seemed a little disturbed, sir."

"Was he in a wax?"

Larkin coughed again.

"Possibly a little disturbed and annoyed, Master Herbert."

"Right-ho!"

The Bounder rang off.

He knew now that his father had received Dr. Locke's letter, informing him that his son was expelled from Greyfriars. Smithy could guess that the millionaire had been rather more than a little disturbed and annoyed, as the butler discreetly expressed it.

He had no doubt that Mr. Vernon-Smith had been in a flaming fury; and that he had "let off steam" with his usual disregard of the servants and what they might think. But why was he coming to Greyfriars?

Not merely to fetch away his expelled son! That was not it. Smithy's heart sank.

He guessed, he knew, that his father was coming to see the Head, to controvert his decision, to urge him to rescind it—perhaps to attempt to bully him.

Mr. Vernon-Smith was an overpowering gentleman, a man accustomed to having his own way.

In Mr. Vernon-Smith's view, Greyfriars School was the place where his son was—it had no other importance. The Head and his staff were simply a collection of persons who were more or less useful to Herbert Vernon-Smith, in preparing him for the brilliant career his father had mapped out for him. They had, and could have, no other importance in the eyes of the autocratic millionaire. That the headmaster should venture to expel the millionaire's son probably seemed to Mr. Vernon-Smith something like impudence. He was quite likely to tell Dr. Locke so.

The Bounder understood these matters better than his father.

Mr. Vernon-Smith could have bought Greyfriars twice over, without missing the money—had it been for sale. But that fact did not weigh a straw's weight with the Head.

The Head would deal with the millionaire, as he would have dealt with Penfold's father, the cobbler of Friardale.

If Mr. Vernon-Smith tried to carry matters with a high hand at Greyfriars, he was booked for failure—and could only make a fool of himself.

But he was coming—and his intention in coming was clear! There was to be an unpleasant scene before the Bounder left.

Smithy left the study with a grim and thoughtful brow. He tramped out into the quad, with his hands driven deep in his pockets. Tom Redwing met him as he came out of the House.

"Smithy, old man, do you know where Quelch is?" he asked.

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The Bounder snarled. He was thinking of his father, and had almost forgotten the master he had locked in the punishment-room.

"Quelch! Hang Quelch!"

"For goodness' sake, Smithy, if you've been playing any trick—"

Redwing eyed his chum anxiously. Evidently there was some vague suspicion at the back of his mind.

"What do you mean, you ass?" snapped the Bounder.

His feelings towards Mr. Quelch were savage and bitter. It was Quelch's fault, as the Bounder chose to consider, that his father was receiving this blow. If Quelch had gone a little easier—

"The Head's sent for him, and he can't be found," said Tom. "He missed brekker, and they've gone to call him, thinking he overslept himself; but they say that his bed hasn't been slept in—"

"Perhaps the old bird's had a night out!" said the Bounder flippantly. "Don't bother me about Quelch!"

"Nobody seems to have seen him since he let you out of the punishment-room last evening, Smithy."

The Bounder laughed harshly.

"Nobody's likely to yet!" he sneered.

"Then you know?"

"Never mind what I know!" interrupted the Bounder. "Hang Quelch! If he hadn't had a down on me this would never have happened! My father's comin' here—he's upset. I fancy this has knocked him over! I've got enough to think about, without Quelch! I've got to face my father! I've no time for Quelch!"

"But, Smithy, if—"

"Oh, shut up!"

The Bounder swung angrily away.

"Vernon-Smith!" Wingate of the Sixth called to him from the doorway of the House.

Smithy stared round savagely.

"What do you want, Wingate?" he snapped.

The Greyfriars captain knitted his brows. But he remembered that Smithy was under sentence of expulsion, and restrained his anger.

"You're to go to the Head's study!" he said curtly.

"Oh, all right!"

The Bounder would have disregarded that summons, even to the majestic presence of the Head, but for one consideration. He had no doubt that Dr. Locke had heard from his father. And the thought of his father filled his mind now, to the exclusion of all other things.

He tramped away to the Head's study, knocked loudly and disrespectfully on the door, and slouched in.

## THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

### Where is Mr. Quelch?

**D**R. LOCKE looked over his glasses at the Bounder, with a grim frown. The junior stood before him scowling, his whole attitude one of rebellion and disrespect. Never before had a Lower boy of Greyfriars ventured to look like that in the presence of his headmaster.

If Dr. Locke had doubted whether he might not have stretched a point in Vernon-Smith's favour, and given him another chance, he no longer doubted. The sooner this disrespectful young rascal was gone from the school the better.

"I have sent for you, Vernon-Smith—"

"I know that," said the Bounder.

"Have you heard from my father?"

Dr. Locke almost gasped.

He rose from his table, fixing a gaze

on Smithy, that daunted the Bounder in spite of his insolence.

"Vernon-Smith! You will address your headmaster with respect!"

"You're not my headmaster now, if I'm bunked," said the Bounder. "I want to know about my father! I don't care two straws about being sacked from the school; but my father—"

The Bounder's voice trembled.

He hated himself for showing that sign of weakness, but he could not help it. Why had he not thought of his father before?

That was the miserable question that was hammering in his mind, and tormenting him, breaking up his insolent assurance and aplomb.

His father was, in those moments, speeding towards Greyfriars as fast as an express train could bear him—hoping, the Bounder knew, to arrive in time to rescind the expulsion—and hoping in vain. The Head's letter had been a blow to him, and another blow awaited him at the school.

Smithy's heart was like lead.

It was not that he feared his father's anger—the Bounder feared nothing. Wrath and severe punishment would rather have comforted him, than otherwise; they would have helped to dull the sting of remorse. The millionaire would be angry; that was certain, but that mattered nothing. It was the blow to his father that the Bounder felt, the pain and disappointment and chagrin he was to feel.

Dr. Locke looked keenly at the junior, and the frown faded from his brow.

"I have heard from your father, Vernon-Smith," he said quietly. "He has sent me a telegram, which I received a short time ago."

The Bounder had guessed that.

"Your father desires to see me before you leave the school," went on the Head. "Apparently his desire is to take you away personally, although I stated in my letter that your Form master would see you into your train for home. If this is your parent's desire, I am bound to accede to it. I shall not, therefore, send you to the station for the early train; you will remain here until your father arrives to take you away."

Smithy bit his lip.

"I gather that Mr. Vernon-Smith will be here during the morning," added the Head. "You will not, of course, join the Remove in class. But you will wait until your father arrives."

"Very well, sir."

"I understood from Mr. Quelch that it was his intention to confine you in the punishment-room, until you left," went on Dr. Locke. "This matter I left entirely in his hands. It seems, however, that you are at liberty, Vernon-Smith."

"Mr. Quelch changed his mind, sir," said the Bounder grimly.

"Apparently he must have done so," said the Head. "I trust this means that you have expressed your regret to Mr. Quelch, and made some endeavour to conciliate his good opinion before leaving."

"I had a talk with him, sir," said Vernon-Smith. "I hope Mr. Quelch is thinking more kindly of me now."

The sarcasm of that remark was quite lost on the Head.

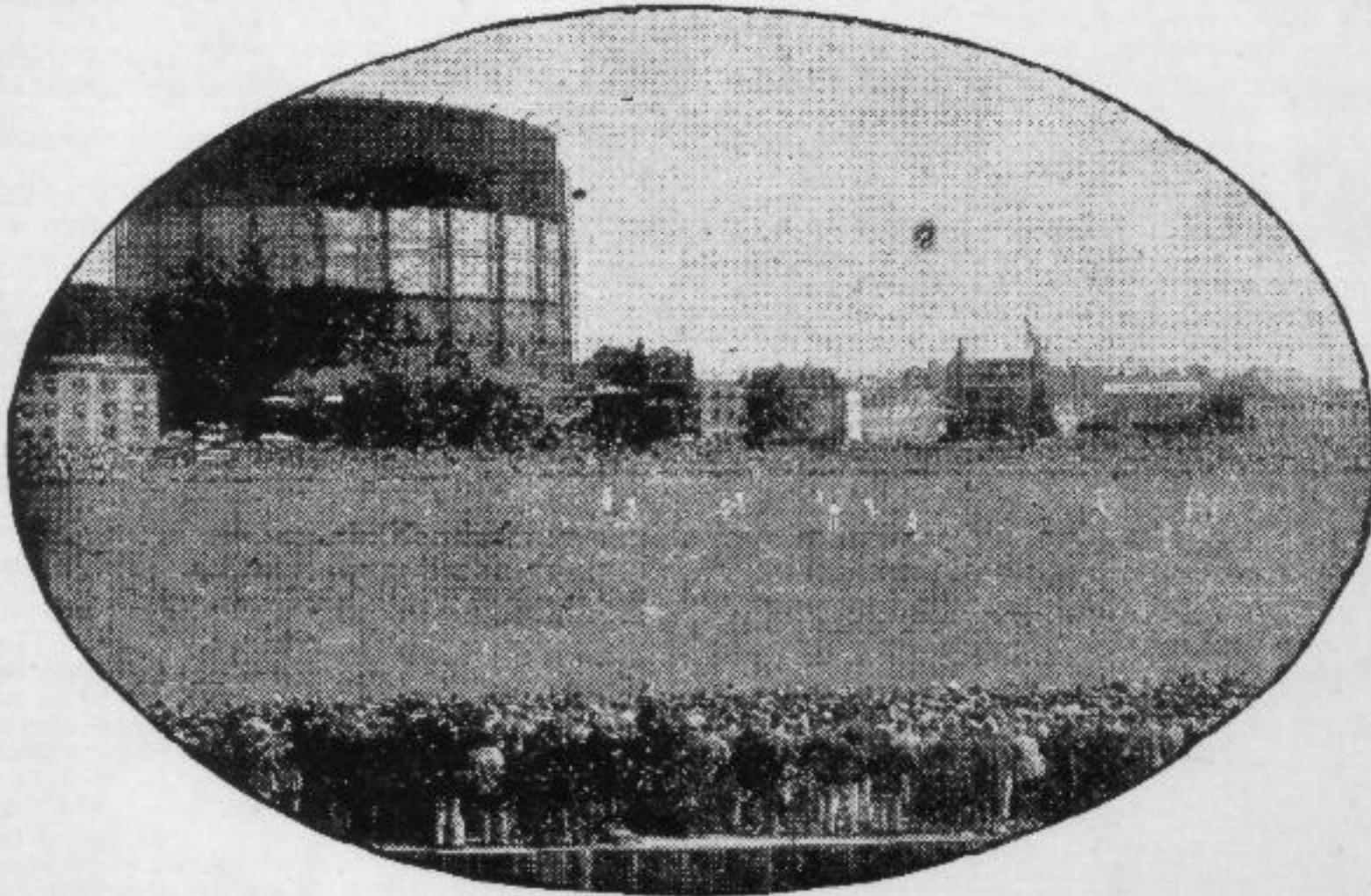
"I hope so, Vernon-Smith," said Dr. Locke, "and I hope, too, that in another sphere you may do better, after the severe lesson you have now received. You will have learned to keep recklessness and insolence within bounds, I trust, and to respect just authority."

"The lesson won't benefit me much, sir," said the Bounder. "What decent

(Continued on page 12.)

**"Old Player"**  
tells of the rise  
of Surrey's  
famous Club  
and Ground.

# Cabbages—and Cricket!



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Eighty-seven years ago the chief interests of the site now known as the Oval were cabbages and potatoes. But from what was once a market garden has sprung one of the finest cricket grounds in England.

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## A Great Ground!

**T**HERE must be few boys in and around London keen on cricket who have not at some time or another been to the Oval, that far-famed ground at Kennington, the scene of so many great matches. But probably very few of them know anything about the early days of the Oval.

The Surrey County Cricket Club was formed in 1845. The ground which the Oval now occupies was a market garden until 1844. It belonged, and still belongs, to the Duchy of Cornwall, so that the Prince of Wales is the Surrey club's present landlord. Surrey commenced to play there in 1846, though there had been a match of sorts as early as May 13th, 1845, when one may guess the newly-laid turf could hardly have set.

## A Long Period!

**F**ROM 1846 to 1931 covers 85 years. All that time big matches have been played on the ground—few at first, gradually increasing, till nowadays the head groundsman is hard put to it to find pitches for them all. When in the course of a single season you may have something like a couple of dozen great games, which must be played not too far from the middle, and many minor matches, with the pitches for them pretty close up, the greatest care is needed.

Complaints have been made that the wickets at the Oval are too easy in consequence of the use of liquid manure and other preparations which deaden the turf and prevent the ball from rising. But no one can fairly be blamed for this.

## Those Green Parallelograms!

**W**HEN you are there next, have a good look at the middle of the ground. You will probably be able to trace at least a dozen pitches. Here is the one last used, still showing signs of wear and tear; here the one in use now; over there, being doctored back to perfection, another, employed perhaps a fortnight ago. Each of them shows a green parallelogram, but the tints of green are varied.

## Surrey on Top!

**S**URREY had played county matches before there was a county club, but not many. There was, indeed, few county matches in those days. But soon after the Oval became a great ground Surrey

became a great county. In the four seasons 1856-7-8-9, 29 matches were played, 26 won, and only 2 lost. Thereafter fortunes varied;—but another great period came from 1886 to 1895, the county being champions in eight of these ten years (level with Notts and Lancashire in 1889, however), and losing only one game in the first of them.

## An Amusing Story!

**T**O tell of these years is hardly worth while, for the players of that day would be no more than names to the boy of to-day. But one little story seems worth recounting. Mr. C. W. Alcock was Surrey's secretary for many years. He took over from Mr. William Burrup, who had shared the work with his brother John since the club was started. The Burrups were City men. They were always willing to put their hands in their pockets to help the club. The wonder was, considering the way they conducted its affairs, that they could find any cash there!

Mr. Alcock discovered that the professionals' fees had been most irregularly paid. That did not suit him. He had Harry Jupp, the leading batsman of the team, into his office. "Now, Jupp," he said, "I find that it has not been the custom to pay you and the other men after each county match. You would prefer that, naturally." Jupp, a gipsy-looking fellow with a heavy black moustache, scratched his curly head. "I dunno, sir," he said. "I dunno, really. Mr. Burrup, he paid me three times for the Lancashire match last year!"

## Jupp, of Dorking!

**J**UPP came from Dorking, and was naturally a great man in his native place. In a match of no great importance at the end of a season he was bowled first ball. He calmly replaced the bails. "You're out, Harry," said the umpire. "Not me!" said Jupp. "Not at Dorking!"

Among the most notable players who have turned out for Surrey are Tom Hayward and John Berry Hobbs—more familiarly known as "Jack." Both are record-breaking batsmen and both migrated to Surrey from Cambridge. Hayward holds the record for scoring more runs in a season than any other batsman. In 1906 he amassed a total of 3,518 runs. Hobbs was the first to break Dr. Grace's record of scoring the highest number of centuries—126. Up to date, Hobbs' number of centuries has reached the astounding total of 179.

## The Impossible Schoolboy!

(Continued from page 10.)

school can my father get me into, after it's known that I've been sacked from a school like Greyfriars?"

"It is a great pity, Vernon-Smith, that you did not reflect upon this earlier. It is unfortunately too late now."

The Head made a gesture of dismissal.

Vernon-Smith left the study.

The Head had asked him nothing about Mr. Quelch; obviously he did not dream that the Bounder knew anything of that gentleman's present whereabouts. Indeed, as he learned that Mr. Quelch had changed his mind about confining the Bounder to the punishment-room, probably he did not know that Smithy had been an inmate of that secluded apartment at all. Certainly he did not think of the punishment-room in connection with Mr. Quelch's peculiar absence from the House.

The Bounder grinned sourly as he went.

Quelch had had a night in the punishment-room—and he was still there. Let him stop where he was! Let him rage like a caged tiger—it would be something for the expelled junior to remember with revengeful satisfaction, after he had left. The Bounder only hoped that no one would guess where Mr. Quelch was. He would not have shortened the Form master's imprisonment by a single second.

The Head had told him that he was not to join the Remove in class; but with the Remove master absent, classes were unlikely to follow the usual even tenor of their way. When the bell rang for first school, the Remove gathered at the door of their Form-room; but while other fellows went into Form, the Lower Fourth still waited.

The Bounder joined them there, a lurking grin on his face. With a heavy heart, looking forward with dismal despondency to his father's arrival, there was a peculiar pleasure to him in causing as much disturbance and confusion as he could. The fellows, at least, would long remember the day when the Bounder had been "bunked."

"Hallo! You still here, Smithy?" grinned Skinner.

The Bounder gave him a black look. Already he was regarded as an outsider in his own school, and Harold Skinner was the man to "rub it in." But he answered flippantly.

"Oh, yes; the beaks can't make up their minds to part with me yet."

"Seen anything of Quelch?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Quelch? I haven't seen him this morning," answered the Bounder coolly. "What about Quelch?"

"Well, he's not turned up, and we're five minutes late for class already," said the captain of the Remove. "Sorry you're not coming in with us, old chap."

"Oh, I shan't miss it a frightful lot—I can do without Latin grammar at a pinch."

"I say, you fellows, Quelch must have been out all night," said Billy Bunter. "I heard one of the maids say that his bed hadn't been slept in."

"Rot!" said Bob Cherry.

"The rotfulness is terrific."

Redwing's eyes were on the Bounder, but he did not speak. There was a vague suspicion in his mind that Smithy knew something of the Remove master's strange absence, though he hardly knew

why. Certainly he did not dream of guessing anything like the facts.

"Oh, he'll turn up, like a bad penny," said Squiff, "and I shan't grumble, for one, if we miss half the lesson."

"No fear!" chuckled Hazeldene.

"It's jolly queer, though," said Harry Wharton. "Quelch isn't the man to be late for class; or to clear off without a word. I can't hear of anybody who's seen him this morning, though."

"I say, you fellows, perhaps he's been kidnapped—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Perhaps he's run away to become a pirate?" suggested Skinner humorously. And there was a chortle.

"Well, he's not in the House," said Bunter. "He goes out for a walk in the evening sometimes. He may have got run over. If he's met with a fatal accident, we may get out of morning lessons entirely."

"That's worth a fatal accident, isn't it, you fat freak?" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Wingate!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

The Greyfriars captain came along to the Remove door. There was a look of perplexity on his face.

"Any of you kids know anything of Mr. Quelch?" he asked.

"No, Wingate."

"The knowfulness is not terrific."

"Hasn't he turned up?"

"It's jolly odd," said the prefect.

"Quelch seems to have gone out last night and not come back. Anyhow, he's not here; and the Head says I'm to take the Remove for first school. So get into your Form-room."

The juniors went in. Wingate glanced at the Bounder.

"You'd better cut, Vernon-Smith," he said. "How is it that you're still here?"

"The Head feels that a sudden partin' would be too painful."

"What?"

"So he's breakin' it to himself gently."

"You young ass! Cut off!"

"Sure you wouldn't like me in class?" asked the Bounder. "Quelch can tell you how nice I am in class—a shinin' example to the rest of the Form."

"Cut off!" repeated Wingate, and he followed the juniors into the Form-room.

The Bounder looked in at the open doorway, at a crowd of grinning faces.

"I may be gone before you kids are let out again," he drawled. "In that case, good-bye! Sorry I shan't stay long enough to see you sacked, too, Skinner. Sorry I shan't be here when your postal order comes, Bunter."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now, then, that's enough," said Wingate; and he shut the Form-room door on the Bounder.

## THE NINTH CHAPTER.

In Durance Vile!

**H**ENRY SAMUEL QUELCH stood at the barred window of the punishment-room, high up in the great mass of buildings, and looked out into the brilliant July sunshine.

His face was pale and set.

The glint in his gimlet eyes would have terrified any Removite who had seen it.

Probably Mr. Quelch had raged at

first, a good deal like a wild animal in a cage. But that had passed. His rage now was strong and deep, but it was of the cold variety.

What had happened to him was well-nigh incredible. But it had happened. It was so incredible, so unheard-of, that he had no hope that anyone at Greyfriars would guess what had happened. For who, in his wildest imaginings, could have pictured a Form master locked up in the punishment-room, and left, as it were, to stew in his own juice?

Nobody would guess! Nobody would know. Mr. Quelch was a hopeless prisoner till the Bounder chose to release him.

The Bounder was booked to leave the school by an early train, while the other fellows were in Form. Would he go without informing anyone of what he had done—without telling them where to look for Mr. Quelch? Knowing the reckless young rascal as he did, Henry Samuel Quelch could not help thinking that it was possible—indeed, probable.

In which case the imprisoned Form master's position was extremely unenviable.

He was hopelessly imprisoned. The door of the room was of thick, strong oak, locked on the outside. It looked on a long corridor; and half-way down that corridor was a passage door, seldom closed, but now, as Mr. Quelch knew, closed and locked. He had heard the Bounder lock it. That corridor door kept anyone from coming anywhere near the punishment-room, even if anyone felt a disposition to wander in that direction, which was unlikely in itself. The room was in a secluded place high up in the building. It was seldom used, and when it was not in use it was never visited. And as the Bounder was free, and doubtless keeping himself well in the public eye, no one would dream that the punishment-room was in use now.

There was no help.

The only other outlet was the window—small, and strongly barred. But the bars were not the only impediment.

On one occasion, when a junior had been locked in the room, he had contrived to communicate with his friends from the barred window. As a result a strong wire netting had been fastened over the window, so that it could not be opened or even touched from within.

That had been a necessary precaution, though Mr. Quelch could not help thinking now that it was rather superfluous.

There was a ventilator in the room, but it was high up in a corner, out of reach, even if any purpose could have been served by reaching it.

Mr. Quelch, the evening before, had shouted, even yelled, and banged a chair on the door. He had known that it was useless. The keenest ear could not have heard a sound from the occupied parts of the building. He had soon abandoned that.

He was a helpless prisoner, dependent on the good graces of the Bounder! He was at the mercy of the junior who was expelled, and in whose expulsion he had been chiefly instrumental. He could guess the Bounder's feelings towards him. He was at that young rascal's mercy—which meant that he had no mercy to expect.

He stared grimly from the window, with a set face. The punishment-room had been designed to keep a prisoner in safe incarceration, strictly debarred from communication with the rest of the school. It was now fulfilling its purpose, with Mr. Quelch as the victim.

Only Quelch was rather worse off than a normal prisoner would have been. A culprit shut up in the room would have

Vernon-Smith caught up a long and heavy poker from the fender and faced the exasperated Walker in a fencing attitude. "Come on, old bean!" he said invitingly. Crash after crash followed as the poker and ashplant came into violent collision.



been visited, at regular intervals, with meals. He would have been taken out at regular intervals for exercise while the rest were in school.

Neither of these concessions came Mr. Quelch's way. Certainly, no one was likely to bring him meals. He could not expect visitors of any sort, unless the Bounder came secretly to mock him.

How long was this to last?

It was now ten in the morning. The Remove must be in class without their Form master. What were they thinking—what was the Head thinking—of the Remove master's inexplicable absence from his duties? The whole school must be utterly mystified!

That was bad enough—very bad indeed when Mr. Quelch thought of the sarcastic comments in Common-room, the snorting of Prout, the lifting of Mr. Hacker's expressive eyebrows, the shrugs of the other masters. They would be discussing him and his mysterious absence. And when the facts came to light there would be ill-natured smiles in Common-room. He would look ridiculous—worst of all happenings to Henry Samuel Quelch!

And he was getting hungry.

Supper, fortunately, had been left for the proper prisoner of the punishment-room. Mr. Quelch had supped on it, and after an extremely uneasy night, during which he slept little, he had breakfasted on what was left. It was short commons. Now there was nothing. And Mr. Quelch thought of lunch-time with an inward sinking.

The expelled junior must be gone by this time, and he had said nothing. How long was this to last?

It was a dreary prospect.

Staring from the window, Mr. Quelch hoped to catch sight of some human form. But the high window barred off any view of the immediate vicinity; the window recess was deep; the wire-netting kept him away from the glass; anyone looking up from the school grounds could not have seen his face at the window, and from a greater distance no one could have discerned a face there.

But suddenly Mr. Quelch's heart gave a beat. A figure had come into view in the distance. It was a junior, too far off for the Form master to recognise him easily, though he looked familiar.

Who could it be at that hour, when all the Greyfriars fellows were in class? Only one junior was likely to be out of class, and that was the junior who had been expelled. And then, all of a sudden, Mr. Quelch recognised the familiar figure in the distance. It was the Bounder.

His eyes gleamed at him.

Herbert Vernon-Smith had stopped in a portion of the grounds that was used as a kitchen garden. There he clambered actively on the slanting roof of a shed.

Standing carelessly on the slant, he stared up and across towards the window of the punishment-room. Distant as he was, Mr. Quelch could make out his strongly featured face and discern the derisive grin on it.

Mr. Quelch's teeth came together hard.

Could the boy see him at the window? It was unlikely at the distance and through the glass, the deep recess, and the wire netting. The Bounder was plain to the view in the bright sun-

shine; but Mr. Quelch, in the punishment-room, must have been invisible to the Bounder.

No doubt the junior guessed that he would be looking from the window—his only outlet into the outer world.

At all events, the Bounder acted as if he could see him there. He extended the thumb and fingers of his right hand in a well-known disrespectful attitude, and laughed. Mr. Quelch discerned the laugh, though he could hear nothing.

For several minutes the Bounder remained there; then he jumped down from the shed and walked away.

Mr. Quelch turned from the window, his face quite pale. The cold, deep rage that possessed him was almost alarming.

The expelled schoolboy had not gone, then! Possibly because Mr. Quelch was missing from his accustomed place he had not been sent away. At all events, he was still at Greyfriars. Not in class—but loafing about idly, and amusing his leisure by strolling in sight of the prison window and mocking the master he had locked in there.

Only too plainly Vernon-Smith had no intention of releasing him, no intention of revealing where he was. In his own disaster he rejoiced at retaliation on the master of the Remove, and found a gnomish entertainment in deriding him in his imprisonment.

"I—I must get out of this!" said Mr. Quelch between his set teeth. "I must escape from this—this dreadful place! I must see that that insolent boy is punished! I must escape—somehow!"

(Continued on page 16.)

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**WORNING!**

Certain jellus beasts having publicly expressed the opinion that Bunter Court is reely the Bunter Arms, I hearby warn them that any repetition of such statements will be followed by immejate action for Slander, Libel and Kontempt of the Aristocracy!

(Sined) W. G. BUNTER.

# Greyfriars

No. 55.

LAUGH AND GRO

## EAT-WAVE BOXING

### Weather Affects Big Fight

### STRANGE SCENES IN GYM

A gallant band of perspiring fight-fans turned in the gym during the recent heat-wave to watch the biggest attraction of the term—Battling Bolsover versus Johnny Bull. Having arrived, the faint band collapsed into various positions of ease on the floor.

Prompt to the minute, Lord Mauleverer, the timekeeper-ref., was wheeled in on an invalid chair, carrying a dozen alarm clocks, each timed to go off at the beginning and end of a round. At the same moment the two principals were laid in the ring by their half-fainting seconds.



Without wasting time on any unnecessary preliminaries, Lord Mauleverer gave the order for the great scrap to begin, and immediately fell into a deep slumber.

Our Boxing Critic, who kept going with the

of ice-blocks wrapped round his head, writes as follows:

Taking less than a minute to rise from the floor, the two heavy-weights sparred for an opening. Their eyes being still closed in sleep, they were unable to see one another and collapsed again. Round One.—Even.

ROUND TWO.—Bull staggered to his feet and looked for his opponent. Failed to see him, and collapsed again, perspiring dreadfully. Bolsover did the same in the latter half of the round. Round Two.—Even.

ROUND THREE.—Revived with a hosepipe, the two great fighters slow-motioned into the ring. All tried to urge his fist towards the other's nose, but soon found himself hanging on to Bolsover's shoulders for support. Both collapsed in a bath of perspiration. Bull's round.

ROUND FOUR.—Bull crawled into the fray and landed a hurricane of blows on his opponent's chest—three in two minutes, to be exact. Bull's round.

ROUND FIVE.—Amid torrents of perspiration, all summoned up all his reserves of strength to administer the deciding flick. Just reached Bolsover's ear. Bolsover melted to the floor.

Owing to the somnolent state of the timekeeper, no count was taken, but it may be taken that all was the winner.

The enthusiastic audience, having stuck it out to the end, made a rush for the kitchen furnaces for a breath of cool air.

N.B.—The Remove Boxing Committee has decided that all future fixtures shall be cancelled if the temperature drops!

## THE PERFECT PICNIC

### Seasonable Hints

### AN EXPERT'S VIEW

"How shall we run that picnic?" is a question that must be troubling many of our readers just now.

With a view to obtaining the views of an expert on the subject, our Representative called yesterday on Mr. W. G. Bunter. The famous gourmand had gone out on one of his tours of exploration when the Representative arrived, but he reappeared after a short period, panting slightly and carrying a cake-tin and a box of chocolates.

"Look here, if that beast Smithy comes in I've been here talking to you for half-an-hour, ain't I?" he gasped, with his faultless diction.

"Really, Mr. Bunter, I hardly see how Mr. Vernon-Smith can affect the matter," objected the "Herald" Representative. "I was under the impression that you had only just come in!"

"Beast! Half-an-hour'll do for that rotter Smithy, anyway. Now, what do you want?" Mr. Bunter added, cramming handfuls of cake into his mouth.

The "Herald" Representative explained and Mr. Bunter smiled.

"Picnics? You couldn't have come to a better man; what I don't know about picnics ain't worth knowing," he said, with characteristic modesty. "First and foremost, there's the question of grub. This must be tackled scientifically."

"Scientifically?"

"Mathematically, in fact," said Mr. Bunter. "Find out how many chaps are turning up and stick to that number; then work out the amount of grub required per man. Simple!"

"But how much grub is required per man?"

Mr. Bunter pondered.

"H'm! Well, roughly, one York ham, a four-pound tin of tongue, say half-a-dozen rolls, two dozen mixed pastries, an iced fruit cake, a tin of biscuits, two pounds of really good chocolates—"

"I think I get the idea roughly!" gasped the "Herald" Representative. "And what about transport?"

Mr. Bunter frowned.

"That's difficult, admittedly. It brings us to the point; where to go for a picnic. Now, some fellows like to go a long way out."

"Exactly! Others—"

"Others—me, included," said Mr. Bunter, with a modest gesture

of a somewhat grimy hand, "think that the same attractions can be found close at hand. Why go tramping miles when you can find a nice comfy little spot quite near?"

"Such as—" our Representative suggested.

"Well, such as the lawn behind the tuckshop. Better still," said Mr. Bunter, as a brainwave smote him. "Why not remain in the tuckshop and be comfortable?"

It was as Mr. Bunter top-note that Mr. Smith, the well-known sportsman, burst into and for reasons best himself, hurried him picnic expert and stre little pieces of round

As there seemed ve of Mr. Bunter to in "Herald" Representa withdrew.

## NO SLANG

### Quelchy's New Order

### Amazing Prospects

Quelchy stalked into the Form-room one morning this week with a steely look in his eyes.

"I have been considering the subject of slang," he said icily. "I have come to the conclusion that the time is ripe for its total suppression!"

"Great pip!" murmured someone at the back of the class, and Quelchy glared.

"There's an example of the unseemly and meaningless jargon which is so rife among you!" he snapped. "It must cease. Understand that, once and for all. Any boy whom I hear using slang from now on will be punished with the utmost severity."

"Crikey!" remarked Bolsover major thoughtlessly.

About five seconds later he was bending over in front of the class and the Form-room was ringing with his howls.

Quelchy obviously meant it!

Since that little episode, several unfortunates who have indulged in slangy expressions within earshot of the Beak have been "for it."

A feeling of genuine alarm has spread among the Remove.

The results are already noticeable.

Yesterday, for example, Bunter received a postal order for 5/- from his pater. Quelchy happened to be passing through the Hall when Todd was telling the crowd

about it, dialogu hereunder v some idea c are going.

Todd: order, you giddy—I m order!"

Crowd: "we mean, d

Todd: "Yes, and b—I should say, five

Crowd: "Goodness

Todd: "It's from h

Crowd: "Bless my

What's going to ha goes on? Only one as we can see. When really get into the ha "Bless my soul!" me!" the beaks w monopoly has ended new slogans.

What more natura they should eventual on the disused phr juniors?

When this happens anticipate hearing t thing in Master's Com

Mr. Quelch: "Dash

If it hasn't started to

Mr. Prout: "Oh cr

I wanted to peotle village, too! By the your 'History of Gre

ting on, Quelch?"

Mr. Quelch: "Rot

seem to get t ough ninety-ninth chapter!

Mr. Capper: "M

In about ten years' tin to get really gang wi

Mr. Quelch: "Oh,

Mr. Capper: "San many of 'em, old spo

Prouty! I'm buzzin

So now you know w Can't say we did can you?

# Merald

Edited by  
**HARRY  
WHARTON,**  
F.G.R.



## LOST, STOLEN, OR STRAYED!

Long, lean specimen of Homo Sapiens' answering to the name of Alonzo Todd. Last seen wandering in the direction of the railway station, carrying a sackful of tracts and trousers. Finder will be rewarded with a punch on the nose.—Apply, Peter Todd, Study No. 7.

GROW FAT.

July 25th, 1931.

## BASEBALL AT GREYFRIARS

### Visit of American Schoolboys' Team

## FISH DESCRIBES EXHIBITION GAME



eyes in the way of fast-breaking curves and hot clouts for home runs.

Here's hoping these sleepy Britishers will profit by the experience, bury cricket, and take up the great Ball Game that's America's pride and joy! Whoopee!

(Hope you know all about it now, chaps! Nobody in the Editorial Office understands a word of what Fishy's been talking about!)

## FISH'S LIDO

### Wealth and Fashion at New Resort

Fish's Lido, the amazing new riverside resort of the Greyfriars aristocracy and nobility, opened in a blaze of glory on Wednesday last. As the site of his remarkable venture, Fisher T. Fish, the celebrated Remove financier from New York, selected a charming, well-sheltered meadow which slopes down to the River Sark about half a mile from Greyfriars, and an enormous crowd turned up to the opening ceremony.

Mr. Fish, in a few well-chosen words, apologised for the absence of Dr. Locke, Wingate, and other celebrities, owing to pressure of other business. He had hoped to have the Head there to perform the official opening, but in his absence he called on H. Skinner, Esq. to do the needful.

Mr. Skinner having signified the opening of the Lido by harmlessly breaking a bottle of ginger-beer over Mr. Bunter's head, there was a rush to explore the delights of the exclusive new rendezvous.

We cannot refrain from congratulating the promoter on the thought and care that had been lavished on the Lido. Bathing-tents had been erected along the beach, and a diving-board over the river. Beach pyjamas and what-not could be hired at the office, while at the lounge-bar under the trees patrons could obtain anything from an ice-brick to a pork pie.

A small army of fags, retained by Mr. Fish for the afternoon, was available for serving ices, poling punts, and fanning the blasé guests of the Lido, and the distinguished visitors made full use of their services.

## FEARFUL CARNAGE

As a result of a calamity on the playing-fields yesterday, nearly a score of seniors are at present lying in the school sanny.

Net-practice was in progress at the time, and the players were first aware that something was wrong when fellows began to fall around them like ninepins, apparently knocked out by a series of mysterious missiles.

Ambulances were hastily summoned and the injured quickly transferred to an improvised first-aid station in the pavilion.

The devastating barrage eventually ceased, greatly to the relief of the alarmed Sixth and Fifth-Formers.

The cause was afterwards found to be Coker, who had been indulging in a little quiet bowling practice at one of the nets.

The afternoon passed quickly in a riot of gaiety and frivolity. An open-air cabaret arranged by W. Wibley, Esq. proved a terrific attraction, and the music of Bolsover and His Blue Ikes, though a little strange to unaccustomed ears, aroused so much enthusiasm that the cheering completely drowned their later efforts.

It is greatly to be regretted that Mr. Fish's successful enterprise should have been throttled at the height of its success. Just before tea-time, however, when the fun was really getting into its stride, disaster came, in the shape of a purple-faced farmer and his ferocious bulldog. It was then discovered, for the first time, that Fish's Lido had been set up on private



property, and that Mr. Fish and all his guests were trespassers.

There was a rush for the exit, inspired principally by the bulldog, and the contractors having hastily shifted the tents, the Lido came to an ignominious end.

On the petition of certain creditors of the Lido Company, a Receiver has been appointed.

Mr. Fish will appear in the Junior Bankruptcy Court for his first examination to-morrow, after morning classes.

We understand that he is prepared to offer a penny in the pound!

Bunter reached this Mr. H. Vernon- well-known Remove into the study, best known to himself on the and strewed him in round the room. ed very little left to interview, the representative quietly

it, and the legue recorded under will give you idea of how things

ing. add: "A postal you know! A I mean, a postal

rd: "Great p—ean, dear me!"

, and it's for five ay, five shillings!" odness gracious!" from his pater."

ee my soul!" to happen if this y one thing, as far

When the fellows he habit of saying all!" and "Dear aks will see their ended and adopt

natural than that entually fall back d phrases of the

pens we may quite ing this kind of

Common-room: "Dash my buttons: ed to rain!"

Oh crumbs! And role down to the y the way, how's of Greyfriars' get- 7?"

"Rotten! I can't ough the blinking pter!"

"My only hat! ars' time, you ought ng with it!"

"Oh, rats!" "Same to you and ld sport! Kim on, uzzing!"

ow what's coming! e didn't tell you,

Attaboy! Didn't this sleepy old shebang open her eyes last week when a nifty bunch of schoolboys from the great United States popped in to show how the Ball Game should be played? She did; and how! It sure was the greatest day ever for this mouldering old ruin. Yes, siree!

Now for the game: Red Sox batted first and made a break with two jig-time home runs. Then the pitching arm got going and made whoopee at the batters' expense. Fourth bat clouted fierce. But the fielder at third base hustled and hooked the ball, making the run a pop fly. Blue Spiders, defending, couldn't drive the ball from infield till Yonkers, some tough baby, took to the plate and bounced a sure-fired base-hit. Red Sox pitcher got rattled after that and heaved one for his dome, second time up, but Yonkers was a hard egg, and it was pie for him. Third pitch, he slammed clean outa the ball park. Red Sox mixed 'em up, but Blue Spiders didn't allow the ball to pitch by too often—not they! They clouted hard and often and soon got a lead.

Time's money, folks, so pardon me if I don't give details of the remaining innings. Anyway, I'll tell the world the game went with a punch all through. Sometimes someone pulled a boner, but most times the mouldering old hometowners saw sights for sore

## Get Rid of Your Superfluous "Tishoos"

Hay Fever and Summer Colds cured by puffing one of Dr. Skinner's Famous Medicated Cigars. Delivered by disguised messengers in plain, sealed packets, 1/-.—Dr. SKINNER, Remove Passage Pharmacy.



(Continued from page 13.)

He stepped across the room to the chimney.

It was a large, wide, ancient chimney, built straight, like the chimneys of old days, and already, more than once, Mr. Quelch had looked up at the circular disc of blue sky at the summit from within, and wondered and pondered.

Now he looked up again.

The interior of the chimney was amply spacious, and the rough brick-work gave ample hold for a climber. But Mr. Quelch was no climber, and the interior was caked with the soot and dust of many years. And if it was possible to escape by such a route, how was he to look when he emerged? Smothered with soot; black as a Christy minstrel; a figure of fun in the eyes of all who beheld him.

He shuddered at the idea.

The chimney, he knew, jutted from a slanting roof of red tiles. To clamber up to the ridge, to find his way to some garret window, to force an entrance. His blood ran colder at the thought. A fall from such a height meant instant death. Mr. Quelch was long past the age of acrobatic stunts.

But Mr. Quelch was getting desperate.

He put his head under the wide old chimney and stared up. The bright patch of blue sky seemed to mock him high above. A fleecy, white cloud drifted across it.

Mr. Quelch gazed upwards. Unfortunately, just then a fragment of soot became dislodged and fell. It fell full on the upturned face.

"Ooooooch!"

Mr. Quelch jumped away. He banged his head on the arch of the fireplace as he jumped.

"Wow!"

He rubbed his head with one hand, his eye with the other. His head had banged, and there was smarting soot in his eye. There was soot also in his nose.

"Atchoo-coo-chooooo!"

Mr. Quelch sneezed violently.

He rubbed his head, he rubbed his eye, and he sneezed—all together. He was quite busy for some minutes.

And he did not approach the chimney again. If that was a resource in Mr. Quelch's desperate extremity, it was a last resource—a very, very last resource.

## THE TENTH CHAPTER.

### The Last Chance!

"HERBERT!"

"Yes, father!"

The Bounder's voice was very subdued.

All the school was in class, and the Bounder had found the time hanging heavily on his hands while he waited for his father.

It was rather to kill time and to drive bitter and painful thoughts from his mind, than for any other reason, that he had mocked his hapless Form master at the window of the punishment-room.

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The long, long minutes passed wearily.

The Bounder did not want to leave Greyfriars—he hated the thought of leaving. But this lingering out of his going was a prolonged torment to him.

He dreaded the arrival of his father; yet he longed for it, to get the thing over.

He had to go—and he wanted to be gone before the fellows came out of the Form-rooms for break. The longer his ordeal lasted, the harder it was for Smithy to keep up his air of careless insouciance, of insolent indifference. It was not easy to be flippant with a heart as heavy as lead in his breast. It was not easy to laugh and gibe when his nerves were on the strain. He wished that he had left at the appointed time and got it over. But he had to wait for his father—and the waiting was weary.

It was a relief when a conveyance from Courtfield station brought the millionaire to the school at last.

The Bounder was loafing idly and dismally by the doorway. His eyes fixed instantly on his father, as the plump millionaire alighted.

Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith was not looking his usual portly, self-satisfied self. Obviously he had had a severe shock.

His face was less ruddy than usual; his rather thick lips were set in a hard line, and his eyes glinted like cold steel. Only one glance was needed to tell the Bounder that his father had come to the school looking for trouble. And his heart sank lower as he saw it.

Mr. Vernon-Smith came up the steps, his eyes grimly on his son. The Bounder's face was pale.

"Come with me!" said Mr. Vernon-Smith abruptly.

Trotter came to show the millionaire to the headmaster's study. He had orders to call the Head from the Sixth Form room as soon as Mr. Vernon-Smith arrived.

Smithy followed his father to Dr. Locke's study. Trotter placed a chair for the visitor, stated that he would call Dr. Locke, and left them.

Mr. Vernon-Smith sat down heavily and breathed hard. The Bounder stood in silence.

"You've done it—at last!"

Mr. Vernon-Smith almost barked the words.

"Yes, father," said Smithy humbly, "I'm sorry."

"What's the use of being sorry now?"

Smithy did not reply to that.

"Your headmaster's explained in his letter. You appear to have acted like a cheeky young scoundrel. You deserve a thundering good flogging!" barked Mr. Vernon-Smith.

"I know!"

Smithy's eyes were on his father's face.

He could read deep wrath there. But he could read something else.

His father was hurt, wounded. And that hurt Smithy strangely. He had no idea of defending himself. After all, what was the use? He was to blame. He had worn out his Form master's patience, with one offence after another, till his offences had culminated, and he was sacked! What was the use of defence? If it gave his father any relief to take it out of him, Smithy did not mind. For once the hard-hearted Bounder, who generally thought only of himself, was thinking of another much more than of himself. There was a strange and unaccustomed humility in his look and manner as he faced Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith.

Mr. Vernon-Smith glared at him. But it was easy to see that his wrath was less for Smithy than for the headmaster who had "sacked" him.

"Expelled!" said Mr. Vernon-Smith. "By gad! A son of mine! This will stick to you all your life."

"I know!"

"But—by gad—they won't get away with it easily!" said Mr. Vernon-Smith. "A flogging—a dozen floggings—bread and water for a week—anything they like—but they're not kicking my son out of school! No!"

The Bounder breathed hard.

"Father!"

"Don't you talk, Herbert! Don't make excuses! You are an impudent young rascal, and you've asked for this!"

"I know," said the Bounder in a low voice, "I'm not going to make excuses, father—and it's no use being sorry now, as you say. I've been a fool—a dashed fool! I thought myself jolly clever, and all the time I've been a rotten fool! But—father!—it's no good talking to the Head! It's no good seeing him, father! I've got to go."

"Nonsense!"

"I'd rather go at once without a fuss—"

A plump hand waved him to silence.

"That's not for you to say, Herbert! I shall not listen to you! By gad! You've messed things up pretty thoroughly! Your opinion is worth nothing! Hold your tongue!"

The Bounder remained silent.

A minute or two more, and there was a footstep in the corridor. Dr. Locke entered the study.

He bowed courteously to the millionaire.

Mr. Vernon-Smith, weighty gentleman as he was, jumped up almost like a jack-in-the-box as the Head entered.

"Good-morning, Mr. Vernon-Smith! I very much regret—" began Dr. Locke.

"You have written to me, sir, that my son is expelled from this school!" interrupted Mr. Vernon-Smith.

"That is the case. I have allowed him to remain pending your arrival, sir, as you desired to take him away in your own charge—"

"Nothing of the sort, sir!"

"I understood—"

"I do not desire to take my son away! I desire him to remain at Greyfriars!"

"But I have explained in my letter—"

"I have read your letter twice, sir, and it is therefore unnecessary for you to repeat its contents to me!"

The Head flushed.

"Really, Mr. Vernon-Smith—"

"We must discuss this matter, sir!" said the millionaire.

"There is nothing to discuss, Mr. Vernon-Smith," said the Head. "Your son, for the reasons I have given you in full, is expelled from Greyfriars. It only remains to remove him from the school."

"Indeed!" snorted Mr. Vernon-Smith.

"Precisely!" said the Head.

Mr. Vernon-Smith sat down again.

"I repeat that we must discuss the matter, sir! I do not desire my son to leave Greyfriars—I object very strongly. It will put a stigma on my son's name, sir, of which he will never get rid. It will make a very serious difference to his future. In short, I desire you to rescind your sentence, sir, and substitute some other punishment."

"Impossible, sir!"

"A flogging—however severe—"

"A flogging will not meet the case,"



said Dr. Locke tartly. "I am not prepared to reconsider—"

"My son has been rebellious—insolent—impertinent—anything you like. But, after all, it was to play cricket in a match that he disobeyed his Form master. And that—"

"It is not merely a matter of disobedience, sir, as I have explained in my letter. It was a matter of unscrupulous deception. A telegram signed by a false name was sent to me, deceiving me into giving your son leave for the day. That is unpardonable!"

Snort from Mr. Vernon-Smith.

"A trick—a disrespectful trick, if you like—but not a crime!" he said. "You are treating my son harshly, sir!"

"I am sorry that you should think so, Mr. Vernon-Smith! I am bound to say that I have more than once almost decided to send your son away. He has been given many chances. But he is incorrigible. Greyfriars, sir, is no place for such a boy!"

Mr. Vernon-Smith opened his lips, and the Bounder almost trembled. He could see the torrent of arrogance, of contemptuous wrath and scorn that was coming.

But there was something in the calm, scholarly face of the headmaster that seemed to daunt even the overpowering City millionaire.

The words that were almost on his lips remained unuttered.

The Head was calm, quiet; but it was the calmness of steel-like determination. The Bounder could see that that determination would only harden under any attempt at blustering or bullying. Mr. Vernon-Smith had come there to bluster and to bully and threaten. But the quiet dignity of the headmaster checked him.

There was a brief silence; and when the millionaire spoke again his voice was calmer and his manner more subdued.

"You realise, Dr. Locke, that this is a heavy blow to me," he said.

"I understand that only too well, sir," said Dr. Locke, "and I need hardly say that I gave the matter serious thought and consulted with your son's Form master before reaching my decision. I am sorry—extremely sorry! But—"

"If my son, sir, had taken French leave for any disgraceful reason—to break any of the rules of the school—But his object in doing what he did was rather praiseworthy than blame-worthy."

"That I admit," said Dr. Locke. "But such a deception—"

"A foolish, a thoughtless act, one that I do not dream of defending. But let such extenuation as exists be taken into consideration, sir. In this matter I realise that I am entirely in your hands. It is your duty to be just; I ask you to temper justice with mercy."

The Bounder looked at his father, hardly believing his ears.

He had never expected sweet reasonableness like this from the arrogant millionaire.

The fact was that Mr. Vernon-Smith was a man of the world, and knew, by instinct, how to deal with any situation as it arose. Having realised, in the first few moments of the interview that his usual overwhelming methods would be useless here, he had switched off, as it were, to a more useful method.

Bluster would have hardened Dr. Locke into adamant. An appeal to his kindness of heart was much more likely to succeed.

"Herbert is my only son," went on Mr. Vernon-Smith. "I have, as you will easily imagine, great ambitions for

him. I freely acknowledge his fault. I agree that punishment should be exemplary. But—I am not a man accustomed to asking favours, sir—but I ask you to give my son one more chance to make good at this school."

Dr. Locke did not immediately reply.

# FREE GIFTS!

## The MAGNET SCORES AGAIN!

BOYS, gather round and listen to the stunning news I have for you this week. It concerns a series of marvellous

# FREE GIFTS

which I have arranged that every man jack of you shall receive. There have been many tip-top Free Gifts presented with the *MAGNET* in the past, but these I have in store for you will beat them all.

I'm not going to let the cat out of the bag and tell you more about these

# FREE GIFTS

this week, I'm just preparing you for the pleasant surprise there is in store. So keep your eyes well on the

# MAGNET

the live paper with the best stories, the best pictures, and

# THE BEST FREE GIFTS!

—EDITOR.

"My son is headstrong, wilful, obstinate," said Mr. Vernon-Smith. "I greatly fear that indulgence on my part is to blame, to some extent. All the more because of these failings in his character, I desire him to remain under a headmaster like you, sir, and under a Form master like Mr. Quelch, whom I respect highly."

"Really, Mr. Vernon-Smith—"

"If it were a question of bad or vicious conduct, I could ask no concession. But a boy's keenness to play in a cricket match—"

"I have taken everything into consideration, Mr. Vernon-Smith! I had better tell you, frankly, that your son's Form master not only fully concurred in his sentence, but demanded it. I am bound to give my support to Mr. Quelch. In point of fact, sir, if I should allow Vernon-Smith to remain, in spite of his Form master's just demand that he should be sent away, I have no doubt that Mr. Quelch would resign his position here."

Mr. Vernon-Smith pursed his lips.

"Is Mr. Quelch so very deeply incensed against my son?" he asked at last.

"Undoubtedly."

"May I see Mr. Quelch?"

"Certainly, if you wish. But—"

"It comes to this, sir, that if my son's Form master could see his way to taking a more lenient view, you would give him your support?"

Dr. Locke started a little.

"I did not mean exactly that—" he said, a little uncertainly.

"Nevertheless, sir, if Mr. Quelch requested you, as Herbert's Form master, to give my son another chance, you would not refuse?"

The Head smiled faintly.

"I can certainly say as much as that," he answered. "In such a matter as this I rely very much upon the opinion of the boy's Form master. But there is not the remotest chance—"

"At all events, you can have no objection to my discussing the matter with my son's Form master?"

"None whatever. Nevertheless—"

"I am wasting your time, sir," said Mr. Vernon-Smith. "Please let me see Mr. Quelch."

Again the Head started. He had forgotten for the moment, and now he remembered that Mr. Quelch was not available.

"I—I am sorry," he said, stammering a little. "Mr. Quelch is not in the school at the present moment—he left rather suddenly, in fact very suddenly, for some reason with which I am not acquainted—"

The Head broke off under Mr. Vernon-Smith's surprised stare.

He coloured rather uncomfortably. Mr. Quelch's mysterious conduct, in point of fact, was hard to explain; it was utterly inexplicable that he should be missing from his duties at Greyfriars.

"This is very extraordinary, sir!" said Mr. Vernon-Smith dryly.

"No doubt; but—"

"I can wait!" said Mr. Vernon-Smith.

That was the last thing that the headmaster of Greyfriars desired.

"I assure you, sir, that it will be futile—"

"You have given me permission, sir, to see Mr. Quelch, and ascertain whether anything can be done. This is a weighty matter to me, sir."

"Oh, quite so! But—"

"I can wait!" repeated Mr. Vernon-Smith.

"It is possible that Mr. Quelch has  
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now returned—I will ascertain if you will kindly excuse me.”

The Head left the study.

Mr. Vernon-Smith glanced at his silent son.

“It depends on your Form master, Herbert,” he said. “I have very little doubt that I shall be able to make him see reason—to induce him to give you another chance. You will apologise to him in my presence—you will promise amendment, and I shall see that you keep the promise, by gad! I know your Form master quite well—he is a just and reasonable man, and if he thought there was good reason to give you a chance, he would be the first man to make a concession. It all depends on whether you have given him such deep offence that he can no longer tolerate you in the school—and I cannot believe that that is the case.”

The Bounder did not speak.

He could not.

All depended on Mr. Quelch—it had come to that! Possibly the millionaire might have succeeded with him, as he had already, contrary to the Bounder's expectations, succeeded with the Head. There was a chance, at least, and Mr. Vernon-Smith was counting on that chance. Or, rather, there had been a chance—and the Bounder's last act of rebellious recklessness had destroyed it.

The Form master, upon whose fiat all depended, was locked up, a prisoner, in the punishment-room, locked up by the Bounder, who only half an hour ago had been deriding him in his imprisonment there!

The Bounder felt sick at heart.

“You had better leave me, my boy.” The millionaire was far from guessing his son's thoughts. “I had better see Mr. Quelch alone. Don't be far away, in case you are wanted.”

The Bounder almost stumbled from the study. There had been a chance, a last chance, and he had destroyed it! There was no hope now.

## THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

### An Awkward Situation!

**H**ARRY WHARTON & CO., in the Remove Form-room, were at second lesson when the door opened, and the class rose respectfully at the entrance of the Head.

Puzzled as the Removites were by the absence of their Form master, it could hardly be said that they regretted it; they were having a much easier time with Wingate of the Sixth than they would have had with Mr. Quelch. Billy Bunter, indeed, was entertaining a wild hope that Mr. Quelch might remain absent for a very, very long time, an awfully long time—in fact permanently, if possible. He found George Wingate ever so much easier to deal with. Still, though they were not mourning his absence, the juniors were wondering a good deal what had become of Quelch and what his unaccountable conduct could possibly mean.

They all looked at Dr. Locke, as he stepped in, guessing that this unexpected visit had something to do with their absent Form master. The Head's usually calm and benignant countenance showed some signs of perturbation.

“Mr. Quelch has not—h'm—returned?” he asked, addressing Wingate.

“He has not been here, sir,” answered the prefect.

Dr. Locke turned to the Form.

“My boys, you are doubtless aware that your Form master is—h'm—absent from the school at the present moment. He has been—h'm—called away sud-

denly. It has occurred to me that he may possibly have left a message with some member of his Form. In that case—”

The Head paused.

There was no answer from the Remove. If the vanished Form master had left any message, he did not seem to have left it with a member of his Form.

“Wharton!”

“Yes, sir!” said Harry.

“You are head boy of Mr. Quelch's Form, and possibly you are aware—”

The Head paused again.

It was a difficult and delicate matter. Everybody at Greyfriars knew that Quelch was missing; that he had, as the juniors put it, cleared off, goodness knew why.

The Head wanted to learn whether any fellow knew or guessed anything of Quelch's movements, or had any idea where he was; and at the same time, he did not want to draw the attention of the boys to the peculiar proceedings of a member of the staff.

Quelch's conduct was amazing, inexplicable, mysterious, and Form masters were not supposed to do things that were amazing, inexplicable, or mysterious. It was really better for the boys to suppose that he had been called away for some reason, not that he had departed suddenly, mysteriously, and inexplicably.

Still, the Head wanted to know. It was unlikely that Quelch had left a message which had not been handed over; but it was possible that some fellow in the Remove had seen him depart, or had some idea where he had gone.

But nobody had any information to give. The head boy of the Form should have known, if anybody knew; but the head boy knew nothing.

“Mr. Quelch did not say anything to me before he left, sir,” answered Harry Wharton.

“You did not—h'm!—see him leave, Wharton?”

“No, sir.”

“Very good!” said the Head.

He left the Form-room, a very puzzled, perplexed, and perturbed headmaster. He had hoped that he might learn something from the Remove; but he had been disappointed. The Remove knew nothing.

“It's jolly queer!” murmured Bob Cherry.

“The queerfulness is terrific.”

“Fancy old Quelch breaking out like this!” murmured Skinner. “It's race day at Wapshot. Think he's there?”

There was a chuckle at the idea.

“I say, you fellows, I'm pretty sure he's been run over,” said Billy Bunter. “Of course, I'm sorry for Quelch; but this may mean a jolly easy time till the end of the term!”

“Silence in the class!” said Wingate. And second lesson was resumed—a much easier lesson than the Remove were accustomed to.

Dr. Locke, as he went away, came on the Bounder, and glanced at him. He was struck by the pale, harassed face of the expelled junior, the deep wrinkle of trouble on his brow.

Smithy did not see him. He was plunged deep in tormenting thought. He went out into the quad, and the Head's glance followed him.

The Bounder, at that moment, was very different in looks from the rebellious junior who had defied his Form master and cheeked his headmaster. The position in which he found himself seemed to have produced its effect on him.

Dr. Locke looked very thoughtful. He

wondered whether the boy might be given, after all, another chance, as his father so earnestly desired. If he realised his wrong-doing, and was sorry for it, there was hope for the rebel of the Remove.

But it rested with Quelch. He was anxious to see Quelch, and discuss the matter with him. It was extremely awkward, extremely irritating, in fact, that Quelch should have chosen this precise time for such an unaccountable absence from the school.

It placed the Head in a very awkward position. He had to return to Mr. Vernon-Smith, and tell him that Mr. Quelch could not be found—at least, that he was still away from the school. It was very awkward indeed.

Out in the bright sunshine of the quadrangle, the Bounder was walking about aimlessly, his hands in his pockets, his brows wrinkled.

There had been a chance—he knew that now! He had himself knocked it on the head.

Had he taken his sentence quietly, as any other fellow would have done, it would have been well for him. The desire to swank, to show off his cool carelessness of disaster, his scorn for authority, had been his undoing again, as it had been his undoing before. He had played the reckless rebel up to the last moment. He had made a sensation in the school on his last night at Greyfriars, he had kept up his reputation for reckless hardihood, and now he had to pay. The game was hardly worth the candle.

It was all up now!

If he told where Quelch was, and the Remove master was released, it was easy to guess in what mood Mr. Quelch would emerge from the punishment-room. It was easy to guess what would be his answer to Mr. Vernon-Smith; easy to guess how much mercy there would be for the fellow who had fooled him, tricked him, locked him in, and mocked him. It was all up, with a vengeance.

The Bounder tramped about aimlessly, in the depths of gloom. His steps led him back into the House at last. Fellows were still in Form. The passages were deserted. There was no eye on the Bounder, as he made his way to the secluded corridor that led to the punishment-room. He unlocked the passage door, passed through, and went on to the locked door of the punishment-room, slowly, indecisively. He was going to speak to the imprisoned Form master; but he knew that it would be useless. Only too well he knew what mood Mr. Quelch must be in. Still, he would speak. If submission, apology, eating “humble pie” to any extent, would spare his father the bitter disappointment that was in store for him, the Bounder was prepared for it now. On his own account the arrogant Bounder would not have humbled himself. But Smithy was not thinking of himself now.

He tapped lightly at the door.

## THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

### Neck or Nothing!

**M**R. QUELCH started.

The tap at the door, in the dreary silence and solitude of the punishment-room, startled him. He almost gasped as he spun round towards the door. If it was release at last!

But there was no sound of a key being inserted in the lock. The tap was repeated; that was all.

Mr. Quelch stepped to the door.

"Who is there?" he called out. "If you have the key, open the door at once. If not, go to the Head—"

"Mr. Quelch!"  
The Remove master's sudden hope died away on the spot. It was the voice of Herbert Vernon-Smith that came muffled through the oaken door.

"You!" articulated Mr. Quelch.  
"Yes, sir."

The Form master noticed that there was no tone of mockery or disrespect in the junior's voice now. It was quiet, respectful. That, however, was not likely to placate Mr. Quelch, in the circumstances.

"So you have come here!" said Mr. Quelch, his voice trembling with passion. "Have you come to release me, Vernon-Smith, or to repeat your disrespectful impudence?"

"I've come to speak to you, sir."

"I decline to hear anything from you, Vernon-Smith! I command you to open that door at once!"

"My father's at Greyfriars now, sir—"

"That does not concern me."

"He is waiting to see you, sir."

"In that case he may have his wish as soon as you have unlocked that door, Vernon-Smith!" said the Remove master in a bitter tone.

His tone revealed plainly enough what he would have to say to Mr. Vernon-Smith when he saw him.

The Bounder breathed hard. He knew that it was useless—that it must be useless—but he would try.

"Mr. Quelch, please listen to me! My father is cut up—I mean, he's had a great shock. I never realised what it would mean to him. If I'd thought, I'd never have done what I did. I admit my fault. I'm sorry; I'll take any punishment—anything you like, but—"

"Will you unlock that door, Vernon-Smith?"

"My father wishes to see you, sir, to make an appeal—"

"That is enough!"

"If you would give me a chance, sir, Dr. Locke has as good as said that it rests with you."

"And that is why you are here!" said Mr. Quelch bitterly. "You dare to imagine that you can make terms with me through a locked door!"

"No, sir! I did not mean that! I mean—"

The Bounder paused. "I mean, sir, that I'm sorry—that I'll promise—"

"I will not listen to you, Vernon-Smith! At the very moment you are speaking of making promises of amendment, you are keeping your Form-master locked in a room. Either unlock that door, or go!"

"When you see my father, sir—"

"When I see your father, Vernon-Smith, I shall tell him that never, under any circumstances whatever, will I tolerate your continued presence in this school. I should prefer to resign my position here, rather than tolerate your presence for a single day!"

The Remove master's voice was low and calm, but it was intensely bitter.

There was no doubt that he meant every syllable.

The Bounder set his teeth. He had humbled himself for his father's sake, and he had humbled himself in vain. His hand was on the key in his pocket, but he released it now.

There was vindictive malice mingled with the disappointment in his breast. Quelch would make no concession; he would not give a fellow a chance, and he could take what was coming to him.

There was some satisfaction in that, anyhow.

"Is that your last word, sir?"

"That is my last word, Vernon-Smith! And if you do not release me from this room, I will see that you



Thick with perspiration and clotted with soot, Mr. Quelch's head rose from the summit of the old-fashioned chimney. The Remove master removed the handkerchief from his mouth and gasped for breath.

receive severe punishment for your lawless rascality, in addition to your expulsion from Greyfriars."

The Bounder laughed mockingly.

"Then you can stay where you are, sir!" he said. "If I have nothing to expect from you, you can expect nothing from me."

"Listen to me, Vernon-Smith. I shall not remain here. At any risk I shall release myself from this imprisonment. If the consequences should be serious, the responsibility will rest upon you. I have examined the chimney of this room, and ascertained that it is possible to obtain access to the roof. This I shall attempt."

The Bounder whistled.

There were few fellows at Greyfriars who would have ventured to clamber out of a chimney on to a slanting roof seventy feet from the ground. And Quelch was long past the active age.

"You hear me, Vernon-Smith? I have resolved upon this, though I am well aware that I shall be acting at the

risk of my life. Reflect, in time, whether you will take the responsibility for a possibly fatal accident."

"Gammon!"

"Wha-a-at?"

The Bounder laughed contemptuously. "Rats!" he said. "You couldn't climb the chimney in a month of Sundays. If you think you can pull my leg, you don't know me. Rats!"

Mr. Quelch trembled with rage.

"You—you insolent young knave! Go—leave me!"

"I'm going!" answered the Bounder. "I've got to go back to my father, and tell him there's no chance—and I'm leaving you here! I'll let them know where to find you, in time to save you from starving—not before then! You're hard on me, and by gad, I'll be as hard on you as I can! Stop where you are—and be hanged to you; put that in your pipe and smoke it!"

The Bounder tramped savagely away.

He closed the corridor door, locked it, put the key in his pocket, and hurried down the stairs.

Mr. Quelch was left again to silence and solitude—and a desperate resolve.

The Bounder did not believe him; he had regarded the Remove master's words as an idle threat. It was, indeed, difficult to believe that Henry Samuel Quelch would attempt such a feat.

But it was a case of "neck or nothing."

Mr. Quelch's last hope of release was gone now. He had supposed that Vernon-Smith, before he left, would give information where he was to be found. He knew now that that was not the junior's intention.

The young rascal was going—he had to go—and he would go with his mouth shut, rejoicing in his retaliation on the master who refused to give him another chance. Disgraced, expelled, sent home with an angry and disappointed father,  
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only that revenge remained to the Bounder.

Days of imprisonment, with all Greyfriars wondering what had become of him—alarm and anxiety—the police called in to search for him—days and nights, till that young scoundrel chose to give the word for his release—

Mr. Quelch had resolved.

With a set and bitter face, the Remove master approached the ancient chimney, bent his head, and crept under the chimney. Far above him was the blue patch of sky.

He tied his handkerchief over nose and mouth; a necessary precaution. The ancient soot that was thick in the chimney would be falling in showers and rising in clouds as soon as he commenced to climb.

He took a last deep breath, and started.

The actual climb was easier than Mr. Quelch had anticipated. The interior of the old chimney was rough with crevices and projections, and Mr. Quelch, though no longer young, was wiry and sinewy. He won his way upward, slowly but surely.

Soot was dislodged; it smothered him from head to foot, it floated in clouds round him.

But he clambered grimly up.

Long, long minutes passed; several times he had to pause and rest; the perspiration was thick on his brow, clotted with soot.

But at long last his head rose from the summit of the old-fashioned chimney, and he removed the handkerchief from his mouth and gasped for breath, gulping in fresh, clean air.

He rubbed his eyes and glanced round him.

That glance almost made his head swim.

He had a view of slanting red roofs, and dizzy chasms of space. The buildings shut off his view of the immediate vicinity; he could see the earth only at a distance, and it seemed incredibly far down.

If he had hoped that he might be seen by someone belonging to the school, that hope left him as he looked down and round. The surrounding roofs and walls were in the way.

Only from a distance could he have been seen, had anyone at a distance looked up at that particular spot on the extensive irregular roofs of the mass of buildings that constituted Greyfriars.

Slowly, but resolutely, the Remove master climbed out. Soot drifted from him in clouds on the summer breeze.

He did not glance round him again. One dizzy glance was enough. By an effort of will he avoided looking. If once his head swam, and he lost his grip on himself, he knew that he would whiz from the roof like a falling stone.

The chimney projected from a slanting roof, half-way from the gutter at the edge, to the ridge above. Between the chimney-stack and the ridge on the roof, Mr. Quelch lodged himself and rested.

His efforts had told on him already, but his task was not half-done yet. He had to crawl up the slant of the tiles to the ridge, work his way along it to a dormer window at a distance, and force his way in at the window, which was that of a disused garret high up in the building.

He had mapped it all out carefully in advance, but like many another well-laid scheme, it was easier to map out than to carry out. Once the little roof

window was reached, all was plain sailing, but it had to be reached.

Setting his feet against the brick-work of the chimney-stack, Mr. Quelch gave himself a push-off to crawl up the slanting tiles.

The angle of the roof was steep—steeper than he had calculated on, and the tiles offered little hold for his hands. Progress was slow, painfully slow and laborious.

Perhaps, at that stage of the proceedings, Mr. Quelch may have regretted that he had made the perilous venture. If so, it was too late. He was "for it" now—neck or nothing!

More than once he almost slipped back down the slope. If he slipped back, he hoped that he would bring up against the chimney-stack he had left behind him. But he knew very well that if he once rolled, he was as likely as not to miss it, and roll past to the edge of the roof, to whiz off into space and dash on the earth seventy feet below.

Fortunately he did not slip back. But progress was slow, and the ache in his arms was growing into an agony.

At last—after what seemed hours to Mr. Quelch, but was, in fact, no more than six or seven minutes—his fingertips reached the ridge of the roof.

The ridge between two sharply slanting roofs was wide, and rounded in form, overlapping the upper edge of the tiles in a curve. He had to lift one hand high in space to grasp the top.

He did so, and the other hand followed. Both hands fastened on the curved summit of the roof ridge.

But as Mr. Quelch strove to draw himself up, his hands slipped on the smooth surface. There was no hold for his fingers—only the smooth surface on which to press his hands. To draw himself up he needed a grip.

A horrible thrill ran through him.

It flashed into his mind that he could not draw himself up the steep angle, from the tiles on to the roof ridge.

Pressing his hands firmly he could keep his hold and remain where he was, and that was the utmost he could do.

His heart seemed to miss a beat.

The difficulty was wholly unforeseen, but it was a fatal one. He could not advance. And the terrible question now was whether he could retreat.

To crawl up the slant was one thing; to crawl down, backwards, was quite another—especially with the aching in his weary arms that was now almost a torture. To let himself slide, hoping to hit the chimney-stack and halt there, made his head reel to think of it.

Mr. Quelch set his lips hard. He fought against the dizziness that was coming over him. He took his courage between his teeth, as it were. But he knew that he could not advance another inch; he knew that he would never reach the window that jutted only a dozen feet from him, and he knew that if he retreated down the slant he would slip and roll. He knew it, and he remained calm, knowing that he was a dead man if help did not come—and that help could not come!

## THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

### A Blow for the Bounder!

GOSLING, the porter, passing along the path under the elms, permitted himself a crusty grin at the sight of the junior who was tramping there, his hands driven deep in his pockets, a black scowl on his face. Gosling knew, like everybody else, that Herbert Vernon-Smith was sacked, and Gosling at least had no regrets on the subject. Indeed, the

crusty old gentleman would not have been displeased had half the Remove been "bunked" along with the Bounder.

Boys, in Gosling's valuable opinion, were "dratted himps," and Gosling's private belief was that they ought to be "drowned." Gosling knew that Mr. Vernon-Smith had arrived some time ago, and he wondered why the Bounder was not yet gone.

It was getting near break now, and before long the quadrangle would be swarming with fellows out of the Form-rooms.

From his looks, as the porter's eyes fell on him, it was clear that the Bounder was taking his expulsion badly. He was very different from the insolent fellow who had "swanked" about the House the evening before. Gosling grinned a crusty grin, and the Bounder, glancing at him as he passed, caught it, and scowled at him savagely.

"You ain't gone yet, sir!" said Gosling.

"Mind your own business!" snarled the Bounder.

Gosling grunted.

"Wot I says is this 'ere—" he began.

"Shut up, you old ass!"

With a snort of indignation Gosling went on his way.

Vernon-Smith resumed his weary tramping.

His father was in the Head's study, waiting. The Head, no doubt, was still inquiring after Mr. Quelch.

The situation was awkward, and growing more awkward. Smithy was anxious to be gone before the fellows came out of the Form-rooms.

He had kept up his bravado so far, but he was at the end of his tether now. He had to go, and he wanted to get it over and done with. He did not want to face a sea of curious, staring eyes again before he went.

He could have ended the peculiar situation by stating where Mr. Quelch was and giving up the keys to release him. But that he was savagely determined not to do.

All the revenge that was in his power he would take. He only regretted that he could not take more. Not yet—not for whole days should the imprisoned Form master be released. Every bitter hour he passed in the punishment-room was a solace to the vengeful Bounder. He would make no concession, and he should receive none. He should have cause to remember the junior he had turned out of the school.

But how long was this going on? How long was Mr. Vernon-Smith going to wait for the interview with the Form master, whom certainly he was not going to see? How long would the Head's patience last? Smithy longed to get away and get it over. The situation was awkward, and growing rather ridiculous. How long was it to last?

But if he thought of ending it by releasing the imprisoned Form master, he rejected the idea at once.

Never that! Let Quelch stay where he was, raging and fuming—unless he chose to climb out of the chimney and break his neck on the roofs. The Bounder laughed at that idea. He did not believe for a moment that Quelch would have the nerve to attempt it.

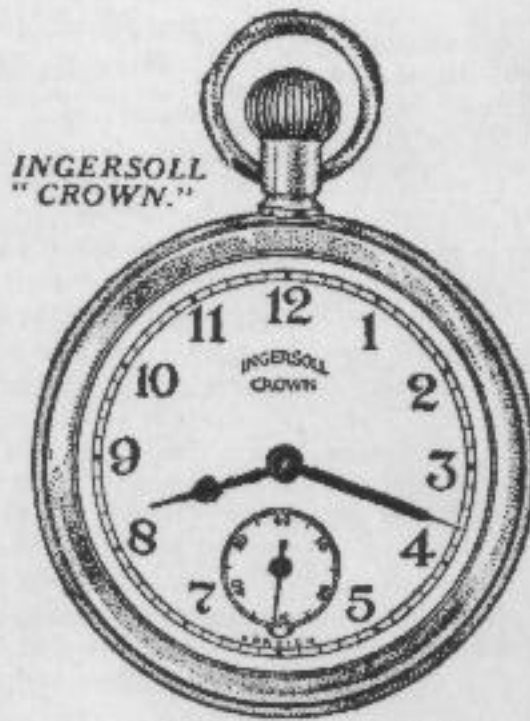
But with the thought in his mind he looked up at the roofs of the mass of buildings. From where he stood, at a distance from the House, he could see the section of the irregular extent of roofs where the punishment-room was situated.

He grinned at the idea of a school-master clambering over the tiles at that dizzy altitude.

But suddenly the grin died off his face,

He stared.  
 His eyes almost started from his head as he stared.  
 Far away, toy-like in the distance on the distant high roof, he made out a figure.  
 He rubbed his eyes and stared again.  
 Was it possible?  
 The figure was small in the distance, hardly noticeable against the roof. The Bounder could scarcely have observed it had he not been staring directly towards the spot.  
 But now that he saw it there could be no mistake.  
 It was a human figure.  
 The Bounder panted. His face was drained of colour.  
 "Quelch!" he breathed.  
 He could not recognise Quelch, but he knew that it could be nobody else. Indeed, he could not see the face. The figure was extended on the slant, face down.  
 What was he doing?  
 Obviously, he had climbed out of the chimney, as he had threatened to do, and evidently he had crawled up the tiles towards the ridge.  
 What was he stopping for?  
 He had only to climb on the ridge, and there was a roof window a dozen feet away, easy to climb into.  
 Why—  
 The Bounder watched.  
 The figure on the roof did not stir. It was Quelch, and he was holding on to the ridge at the summit of the slant. Why did he not move?  
 The knowledge was forced into the Bounder's mind that Mr. Quelch did not move farther because he could not. Either his strength had failed him from his exertions or else there was no hold on the smooth ridge. From whatever reason, the Form master had stopped there because he could go no farther.  
 The Bounder's heart almost ceased to beat.  
 As in a hideous vision he saw what must happen. Quelch was holding on. He would hold on till his strength was gone. Then—  
 Then a slip down the slant. If, by almost a miracle, he brought up against the chimney-stack below him he had a chance. It was a chance in a thousand. Once he let go he would roll, to slip over the dizzy edge and be dashed to death on the earth below.  
 Smithy groaned aloud.  
 He had not believed—he had not dreamed of believing—that the Form master would take that terrible risk to escape from his imprisonment. He had to believe it now.  
 And if Mr. Quelch went to his death, on whose head was the guilt—the guilt of a man's life?  
 The wretched Bounder shuddered. This was the end, and the outcome of rebelliousness and brazen hardihood—a terrible tragedy that would haunt him with remorse all the days of his life. The man he had defied, insulted, mocked, and who, as he knew at the bottom of his heart, had been just, if severe, hung at a dizzy height, in instant peril of destruction—and it was the Bounder's doing.  
 In those hideous moments the Bounder of Greyfriars paid dearly for his reckless folly and wrong-headed obstinacy. For some moments after he had realised how matters stood he was rooted to the ground, gazing up at the tiny figure in the distance, with a face white with horror.  
 But he woke to action. If there was time yet—  
 He stared round him almost wildly. Gosling was still in sight, on his slow way towards his lodge. Gosling would have seen that clinging figure on the roof had he looked up in that direction which, naturally, he had never thought of doing. Smithy shouted hoarsely:  
 "Gosling!"  
 The old porter stared round.  
 Vernon-Smith ran towards him. Gosling stared blankly at his white, horror-stricken face.  
 "Wot—" he began.  
 Smithy, in his excitement, grasped his arm.  
 "Get your ladder—ropes! Quick! Look!"  
 Grasping the amazed porter's arm with one hand, he pointed with the other.  
 Gosling stared blankly in the direction he pointed out. Gosling's old eyes were less keen than the Bounder's, but he made out something on the roof.  
 "It's Quelch!" panted the Bounder. "Don't you understand, you old fool? It's Quelch!"  
 "Look 'ere, Mr. Vernon-Smith, none of your larks!" grunted Gosling. "Wot I says is this 'ere—"  
 He gave a yelp as the Bounder's grip tightened on his arm.  
 "It's Quelch, I tell you! I looked him in the punishment-room. He climbed out. There he is! Get ladders—ropes! Get help! Can't you understand?"  
 "My eye!" gasped Gosling.  
 The Bounder rushed away from him towards the House. He left William Gosling staring blankly.  
 (Continued on next page.)

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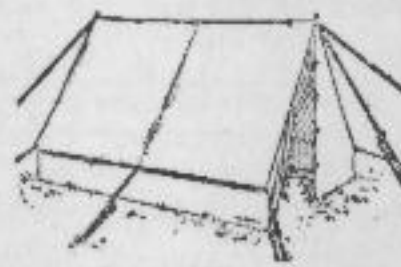
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## The Impossible Schoolboy!

(Continued from previous page.)

"My eye!" repeated Gosling, as the terrible truth dawned on his mind. "The young rip! My eye!"

And Gosling, now that he understood, proceeded to get busy. Meanwhile, Herbert Vernon-Smith tore into the House. He ran like a madman to the staircase that led to the secluded corridor on which the punishment-room opened. A voice called:

"Vernon-Smith!"

It was the Head's voice. The Bounder did not heed; he hardly heard. He vanished up the staircase.

"Bless my soul!" ejaculated Dr. Locke.

The Bounder had no time to lose. There was a life to be saved, if there was yet time, and if it was possible—and the Bounder was going to save it, or lose his own in trying.

### THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

#### For Life or Death!

"**H**OLD on!" Mr. Quelch gave a sort of quiver.

He was holding on—how long he had been holding on he hardly knew; it seemed like endless ages.

He held on without hope; for he could not help himself, and rescue seemed well-nigh impossible. Sheer instinct kept him holding on as long as he could, though there was no hope in his heart. But his arms were aching, his fingers numbed with the effort. It could not last much longer. And then the voice came to his ears.

It came from the garret window at a little distance along the tiled roof. It came utterly unexpectedly.

That garret was disused; it had been disused for more years than Mr. Quelch had been at Greyfriars; it was never entered. From its window he could easily be seen, if anyone came there; but no one would come—unless, by a remote chance, the man on the roof was seen from below.

But only from a distance could he have been seen, and then only if someone looked up and scanned that special section of the great extent of irregular roofs. Mr. Quelch had no hope of it. And yet the voice came from the garret window, and gave him new life.

He attempted to turn his head and look. His cramped fingers almost slipped on the smooth, rounded surface of the roof-ridge, and a shudder ran through him from head to foot.

"Hold on! For Heaven's sake, sir, hold on! I'm coming."

He knew the voice now.

It was the Bounder's voice.

Now he understood. It was because he had told the rebel junior his intention, that Vernon-Smith had discovered his danger. But the boy could not help him. Ladders were required—ladders of immense length to reach such a height—ropes, and rescuers with iron nerve—and there was no time, no time!

He moved his head a little, and looked along towards the garret.

The little window was open; a head and shoulders were projected from it. The window was in another, and rather higher section of the roof, and it faced the long ridge, which ended at the wall below the stone sill.

It was easy to step out of the window on to the ridge to which Mr. Quelch clung at a distance of a dozen feet. It was fairly easy to crawl along it, astride, and reach the Form master. But to pull Mr. Quelch up required a strength that was beyond that of the strongest schoolboy. It could not be done.

Whether it could be done or not, the Bounder was there to do it somehow. Mr. Quelch's dizzy eyes saw him swing out of the garret window, and drop astride of the ridge on the lower roof.

With a leg on either side of it, the Bounder worked his way along towards the spot where the Form master hung.

On either side of the Bounder was a long, steep slant of tiles, ending in a gutter, and a drop of seventy feet. But he did not look either to the right or to the left.

"Hold on, sir!" he breathed again.

Mr. Quelch tried to speak. But his strength was ebbing; his throat was dry. For long moments, no sound would come.

Vernon-Smith worked his way swiftly along.

The Remove master found his voice at last. Even in those moments in the imminent shadow of a terrible death, Henry Samuel Quelch was calm, his brain perfectly clear, his self-possession unbroken.

"Vernon-Smith! Go back!" His voice came huskily, but distinctly. "Go back at once! You cannot help me—go back!"

"Not likely!"

The Bounder came quickly on.

"Go back!" breathed the Remove master. "You shall not risk your life—lose your life! Vernon-Smith, I forgive you. I do not blame you; but go back—go back at once."

The Bounder did not trouble to answer again. In those fearful moments all anger and bitterness had passed from Mr. Quelch's breast. The rebel of the Remove had brought him into this terrible danger; but the sense of duty which had made Mr. Quelch a severe Form master, was as strong as ever with him now; and it was his duty to see that the junior did not lose his life in making a hopeless attempt to save him.

His strength was going; but his courage was not failing. There was something of the old snap in his voice as he spoke again.

"Vernon-Smith! Go back! This is the last order I shall ever give you—obey it! I order you to go back while you are safe."

"I've landed you in this, sir," said the Bounder quietly. "I'm getting you out of it, or—"

He did not finish.

Crawling along the rounded ridge, he reached the Form master. His grasp closed hard on Mr. Quelch's aching wrists.

"I've got you, sir! Now—crawl up, if you can—"

Mr. Quelch suppressed a groan.

"I cannot—my strength is gone."

"I'm going to get you up somehow," said the Bounder, between his teeth.

It was well for the Bounder of Greyfriars, then, that he had a nerve of iron; a reckless courage that no danger could daunt. He seemed to give no thought to the fearful abyss yawning on either side of him.

Lying along the ridge a leg gripping the slant on either side, he held Mr. Quelch's wrists with both hands, and pulled at him with all his strength.

But it was futile.

He could not draw the Form master up the slant a single inch. And Mr. Quelch could not help him.

Again and again the Bounder strove, with gritted teeth, and the perspiration thick on his forehead.

But it was in vain.

A deep pallor had overspread Mr. Quelch's face. His cramped, numbed fingers no longer had a grip. They slid on the rounded surface where they tried to hold.

His weight was on the Bounder now.

He tried to speak. But no words came from his lips. His eyes told what his tongue could not say; they bade the Bounder release him, and save himself.

The Bounder's grip tightened like steel bands on his wrists. But he was in imminent danger of being dragged from his perch now, by the weight of the man on the slanting tiles. He could

## Tom Merry's Challenge!

A youngster stands at the crease. The tiring bowler sends down another fast one. The flash of a bat in the sun—and "Hurrah! Boundary! Good old Tom Merry!" The hero of the Shell at Clavering is in form. He can bowl and he can bat. He is the cricketer "find" of the season! But he has a rival! A rival who is not above stooping to foul play to secure his own ends. Read this gripping school and cricket story in the GEM! On sale Wednesday.



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not remain where he was—the strain was too heavy.

A second's terror, a second's loss of self-control, and the Bounder would have been dragged down by the man's weight, and they would have slid together to death.

But the Bounder was cool, steady—steady as a rock. There was one way to support Mr. Quelch's weight—and the Bounder took that way.

to be tearing them from their sockets, he held on, and hoped that help would come. Two lives were at stake now—two lives hung on a thread.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Redwing to the Rescue!

**H**ARRY WHARTON stared up, with a face white as chalk. The school had come out in break; to find wild excitement reigning in Greyfriars. Gosling had informed the Head—in a few minutes all the school knew what was happening.

"A rope!" muttered Tom Redwing. "We want a rope!"

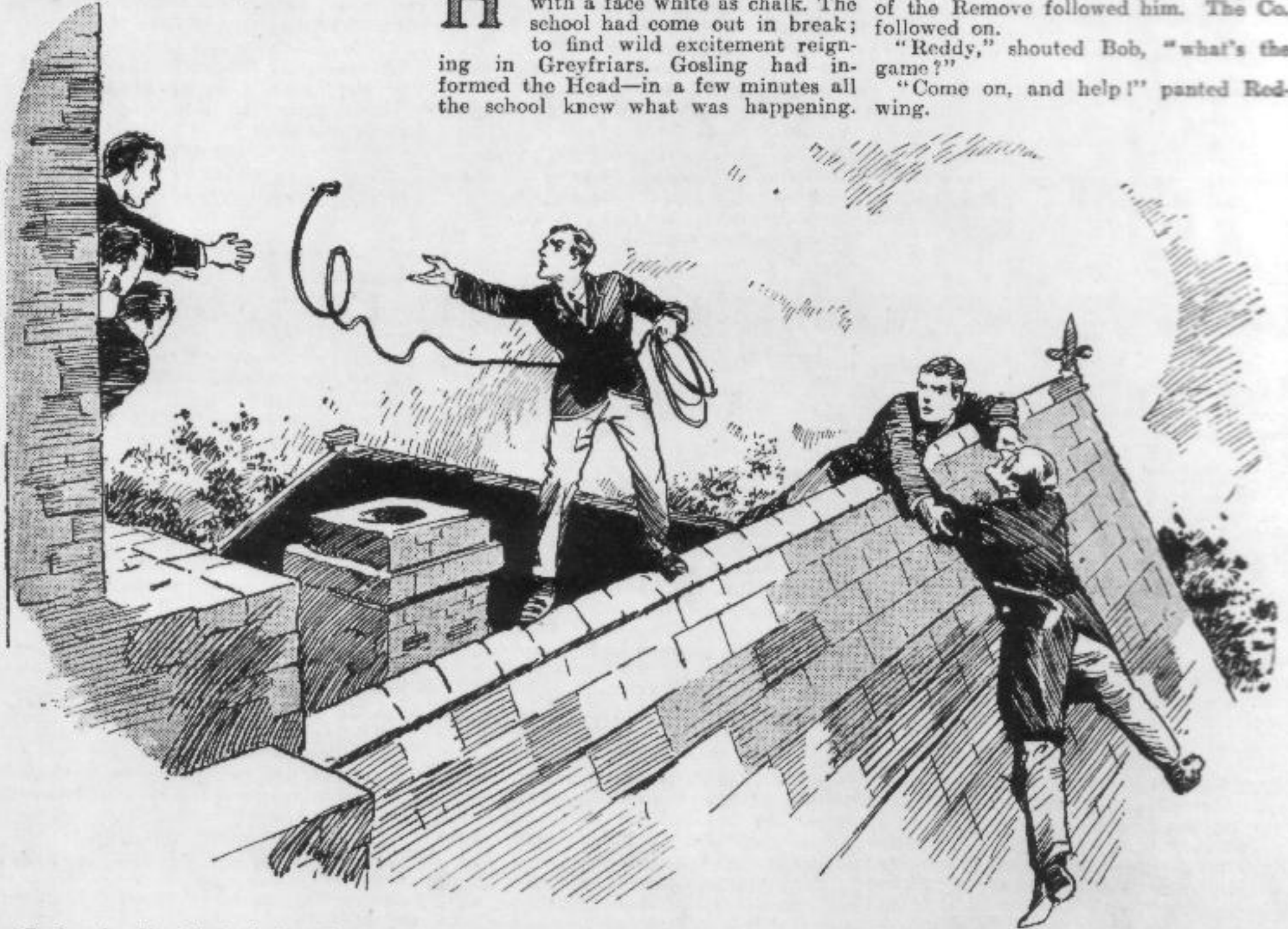
Redwing darted away to the woodshed. He knew that Gosling kept a coil of rope there.

"Reddy," called out Wharton, as he saw the sailorman's son running back towards the House, with the coil of rope over his arm. "What—"

Redwing did not heed him. He darted into the House, and the captain of the Remove followed him. The Co. followed on.

"Reddy," shouted Bob, "what's the game?"

"Come on, and help!" panted Redwing.



Cool and collected, Redwing stood on the rounded roof-ridge, space yawning round him, and threw the end of the rope to Harry Wharton. "Smithy!" he shouted. "Help's coming—hold on!" His eyes gleaming, Vernon-Smith hung on to Mr. Quelch's arms.

He slid off the ridge, on the opposite side from Mr. Quelch. His arms were over the wide, rounded roof-ridge, his legs dangled down the slant of tiles behind him. His grip on Mr. Quelch's arms was tenacious. His own weight now saved him from being dragged over the summit by the weight of the Form master. So long as he could hold on to Mr. Quelch, both were safe. But how long could he stand the strain?

From the distance a shout was heard. Many eyes were on them now. They could not look down. But they knew that from below, many were watching.

Help would come. Would it come in time?

"Keep your pecker up, sir!" The Bounder's voice was low, but clear. "I told Gosling—he's told others; they'll help us, if we can stick it."

Mr. Quelch tried to speak.

"There's a chance, sir! There's a chance! But—but if we go, sir, I—I—I'm sorry—sorry for all I've done. I never dreamed you'd take the risk. If we go, we both go—that's all I can do now—"

The Remove master could not speak. And Vernon-Smith did not speak again. With a strain on his arms that seemed

Crowds of fellows gathered at various points, to stare up at the distant roof. Dr. Locke stood with his head thrown back, gazing up in horror. Mr. Vernon-Smith stood by his side, white as chalk.

"My son!" the millionaire breathed through colourless lips. "My son! Save my son!"

Gosling had brought his ladder. But the ladder was useless; it did not reach half the distance.

"It's Smithy!" breathed Bob Cherry. "Smithy— But what—"

"It's Quelch!" said Nugent. "They say that Smithy had him locked in the punishment-room. That's where he's been all this time."

"I say, you fellows—"

"He must have got out by the chimney!" said Johnny Bull. "Fancy Quelch risking it! But—"

"It's Smithy!" said Tom Redwing, staring up. "He's holding something—he must be holding Quelch—"

"That ladder's no good—"

"They can't be got at from below," said Harry Wharton. "But there's a garret window—"

"That's the way Smithy must have gone—"

He was racing up the staircase that led to the punishment-room. The corridor door was still locked. But several garrets opened from the passage before that door was reached. One of them was the garret whose window overlooked the spot where the two figures clung to the roof-ridge. Into that garret Redwing ran, with Harry Wharton & Co. some few yards behind him.

The little window from which the Bounder had climbed was wide open. Redwing plunged through it, the coil of rope on his arm.

The dizzy height was nothing to the sailorman's son, accustomed from earliest boyhood to swinging on dizzy spars. The yawning space that might have made any head swim, had no effect upon Redwing.

He stood on the rounded roof-ridge as coolly as if he were standing on the solid earth, space yawning round him, death on either side. Harry Wharton & Co. rushed up and packed the window.

"Smithy! Help's coming—hold on!" shouted Redwing.

He uncoiled the rope rapidly. "Hold on, you men!" he panted.

He tossed the end of the rope to Harry Wharton & Co., in the window. Five pairs of hands grasped it and held on.

The chums of the Remove understood Redwing's intention now. If success was possible, it was possible to the sailor-man's son.

Taking the other end of the rope in hand, Tom crawled along the ridge, towards the two clinging figures.

The Bounder's eyes were on him, gleaming. He did not speak—he watched, with new life and hope in his heart. Mr. Quelch's lips moved, but no sound came from them.

Swiftly Redwing reached them.

"Hold on, Smithy!" he breathed.

With only a leg over the ridge to hold him, Tom Redwing reached down the slant at Mr. Quelch, and passed the end of the rope round him. The Remove master, understanding his object, contrived to raise himself a little from the tiles, and the rope passed under him, and with swift, deft fingers, Redwing knotted it.

With the rope securely knotted round him under the arms, and the Famous Five holding the other end, Mr. Quelch was safe. If he slid down the slant, he could not slip beyond the length of the rope.

"You're safe, sir!" whispered Redwing.

Sitting astride the ridge, he reached down for the Bounder, and grasped him by the collar.

It was time, for Smithy's arms were almost cracking under the strain.

"Let him go, Smithy; he's safe now!"

Mr. Quelch wound his arms round the rope that was knotted under his shoulders and held on to it. As Vernon-Smith's grasp on him relaxed, the Remove master slid on the slanting tiles. For one horrible moment he rolled helplessly. But the five juniors at the garret window were dragging on the rope with all their combined strength, and Mr. Quelch was drawn to the window.

The juniors reached out and grasped him, and dragged him in at the window. He sank down, almost fainting, on the floor within.

"Safe now, sir!" panted Wharton.

"The safefulness is terrific!" gasped Hurreo Janset Ram Singh.

"The boys—" articulated Mr. Quelch.

But the two juniors on the roof were safe now that they were relieved of Mr. Quelch. Redwing's strong arm dragged the Bounder up to the ridge, and he sat astride of it, gasping for breath. With Redwing helping him from behind, Vernon-Smith worked his way along the ridge, and reached the window of the garret.

There, many hands were ready for him.

Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry grasped him, and pulled him in. Redwing followed him in without assistance.

Mr. Quelch was on his feet now.

From below there was a roar of voices—a sound of thunderous cheering. Scores of eyes had watched the rescue and seen its success.

Mr. Quelch was tottering. Harry Wharton stepped quickly to him.

"Let me help you, sir."

Mr. Quelch nodded, and leaning heavily on the arm of the captain of the Remove, he left the garret and went down the stairs.

Herbert Vernon-Smith, leaning on the wall, was breathing hard and deep. But the hardy Bounder very quickly recovered himself.

"Reddy, old man, it was lucky you were brought up as a sailorman," he

said. "No other fellow could have got us out of that."

He laughed.

"Well, the jolly old show's over! I'd better go down and take what's coming to me."

"Smithy, old man—"

The Bounder walked out of the garret, and the other fellows followed him. At the bottom of the staircase they found Mr. Vernon-Smith. The millionaire was white as a sheet.

"Herbert!" he gasped.

"All serene, dad!" said the Bounder. "If you want to see Quelch, you'll have to wait till he's had a bath. He's rather sooty after his chimney-sweep stunts."

"You—you locked him in?"

"I suppose I've got to own up now! I did! But I never dreamed he would be ass enough to clamber out of a chimney! He's a game bird, considerin' his age."

"You young rascal!" said Mr. Vernon-Smith. "It was your fault that he risked his life—and you risked your own—" His voice shook. "If—if—if—"

He broke off.

"I'm sorry, dad," said the Bounder, in a low voice. "But it was my fault he was in danger, and I couldn't leave him to it. Thank goodness I was able to hold on to him till Reddy got us out of it! But now you know where Quelch was—locked up in the punishment-room—you know it's no use waiting to see him, father! The sooner we go the better."

Mr. Vernon-Smith nodded, without speaking. He went out to the waiting taxi, and his son followed him.

## THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

### At the Eleventh Hour!

"SMITHY!"

"Good-bye, old chap!"

"Give us your fist, Smithy!"

"Sorry you're going, old

fellow!"

"The sorrowfulness is preposterous."

Vernon-Smith's box was on the taxi; and the Bounder had taken his seat in the vehicle with his father.

The millionaire's face was grim, and that of the Bounder was clouded. But he smiled faintly as the Remove fellows gathered round in a crowd to see him off. The engine was buzzing, the driver ready to start. But a swarm of fellows wanted to say good-bye to the Bounder.

He was "bunked," and no doubt he deserved it; but the terrible risk he had run to save Mr. Quelch had washed out all offences, in most eyes.

"See you in the hols, anyhow," said Harry Wharton.

"Yes, rather!" agreed the Bounder.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Wingate!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, as the captain of Greyfriars pushed his way through the swarm of juniors. "Want to say good-bye to Smithy, Wingate?"

Wingate grinned.

"I want to speak to Vernon-Smith, if you young sweeps will give me a chance!" He reached the taxi. "Get out, kid! Mr. Vernon-Smith, Mr. Quelch desires to speak to you—and your son."

"Oh!" said Mr. Vernon-Smith.

He rose from his seat.

"Come, Herbert!"

He alighted from the taxi, and went up the steps of the House, followed by the Bounder.

After the discovery that his son had locked the Remove master in the

punishment-room, the millionaire had dropped the idea of making an appeal to Mr. Quelch. But he was willing to catch at any straw; and if Mr. Quelch wanted to see him he was glad enough to see Mr. Quelch.

The Remove master was in his study. He was lying on a settee, evidently feeling severely the strain he had gone through. A hasty wash had removed some of the traces of Mr. Quelch's adventurous ascent of the punishment-room chimney; but he was still rather sooty in places.

He sat up as the millionaire entered, with the Bounder at his heels.

"Pray come in, Mr. Vernon-Smith! Please be seated!" Mr. Quelch's voice lacked its usual incisive tone. It was likely to be some time before the Remove master recovered from the strain. "You are now aware, sir, that your son had locked me in the punishment-room?"

"I am," said Mr. Vernon-Smith. "I am sorry, and I have no doubt that my son is sorry, considering what his conduct led to. I can say no more."

"But, sir," said Mr. Quelch, "rebellious, disobedient, reckless, audacious, as this boy has been, I cannot overlook the fact that when I was in terrible danger he came to my help. It was due to your son that I was in such fearful peril; nevertheless, I should certainly have lost my life had he not come to my aid—with a courage which, in my opinion, almost redeems the many faults in his character."

"My boy has never wanted in pluck, at all events," said Mr. Vernon-Smith, eyeing the Remove master curiously.

The Bounder stood silent.

"Dr. Locke has kindly left the decision of this matter in my hands," went on Mr. Quelch. "While finding no excuse for Vernon-Smith's conduct, I cannot, as I have said, forget that he risked his life to save mine. In the circumstances, sir, I am prepared to give him another chance, if that is your wish; and, at my request, the Head will rescind the sentence of expulsion."

Mr. Vernon-Smith smiled expansively.

The Bounder drew a deep, deep breath. In the Remove the fellows had always said that the Bounder's luck was phenomenal. And at long last his luck had held good.

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! Here's Smithy!"

The Remove were going in for third school. Herbert Vernon-Smith came along the passage with Tom Redwing and joined them at the door. Smithy was smiling, Redwing looking merry and bright.

"Not bunked, Smithy?" yelled Skinner.

"Sorry to disappoint you, old bean!" said the Bounder politely. "No!"

"Good!" said Harry Wharton.

"The goodfulness is terrific!"

"Bravo!"

"Hip, hip, hurrah!"

It was quite an ovation. The Bounder lounged into the Form-room with a cheery grin on his face. "Bunking" the Bounder was a thing of the past.

THE END.

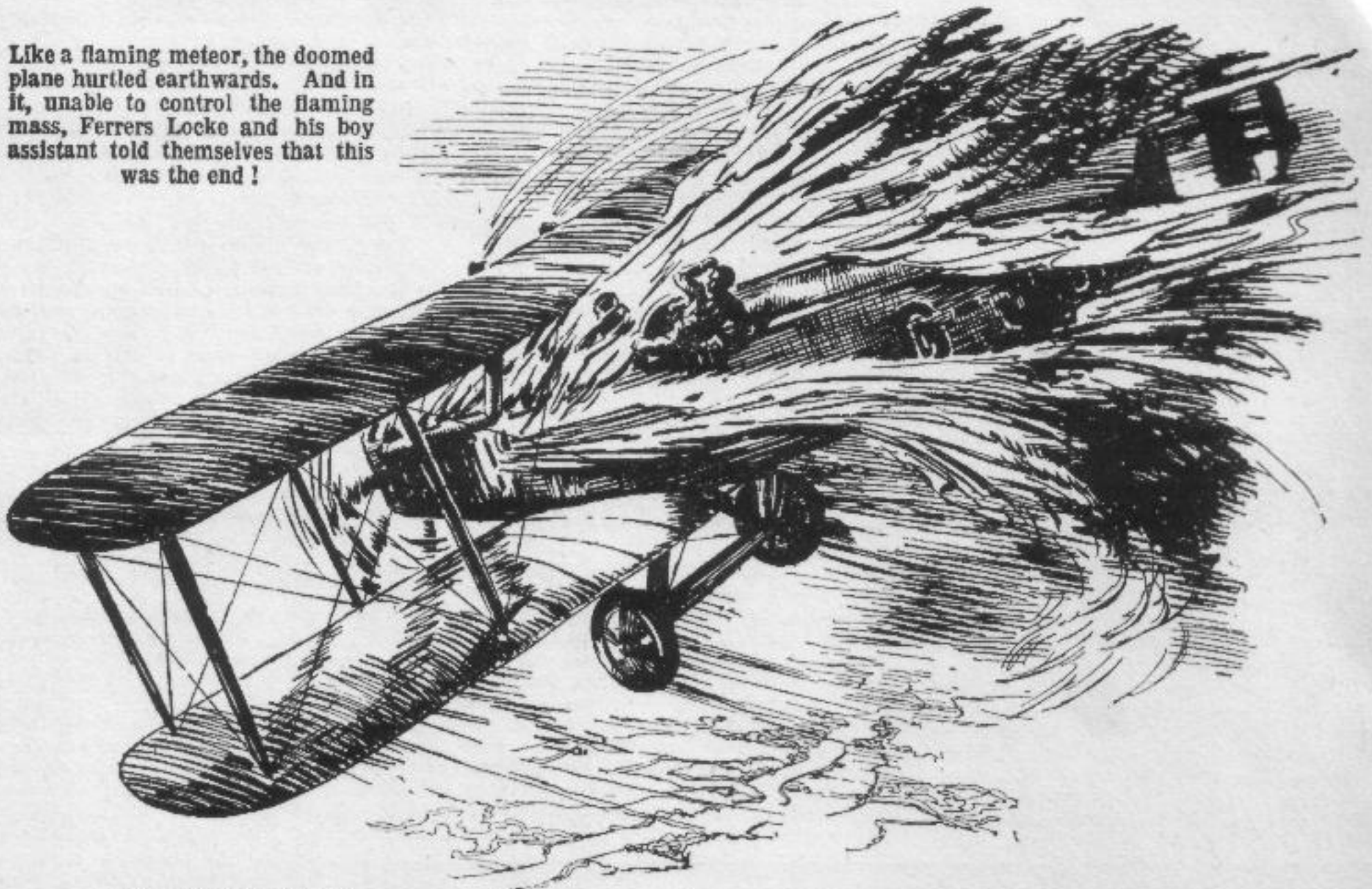
(So Vernon-Smith saved his bacon after all! Whatever you do, chums, don't miss next week's exciting yarn of Harry Wharton & Co., entitled: "THE NIGHT RAIDERS!" It's absolutely tip-top!)



START THIS THRILLING 'TEC SERIAL TO-DAY!

# BANDITS of the LINE!

Like a flaming meteor, the doomed plane hurtled earthwards. And in it, unable to control the flaming mass, Ferrers Locke and his boy assistant told themselves that this was the end!



## THE FIRST CHAPTERS.

Following a series of train hold-ups by a band of armed criminals, the railway chiefs engage Ferrers Locke to elucidate the mystery. In company with Jack Drake, his boy assistant, the famous detective is exploring the scene of the latest ambush when he sees a negro hurled to his doom from the top of an old tower. Locke and Drake rush to the scene, but the black man's assailant eludes them by leaping from the tower and escaping in a car. Convinced that the man is in league with the train bandits, Locke and Drake trail him by air to the House of the Clenched Hand, which proves to be the headquarters of the gang. Here they overhear the bandits discussing the holding-up of the London-Harwich express. "Come on, Drake!" says the detective. "We're only got an hour to warn the express, but we've got the plane!"

(Now read on.)

## By Hook or by Crook!

**F**ERRERS LOCKE and Drake arrived at the foot of the stairs—and at that moment there was a sudden shout from behind them. The Baker Street detective and his boy assistant swung round to see that a man had appeared from the door outside which they had been listening—a thin, gaunt figure with glittering eyes and a high hooked nose. Dr. Lash!

He was staring up the vaulted passage as though he believed them to be ghosts. Then, recovering from his stupefaction, he cried out shrilly. Half a dozen startled men came racing into view.

"Locke!" shrieked Dr. Lash. "Locke—alive, and here! Stop them—"

Though Locke was armed, there was no doubt that the railway bandits were also armed, and the odds were too great for the detective and his boy assistant to stop and argue! They broke into a run, racing up the stairs. And behind them came the echoing footsteps of their pursuers.

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They came to the top and raced across the study where the bound man was sitting and out into the hall, where the figure of the dead gorilla was sprawled near the inert form of Tallon. Jack Drake swung open the big front door and they raced out into the dark garden and away over the misty lawn.

A shout from the lighted doorway behind told them that their pursuers were not far behind. A moment later a shot came whining past their heads.

But Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake had had a good start! They came to the wall and dropped over into the road. It was only a question of minutes before they arrived at the field where their plane was waiting. They scrambled in.

There was no sign of their enemies as they taxied over the grass and rose, with roaring engines, into the night sky.

"There she goes!"

From the soaring aeroplane, Jack Drake stared down with excited eyes. Across the black countryside beneath them, the lights of an express train were racing through the dark.

It was the London-Harwich express with the Dutch diamond merchants on board, if Lash's information was correct—the train which the railway bandits had prepared to ambush that very night, in less than a quarter of an hour's time now—Ferrers Locke was convinced!

The wizard detective possessed an encyclopedia-like knowledge of many things, amongst them the railway systems of England. Though he had not known the precise position of the mysterious House of the Clenched Hand, he had soon taken his bearings by locating the position of a city which he had been able to recognise from the

air as Norwich. He had already known the time at which the train in question would be passing through that part of the country, and by picking up the main Harwich line, it had not been long before he had found the very train itself, speeding beneath them on its fateful journey.

That it was racing towards the ambush prepared for it by the bandits, Locke and Drake knew. There was no time to land and find railway officials to send a warning to the signal-boxes which the train must pass. They could only hope to save the train from the merciless hands of the bandits by getting ahead of it and landing, and stopping the train themselves.

With threshing propellers the machine roared on through the night, diving towards the rushing train below.

By hook or by crook Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake meant to stop that train at any cost—in the nick of time!

## In Ruthless Hands!

**D**OWN towards the lighted express, as it raced through the night far beneath them, Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake came swooping in their speeding plane.

From what they had learnt at the mysterious House of the Clenched Hand, they knew that at any time now the lighted train beneath would be running blindly into the ambush prepared for it by the dreaded railway bandits. If they were to save it from the merciless hands of the bandits, they had to stop it without a moment of unnecessary delay.

To signal to the engine-driver from the aeroplane, so that he would understand their message, was an utter impossibility. They must get ahead of the train, land, and then stop it by some signal on the line.

Ferrers Locke, at the controls of the onrushing plane, opened the throttle wide, and they zoomed over the racing express and away along the shadowy line, where the four rails gleamed fitfully in the broken moonlight. They would have to get well ahead to have time enough to make their landing and get on to the line before the express reached them; and landing did not look an easy job. The country beneath was flat, but well wooded. And if they crashed in landing, the train was doomed to fall into the waiting hands of the bandits!

At last the Baker Street detective found what he sought. A vast level stretch of pasture-land came into view below. They were far ahead of the express now.

Ferrers Locke, who had already brought the big machine down to within a few hundred feet only above the tree-tops, turned towards the open fields, dipping its nose earthwards. With silent engines, they swooped down in ghostly silence.

Despite the difficulties of landing in the shadowy gloom, the detective brought the machine down without a hitch. He and Drake swung out of their seats, and dropped on to the grass.

"Not a moment to waste now, young 'un!" snapped Ferrers Locke.

His boy assistant nodded, and together they turned and raced over the fields towards the railway embankment, some distance away across the flat, shadowy countryside.

"How are we going to stop the train, gov'nor?" panted Drake, as they scrambled through a hedge on towards the embankment, only a few hundred yards away now.

"That's what I've been wondering!" jerked out Ferrers Locke. "Got to manage it somehow. Jove, I've got it!"

As he ran, the detective tugged from a pocket a red-backed notebook. He ripped off the backs, and tore out the stiffening cardboard, leaving the red-glazed cloth.

"Seems as if there's not such a hurry, after all!" he muttered, as they came to the fence at the foot of the railway embankment. "No sign of that train yet."

There was nothing to be seen or heard of the express. In their search for a landing-place Ferrers Locke and Drake had been forced to draw even farther ahead of the train than they had wanted to get. It was still a long distance behind them, in consequence.

The detective drew from his pocket his powerful pocket-torch, and flashed it on. He placed the red cloth from the back of his notebook over the bulb; a crimson light shone brightly through. Locke gave a mutter of satisfaction.

"Fine, gov'nor!" grinned Jack. "You're the chap for rigging up things on the spur of the moment! That's a swell red light! If you ask me—"

The youngster got no further. A sudden sound of stealthy feet in the bushes on one side of the line caused Jack to break off and swing round. A hoarse shout broke from his lips.

"Look out—"

Out of the bushes half a dozen figures had appeared, scrambling up the side of the embankment towards them. The moon had vanished for the moment

among racing clouds; but even in that dim light Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake could see that the faces of the newcomers upon the scene were hidden beneath white masks.

In a few moments the shadowy figures were on them!

Ferrers Locke had whipped out his automatic, and it spoke—once. One of their attackers gave a cry as the bullet took him in the arm. But the next instant three of the others had fallen upon the Baker Street detective.

The weapon was dragged from Ferrers Locke's hand.

Jack Drake, hitting out at the two men who had sprung at him across the gleaming rails, saw out of the corner of his eye that his gov'nor was struggling gamely against his foes. But three to one made overwhelming odds!

Locke floored one of his enemies with a smashing blow, but was eventually dragged down by the others. At the same moment Jack Drake was sent spinning by a clenched hand.

But through the swimming haze that filled his mind, Jack could figure out the situation well enough.

By an amazingly unlucky chance he and Ferrers Locke had got on to the line at the very spot where the railway bandits were waiting in ambush for the train that the detective and he had come to stop, to save it from that very same ambush! Whether the scoundrels had seen their plane Jack could not know! It seemed probable that they had not, for it had landed without sound or lights some distance away. But they had seen them on the line—that experi-

Jack had been captured. They were hurried along the grassy verge of the canal towards it and over a rickety bridge to the other side.

A dilapidated cottage, long left empty and overgrown with ivy, stood there, and through the low doorway Locke and Drake were roughly hustled.

One of their captors had hurried ahead. A number of the white-masked scoundrels who were gathered in the cottage swung towards them as they were brought in.

"Tie 'em to those banisters!"

One of the bandits, who seemed to be leader, gave the harsh order, pointing to the banisters at the foot of a rickety stairway that led to the upper part of the little building. The detective and his boy assistant were lashed to them, and the burly figure of the bandits' leader stood before them with a triumphant glimmer in his savage eyes.

"Heaven alone knows how you got here, Locke," he growled. "But you're a prize for the chief. By thunder, yes!"

"Splendid!" drawled Locke. "So long as Dr. Lash is pleased—"

"Lash?" the man started. "How did you know that name?"

He peered at Locke in a startled way. The big room, which seemed to comprise most of the ground floor of the disused building, was dimly lit with a number of guttering candles, but there was light enough for the detective and Drake to see the sudden consternation in the big scoundrel's eyes through the eyeholes of the mask that concealed the upper part of his face.

"You seem to know too much!" he snarled at last. "Well, you won't get a chance of making use of your knowledge—"

"Schlee! Train's coming!"

The big figure swung round as the quick exclamation came from somewhere outside the cottage. So this was Schlee! Jack remembered that they had heard that name used by Lash in connection with the night's hold-up.

The man darted to the little window that looked out across the canal towards the railway embankment beyond the bushes, and for the first time Drake saw that a strange apparatus was standing on a rough shelf that had been fastened to the wall just below the inner side of the window.

The mysterious apparatus by which the train bandits stopped the trains they planned to rob.

From a long distance down the line the sound of the approaching express could now be heard, running swiftly into the ambush prepared for it. Schlee was busy with the apparatus, setting dials and gauges.

Tied to the banister rails, Ferrers Locke and Drake glanced at one another—Jack despairingly; but in Locke's eyes there was a sudden gleam of purpose.

The thunder of the approaching train on the far side of the canal was loud now. The little group of men round the apparatus were peering through the window tensely. Schlee held in his hands an instrument rather like a sawn-off rifle, which was connected by numerous wires to the apparatus on the wall. He was directing this instrument out of the window, squinting along it as if taking aim through the sights of a

### Great News!

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mental flash of their signal light had revealed them!

And now they had fallen into the enemies' hands.

As he struggled up, Drake felt himself seized by powerful hands. He had been too stupefied by that knock-down blow to attempt effective resistance. He felt his arms lashed behind him with a knotted cloth.

"Holy smokes!" he heard one of the white-masked bandits ejaculate. "See who it is? It's Ferrers Locke!"

Locke, too, despite his struggles, had been unable to prevent himself from being bound and rendered helpless.

"Yes," nodded the detective coolly, "my name is Ferrers Locke. A name I fully intend that you shall one day hear in a court of law—in evidence against you."

"You think so, eh?" snarled one of the white-masked figures, deliberately striking Locke across the face.

"You hound!" broke out Jack Drake hoarsely.

"Quick! Bring 'em along!" muttered another of the bandits impatiently. "That train will be here in another minute!"

Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake were dragged down the embankment and through the belt of bushes. Beyond, a disused canal, choked with weeds and overhung with trees, ran parallel with the railway for some distance, with an ancient lock a few hundred yards away from the point where the detective and

gun. The hum of the electric motor droned busily.

The sound of splintering woodwork suddenly broke in on the other sounds, causing Schlee to glance round, with a startled ejaculation. He gave a dismayed shout.

With a sudden exertion of all his tremendous strength, Ferrers Locke had broken the banisters to which he was tied. With his arms still fastened behind him, dragging a splintered banister amid the knotted ropes, the detective was leaping across the room towards the humming apparatus.

"Look out!" yelled one of the white-masked figures. "My heavens—"

Crash!

Too late had the scoundrels realised the danger. Locke was already on them, and with a smashing kick, the detective shattered the heart of the mysterious apparatus before their eyes. The drone of the electric motor snapped off abruptly, and outside, through the window, the lights of the express came racing, glimmering through the bushes on the surface of the dark canal, thundering by without check.

In the nick of time, before the white-masked men had had time to employ the strange powers of their sinister apparatus in order to brake the passing train for their waiting satellites to rob and plunder, Ferrers Locke had taken a hand in the game.

Jack Drake, freed by Locke's smashing of the banisters from where he had been tied, though his arms were still bound behind him, as were Locke's, gave a yell of delight. In another moment the detective was leaping back towards him.

"Run, Jack!"

So utterly flabbergasted were Schlee and his fellow scoundrels by the unexpectedness of it all that they made no attempt at all to prevent their escape through the open doorway. They were still too stupefied to act. Locke and Jack darted out into the gloom. A startled figure loomed up before them, but Ferrers Locke sent the man reeling back with a shoulder-to-shoulder charge that would have done credit to an international full-back. The man went flying. As he scrambled up, he was just in time to see the fugitives vanishing into the edge of a wood that grew in straggling fashion behind the cottage.

Fifteen minutes later, their arms free—it had been easy enough for each to release the other from his bonds, in the wood, after they had temporarily thrown their furious pursuers off the track—Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake were stealing back across the railway embankment, heading for their waiting plane.

"I fancy we've diddled 'em all right!" muttered Jack Drake gleefully, as they slipped down the farther side of the embankment. "They're still hunting for us in the wood, and—"

A shout from farther along the line showed them at that moment that Jack was wrong!

"Come on!" panted Locke.

They scrambled hastily over the fence at the foot of the embankment, and tore away across the fields to the place where their machine was waiting. A few hundred yards behind them came a dozen racing, shadowy figures. A ragged fusillade of shots zipped around them.

"We'll beat 'em to that plane, though!" snapped Ferrers Locke fiercely, as they pounded on across the

flat fields. "We've got to beat 'em to it!"

How they did it, Drake never knew! But they did!

Their pursuers were only a few hundred yards away, however, when Locke, having started up the engines, hastily took charge of the controls. The big aeroplane moved forward over the grass, swinging into the wind.

Jack saw the shadowy figures of their foes scatter in sudden panic as the plane roared full towards them. The youngster gave a breathless chuckle of triumph.

Bumping and lurching, the plane swept through the ranks of the railway bandits, and steadied suddenly as the wheels left the ground. Jack waved a derisive hand.

"Good-byeeee-e-ee!" he sang out, his voice drowned by the roar of the propellers.

Climbing steeply, the machine roared skywards.

From the group of baffled, raging men below there came a last desperate fusillade of shots.

"Hallo! They're potting at us!" grinned Jack. "A last cheery ta-ta, I suppose—"

The youngster's words broke off, freezing in his throat.

A sheet of crimson flame had leapt up from the big roaring engine, driving back into their faces. Drake heard his guv'nor's hoarse shout, and whether or not it was only his imagination, he seemed to hear, too, from the ground beneath, a yell of triumph from the watching scoundrels from whose merciless hands they had so nearly escaped!

Another burst of raging flame swept back at them like a crimson tongue. The plane plunged downwards.

A lucky shot had struck the petrol pipe. Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake were crashing in flames!

### Vanished!

**H**URLING through the night with the nose of their plane flaming with crimson fire, dropping earthwards as it went, Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake both knew that it was ten to one that this was the end for them.

In their race to the aeroplane, with their pursuers hot on their heels, they had not had time to put on their flying suits and parachutes. Even had they had their parachutes available, however, they were still so low over the fields that it was doubtful whether they would have been much use to them.

Even if they escaped death when the blazing machine hit the earth, they knew that their enemies were waiting below—the sinister white-masked railway bandits, men utterly unscrupulous and merciless: men at whose hands they could hope for nothing better than death from a gunman's bullet.

A tongue of leaping fire swept back into the faces of Locke and the youngster as the blazing aeroplane swooped downwards in its final sickening plunge.

An echoing crash seemed to numb Jack Drake's brain. Darkness swept over his mind, and, for the time being, he knew nothing more.

When Jack Drake recovered consciousness, it was to find himself in bed in a small room which he could recognise as being, for certain, the private

ward of a hospital. A uniformed nurse was moving softly about by a table that was laden with bottles and other medical necessities; and sitting on a chair by the head of the white enamelled bedstead was Ferrers Locke.

"Guv'nor!" breathed Jack.

Though his senses were still swimming, and there was a shooting pain behind his eyes, the youngster managed to summon a weak smile as his eyes fastened upon Ferrers Locke.

"So—so we weren't both killed in the plane crash, guv'nor!" he muttered.

The nurse had turned quickly at hearing his voice. She held a glass to Jack's lips, and told him, with a smile, to drink. The youngster felt better when he had done so.

"You've been a long time coming round, old man!" said Ferrers Locke, stepping forward and patting Drake's hand. "Thank Heaven you have, at last! You're not much hurt, the doctor says, but you had a nasty crack on the napper in the crash."

He laughed cheerfully.

"No, we weren't killed, Jack! And what's more, we weren't even captured again by those scoundrels! We hit the earth on the other side of the canal, by the woods, and luckily I was able to drag you out of the wreckage and get clear before the hounds could arrive on the scene. They must have thought we were being burnt to death in the wreckage, because they waited there, watching it, while I got clear with you! After a time I found a road, and had the luck to meet a lorry. The driver gave us a lift—with you still in the land of dreams, young 'un!"

"Where are we now?"

"This is the Cottage Hospital at Myntford, a place not far from Harwich. I've seen the police here, and told them the whole story. With their maps, I was able to reconstruct our movements pretty well, and it seemed clear that the house to which we followed Lash—the House of the Clenched Hand—was not far from a little town called Lyndlestone. We phoned through to the police there, and they told us there was a house answering to that description some miles north of them. They sent a strong force of police there at once—"

"And caught Lash & Co?" gasped Jack eagerly.

The Baker Street detective shook his head.

"No, worse luck! When the police got there the birds had flown. They realised, I suppose, that since we knew of the place now, it would not be long before the Law arrived to look for 'em—and they didn't wait! The whole place was deserted. Where they've gone, goodness knows."

"Oh, blow!" grunted Jack.

Locke leant forward with gleaming eyes. The nurse had left the room.

"But I've learnt something interesting, young 'un. That House of the Clenched Hand is the property of a man named Moon!"

"Moon?" echoed the youngster. "By gun, that's the chap we've heard so many blessed mysterious references to! Who is he?"

"He's a man who worked for years on railways in South America. That house of his is named Mendoza House—Mendoza, of course, is a city in South America. He's elderly now, and has retired for a good many years. He is supposed to be abroad at present for his health. Hasn't been seen for

months. A man calling himself Shergold has been living there, however, supposedly renting the place from Moon. No one knows anything about this mysterious Johnny, Shergold, except that he's often away from home, and that men in cars have often visited the house at night.

"From the police description, there can be no doubt that this man Shergold is really Dr. Lash."

"Then where does Moon come in?" muttered Jack in bewilderment. "Is he the real boss or Lash?"

"We don't know that yet. But since Moon is a railway engineer, it seems likely that he is the fellow who invented the apparatus by which the railway bandits stop their trains for looting. Perhaps we shall find some clue at Mendoza House."

All Locke found, however, at the House of the Clenched Hand, when in due course he conducted investigations there, was the body of the dead gorilla, still lying in the hall, and everywhere signs of the hasty departure of the mysterious building's recent occupants.

"They've left not the slightest clue behind them as to where they've gone," Locke announced grimly to Jack, in the study at Baker Street, when he had returned from Mendoza House.

Jack himself had palled round wonderfully, but he was still far from fit, and he had not accompanied Locke.

"It's rotten!" grunted the youngster gloomily. "We were right on their heels—and now they've all vanished again, lock, stock, and barrel."

"Where they have gone to is a mystery," nodded the detective quietly. "But I don't think it will be long before we pick up the trail again, Jack."

"How, gov'nor?" cried Jack eagerly. "Where?"

"Don't you remember we heard them planning to loot the bullion train from Plymouth, with the gold on board from the Sylvania?" chuckled Locke. "We heard them discussing it in that underground room at Mendoza House, but they'll carry out their plan all right, without dreaming we know something of their scheme."

"Yes?" breathed Drake eagerly, as Locke paused.

"When they get busy with that mysterious apparatus of theirs to stop that bullion train," smiled Locke grimly, "there will be a little surprise waiting for 'em. They'll find us on board, at the head of a crowd of C.I.D. men from Scotland Yard!"

### The Attack on the Bullion Train!

"WE'LL be running into their ambush pretty soon now, I should think, Mr. Locke," said Detective-Inspector Simpson, of Scotland Yard. "If there

is going to be an ambush at all," he added, with a faint note of irony.

It was eleven days later. Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake were seated with the inspector and another C.I.D. man in one of the vans of the bullion train that was carrying to London the gold from the Sylvania, which had docked at Plymouth earlier that day. They were seated on the piles of small, rope-handled boxes with which the van was half-filled. Each of those boxes contained bars of solid gold.

It was getting on for midnight. The train was racing through the dark desolation of Exmoor, along one of the loneliest stretches of line in England.

"If there is going to be an ambush at all," repeated the inspector dryly, with a glance at Ferrers Locke.

The Baker Street detective, drawing quietly at his pipe, where he sat in one corner of the van, with a rifle leaning against the boxes beside him, smiled.

Detective-Inspector Simpson was a new colleague, so far as Ferrers Locke was concerned. The two had met, but never worked together before. And though Simpson had a wholesome respect for Locke's amazing capabilities, he was an obstinate type of man—a big, burly figure, with a prominent jaw.

Having got the idea into his head that the dreaded railway bandits were unlikely to attack the train, for fear that Locke had discovered their plan when at Mendoza House, in Norfolk, the Scotland Yard man had all but convinced himself that they were all on board the bullion train on a fool's errand.

Jack Drake surveyed the C.I.D. man impatiently. The youngster, though he had had to spend a few days in the hospital, was quite fit again now.

"Of course, there'll be an ambush!" grunted Jack. "They can't know we overheard their talk that night, so why should they chuck up their plans for fear of walking into a trap?"

"But they know you and Mr. Locke were in that house when they were discussing their plans!" retorted Inspector Simpson obstinately. "So—"

"There's two million pounds' worth of gold on this train, inspector!" broke in Locke quietly. "I don't think they will be likely to give that up without a murmur."

"That's so, sir," nodded the second Scotland Yard man—a young, fair-haired officer who had already shown that he put more faith in Ferrers Locke's judgment than that of his superior from the Yard. He chuckled. "Anyway, if they do attack, they'll have the surprise of their lives. We've got forty armed men on this train, besides ourselves—"

"I only hope it's enough," cut in Ferrers Locke. "I asked for sixty."

The train, with its long line of dark vans, each containing its quota of men armed with rifles and automatics, rumbled on over the wild moorland. The van in which Ferrers Locke, Drake, Inspector Simpson and the other Yard man were sitting contained an air of tenseness and expectancy. Despite Simpson's scepticism, the other three were convinced that at any moment now the attack on the train would come!

Jack felt his pulse throbbing with unnatural quickness.

The speed of the train was slowing, as it dragged its precious freight up a long incline towards the black mouth of a tunnel that yawned in the hillside.

Then suddenly, with a grinding of wheels, the train came jolting to a standstill. On the instant Locke was on his feet, listening tensely.

"Only a signal against us, I expect," said Inspector Simpson, with a shrug. "If you ask me—"

From somewhere farther along the train came the sound of a sudden shot. It was followed by another, and then another.

"If you ask me," snapped Ferrers Locke fiercely, swinging round on the man from Scotland Yard, "you'd better try not to talk like a fool! It's the ambush, man—the bandits!"

Inspector Simpson was listening open-mouthed to the noise of firing that rang out fitfully from the front of the train. Locke dragged open the door of the van. The light from the electric lamps within streamed out on to the tall, wind-blown grass at the side of the line—lit up a figure that was scrambling over the low fence beside the rails, a man with a white mask!

Other figures could be seen in the broken moonlight, men who were pouring towards the stationary train from the surrounding darkness of the moor. In a moment, Ferrers Locke, peering out with gleaming eyes, saw that the railway bandits were in tremendous force.

His fears that the forty men Scotland Yard had allowed him would not be enough to make sure of a victory over the bandits had been only too well founded!

Snatching up the rifle he had ready, Ferrers Locke turned again to the door of the van. As he did so, the man on the fence fired. A bullet sang into the van, shattering one of the electric bulbs within.

Then Locke's rifle spoke, and the man toppled backwards off the fence, with a snarling cry.

(*Ferrers Locke and the men from Scotland Yard are in for a very warm time by the look of things! Will the railway bandits succeed in their object? Don't miss the thrilling fight to save the bullion in next week's exciting chapters!*)

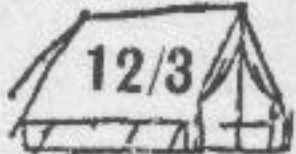
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