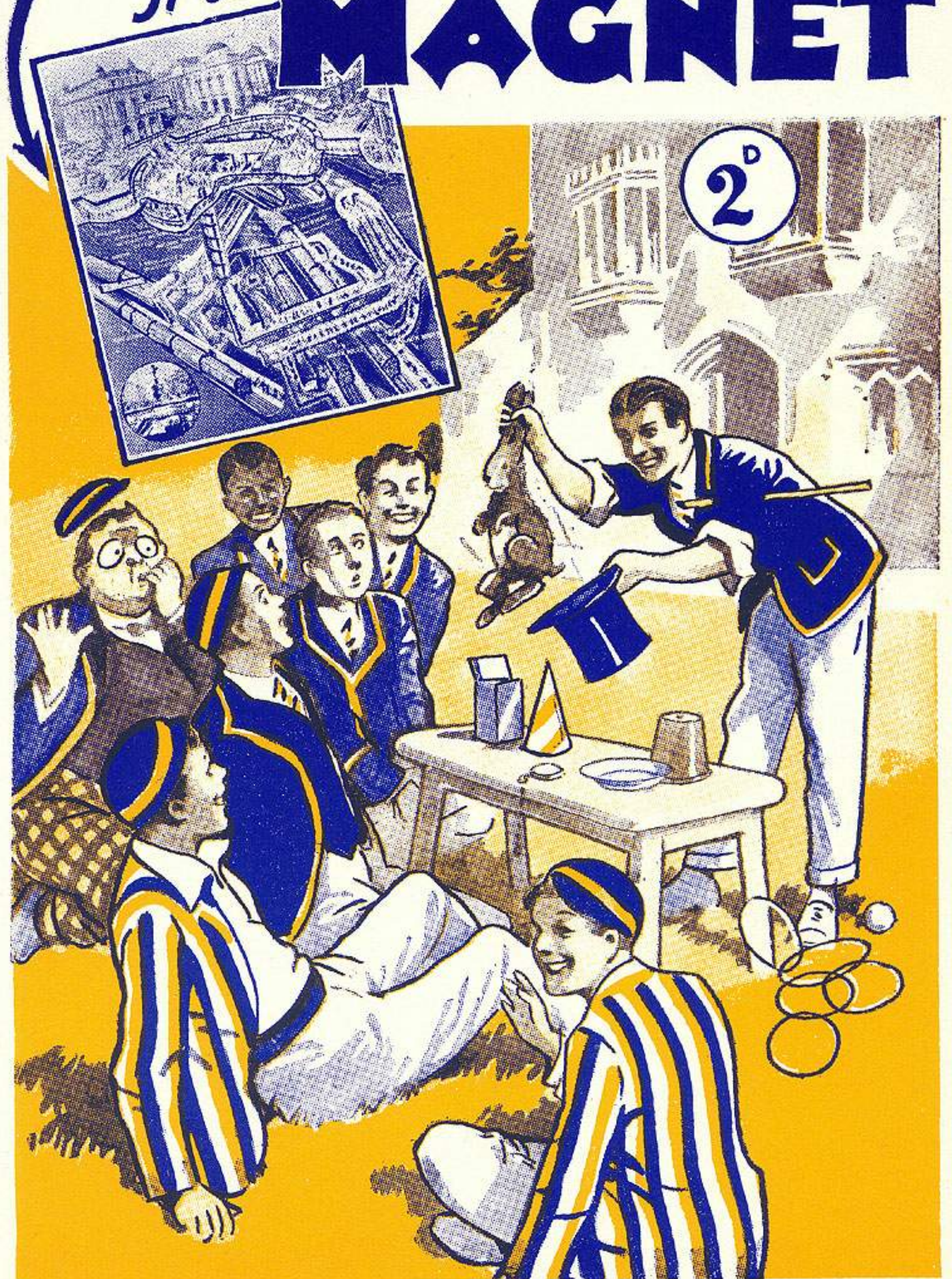


GRAND SCHOOL STORY and FREE PHOTO PLATE Inside.



The MAGNET



THE BOXING 'BEAK'!



THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Spoof!

BILLY BUNTER groaned. Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent jumped.

It was enough to make any fellow jump.

Wharton and Nugent were in Study No. 1 in the Remove at Greyfriars after class. They were sitting on the study table, disposing of a bag of cherries that lay between them. They discussed cricket while they discussed the cherries. The last thing they would have expected to hear, at that peaceful moment on a peaceful summer's afternoon, was a deep and hair-raising groan. But that was the sound that fell on their startled ears, and it made them jump.

"What the dickens—" ejaculated Wharton.

"That fat owl Bunter—" exclaimed his chum.

They spun round, staring at the doorway. Framed in the doorway was the fat figure of William George Bunter of the Remove. He blinked at them through his big spectacles and emitted a second groan. They gazed at him.

"I say, you fellows—" began Bunter.

"You howling ass!" roared Wharton. "What are you kicking up that ghastly row for?"

"I'm in fearful pain!" explained Bunter. "Look!"

He held up his right hand. It was bandaged in a handkerchief that was far from clean. Bunter's "hankies" and most of Bunter's other possessions

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generally needed a wash—like their owner.

"I've got a fearful cut!" said the fat Owl of the Remove. He emitted a third groan, to leave no doubt on the subject of his intense sufferings. "The thumb nearly cut off—"

"Yes, I can see you walking round with your thumb nearly cut off!" said Nugent.

"The pain's fearful!" said Bunter. "You see, I was cutting some paper, when the scissors closed suddenly on my hand, and—"

"And why were you using scissors with your left hand?"

"Eh? I wasn't—"

"Then how could they close on your right thumb?" yelled Wharton.

Bunter started.

Apparently he hadn't thought of that. "Oh! I—I mean it—it wasn't the scissors!" he exclaimed hastily. "It—it was my pocket-knife—"

"Your pip-pip-pocket-knife!" stammered Nugent.

"Yes, old chap. I was peeling an apple with my pocket-knife, when it suddenly closed on my hand, and nearly cut off my forefinger—I mean my thumb—"

"Great Scott!"

The chums of Study No. 1 gazed at the unhappy Bunter. As a fibber Billy Bunter left Ananias completely in the shade; and Baron Munchausen and George Washington were merely "also rans." But there was one drawback to Bunter's fibbing—he seldom or never made it probable. He seemed to be satisfied so long as he fibbed—forgetting

that if a job was worth doing, it was worth doing well.

Why he was fibbing now was a mystery to Study No. 1. But he was—there was no doubt that he was!

"I've bound it up," went on Bunter. "I'm in awful pain—but you fellows know how I can bear pain. I'm not soft, like some fellows. But, I say, can you lend me some red ink?"

"Red ink?" ejaculated Wharton and Nugent together, quite startled by that sudden change of subject.

"Yes; I want some before I go down to see Lascelles—"

"Has the maths master set you problems to do in red ink?" yelled Nugent.

"Exactly, old chap! Insisted on it," said Bunter, blinking at him. "He said to me, 'Mind you do these problems in red ink, Bunter!' His very words!"

"Oh crikey!"

"There isn't any in my study," went on Bunter. "Toddy used the last to mop over Coker of the Fifth. Have you fellows got some?"

"And you're going to do geometry with your fin tied up like that?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Eh? Oh! Yes! I mean I shall do it with my left," said Bunter. "I'm awfully good with my left hand, you know. I say, you might let a fellow have some red ink. Lascelles won't believe I've cut my hand if there aren't any bloodstains—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the two juniors in Study No. 1.

They understood now.

Bunter had an impot to do for Mr. Lascelles, who was mathematics master

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This issue contains..

ANOTHER SUPERB PHOTOGRAVURE PLATE

and games master at Greyfriars School. "Larry," as the juniors called him, was generally loathed as maths master, and generally beloved as games master. Bunter loathed him in both capacities—having no desire to exert himself either at mathematics or at cricket.

Evidently the astute Owl had thought of a dodge for getting out of that extra geometry.

He had bandaged his fat paw—and Study No. 1 was to supply the bloodstains, in the form of red ink!

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" said Bunter warmly. "Jolly heartless to cackle at a chap, I think, when he's suffering fearful agony—with a finger nearly nipped off—"

"A finger as well as a thumb?" yelled Nugent.

"I—I mean a thumb! If you knew what I felt like when the carving-knife sliced my finger—I mean thumb—"

"The—carving-knife?" gurgled Wharton.

"You know I'm short-sighted," said the fat Owl sorrowfully. "Well, I picked up the carving-knife by the blade. See? That's how it happened."

"Which are you going to give Lascelles—the scissors, the pocket-knife, or the carving-knife?" asked Harry. "It doesn't matter which, so far as I can see—but you'd better stick to one of them!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Groan!

Billy Bunter emitted a fourth groan as a sign of deep suffering. But the chums of the Remove did not sympathise. They had no doubt whatever that if Bunter's fat paw was unbandaged, the fact would be revealed that there was nothing the matter with it—except that probably it needed soap and water! So, instead of sympathising, they roared with laughter.

"Beasts!" hooted Bunter. "Rotten, unsympathetic beasts—that's what you are! Look here, will you lend me some red ink? Just a few drops will do. I've got to go down to Lascelles' study at six—and it's only a few minutes now. Look here—"

"And you're going to do your impot in red ink in a few minutes?" chuckled Wharton.

"Eh? Oh! Yes! I'm frightfully quick at geometry, you know," said Bunter. "I'm rather a whale at it. Do give me some red ink! Ever so little will do; I only want a few spots. I—I mean—"

"You mean you want us to help you spoof Larry, you fat villain!" said Harry Wharton. "Wash it out, old fat man! Larry's too jolly wide to be spoofed with a dud like that!"

"Look here, you mind your own business! See?" hooted Bunter. "I don't want any jaw; I want some red ink! Just a few spots—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You might help a fellow—"

Harry Wharton slipped from the table.

"I'll help you, old fat bean," he said. "It's no good trying to spoof a man like Larry with dud bloodstains. Better have some real ones; and I'll help. Wait till I get my compasses—"

"What—what for?" gasped Bunter.

"Oh, here they are! Now, hold your paw steady, and I'll stick the compasses into it—"

"What?" yelled Bunter.

"I'll run them right in—"

"Beast—"

"And you'll have all the bloodstains you want—and a few over! What are you backing away for, you ass, when

I'm trying to help you? Where are you going, Bunter?"

Billy Bunter did not stay to state where he was going, or why. He just went. There was no doubt that genuine bloodstains would have been more convincing than red ink—and no doubt that a jab from the sharp end of the compasses would have produced the genuine article. But Billy Bunter did not seem to want it somehow. He turned round in the doorway like a fat humming-top and bolted. Wharton, reaching after him, gave a gentle jab at the tightest trousers at Greyfriars. The yell that came from Billy Bunter rang the length of the Remove passage.

"Yaroooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wharton and Nugent resumed discussing the bag of cherries, and cricket. Bunter, if he was still in search of help, did not come back to Study No. 1 for it. He had had enough help from that study!

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

A Mysterious Attack!

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

"My only hat!" exclaimed Johnny Bull.

And Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh stared blankly.

Not so very long ago "Larry" Lascelles earned his living by knocking out pugilists in the prize ring! Nowadays Larry earns a living by "knocking" mathematics into the heads of the Greyfriars boys. But Larry's old "pug" pals don't believe that he's finished with prize-fighting for good!

The three juniors of the Greyfriars Remove were coming back from the village of Friardale to the school. They had taken a short cut across the meadows, and were heading for a gap in the high hawthorn hedge to get into the lane.

From a distance they had observed figures in that gap—two men with their faces to the lane, their backs to the field, and the schoolboys who were crossing it. They wondered, without much interest, why the two men were crouching in the gap watching the road, but as they came closer they could see that each of them held a thick cudgel in his hand. Crouching in the gap, carefully screening themselves from sight from passers-by in the lane, the two men watched the road, cudgel in hand. And now that Bob and his friends had a clear view of them from behind, it was scarcely possible to doubt what they were there for.

"My only summer bonnet!" said Bob Cherry. "Looks like a surprise-package waiting for somebody who's coming along the lane."

"Footpads!" said Johnny Bull.

"Blessed if I make it out," said Bob. "They're watching for somebody, but they can't have the nerve to do bandit stunts in broad daylight. Hallo, hallo, hallo! There's some merchant coming along!"

A black bowler hat showed over the

top of the hedge, coming along from the direction of the village.

The hedge was high, and the schoolboys in the field could see only the top of the hat as it came.

But the two roughs crouching in the gap of the hedge evidently saw more, for they made a sudden movement. They half-rose, crouching ready to spring, their attitude tense. They did not glance behind them, having no idea that there was anyone in the meadow backing the hedge. Their attention was concentrated on the man who was coming along the lane from the village, and it was perfectly plain that their intention was to spring out at him as soon as he came abreast of the gap.

"My esteemed hat!" murmured Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh. "It is up to us to take a ridiculous hand in these absurd proceedings, my ludicrous friends."

"What-ho!" murmured Johnny Bull.

"By gum! I believe that's Larry!" said Bob, with a quick breath. "We saw him in the village, and he was wearing a bowler hat. And he's tall enough for his tile to show over the hedge. If it's Larry—"

"Come on!" said Johnny.

The three Remove juniors ran on swiftly, their feet making no sound on the thick grass in the meadow. Through the gap ahead they could see a patch of the lane, dusty in the June sunshine. A rather tall, athletic figure came into view—that of Mr. Lawrence Lascelles, the maths and games master of Greyfriars. And at the same moment the two roughs leaped out from their ambush and rushed at him, their cudgels swinging up.

"Buck up!" gasped Bob.

Bob Cherry was ahead of his comrades, and he had nearly reached the hedge when the attack happened.

Obviously, the men were not footpads—they were not attempting to rob the games master. They were rushing on him to attack him, for what reason was unimaginable to the juniors.

Bob came through the gap with a flying leap, only a few seconds after them. As he leaped, he heard Mr. Lascelles' startled exclamation. A swift jump back saved Larry Lascelles from the blows that swept at him, and saved him from serious injury. But his assailants followed him up fast, and the cudgels would have crashed on him had not help been at hand. Like a stone from a catapult Bob Cherry came at the backs of the assailants, barging into them headlong, hitting out with both fists.

All their attention was concentrated on Mr. Lascelles, and that sudden attack in the rear took them utterly by surprise.

Both of them staggered forward, their savage blows missed, and they bumped into Larry Lascelles blindly.

Mr. Lascelles' hands were up now, his eyes flashing over them.

Larry Lascelles had been a boxer before he became a master at Greyfriars. He showed now that he had not lost his old skill and quickness, neither had he lost his hitting powers.

Before the two ruffians could recover from their surprise, Larry's right and left came flashing out. Crash, crash! came two fists that seemed like lumps of lead, and the two roughs went staggering, to crash on their backs in the dusty lane.

It passed so swiftly that they were down in the dust by the time Johnny Bull and Hurree Singh came jumping through the gap in the hedge.

"Give 'em beans!" gasped Johnny.

"Give them terrific beans!" panted the Nabob of Bhanipur.

But there was no need to give the two ruffians any more beans. They had had all the beans they wanted. They sat up in the dust, one of them holding his chin with both hands, rocking himself to and fro and moaning, the other clasping his nose, from which a red stream ran. They had dropped the cudgels, and Bob Cherry promptly collected them and tossed them away over the hedge. But it was hardly needed. Those two rapid knocks from Larry Lascelles had knocked out the two bruisers.

Bob stared at them, and chuckled.

"My hat! You can hit, Larry!" he said—"I—I mean, sir!"

Among themselves the juniors always called the games master Larry, but that mode of address was not suitable for Larry personally.

Mr. Lascelles smiled.

"I should not have had a chance to hit, Cherry, if you had not barged in," he said. "I am very much obliged to you."

"We saw them from the field, sir," explained Bob, "so we came along to butt in—"

"I am very glad you did." Larry Lascelles rubbed his knuckles. "I think they are going to be peaceable now."

"They look it!" grinned Johnny Bull.

"The lookfulness is preposterous!" chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Mr. Lascelles walked towards the two dazed ruffians sitting dizzily in the lane. They blinked at him. The man who was holding his chin—a squat, thick-set ruffian, with a damaged nose and many scars on his rugged face, gave a groan. There was no doubt that he was severely hurt. A faint smile played over Larry Lascelles' handsome face.

"What does this mean, Pug?" he asked.

Bob Cherry & Co. exchanged glances. They could not help wondering why that savage attack had been made on the young Greyfriars master—a man who was popular all through the school, and so likeable by nature that it was difficult to imagine his having any enemies at all.

But Larry Lascelles had had a varied and adventurous life before he came to Greyfriars, and it was clear that he recognised in his assailants some acquaintances of his earlier days. Once upon a time he had figured in the roped ring—and the juniors could see that the two roughs looked like bruisers. Apparently Larry had known them in his old boxing days.

"It's years since I've seen you, Pug, and I can't say I'm glad to see you now," said Mr. Lascelles. "And you, Snipey?"

The man clasping his nose did not answer. He rocked and moaned, and the "claret" ran in a stream through his fingers.

"I've asked you what this means, Pug?" said Mr. Lascelles quietly. "Have you anything to say before I kick you along to the police station, and give you in charge for assault?"

"The esteemed assault is really a boot on the other leg," Hurree Singh whispered to his comrades—and they grinned. It was true that Larry had had a narrow escape of severe injury, but it was his assailants who had captured all the damages.

"Blow yer!" groaned Pug, groaning dismally. "We've been 'anging about for days looking for a chance at you,

and now we gets a chance, and—ow! Oh! Ow! You ain't forgotten 'ow to 'it, Larry."

"But why?" demanded Mr. Lascelles. "We were never friends, Pug Pilkinson, but why the dickens are you hunting for me like this, after so long? What have I done to you?"

"As if you didn't know!" groaned Pug.

Larry Lascelles stared down at him. It was plain that he was perplexed and mystified by the savage attack from these old acquaintances of the boxing ring.

"I know nothing!" he declared. "I haven't the faintest idea how I've given you offence—not the foggiest—unless it's an old grudge."

"You know all right!" groaned Pug. "You make out you're a schoolmaster—well, why can't you stick to your schoolmasterin'? If you come buttin' back into the ring, you can take what's coming to you, blow yer!"

"But I have no such intention!" exclaimed Mr. Lascelles, in astonishment. "Who's been pulling your leg, Pug? I could not keep my position at Greyfriars if I were a boxer also; that was all given up long ago. My headmaster would allow nothing of the sort."

Pug blinked at him.

"Mean to say you ain't up to fight the Game Chicken?" he demanded.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob Cherry, almost overcome by the idea of the mathematics master of Greyfriars being "up" to fight the Game Chicken—whoever the Game Chicken was!

Mr. Lascelles burst into a laugh.

"I've never heard of the Game Chicken," he said. "You've been made a fool of, Pug!"

"Is that straight?" gasped Pug.

"Quite! But you are still the same rascal I knew you in the old days!" said Mr. Lascelles. "Foul play was always your line, Pug! You were going to knock out a man who was booked to fight your man—as you thought?"

"There's a lot at stake," said Pug sullenly. "Nor I don't believe I was took in, neither! I've had it fair and square that Archie Valence is puttin' you up—"

Mr. Lascelles' manner changed suddenly.

"Who?" he snapped.

"You know him all right!" growled Pug. "And he's putting you up—"

"Nothing of the kind! I've heard nothing of it. And if I heard anything, I should refuse on the spot! If you understood anything of my present position in a Public school, Pug, you'd understand that such a thing was impossible—unless I resigned my post. You are a blockhead, Pug!"

"It's straight, Pug!" groaned Snipey. "Larry wouldn't tell us lies! We've been took in!"

"I'll let you off for this," said Mr. Lascelles quietly. "You seem to have been deceived by somebody, and you've got yourselves damaged for nothing. But if I see either of you near this quarter again, look out for trouble!"

And he turned away from them.

The three Removites walked back to the school with Mr. Lascelles, Pug and Snipey being left sitting on the grassy bank by the side of the lane, nursing their damages. It was quite some time before Messrs. Pug and Snipey picked themselves up and trailed wearily away. It was likely that their features would remind them, for a long time to come, of that encounter with the games master of Greyfriars School.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Talk on the Telephone!

"WIBLEY, old man!"

Billy Bunter blinked into Study No. 6 in the Remove. William Wibley was there, but he did not seem to want to see Billy Bunter. He waved an artificial moustache at the fat junior, having that article in his hand at the moment. Wib was going over theatrical gadgets in his property-box when the fat Owl butted in.

"Hook it!" said Wibley. "Busy! Cut off! Buzz! Vanish! Disappear! Avaunt! Off!"

"Oh, really, Wibley—"

"Go and do your impot for Larry!" said Wib. "He'll want it when he comes back from Friardale! It's close on six now!"

"Do let a chap speak!" said Bunter peevishly. "I say, Wib, you're the cleverest chap in the Remove at making up—in fact, in the whole school! In fact, I think you're the cleverest chap in that line in the whole world!"

Wibley stared at him.

"Granted!" he answered. "I know that better than you do. But there's no need to lay it on so thick. I haven't had a remittance, and I'm not going to cash that postal order you've been expecting for three or four terms!"

"Oh, really, old chap, the fact is, I wanted to see you do some make-up! Look here!" Bunter held up his bandaged paw. "See that? Could you make it look as if it was really crooked—bloodstains, and so on?"

"Of course I could, fathead! I could make it look so natural that you'd almost feel a pain in it."

"Oh, my hat! Well, Squiff says you couldn't."

"Squiff's an ass!"

"And I told him you jolly well could, and I'd prove it," said Bunter. "I'm going to show it to him, and—and prove it—see?"

"Oh!" said Wibley. He laid down the moustache. Any call for a demonstration of his theatrical powers always found Wib ready. "I'll do it like a shot! And you can tell Squiff from me that he's a fathead!"

Wib opened his make-up box, and Bunter grinned.

He was getting on better in Study No. 6 than in Study No. 1.

Wharton and Nugent, for some reason, hadn't believed that his injury was a genuine one. A series of agonised groans, instead of convincing them, had only made them chortle. So Bunter was taking a different line with Wibley. This time he had backed a winner.

Wib, in this line, was in his element. He could make himself up as almost anybody or anything. He had a master-hand at make-up, and the task Bunter had set him was easy enough to Wibley.

He untied the handkerchief, and retied it in a more professional manner. Then he added artistic red stains. Billy Bunter, blinking at his bandaged paw, could hardly believe that it was not bleeding.

"There!" said Wib. "What about that?"

"Oh, good!" said Bunter. "Even that suspicious beast Lascelles will think that's all right!"

Wibley jumped.

"Lascelles!" he repeated. "You said Squiff!"

Bunter had already forgotten that little fib. He belonged to the class that, proverbially, ought to have good memories. But he had a bad one, which was rather a handicap.

"Oh! D-d-did I say Lascelles?" he stammered. "I—I mean Squiff, of—of

course! I—I wonder what made me say Lascelles!"

"You fat villain!" exclaimed Wibley. "Have you been pulling my leg? If you've got up that gammy fin to spoof Larry——"

"Oh, no! Nothing of the kind!" gasped Bunter, retreating to the door. "I'm going to show it to Toddy now."

"Toddy?" exclaimed Wibley.

"I mean Squiff——"

"Look here——"

Wibley made a jump at Bunter.

Bunter made a jump into the passage and bolted. It was too late for William Wibley to undo his work. The fat Owl raced down the Remove passage to the stairs.

"You spoofing owl!" roared Wibley after him; and he went back into his study and banged the door.

I say, you fellows, has Lascelles come in?"

"Haven't seen him."

"Well, the beast said six!" said Bunter. "I suppose I'd better go to his study! I'm jolly well not going to wait for him, blow him!"

And the fat junior went down the lower staircase, Smithy and Redwing staring after him as he went.

The Owl of the Remove rolled along to Masters' Studies, and stopped at Mr. Lascelles' door. He tapped and entered, with his damaged fin well to the fore. But the study was unoccupied.

"Beast!" grunted Bunter.

Mr. Lascelles, evidently, had not yet come back from Friardale, and it was just on six. It was like his cheek to keep so important a person as Billy Bunter waiting, of course! But the fat

He rose from the armchair and took off the receiver. His first thought was simply to stop the bell buzzing. Somebody was ringing up Lascelles, and Lascelles wasn't there to take the call; and Bunter intended to say so. But second thoughts—not always the best—supervened. Curiosity was Bunter's besetting sin. No fellow's correspondence was safe from Bunter, if he could get an eye on it. Minding his own business was a thing that had never had any appeal for William George Bunter. But he was always ready to mind anybody else's. He put the receiver to his fat ear, with a grin.

"Hallo!" came through. "Is that you, Larry, old bean?"

"Hallo!" murmured Bunter into the transmitter. "Who's speaking?"



Mr. Quelch unfastened the bandage, and Bunter, in terror, waited for the storm to burst. "Bunter!" roared the Form master, as the fat hand was disclosed to view. "Your hand is uninjured! Explain immediately why you have been playing this foolish trick!" For once the fat junior was at a loss for a "fib."

"Beast!" gasped Bunter.

And he flew down the Remove staircase.

"Here, hold on, you barging grampus!"

On the middle landing he almost ran into Vernon-Smith and Redwing, who were coming up. Smithy gave him a shove.

"Ow! Beast!" gasped Bunter.

"Hurt your hand, Bunter?" asked Redwing, glancing at the bandaged paw, and pushing Smithy back, as he seemed disposed to give the fat Owl another shove.

"Eh—yes! Awfully!" said Bunter. "I was cutting some coupons out of a paper, you know, and the carving-knife closed on it——"

"Wha-a-t?"

"I mean, the scissors—that is to say, the pocket-knife! I'm in fearful pain!" said Bunter. "If I wasn't crocked, Smithy, I'd jolly well punch your head!

Owl decided that he had better wait for a few minutes, at least. Mr. Lascelles, though a very kind and good-tempered young man, was not a man to be trifled with. Besides, Bunter had his disabled paw all ready for inspection as a proof that he hadn't been able to do the impot set him by the maths master. He wanted to get done with Lascelles, and done with the damaged paw. He couldn't keep it bandaged for ever.

But minute followed minute, and Lascelles did not come in. As he had told Bunter to come to his study at six, he must have intended to be there; but possibly he had been delayed on the way back from Friardale. Bunter sat in Lascelles' armchair, and grunted with impatience.

Buzzzzzzzz!

It was the telephone bell, almost in his fat ear. Bunter jumped.

Buzz!

"Archie!"

Billy Bunter had never heard of Archie before, but he concluded that Archie was some friend or relative of Larry Lascelles.

"Oh! You!" he said.

"Yes, old chap! That's Larry, isn't it?"

Archie apparently wanted to make sure that he had the right man.

"Don't you know my voice?" said Bunter calmly.

Even Billy Bunter hesitated to state that he was Larry. But he left the interlocutor to draw his own conclusions from that reply.

"It sounds so different on the phone," came the answer. "I wanted to make sure, old bean. And I wasn't sure of catching you. I don't know your hours for teachin' the young idea how to shoot! I rang you yesterday, without gettin' an answer. But there you are!"

Billy Bunter grinned. There he was, certainly—though Larry wasn't!

"I've got to see you, Larry!" went on the voice. "Don't tell me that you don't want to see me. I know that in advance. But it's urgent, and I'm relyin' on you to stand by me. Aren't you fed-up on mathematics, by this time?"

"Yes, rather!" said Bunter. He could answer that question quite truthfully.

"Well, it must be frightfully quiet, after the old life," said the unknown Archie. "I really wonder you haven't cut it, old man. 'I suppose you've been keepin' yourself fit?"

"Fit as a fiddle!" said Bunter.

"Good egg! I had no doubt about that, Larry. I've seen your name in a county cricket match. Still keeping up your cricket—what?"

"Oh, yes."

"How'd you like a go at the old game, Larry?"

"Eh? Oh, fine!" said Bunter.

What the man was driving at Bunter did not know. But he realised that there was something very unusual about all this—something a little mysterious. He was keen to learn more. He framed his replies on Archie's questions, to keep the man going.

"You mean that?" There was an unmistakable note of eagerness in the voice at the other end. "Larry, old bean, you mean it?"

"Quite!" said Bunter.

"By gum, that's good news! That's ripping, Larry! I hardly dared to hope you'd say that. Oh, good man! Good man! Look here, can I put you up?"

Bunter blinked at the telephone. What Archie meant by "putting him up" was a deep mystery to the fat Owl. But he went on with his peculiar game of pulling the leg of the man on the phone.

"What? Put it plain, Larry—can I put you up?" came the eager voice.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "Yes!"

"Good man! To tell you the truth, Larry, I've practically done it already, counting on persuading you. But I might have guessed that you'd be keen after your old life! Look here, have you heard of the Game Chicken?"

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

"What did you say, Larry?"

"I said 'Oh, yes.' Yes."

"Think you could handle him?"

"Oh! Yes."

"Well, I know you could. I'd put my shirt on you, old man. Look here, Larry, you can't be making a fortune schoolmastering, and a few hundreds would come in useful—what?"

"Yes," gasped Bunter.

"It would mean that to you, and to me. If I put up a man to knock out the Chicken it means a lot to me, as promoter. But, of course, you know that. I've had putrid luck, but if you stand by me in this, Larry, I'll pull through all right. You're keeping up your boxing?"

"Oh crumbs!"

"What?"

"Yes. Of course! Yes."

"You'll have to go in for a bit of training, of course. But you know that. That'll be later. Look here, you give me a free hand to make the arrangements?"

"Absolutely," said Bunter.

"Larry, old man, I'll never forget this. I was afraid you'd turn me down, and I've hesitated a long time to get on to you. And I can tell you it would

leave me in the soup! Larry, old man, you've given me new life!"

"Oh scissors!"

"Leave it to me now," said Archie jubilantly. "I'll write in a day or two. Good-bye, Larry!"

"Good-bye!" gasped Bunter.

Archie was gone! Billy Bunter put the receiver back on the hooks and stood blinking at it.

"Oh lor!" murmured Bunter.

Inquisitiveness and fatuousness combined had caused Bunter to enter into that remarkable talk on Mr. Lascelles' telephone. What he had learned was rather mixed and mysterious to him. Somebody named Archie wanted Lascelles to handle a chicken, so far as Bunter could make out. This looked as if Archie might be in the poultry business. He had referred to cricket and boxing, however, which had nothing to do with poultrying. Also, he had wanted to know whether Larry had kept himself fit; and, so far as Bunter could see, a man did not have to be very fit to handle a chicken! Even Bunter could have handled a chicken! In fact, he had handled a good many in his time, and they had disappeared internally. It was all very mysterious, and Bunter could not make it out.

But one thing was clear to him. Archie, believing that Larry Lascelles had answered that call, had gone off believing that Mr. Lascelles had agreed to something or other. That was clear.

TO READERS IN THE IRISH FREE STATE.

Readers in the Irish Free State are requested to note that when free gifts are offered with this publication, they can only be supplied when the article is of a non-dutiable character.

He was going to write to Larry about it in a day or two—probably very much to Larry's astonishment. And if it came out that Bunter had played tricks on the telephone—answering a call in a master's name—

Bunter shivered!

It seemed to him that he could already feel the Head's birch whacking on his portly person!

"Oh lor!" repeated Bunter.

He rolled across to the door. He was not going to wait for Larry to come in. If there was any inquiry about that talk on the telephone Billy Bunter did not want to get mixed up in it. He wanted to keep it dark that he had been in the study at all.

Promptly he left the maths master's study and rolled down the corridor.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Quelch is Too Kind!

"BUNTER!"

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

Mr. Quelch's study door was open. The Remove master was about to step out when Bunter came rolling along from Lascelles' study.

Bunter had almost forgotten his bandaged paw. But it caught Mr. Quelch's eye at once, and naturally drew his attention. Wibley had done his work well—too well, as it turned out. Bunter's paw looked as if it had suffered serious damage. Mr.

Quelch was too dutiful a Form master to allow such a matter to pass unregarded.

"Bunter! Step into my study!"

"I—I— Oh! Yes, sir!"

Mr. Quelch backed into the room, and Billy Bunter followed him in. The Remove master's eyes, often compared by his pupils to gimlets for their penetrating qualities, were fixed on his bandaged hand.

"You have had an accident, Bunter?" asked Mr. Quelch kindly.

"Yes—no—yes, sir," stammered Bunter.

"Is your hand badly cut?"

"Frightfully, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"I—I'm in fearful pain, sir."

It seemed to Bunter that even a Form master ought to have sense enough not to keep a fellow jawing when he was in fearful pain. But he had touched the wrong chord. His manner only increased Mr. Quelch's kind solicitude.

"How did it happen, Bunter?"

"The—the carving-knife closed on my hand, sir—"

"Eh?"

"I—I mean the scissors."

"The scissors!" repeated Mr. Quelch blankly.

"That is, the pocket-knife," stammered Bunter. "You see, sir, I was cutting some coupons out of a paper with the scissors when the carving-knife slipped, and the pocket-knife closed on my hand—"

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Quelch.

"I—I mean—" Bunter was getting confused, as he often did under Mr. Quelch's penetrating eyes. "I—I mean, it snapped shut, sir, as I was peeling the apple."

"The carving-knife snapped shut?" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"No, sir—the scissors. I mean the pocket-knife. It was a rather hard apple, sir. I mean, the paper I was cutting was rather stiff, and so—so—so it—it happened, sir."

"Will you tell me at once what has occurred, Bunter?" snapped Mr. Quelch.

"If your hand is badly cut, the matter is serious. A neglected cut may lead to lockjaw. I had better see it."

Bunter jumped.

"Oh, sir, it—it's all right!" he stammered. "I—I don't want to bother you with it, sir. A mere trifle!"

"You told me that you were in fearful pain, Bunter!"

"It—it—it's passed off, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"What? Bunter, untie your hand at once! I begin to suspect that there is some trickery here!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"Oh lor!"

"I shall certainly examine your injury and ascertain whether it is necessary for you to see a doctor, Bunter."

"Oh, no, sir! Not at all! I—I can bear it, sir."

"That is for me to judge!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "Remove those bandages at once, Bunter! You are exceedingly foolish to place a dirty rag on a cut. Dirt should be carefully excluded from any cut. It might cause blood-poisoning!"

"It—it's my nanky, sir."

"Bless my soul!" repeated Mr. Quelch. He had mistaken Bunter's handkerchief for a dirty rag—judging by appearances, of course. "Bunter, you are the most slovenly boy at Greyfriars! Remove that handkerchief from your hand immediately, and let me see the cut."

"It—it—it's rather horrid to look at, sir!" groaned Bunter.

"Let me see it at once!"

"In fact, gig-gig-ghastly, sir!"
 "I shall cane you if you waste my time, Bunter! Take that exceedingly unclean handkerchief off your hand immediately. I will provide you with clean lint for bandaging it."

"Oh lor'!"
 Billy Bunter fumbled at his bandaged paw with his left hand.

"I—I can't unfasten it, sir. I—I can't manage it with my left hand. C-a-a-can I go now, sir?"

"You foolish boy, this must be seen to. Do you desire to run the risk of lockjaw?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

Certainly Bunter didn't. His jaw was the most active part of him, and he would have been frightfully dismayed had it been put out of action. But there was really no danger, if Mr. Quelch had only known it. But he did not know it—yet, though he was growing suspicious.

"Hold out your hand, Bunter!" he rapped.

"Oh crikey! I—I—you're not going to cane me on—on—on a fearfully injured hand, sir?" gasped Bunter.

"You stupid boy! I am going to untie the bandage. Hold out your hand immediately!" rapped the Remove master.

There was no help for it. Bunter held out his hand. Mr. Quelch unfastened the bandage, touching it rather gingerly. It was, in fact, not very nice to touch. But he did it, and Bunter, in terror, waited for the storm to burst when the uninjured paw was revealed.

Mr. Quelch blinked at the fat hand that was disclosed to view. It was in need of a wash, but not of a bandage. Even Quelch's gimlet eyes could discern no sign of a cut.

"Bunter!" Quelch's voice was like the rumble of distant thunder.

"Oh crikey!"

"Your hand is uninjured, Bunter!"

"Is—is—is it, sir?" groaned Bunter. "Perhaps the cut's closed up, sir! It—it may have healed! I—I heal very quickly, sir, being so healthy and—and fit!"

"Your hand has not been cut at all, Bunter. I require to know why you have been playing this foolish trick!" said Mr. Quelch sternly. "Explain yourself at once!"

"I—I—I—"

"Well?"

"I—I—I—"

"Will you answer me, Bunter?"

"I—I—I—" stuttered the hapless Owl. Bunter was seldom at a loss for a fib, but he could not think of one now. He blinked helplessly at Mr. Quelch. "I—I wasn't going to spoof anybody, sir. It's nothing to do with Mr. Lascelles."

"Mr. Lascelles?" repeated Mr. Quelch blankly.

"Nothing at all, sir. I never had an impot from him, and it wasn't geometry, and I did it at once, and took it to him before he went out, sir!" gasped Bunter.

Mr. Quelch gazed at that interesting member of his Form. He did not speak for a moment or two. Perhaps Bunter had taken his breath away.

"Upon my word!" he said at last.

"C-c-can I go now, sir?" groaned Bunter. "My hand hurts fearfully! I mean, I want to get a clean hanky."

"It appears," said Mr. Quelch, "that you had some geometry task to do for the mathematics master, and I gather, Bunter, that this pretended injury to your hand was intended to deceive him and account for your not having done your task."

Bunter blinked at his Form master. It seemed to him that Quelch must be

Piccadilly Circus is one of London's busiest quarters—yet deep down beneath its surface British engineers have built

AN UNDERGROUND CITY

which forms the subject of this week's Free Plate.

THEY made a complicated underground "city" beneath the very heart of London's West End, in a matter of months, and few of the swarming pedestrians who walked above this miracle whilst it was being performed knew anything at all about it. The road traffic is as thick there—at Piccadilly Circus—as can well be. The engineers had been told to make their subterranean city without interfering with the road traffic in any way, and without getting in the way of the underground railways at that spot, and also without taking too long over it.

Removing 1,000 Tons of Clay a Month!

Enough to make anyone scratch his head, orders like that. But the engineers got on with it. There was a very small "island" set in the midst of the swirling traffic, and that was the only possible spot for them to sink their shaft. They stuck a hoarding up around it, and the shaft, eighteen feet in diameter, was dug out over 90 feet deep, and everything that had to come up from the depths during the mighty excavations for the underground city—including about 1,000 tons of clay a month—was brought up that way. And practically everything that had to go down to the workmen went down that way.

While the traffic swirled and swarmed around the lip of the shaft, the engineers, calm, cool and collected, did their magic below.

Gradually the amazing Piccadilly Tube Station took form, down there out of sight. It had to serve two big underground railways lying at different levels beneath the streets and roadways, there had to be a vast booking-hall, with

subways going from it out to the various streets around Piccadilly Circus, then another and lower hall, and stairways and escalators and passages, so that the platforms were connected with all points.

Digging out the places to be occupied by all these things would be difficult enough if there were only soil, or clay, or rock to delve straight down into. But these engineers knew there was a perfect spider's-web of water-mains, gas and electric light and telephone connections, in the way. And, just where the big booking hall itself was to be, there reposed a large sewer.

Taking the Strain!

Well, the engineers had made their plans, and had seen constructed a big collection of models of all parts of this great Tube Station. They knew just where everything was to go and everything that was in the way. And everything that happened to be in the way had got to be shifted somewhere else—without the public's supply of gas, water and so on being interrupted for a moment.

So they built what they called a pipe subway in addition to the other tunnels, larger in diameter than the actual tunnels through which the tube trains run, to accommodate all the new pipes, cables, and so on that were to do duty for those displaced by the new underground city.

When they burrowed out the booking-hall they supported that part of London which was immediately overhead with many pillars or columns, four of them each holding up a weight of over 300 tons, fifty others each taking the strain of weights varying between 80 and 150 tons.

Next Week's Free Photogravure Plate Shows "THE DREADNOUGHT DIVER!"

a magician, or a Sherlock Holmes at least, to jump at a thing like this. How did Quelch do it? he wondered.

"I hardly think," continued Mr. Quelch "that you would have succeeded in deceiving Mr. Lascelles to that extent. But you will certainly not make the attempt, Bunter. Hand me that cane from my table."

"Oh crumbs!"

"Now," said Mr. Quelch, taking the cane, "bend over that chair!"

"Oh, crikey!"

Whack, whack, whack!

"Whoo-hoo-hoooooop!"

"You may go, Bunter," said Mr. Quelch. "And if you ever attempt such a deception again—" He left the rest to Bunter's imagination.

"Owl! Wow! Owl!"

Billy Bunter rolled dismally away. He wriggled and writhed his way down the corridor. At the end he came on Mr. Lascelles, who had just come in. The maths master glanced at him and

smiled. Bunter's contortions told what had happened to him.

"Have you taken your imposition to my study, Bunter?" asked Larry.

"Oh, no! I—I haven't been anywhere near your study, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I'm sorry, sir, but my hand was so bad from a fearful cut that I couldn't do the geometry, sir."

"Your hand?"

"I—I—I mean, I—did the geometry, sir, but Toddy used it to light the study fire and boil the kettle, sir."

"What?"

"He—he didn't know it was an impot for you, sir. That's how it happened. I—I often have a lot of geometry about the study, sir. I—I do it for amusement, because—because I'm so fond of it."

Mr. Lascelles looked at Bunter.

"I think you have just been caned, Bunter?" he said.

"Ow! Yes! Quelch—"



"Otherwise I should certainly cane you myself!" said Mr. Lascelles. "Go away, Bunter, and bring your imposition before bed-time."

"Oh lor!"

Billy Bunter rolled away in the lowest of spirits. He had had three swipes from Quelch, and he still had the impot to do for Lascelles. It seemed to Billy Bunter that life was hardly worth living at a place like Greyfriars, where everybody but himself seemed to be a beast!

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Caught!

"**C**OURTFIELD two-double-O!" Herbert Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, gave that number into Mr. Quelch's telephone. It was the number of the garage in Courtfield, where Smithy was accustomed to hire a car when he wanted one. Smithy was "persona grata" at the garage, where a bill ran up for his millionaire father to pay. Needless to say, Mr. Quelch was not present at the moment. The Bounder had watched Quelch walk out of gates after class before he ventured into his study to use the telephone.

Quelch being safe off the scene, the Bounder had strolled coolly along to his study, stepped in quickly, and shut the door. There was no one in Masters' Passage at the moment; and it was not the first time that Smithy had borrowed his Form master's phone in his absence.

As it happened, however, he was not so safe as he supposed. A young master of Greyfriars was leaning on the wall by Mr. Quelch's window, looking, with a smile on his handsome face, at a group of juniors in the distance.

Kipps of the Remove was standing by a table on which reposed a quantity of conjuring paraphernalia, and the Famous Five and a number of other Remove fellows were gathered round, watching him. Kipps was a conjurer of almost magical powers; he could make various articles disappear in a most mystifying manner, could turn rice into water by merely waving his magical wand over it; could pass handkerchiefs of various colours through a tube, and make them appear at the other end in the form of a Union Jack.

As the young master watched, Kipps was performing weird tricks with a tame rabbit which he made disappear into thin air and then appear again in a glossy silk hat borrowed for the occasion from Lord Mauleverer.

The Greyfriars juniors looked on, spellbound. Larry Lascelles, from a distance, watched also. But the window at his elbow was open; and without being deaf, he could not have helped hearing the voice that spoke at the telephone in Quelch's study.

Mr. Lascelles ceased to watch Kipps, and glanced round at the window. He was aware that Quelch was gone out, having seen him peregrinate down to the gates in company with Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth. Moreover, the Bounder's rather sharp, hard voice was familiar to his ears. Mr. Lascelles frowned a little. He could not help being aware that a Remove boy was surreptitiously making use of his Form master's telephone.

But after a glance at the window, he gave no further heed. He had nothing to do with the Remove, except to teach them maths; he was not a Form master. And he had a great capacity for minding his own business. It was not, after all, a very serious matter; and Larry Lascelles decided to take no notice of it.

But he had to change his mind on that point a few moments later!

"That the garage?" Vernon-Smith had got his number. "Right! Herbert Vernon-Smith, speaking from Greyfriars! That Pratt?"

Apparently the answer was in the affirmative, for the Bounder went on: "I want the car at ten-thirty."

Beside the open window, Mr. Lascelles gave a start.

Bed-time for the Remove was half-past nine; so it was rather startling to hear a Remove boy booking a car for half-past ten. Smithy could hardly mean half-past ten in the morning, when the Remove would be in the Form-room with Quelch. Mr. Lascelles closed his lips rather hard.

"Yes—ten-thirty—wait at the corner of the coppice near the school," the Bounder's voice went on. "Don't show any lights till I come along. Right!"

Vernon-Smith put up the receiver, and turned away from the telephone. He was about to cross to the door, when a quiet voice spoke.

"Stop!"

The Bounder started violently. He spun round towards the open window. Framed in the opening were the head and shoulders of Mr. Lascelles.

"Oh!" gasped the Bounder, completely taken aback. He realised instantly that the games master must have heard what he had said to the garage. For once, the cool, iron-nerved Bounder of Greyfriars was utterly confounded. He stared in blank alarm at the rather stern face looking in at the open window.

"So it is you, Vernon-Smith," said Mr. Lascelles quietly. "I thought I knew your voice."

"Oh!" repeated the Bounder. He was quite at a loss.

"I heard what you said on the telephone, Vernon-Smith!"

"Did—did you, sir?" stammered Smithy.

"I could not help hearing, Vernon-Smith, as the window was open. You will kindly tell me what it means."

A hard, sullen look came over the Bounder's face. Smithy was always "up against" beaks on principle. But he had rather liked Lascelles, more or less. The Bounder, reckless scapegrace as he was, was keen on cricket, and he had had many valuable tips from the games master. And as he was unusually good at maths, he was never in trouble with the maths master on that account. But any faint liking he might have had for "Larry" was wiped out on the spot, as he stood under the master's stern eye. Lascelles had had no right to overhear him—it was not a "fair catch"—as the Bounder regarded it.

"What it means!" he repeated. "I should think you could guess that, sir!" Smithy was recovering his coolness, and his impudence along with it.

"You were ordering a car for half-past ten!" said Mr. Lascelles, knitting his brows.

"Just so, sir!" assented the Bounder.

"An hour after lights out in the Remove."

"Oh, no, sir!" said Smithy coolly. "Half-past ten in the morning! I hope to get leave from my Form master."

"And you warned the chauffeur not to show lights, at half-past ten on a June morning," said Mr. Lascelles, grimly.

The Bounder bit his lip hard.

"It is useless, as well as contemptible, to utter falsehoods, Vernon-Smith," said the games master, quietly. "You were ordering the car for to-night, with the intention of going out of bounds after lights out."

"Do you think so, sir?"

"I am sure of it."

"Then I don't see why you asked me

what it means, if you know already," said the Bounder, with cool impertinence.

Mr. Lascelles' brow darkened.

"I am not your Form master, Vernon-Smith," he said, "or I should certainly give you a severe caning for your insolence."

"You're not!" agreed the Bounder. "And I don't see how the matter concerns you at all, sir! Of course, I never knew you were listening."

"That is enough! Having become acquainted with your intention, Vernon-Smith, I cannot allow you to proceed with it. I am reluctant, however, to lay the matter before Mr. Quelch. It is not agreeable to report a boy for punishment—even a reckless young rascal like yourself. If I could trust you to give up this folly—" He paused.

The Bounder looked at him curiously. This was a chance—and the Bounder jumped at it. A report to Quelch meant a caning, probably detention, and certainly a suspicious eye on his movements for the rest of the term. That did not suit the scapegrace of Greyfriars at all.

"Well, sir, I shouldn't be likely to get on with it, after you've spotted me," said the Bounder, with an air of great frankness. "I'm not exactly askin' to be hiked in to the Head to be bunked! If you'll let me, sir, I'll ring up the garage again and wash it out."

Mr. Lascelles looked relieved.

"Very well. I shall be satisfied with that," he said.

Vernon-Smith stepped to the telephone again. He rang up Courtfield garage, and rapped into the mouth-piece:

"Hallo! Vernon-Smith speaking from Greyfriars. I can't get leave after all—cancel the car for to-night."

"Yes, sir!"

"Is that all right, sir?" asked Smithy, turning to the young master at the window, as he put up the receiver.

"Quite!" said Mr. Lascelles. "Now leave the study."

Vernon-Smith left the study and closed the door after him. He stood in Master's Passage with a faint, cynical grin on his face. He had, as he believed, at least, pulled Lascelles' leg, and satisfied him. But he had not the slightest intention of giving up his excursion for that night if he could help it.

He moved along to the passage window, and looked out into the quad. He stood there for ten minutes or more, patiently watching. Then he had the satisfaction of seeing Mr. Lascelles walk away from the House, in the direction of the group of juniors surrounding Kipps of the Remove. Smithy's lip curled as he watched him go.

Then he cut along the passage to Mr. Prout's study. Prout had gone out with Quelch, and the coast was clear.

Stepping into Prout's study, Vernon-Smith closed the door and ran across to Prout's telephone. Prout's window was shut; he was not a believer in fresh air like Quelch.

Coolly, the Bounder rang up the garage again.

"That you, Pratt? Bring the car along to the coppice to-night at ten-thirty—I find that I can get off, after all. Is that clear? Right?"

With a grin on his face, the Bounder quitted Prout's study, and strolled out of the House. He joined the little crowd round Kipps, and stood at Mr. Lascelles' elbow, watching the weird performances of the schoolboy conjurer. Lascelles glanced at him; and if there was a lingering suspicion in his keen eyes, the Bounder did not observe it.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

No Takers!

HARRY WHARTON and Co. had finished prep.

There were doughnuts in study No. 1, and Bob Cherry, Johnny Bull, and the Nabob of Bhanipur had come along to help Wharton and Nugent dispose of them. And when the rather hard face of Herbert Vernon-Smith looked in, he was cheerily bidden to enter, and bag the last of the doughnuts.

Smithy came in and shut the door after him; but he did not bother about the doughnuts. The Famous Five regarded him curiously. Evidently the Bounder had something to say that he did not want overheard in the passage, which made the chums a little restive. In cricket, the Bounder was at one with the cheery Co. They prized him as a valued member of the Remove Eleven, and made no secret of it. But in other matters they seldom saw eye to eye with Smithy. And they really did not want to hear anything from him that all the Form might not have heard.

"Any of you fellows game?" asked the Bounder, leaning his back on the door and scanning the Famous Five.

"That depends," answered Wharton. "What is it—a rag on Coker of the Fifth?"

"Rats! You've heard of Lantham Fair?"

"Yes; we're thinking of going next half-hol. What about it?"

"I'm going to-night."

"Fathead!" said the Famous Five together.

"More fun after dark, you know," said the Bounder. "And it goes on till twelve, so we shall have plenty of time if we leave at half-past ten in a fast car. What?"

Harry Wharton & Co. blinked at him. The Bounder was the man for reckless escapades. But leaving the school in a fast car for Lantham Fair an hour after bed-time was rather startling even from the Bounder.

"You don't mean to say you've got leave?" exclaimed Frank Nugent. "Quech would never—"

"I haven't asked for it. I'm going! Any of you fellows game to come? I'm standin' the car."

"You howling ass!" said Johnny Bull. "You'll be hooked up to the chief beak and sacked if you do anything of the kind!"

"What's life without risk? Besides, there's no harm in going to a fair, I suppose. If it was a pub crawl I shouldn't ask you fellows. This is a lark."

"The larkfulness is rather too terrific, my esteemed Smithy," said Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh, shaking his dusky head.

"Not game, what?" asked the Bounder, with a sneer.

"Oh, don't be an ass, Smithy!" said Harry Wharton sharply. "We're game enough, but it can't be done. It's a flogging, at least, for breaking bounds after lights out—and it might be the boot. The beaks would want a lot of convincing that fellows were only going to a fair if they were caught out of bounds late at night."

"Might be seen there, you ass, and reported!" said Bob Cherry. "Cut it out, Smithy, and go to sleep like a good little boy in the dorm to-night."

"Come with us on Saturday," said Nugent.

"I'm going to-night! The car's ordered, and will be waiting. Look here, there's no harm in a lark—"

(Continued on next page.)

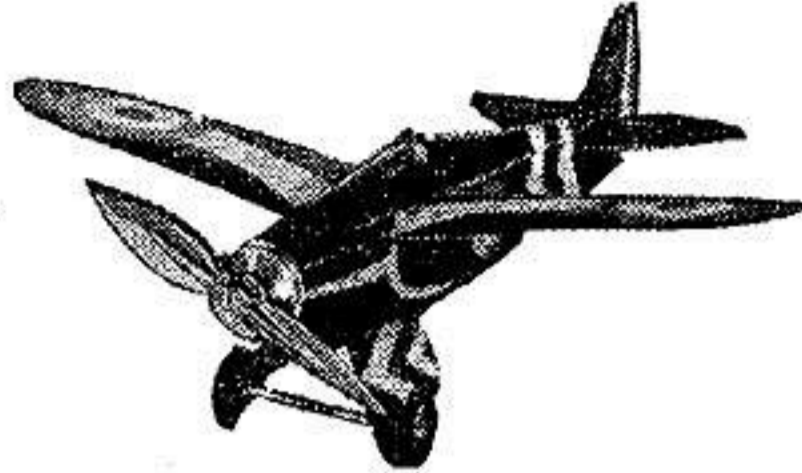
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"No harm, perhaps," agreed Wharton. "But it won't do, Smithy. Lantham Fair gets fearfully rough and rorty late at night, too. We're allowed to go in the day-time. What's the good of asking for trouble?"

"Smithy thrives on trouble," grinned Bob. "He'd rather go in the day-time if we were only allowed to go at night."

Vernon-Smith grinned. There was something in what Bob said. Breaking the rules, and defying or eluding authority, had always had an attraction for the lawless Bounder of Greyfriars.

"Well, I'm going," he said. "All you fellows got cold feet?"

Wharton shrugged his shoulders.

"No colder than yours, Smithy. But Quelch didn't appoint me head boy of the Form to race about in cars at midnight. Wash it out."

"No takers? Redwing's turned it down, and Skinner funks it," said the Bounder. "I thought you men might have a little more nerve. Well, I can go on my own."

"I say, Smithy——"

It was the fat voice of Billy Bunter. Smithy fairly jumped. Bunter certainly was not in the study, and the door was shut. He realised the next moment that the fat voice came through the keyhole.

With a black scowl, the Bounder spun round and dragged the door open. Reckless as he was, he did not want his scheme talked of up and down the Remove by the fat tattler of Greyfriars. It was risky enough without that. As the door swung wide Billy Bunter rolled in with a fat grin on his face.

"I wasn't listening, old chap!" he explained, first of all. "I never saw you come into this study, and never wondered what you shut the door for. As for listening at the keyhole, of course, I shouldn't dream of such a thing. I happened to stoop down and tie my shoe-lace—— Here, keep off, you beast!" Billy Bunter dodged rapidly round the study table. "I say, you fellows, keep him off! What's he getting his rag out for, I'd like to know?"

"You spying worm!" roared the Bounder.

"Oh, really, Smithy! Look here, it's

all right!" exclaimed Bunter, backing behind Bob Cherry, and blinking at the Bounder from the protection of Bob's sturdy form. "It's all right, old chap! I'll come."

"You'll—what?"

"I'll come," said Bunter. "These fellows are all funks—— I say, keep him off!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm no funk, as you know," continued Bunter, still dodging behind Bob, and watching the Bounder warily through his big spectacles. "I've got lots of nerve—keep off, you beast—stacks of pluck—— I say, Cherry, keep that beast off!" yelled Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Famous Five.

Bob Cherry pushed the Bounder away. The enraged Smithy seemed disposed to make an example of the Peeping Tom of Greyfriars.

"Hook it, Bunter!" gasped Bob. "I can't keep Smithy off for ever."

"I say, Smithy, don't be waxy, old chap! I'll come with you tonight," squeaked Bunter. "I'm not funky like these fellows——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'll stand half towards the car if you like—only you'll have to let that wait till my postal order comes."

"Owl!" roared Bob Cherry, as the Bounder suddenly hooked a leg from under him, and he sat down on the floor of Study No. 1 with a terrific bump.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bunter.

His protector was gone—and it was clearly time for Bunter to be gone also! The fat Owl made a bound for the doorway. The Bounder leaped after him and kicked.

Crash! Bump!

"Yaroooop!"

Bunter landed in the passage. He roared as he hit the floor. But he did not stay to roar twice. The Bounder was striding out at him. Bunter picked himself up with wonderful celerity, considering the weight he had to lift. He disappeared up the Remove passage like a hunted hare.

Vernon-Smith turned back into Study No. 1. His face was red and angry.

Bob Cherry had scrambled up, and he was looking rather grim.

"You cheeky ass——" he began.

"Oh, can it!" interrupted the Bounder. "Any of you fellows coming to Lantham Fair to-night? Yes or no?"

"No, ass!" answered Harry Wharton. "And if you've got the sense of a bunny-rabbit you'll chuck it now Bunter knows. What Bunter knows to-day all Greyfriars knows to-morrow."

"Rats!"

The Bounder slammed the door and stamped away. Evidently he was in a bad temper. The Famous Five in Study No. 1 finished the doughnuts, absolutely undisturbed by the Bounder's bad temper.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Out of Bounds!

WINGATE of the Sixth saw lights out for the Remove that night—certainly without the remotest suspicion that any member of that Form had an engagement booked for later in the evening.

He did not observe that Billy Bunter only half undressed before turning in. But had he observed it he would hardly have suspected that the fat and fatuous Owl of the Remove was thinking of breaking bounds at night. But that, as it happened, was exactly what Billy Bunter was thinking of. For once, Bunter's deep snore was not heard a minute after the light went out and the prefect departed. For once, William George Bunter was not seeking the repose of the land of dreams. Bunter had almost to prop his eyes open—but he kept them somehow from shutting. Bunter was not losing this chance.

It was surprising, perhaps, that the fat Owl was keen on taking the risk—which Skinner had turned down, and nobody else seemed to think good enough. But the fact was that Bunter did not think of the risk—Bunter never thought of anything till it happened. Until danger was in sight Bunter was as bold as a lion. And it was rather a "catch"—a trip in a motor-car after lights out, and the fun of the fair; a rush home in the dark, and bragging to the fellows next day about his pluck and nerve and daredevil recklessness. Bunter was not going to miss this.

At half-past ten, with all his super-human efforts to keep awake, Billy Bunter was nodding off. But he came back to wakefulness with a jerk, as he heard a whispering in the silence of the dormitory. He sat up in bed, groped for his big spectacles, and jammed them on his fat little nose, and blinked round in the gloom. In the starlight from the high windows he discerned a shadowy figure, and he realised that the Bounder was up.

"Look here—coming?" he heard Smithy's angry whisper.

"No! Warrer you waking me up for?" That was Skinner's voice. "Let a fellow go to sleep, bother you!"

"You rotten funk!"

"Oh, rats! You said yourself that Lascelles heard you phoning for the car. You must be potty to take the risk after that!" muttered Skinner sulkily.

"I pulled his leg all right."

"Perhaps you did—and perhaps you didn't! Anyhow, I'm jolly well not riskin' it, and you're a fool if you do!"

"Oh, go to sleep, then, you worm!" growled the Bounder.

And he turned away from Skinner's bed, and began to dress in the dark,

(Continued on page 12.)

FRANK RICHARDS' Ripping School Stories in "The RANGER"

"The Grimslade boy who trespassed in Grimslade Chase yesterday will report himself to Dr. Sparshott after third school."

Ginger Rawlinson, when he saw that notice, thought he was the boy concerned. But Ginger did not visit his headmaster; he had no relish for a licking.

Jim Dainty, who had also trespassed on Grimslade Chase, kept very quiet about it.

Fritz von Splitz knew he was not the boy referred to in that notice—but Fritz went to "Sammy" Sparshott and confessed that he was the culprit!

Why? Read this enjoyable school story, written by famous Frank Richards, in this week's issue of



The **RANGER** On Sale Every Saturday **2^d.**



How's THAT Umpire?



"UMPIRE" IS AT THE DISPOSAL OF EVERY "MAGNET" READER WHO COMES ACROSS A KNOTTY CRICKET PROBLEM. WRITE TO HIM TO-DAY, c/o THE "MAGNET," AND THEN WATCH FOR HIS REPLY IN THIS WEEKLY FEATURE.

BODY-LINE BOWLING!

CRICKET is in full swing again, and we are going to talk about this wonderful summer game in the MAGNET every week. I am going to do the talking, naturally, but I have more than a suspicion that my readers will decide what I shall talk about.

There are a hundred and one things you want to know about cricket, aren't there? I know that some of you don't quite understand the rules; some of you are not certain whether you are on the right road to success either as batsman, bowler, or wicket-keeper. Well, I want you to fire along your questions, addressed to me care of the Editor, and it will be my pleasure to give the help required.

If the cricket questions sent to me make for replies of general interest, they will be answered in the MAGNET. If the particular questions can only be of interest to the young player himself, then he will receive a direct reply through the post. The great thing is that I want you to send in your questions. I am at your service.

There is one very big question being discussed everywhere in these early days of the new cricket season. It relates, of course, to what is called body-line bowling. That is the name the Australians gave to it when our fellows, and Harold Larwood in particular, were winning the "Ashes." I know that even very young players are interested in this body-line bowling. Not long ago I spent an evening at a cricket school where Patay Hendren, the Middlesex batsman, was teaching a number of young players. And one young hopeful after another, starting to bowl, had a question to put to the famous batsman about body-line bowling. Most of these lads wanted to bowl the leg theory stuff, too.

SUICIDE ALLEY!

NO necessity to enter, at this stage, into arguments as to the fairness or otherwise of leg-theory bowling. We can leave the "heads" of cricket to do the talking on that line. Rather let us talk about what it is; how it is done, and whether it is worth while young players doing it.

In the first place leg theory bowling means bowling directed at the leg stump, or just outside the leg stump. The trap for the batsman is set with several fielders comparatively close up to the bat on the leg side. In Australia, Larwood sometimes had as many as five men clustered round the batsman's legs.

If you think for a moment, you will realise that fielders placed in such a position are in very grave danger of serious hurt if the batsman is good enough to hit the ball hard—or if the bowler is not clever enough to prevent the batsman hitting

hard to leg. In fact, I have heard county cricketers refer to the leg-trap as suicide alley—from the fielder's point of view.

There were two main reasons why Larwood was so successful with this leg theory method in Australia. One was the remarkable pace at which he bowled, and the other was the amazing accuracy of the bowling. It is perfectly obvious, however, that players with the pace and accuracy of Larwood don't grow on every currant bush, otherwise every county would have a Larwood; every club team, and every school team would have one.

Now let us suppose for a moment that young players who aren't Larwoods try the Larwood method. What is going to happen?

They are going to drop some balls very short; they are likely to send some balls a foot or more outside the leg stump, and even ordinary players with the bat are going to hit those deliveries mighty hard. The fellows who are making up the leg-trap will spend most of their time, not picking up catches, but dodging and ducking this way and that to prevent themselves being knocked out.

So I will tell you, chums, that leg theory bowling is not something for anybody and everybody to try.

PERSEVERANCE PAYS!

I WOULD rather talk about Larwood in another connection, because there are many lessons which young cricketers can learn. Larwood, in the first place, has risen to eminence in cricket all against the odds. He is not, physically, built on the lines on which most good fast bowlers of the past have been built. He is comparatively short of stature. But he set himself out to be a fast bowler, and overcame his handicaps. That's the spirit. It has been shown by Larwood in other ways.

Even when this still boyish-looking player of Notts was playing in League cricket—before he was introduced to the county as a bowler—he was such a poor bat that last man in was his usual place. When he started with the county at Trent Bridge, he made up his mind that he would get runs in county cricket, as well as wickets. So from the very beginning of his county cricket career he set himself to the task of learning how to bat.

He used to go to George Gunn, the famous Notts batsman, for lessons in batting. He made a study of batting, and as everybody knows, he has made a lot of runs both in Test cricket and in county cricket. "Risen by perseverance" is the real lesson of Larwood. What he has done other young cricketers can do. So stick it, boys!

LEG BEFORE!

CAN a batsman be out leg before wicket to a bowler bowling round the wicket? This is one of the questions most frequently asked by young players, and incidentally it is a question frequently answered wrongly. Many people are of opinion that a batsman cannot be out to such a bowler. He certainly can be out.

The rules say that a batsman can be out leg before to a ball which is pitched in a straight line from wicket to wicket, and which would, in the umpire's opinion, have hit the wicket if it had not encountered the batsman's legs.

Now think how this rule can work with a bowler bowling round the wicket. He is a left-hander, say. He pitches a ball on the off stump which is going away a little towards the leg, but only sufficiently to hit the leg stump if it "carries on." That is a ball from which a batsman can be out leg before.

Many of the most successful slow bowlers—like Jack White of Somerset, for example—get a lot of wickets with a ball which straightens out after it has pitched. When it drops it is going across, but a little bit of spin straightens the ball. And out leg before is the proper verdict if the batsman's legs are in the way.

Here is another problem which is in the nature of a "catch" question. How can a bowler get a whole side out without bowling a single ball which is counted as part of the over? It can be done, and this is how the bowler can do it. He bowls ten wides in succession. It is plainly laid down in the rules that a wide-ball does not count as part of an over. Therefore, if a bowler bowled ten wides in succession, he did not, literally, bowl a single ball which counted. The fact remains that in spite of not bowling a single ball which counted in the over, the bowler could have all the wickets credited to him. There are at least two ways in which this could be done. The batsmen could be out, hit wicket, in attempting to play the ball, or each man could be stumped in the effort to play the wide, and failing to get back quickly enough.

Now send me your questions about anything connected with cricket; players, records, how to bat, how to bowl this or that type of ball. They will all be answered. It is by asking questions, learning from those who know, that you can improve your game.

"UMPIRE"

THE BOXING 'BEAK'!

(Continued from page 10.)

He started a little at the sound of a creak. Another fellow was rolling out of bed.

"That you, Reddy?" whispered the Bounder.

He would have been glad enough had his own chum joined up. It was unlikely enough, for Tom Redwing never joined in the Bounder's wild escapades.

"It's me, old chap!" came a fat whisper.

The Bounder gritted his teeth.

"You fat fool!" He knew the dulcet tones of William George Bunter. "Get back to bed, you potty porpoise!"

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"Quiet, you idiot! Do you want to wake the whole dorm?" snarled the Bounder.

Billy Bunter chuckled. He not only wanted, but intended, to wake the whole dormitory if he did not go on that happy excursion with the scapegrace of the Remove. The fact that the Bounder had declined his company made no difference to William George Bunter. Bunter wanted to go—and he was going! If Smithy did not like it, he could lump it. That was how the Owl of the Remove looked at it.

Bunter was dressing with unusual rapidity. He did not mean to let the Bounder dodge him in the dark. He was finished as soon as Smithy, as he had left himself less dressing to do.

Vernon-Smith trod softly across to the door. Billy Bunter rolled after him. At the door the Bounder halted, his eyes gleaming like a cat's in the gloom.

"You fat chump!" he hissed. "What do you want?"

"I'm going to Lantham Fair, old chap!"

"You blithering idiot—"

"You can give me a lift in your car, if you like!" said Bunter breezily, and without taking the trouble to lower his voice. "I'll pay half, as I told you, when—when I get my postal order."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" came a sleepy murmur. "Is that somebody up?"

Vernon-Smith choked back his angry annoyance, opened the door, and stepped out into the dark passage. Bunter followed him out, grinning. The Bounder slipped away swiftly in the dark.

"I say, Smithy!"

No reply.

"Smithy!" hooted Bunter.

The Bounder, already a dozen feet away, stopped, trembling with rage. Bunter was calling out quite recklessly, and any beak "on the prowl" might have heard him call. The fact was that the unscrupulous Owl of the Remove had the upper hand, and he was using it.

"Wait for me, Smithy!" said Bunter, groping along the dark passage. "You're going to give me a lift in the car, you know!"

"Quiet!" hissed the Bounder.

"All right!" Bunter joined him, grinning. "Don't make me call to you, you know. I can't see in the dark. Keep near me, old chap, or I shall miss you, and have to call out again."

"Will you go back to the dorm?" breathed the Bounder.

Not for worlds, if he could have helped it, would the Bounder have burdened himself with the fat and fatuous Owl on such an excursion. It was risky enough for a cool-headed fellow with all his wits about him. But it was beginning to look as if he could not help it.

"I'm coming, old fellow!" said

Bunter. "I'm rather keen on it! If you don't want my company—"

"Well, I don't!" snarled Vernon-Smith.

"Oh, really, Smithy," said Bunter, raising his voice. "If you really mean that you don't want me—"

"Quiet!" hissed Smithy.

"Rats!" retorted Bunter coolly. "I'll speak as loud as I like! If Quelch happens to come along—"

"Hold your tongue! Come with me!" muttered the Bounder, hardly able to resist his intense desire to take Bunter by the neck and bang his head on the passage wall.

But that, evidently, was out of the question. Every sleeper in the school would have been awakened the next moment.

Smithy trod on his way, Bunter at his heels. He did not get out of the fat junior's reach again. He was aware that Bunter would have called to him if he did. They crept down the stairs to the Remove passage, and along that passage to the box-room at the end. Below, lights were still burning, but this part of the House was in darkness. In the Remove box-room, Vernon-Smith opened the lower sash of the window.

It was a glorious night in early June. Fleecy clouds floated on a sky of darkest blue, and a silver edge of the

STILL THEY COME!

On page 17 of this issue you will see a reproduction in miniature of NEXT WEEK'S FREE PHOTO-PLATE. Take a glance at it, and then place an order for your MAGNET right away!

moon showed among them. The cool, clean air from the sea was keen and invigorating. Vernon-Smith drew a deep breath as he put his head out. A joy-ride on such a summer's night was enjoyable enough, and to the Bounder the risk he was taking gave it an added zest. He forgot for the moment the fat fly in the ointment. He was reminded of it when he dropped out on the leads below the window.

"Lend me a hand, Smithy!"

He turned back, gritting his teeth, and glared at Bunter.

"Stay where you are, you fat fool! Go and eat coke!"

"Oh, all right!" answered Bunter. "If I wake up any of the beaks, going back to the dorm, it won't be my fault! I shall have to explain that I came after you, Smithy. But I suppose you won't mind that."

Silently the Bounder reached up and helped Billy Bunter down from the box-room window to the flat leads. Bunter was no climber. He kicked the Bounder in the ribs as he came down, and jammed a fat elbow into his neck, and perhaps it was by accident that Smithy let go, and allowed him to fall on the leads with a bump.

"Ooooooop!" spluttered Bunter.

"Quiet, you fool!"

"Owl! Wow! Wharrer you let me fall for, you silly idiot?" hooted Bunter. "I've a jolly good mind not to come now! Wow!"

"Do you want to wake everybody in the House, you blithering hander-snatch?"

"I don't care! I'll jolly well tell 'em

you were breaking bounds, and I came after you! Look here, I jolly well won't come now, and I jolly well won't let you go, either! You jolly well come back with me to the dorm, or I'll jolly well wake the whole blessed House!" hooted Bunter.

That bump on the leads seemed to have had a deteriorating effect on Bunter's temper.

The Bounder almost trembled. He had much more to fear than the fatuous Owl if he was discovered out of bounds at that hour, as Billy Bunter was well aware.

"Quiet! I—I'll help you down!" The Bounder was almost choking with fury. "Come on, you fat idiot! This way!"

"That's all very well," said Bunter. "But let's have it plain. I don't trust you farther than I can see you, Vernon-Smith!"

"Speak low, you idiot!"

"Shan't! You're the kind of fellow to turn a fellow down after inviting him to come!" said Bunter. "Are you giving me a lift in the car?"

"Yes!" said the Bounder, between his teeth.

There was no help for it, though he promised himself the pleasure of kicking Billy Bunter the whole length of the Remove passage on the morrow.

"And standing the exes at the fair?" demanded Bunter. "You'll keep account, of course. I shall settle out of my postal order to-morrow—or—or the day after! Keep a strict account, you know! I refuse to be under any monetary obligation to you, Vernon-Smith!"

"Will you be quiet, and come?"

"You haven't answered me yet!"

"Yes, yes!" hissed the Bounder.

"Now shut up, and come!"

"Oh, all right! Give a fellow a hand up!"

The Bounder gave him a hand up. Then he helped him down from the leads to the ground by way of the rain-pipe. It was easy work to Smithy, who had done it many a time before; but it was hard work to Bunter, and he growled and groused and gasped and gurgled as he went. But he was safely landed at last.

Then Vernon-Smith led the way round the buildings, to cut across the corner of the quad to the Cloisters, which was his way out. This brought him in view of the Masters' study windows from a distance, and he glanced in that direction. One window was still lighted—that of Mr. Quelch; the others were dark. The thought of Mr. Lascelles was in Smithy's mind; but as his study window was dark, it looked as if Lascelles had gone to bed.

It was getting towards eleven o'clock now; Bunter had caused a great deal of delay. The car from Courtfield had long been waiting at the coppice down the road.

"Don't race like that!" gasped Bunter. "Keep with me, you beast! You jolly well want to leave me behind, you rotter! I say, Smithy—"

The Bounder slowed down. There was no getting rid of Billy Bunter. He was glued to the Bounder, like the Old Man of the Sea in "Sinbad the Sailor."

"Will you buck up?" snarled Smithy.

"No, I won't!" Bunter's uncommon exertions had told on him, and his temper was getting worse and worse. "I'll jolly well take as long as I like, and you'll jolly well wait for me—see? And—"

"Cave!" breathed the Bounder. He gave a sudden start, and his heart thrilled at a sound in the silent quad.

"Quiet! I can hear—"

"Oh, don't be a nervy ass! There's

nobody— Groooogh!" gurgled Bunter, as the Bounder clapped a savage hand over his mouth.

"Silence, you fool! It's a beak!" hissed Vernon-Smith.

"Oh crikey!" gurgled Bunter.

The Bounder grasped a fat arm and dragged Bunter almost headlong into the deep shadow of one of the old Greyfriars elms. It was the only cover at hand. Under the thick, wide-spreading branches the darkness was black—a patch of blackness in the silvery glimmer of stars and moon. Vernon-Smith pressed close to the great gnarled trunk, his heart thumping. Even Bunter realised the necessity of silence now, and he hardly breathed, his little round eyes almost popping through his big round spectacles with terror.

There was an unmistakable sound of a footstep in the silence. Someone, obviously a beak, was abroad in the deserted quadrangle, and approaching the spot. Very probably some sound of Bunter's voice had reached his ears in the silence.

Breathless, the Bounder watched. A tall figure came into clear view in the glimmer of the moon and halted, not more than ten or twelve feet from the big elm. In the silvery light Mr. Lawrence Lascelles was easily recognisable. The Bounder shut his teeth hard. It was plain now that he had not pulled Larry's leg so thoroughly as he had believed. The games master was not gone to bed, after all—he was walking in the quadrangle, evidently with a keen eye open for breakers of bounds.

"Oh crumbs!" breathed Billy Bunter, all his courage oozing out at his fat finger-tips at the sight of a beak. He leaned on the elm in a state of palpitating funk.

The Bounder pressed his arm as a hint to be silent—so hard that the fat Owl could barely repress a squoak of pain. And in silence, wrapped in darkness under the elm, they watched the athletic figure standing only a dozen feet away in the moonlight.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Up to Smithy!

THE Bounder hardly breathed.

Lascelles was standing still, looking past the elm under which the two juniors hugged cover.

It was plain enough that he was suspicious, that he had heard some sound that put him on his guard.

Only the Bounder's prompt dodging into cover had saved him from discovery, but it was doubtful whether it would save him for long. Larry was aware that somebody was about, and he was not likely to leave the spot without investigation. A long, long minute passed—sixty seconds that seemed each like a long minute—and still the games master stood where he was, watching and listening, and apparently puzzled.

In that long minute the Bounder had ample time to reflect on what this would mean to him, and he set his teeth hard with suppressed rage. What was the games master meddling for, he asked himself savagely. He was not a beak—only a maths master and games master! It was no business of his if Quelch's Form kicked over the traces. Why couldn't the meddling fool mind his own business?

The Bounder did not realise, or did not choose to realise, that having become aware of his intention, Lascelles



"Lend a hand here, Smithy!" gasped Bunter. "Go and eat coke!" said the Bounder. "Oh, all right!" answered the fat junior. "If I wake up any of the beaks it won't be my fault. I shall have to explain that I came after you, Smithy!" Silently, the Bounder reached up, and helped Bunter down from the box-room window.

could not possibly let the matter drop unless he was quite satisfied that that intention had been abandoned.

How long was he going to stand there like a stuffed dummy? the Bounder asked himself. Discovery, and a Head's flogging, was almost better than this miserable suspense. Savagely the Bounder watched the man in the moonlight. As for Bunter, he was collapsing against the thick trunk of the elm in a state of hopeless funk, thinking of nothing except what an ass he had been to get out of bounds.

Behind Larry, as he stood looking towards the elm, the shadow of another and more distant tree lay on the earth, black in the moonlight. Larry, of course, could not see it as it lay behind him, but the Bounder's glance, passing the man in the moonlight, saw the black shadow stir. He gave a start of astonishment; but he grasped the fact that a stirring shadow was detaching itself from the shadow of the further tree. In utter amazement the Bounder watched a creeping figure emerge into view, directly behind the games master of Greyfriars.

His eyes fairly bulged at the unexpected sight.

He would not have been surprised had some other Greyfriars master been taking a walk in the quad on that glorious June night. But the man creeping up behind Lascelles evidently

did not belong to Greyfriars. It was some intruder who had climbed in over the school wall under cover of the night.

Lascelles saw and heard nothing of him. But the Bounder watched the moonlight gleaming on a hard, set face—the face of a bruiser, marked with the scars of many a combat, the nose a little out of the straight, a tooth missing, and the stubby chin blue with a recent bruise. Smithy had never seen the thick-set, stocky ruffian before, but Bob Cherry would have recognised him as Pug, one of the bruisers who had attacked Larry in Friardale Lane a couple of days ago.

But Smithy, though he did not know the man, could not be in doubt of his intention. There was a short, loaded stick gripped in his right hand as he crept up behind the games master of Greyfriars, and his little, close-set, piggy eyes glinted like a beast's. And Smithy knew that it was some enemy of Larry's who had crept into the school at that late hour to seek him, and had unexpectedly found his task easy—finding Larry Lascelles out of the House, clear in the moonlight, off his guard. Vernon-Smith watched the man as he crept closer and closer behind his unsuspecting victim, with fascinated eyes.

Would Larry hear him, and turn?
(Continued on page 16.)



(Continued from page 13.)

He did not hear a sound. The stocky ruffian crept as softly as a cat. Larry did not stir. It was easy to guess why he was standing so still and waiting. He knew that someone was out of bounds, and had dodged into cover at his approach. And he was watching and listening to spot that someone. As the breaker of bounds, obviously, was not behind him, Larry did not think of looking round.

The Bounder's heart beat. It was a flogging, it might be the sack, for breaking bounds at night. The fatuous Bunter would be caned, but Smithy's old reputation was against him—he was not trusted, and there was many an old score against his name. And he was safe—safe as houses—if he allowed the games master to be struck down by the man who was creeping behind him. And he could not warn Lascelles without betraying himself.

To the Bounder's credit be it said that he did not hesitate. He waited only till it seemed certain that Larry would not turn his head and discover his danger himself. Pug Pilkinson was within six feet of the games master's back, and it was clear that to wait longer was to leave Larry to his fate, when the Bounder acted.

He sprang out from the circle of black shadow under the elm, and shouted:

"Look out—behind you—quick!" Mr. Lascelles stared at him in astonishment. Pug, taken still more by surprise by the schoolboy's sudden appearance, halted a second. Larry was quicker on the uptake than Pug. The Bounder pointed as he shouted, and Larry, after an instant's amazed stare, swung round.

"Gad!" he ejaculated. For a moment the two men faced one another—the handsome, athletic games master of Greyfriars, and the low-browed, ruffianly bruiser. Then Pug came springing on, the loaded stick lifted.

Smithy could not help admiring Larry as he watched what followed. The young master leaped backwards with the agility of a panther, a good six feet in a backward spring, and the blow that seemed certain to smash him down missed him by a couple of feet. Pug, overborne by his own momentum, plunged forward, the loaded stick crashing on the ground as it met with no resistance, the bruiser staggering almost to his knees.

With as swift a spring Larry came forward again, and as he came his right shot out, catching Pug fairly between the eyes.

The bruiser gave a grunt and pitched over like a felled ox.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped the Bounder. He knew that Larry had once been a boxer in the ring—that circumstance was known, though almost forgotten, at Greyfriars. Probably Larry had never hit harder in his old days within the ropes.

The thick-set ruffian stretched out on the ground and lay there. That single drive had knocked him out, and he lay almost stunned.

Lascelles hardly glanced at him after he went down. His eyes were about him keenly and watchfully, in search of other enemies. But it was soon clear that Pug was alone. There was no sound or movement in the glimmering lights and shadows of the moonlit quad.

The games master's tense manner relaxed. He stepped towards the fallen bruiser and glanced down at him with a faint smile. Pug stirred, and blinked up at him dizzily. But he did not attempt to rise—he could not.

"You again, Pug!" said the games master quietly. "This is the second time—and the last!"

A mumbled oath answered him. "You came here to find me," said Lascelles, still in the same quiet tone. "If I had not chanced to be out of the House you would have entered—is that it? You will not have another chance for another six months, Pug—I shall take care of that!"

He turned to Vernon-Smith. "So you are out of bounds, Vernon-Smith! I had no doubt that it was you! Who was with you?"

The Bounder had forgotten Bunter. But Bunter was not to be seen. The fat Owl was hugging cover under the elm, hardly conscious of what was passing in his terror, only hoping that whatever happened to Smithy, he would escape detection.

Smithy was not the fellow to give him away. He stared at Lascelles as he asked the question.

"Nobody's with me, sir," he answered coolly.

"I think I heard voices, Vernon-Smith, which caused me to come in this direction."

"You can see that I'm alone, sir."

"At the present moment, undoubtedly," agreed Mr. Lascelles. "But you were under that elm, I think, and I have no doubt that your companion is still there."

"Oh lor'!" gasped Bunter. Mr. Lascelles stepped closer to the elm and peered under the black shadow of the branches. Then he dimly made out a fat figure hugging the trunk.

"You may step out!" he said.

"I—I—I'm not here!" gasped Bunter.

"What?"

"I—I—I mean— Oh lor'! Oh crikey!" groaned the fat Owl.

"Come out at once!"

In deep dismay, the Owl of the Remove tottered out into the moonlight. Mr. Lascelles gave a start as he recognised Bunter, and his eyes turned on the Bounder grimly. Bunter was about the last fellow he would be expected to find in company with a reckless breaker of bounds. His brow grew dark and stern.

"So you are not satisfied with breaking the rules of the school yourself, Vernon-Smith, but you have drawn this foolish, stupid boy into your lawless escapade!" said the games master.

"The fat fool butted in," said Smithy coolly. "I didn't want him. He hooked on to me."

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"Are you going to report me to the Head, sir?" asked the Bounder, with a glitter in his eyes.

"I have no choice in the matter, Vernon-Smith."

"I might remind you, sir, that I gave myself away, and that if I hadn't, that brute would have knocked your brains out from behind."

"I am aware of the service you have

rendered me," said Mr. Lascelles, "and I shall certainly explain it to Dr. Locke as an extenuating circumstance. I can do no more than that."

The Bounder gritted his teeth. "If I'd left you to be knocked out—"

he said bitterly. "That would have been the act of a coward and a rascal, of which I do not believe you capable," said Mr. Lascelles. "You were bound to act as you did, and if the matter rested with me I should certainly overlook your offences. But it does not rest with me."

"You could keep it dark," said the Bounder sullenly. "You'd be lying there instead of that brute if I hadn't shown up—and I needn't have."

"I could not keep the matter secret if I desired. Vernon-Smith, as that man will be charged and taken into custody, and the matter therefore must become public," said the games master. "Say no more."

Pug Pilkinson sat up, groaning. "You give a bloke into custody, will you?" he muttered. "You, a school-master, putting up to fight for a purse! You'll like all this 'ere school to 'ear about it, I dessay, and your 'eadmaster too—I don't think!"

"Get up!" Lascelles grasped the ruffian's shoulder and jerked him to his feet. Pug lurched in his grasp.

"Follow me, Vernon-Smith and Bunter!" said the games master. And with an iron grip on Pug's shoulder, he marched him away, the Bounder and Billy Bunter following. A couple of minutes later Mr. Lascelles, still holding Pug by the shoulder with one hand, was knocking at the Head's private door with the other.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Before the Beak!

DR. LOCKE, the Greyfriars head-master, seemed to be undergoing the surprise of his life. He blinked over his glasses at Mr. Lascelles, at the Bounder, at Billy Bunter, and at the low-browed scowling Pug in almost dizzy astonishment.

The Head was in his study, sitting up rather late over a knotty point in Sophocles, when Lascelles knocked at his door, and as the servants were gone to bed at that hour Dr. Locke admitted the games master himself. Lascelles he was not surprised to see, but Bunter and Vernon-Smith, of course, should have been in bed and asleep long ago; and as for Pug, the sight of him was both amazing and unnerving to the old gentleman. Dr. Locke stood like a statue of astonishment.

"I am sorry to disturb you, sir," said the games master in his quiet, pleasant tones, "but I have to acquaint you with what has occurred, and I must telephone for a constable to take charge of this man."

"S'elp me!" murmured Pug. "Bless my soul!" said the Head. "Please come into my study. Bless my soul!"

Still grasping Pug's shoulder, Mr. Lascelles led him in, and the two juniors followed down the passage to the study. In that apartment the Head fell rather than sat into his chair, and blinked.

"Mr. Lascelles, what—"

"This man, sir, is named Pilkinson," said Mr. Lascelles. "He entered the precincts of the school to-night with the object of making an attack upon me. You will approve of my giving him in charge of the police?"

"Most certainly!" gasped the Head. "This is—is most extraordinary! Is—is—is the man safe, Mr. Lascelles?"

"Quite, sir!"
"But what—what could be his object?"

"He is a man connected with the boxing ring, sir, and, as you are aware, I did some boxing before I became a master at Greyfriars."

The Head sat up.
"But that is all over, Mr. Lascelles. I was given to understand that the connection was broken—entirely broken."

"Entirely, sir. But this man has an extraordinary fancy that I have re-engaged in some contest in the ring. I need not say that his belief is entirely unfounded—"

"S'elp me!" gasped Pug.
"In the belief that I was put up to meet some boxer, a man called the Game Chicken, in whom he is interested, he wished to knock me out—that is, to incapacitate me for the fight," explained Mr. Lascelles. "On a previous occasion I told him that he was mistaken, but his present action indicates that he did not believe my assurance. Why, I cannot say."

"S'elp me!" gasped Pug again.
His eyes, already blackening, were fixed on Mr. Lascelles in dizzy amazement.
The Bounder was watching him keenly.

Bunter was blinking at the Head in terror. But the Bounder had all his wits about him, as he usually had. And the Bounder could see quite clearly that Pug Wilkinson's breath was taken away by Larry's denial. His look was that of a man amazed to hear falsehoods reeled off so glibly. Right or wrong, it was evident that Pug firmly believed that Larry was lying to his headmaster. And the Bounder wondered.

"On a previous occasion," went on Mr. Lascelles, "I allowed this man to escape, hoping that he would realise his mistake and leave me in peace. But since he has ventured into the precincts of the school, there is no alternative but to give him into custody."

"I quite agree," said Dr. Locke.
"Oh, stow it, Larry!" burst out Pug. "My eye, I've 'eard some lying in my time, but this 'ere beats it all! It do that! Ain't Archie put you up to fight the Chicken for five 'undred pound? Now, I asks you!"

"Certainly not!" rapped Mr. Lascelles.
"How can you imagine such a thing?" exclaimed the Head.
"But it's down in black and white!" roared Pug. "I tell you it's down in black and white, and it's fixed. That bloke's a-taking of you in, sir! That's his game! I tell you it's all fixed for him to fight the Chicken for a purse of five 'undred pounds, fixed between him and Archie—"

"Silence, sir!" rapped the Head. "Can you imagine that I should take your word against that of a master in this school? Be silent!"

"On my davy, sir. Ask any man in the fancy, sir, and he'll tell you. It's all fixed!" gasped Pug.
"Be silent!"
"He's took you in—"

"Silence, I say!"

The Head's majestic manner cowed the bruiser into silence. He stood glaring at Larry with his blackening eyes, simmering with fury. The Bounder's lip curled. Evidently Pug believed what he said. He could hardly have made so strange a mistake. One thing seemed clear to the Bounder—Larry Lascelles was mixed up in the

ring again, and he was pulling the wool over the eyes of the Head of Greyfriars.

That, to tell the truth, would not have shocked the Bounder very much. In other circumstances he would probably have wished Larry luck. But his feelings were very different now.

The bruiser having been reduced to silence, Dr. Locke turned his gaze on the Bounder and Bunter.

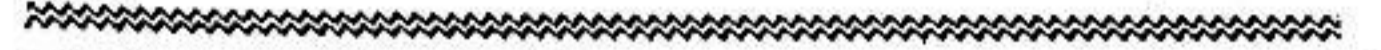
"These boys—" he began.
"I am sorry to say that they were out of bounds, sir, and I found them in the quadrangle," said Mr. Lascelles.
"Bless my soul!"

"I must add that Vernon-Smith gave me warning when this ruffian was about to strike me down from behind, and that but for his intervention I might have fallen a helpless victim. I must say, too, that but for Vernon-Smith's action in warning me I might not have discovered that he was out of bounds. May I hope, sir, that you will take this into consideration in dealing with him."

"I shall deal with him in the morning," said Dr. Locke. "Both will now return to their dormitory. Go at once!"

"I—I say, sir," stammered Bunter. "It was only a lark—"

(Continued on next page.)



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"I shall question you in the morning, Bunter. If you will keep that man in your charge for the present, Mr. Lascelles, I will ring up Courtfield police station and ask for a constable to be sent."

"I say, sir—"

"That will do, Bunter!"

"But—but it was only a lark, sir!" groaned Bunter. "We—we were only going for—a stroll in the quad, sir. We weren't going in a car to Lantham Fair, were we, Smithy?"

The Head gave quite a jump.

"Upon my word! Is it possible, Vernon-Smith, that you had any such reckless intention?"

The Bounder gave Bunter a look as if he could have bitten him.

"We—we just wanted to see the quad by—by moonlight, sir," stammered Bunter. "That's all, ain't it, Smithy? There isn't any car waiting for us down the road, is there, Smithy?"

"Leave my study!" rapped the Head.

"Oh lor'!"

Billy Bunter's fat knees fairly bent under him as he crawled out of the Head's study. And the Bounder, with a savage face, followed him.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Beastly for Bunter!

HARRY WHARTON awoke suddenly. So did every other fellow in the Remove dormitory. They were awakened by a fearful yell.

"Yaroooooooh!"

"What the thump—"

Wharton started up in bed.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"My esteemed hat! What—"

"Great gad!" yawned Lord Mauleverer. "What the merry dooce—"

The light was on in the dormitory. Vernon-Smith had switched it on as he came in. Every fellow sat up in bed, staring and blinking. They saw a remarkable sight—two fellows, fully dressed, going along the dormitory at a racing pace—Bunter in the lead, the Bounder close behind, kicking at every other step! Why Smithy had started kicking him as soon as they were inside the dormitory, Bunter did not know. But there was no doubt about the fact! Smithy was kicking him, frightfully hard! Yelling on his top note, the Owl of the Remove fled and dodged—in vain! The Bounder dribbled him up the dormitory like a fat football, and back again.

"My only hat!" gasped Nugent, staring blankly.

It was half-past eleven—a time of night when slumber's chain generally bound the Remove fellows. But they were all wide awake now. Bunter's frantic howls would have awakened a dormitory of Rip Van Winkles!

"Smithy!" shouted Redwing.

"Yaroooh! Help! I say, you fellows, keep him off!" shrieked Bunter.

"What's he kicking me for, I'd like to know? Yarooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it, Smithy!" chortled Skinner. "You'll have Quelch up here soon, at this rate! Go it!"

The Bounder did not heed. Bunter dodged round a bed, scrambled over another, and fled down the dormitory again. After him went the infuriated Bounder. The Removites stared on in amazement. Bunter howled and dodged, and yelled and hopped, and spluttered and blew and panted. Thud, thud,

thud, came the Bounder's boots behind him.

"I say, you fellows—rescue!" raved Bunter. "He's gone mad! Dragimoff! Sit on his head! Oh lor'!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Redwing jumped out of bed, ran after the Bounder, and grabbed him by the arm.

"For goodness' sake, chuck it, Smithy!" he gasped. "That fat duffer will wake the whole House! You'll get Quelch here."

"Yaroooh! Whoop! Help!"

The Bounder panted. He gave a surly assent and went to his bed, to sit down and take his boots off. He thought that perhaps Bunter had had enough. Bunter's impression was that he had had too much.

"Ow! Ow! Ow!" groaned Bunter. "I've a jolly good mind to mop you up, you beast! Pitching into a chap for nothing! Wow! Ow! Wow!"

"But what on earth's the row?" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "Have you two piffing duffers been out of bounds?"

"You knew I was going," snapped Smithy.

"You haven't got back from Lantham Fair—"

"Never got outside the school!" snarled the Bounder. "That fat idiot glined himself on to me, and gurgled and gabbled and got us spotted by a beak in the quad."

"Phew! That means going up before the Head!" exclaimed Johnny Bull.

"We've been before the Head."

"I say, you fellows, I only went out to—to tell Smithy to come back, you know," wailed Bunter. "I—I was shocked at him, you know, and—and I went after him to—to persuade him to—to—to come back. I say, it was all Smithy's fault we were spotted. Oh dear!"

"One comfort is, that blithering burler will be flogged!" said the Bounder savagely. "I can stand it better than he can."

"Oh crikey! It was all your fault, you beast! You fairly dragged me into going!" gasped Bunter. "And then you had to show up and let that beast Lascelles spot you—"

"Did Larry spot you?" exclaimed Wharton.

The Bounder snarled.

"Yes, hang him! I thought I'd pulled his leg all right, but—"

"But you hadn't!" grinned Skinner. "I jolly well warned you, Smithy! I knew he was too wide to be spoofed."

"Oh, shut up!"

"He wouldn't have spotted us," groaned Bunter. "But that fool Smithy had to show up just because a man was going to bang Lascelles on the back of the head with a stick—"

"What?" yelled the juniors.

"Of course, I didn't want Lascelles to have his silly brains knocked out, but that would have been better than a flogging!" groaned Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wonder if Larry would think so?" chuckled Bob.

"Is that fat Owl romancing, or what?" asked Harry Wharton, in wonder. "Has anything happened, Smithy, besides your getting nailed?"

"Only that I've been a bigger fool than even Bunter," said the Bounder bitterly. "He had sense enough to keep in cover. I showed up, when a man went for Larry with a stick—some old bruiser, he looked like. A man the rotter knew. He called him 'Pug'."

"Pug!" exclaimed Bob. "That's the

merchant who went for Larry the other day in Friardale Lane."

"Oh, he knows him all right—some old acquaintance," sneered the Bounder. "We all know that Lascelles was a prize-fighter before he came here."

"Oh, rats!"

"And he was here—inside the school?" exclaimed Wharton. "My hat! He must be determined to knock old Larry out if he butted into the school to get at him!"

"It seems that Lascelles is booked for a prize-fight, and Pug thinks his man will get the worst of it," jeered the Bounder. "That's why."

"That's rot, Smithy! Larry chucked all that long ago—"

"Pug doesn't seem to think so."

"Larry told him he was making a mistake," said Bob Cherry. "I heard him, the other day, in the lane—"

"He told him lies; and he's been telling the Head the same lies," said Smithy. "It's true enough."

"Rot!"

"The rotfulness is terrific."

"I say, you fellows, the man was behind Lascelles, and Smithy showed up to warn him," said Bunter. "Lascelles might have let us off after that."

"Might have let Smithy off," said Bob. "I don't see why he should let you off, you fat fraud."

"Well, I—I was just going to rush on the man and—and knock him down!" said Bunter. "In another second I should have knocked him spinning—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at. We're up for a flogging now, and it's all Smithy's fault! Why couldn't he stick tight, like I did?"

"Wish I had!" snarled the Bounder. "I jolly well know that if I get a Head's flogging, I'll make that cur Lascelles pay for it somehow."

"Oh, don't be an ass, old chap," said Harry. "Lascelles couldn't keep it dark, whatever you did for him—and it was impossible, too, if that man Pug was mixed up in it—"

"He would be lying with a cracked head now, if I hadn't tipped him," said the Bounder between his teeth. "After that, he takes me to the Beak! He'd never have spotted me, if I'd let Pug get on with it. I was a fool not to. If I get a flogging—" He gritted his teeth. "I'll make him squirm for it—and I fancy I know how, too! He can take in the Head—he can't take me in!"

"Bow-wow! You'll be cooler in the morning," said Bob, soothingly. "Turn in and sleep on it, old bean."

"I say, you fellows, we've got to see the Head in the morning," groaned Bunter. "I say, I told him we only went out for a stroll in the quad, but he didn't seem to believe me, though I specially mentioned that we weren't going to Lantham Fair!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'd be at the fair now, if that fat fool hadn't hooked on to me," growled the Bounder savagely.

"Look here, Smithy, you'll jolly well have to own up to the Head that you persuaded me to come—"

Smithy was about to turn in, but at that remark, he grasped his pillow and turned away from his bed. He made a stride at William George Bunter.

"I say—keep off!" yelled Bunter. "Oh, my hat! Oh scissors! Oh crikey! Yarooooooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Whoop! Stop it!" shrieked Bunter, rolling over under the hefty swipes of the Bounder's pillow. "Help! Rescue! Fire! Yaroooooh!"

Swipe, swipe, swipe!



"Look out—behind you—quick!" shouted Vernon-Smith. "Gad!" As Mr. Lascelles swung round, the low-browed, ruffianly bruiser sprang at him, the loaded stick lifted. The young master leaped backwards with the agility of a panther, and the blow that seemed certain to smash him down missed by a couple of feet!

"Cave!" shouted Hazeldene, as the door opened.

Mr. Quelch, with a grim brow, looked into the dormitory. Apparently the Remove master had been apprised of the startling happenings of the night, and had come up to see the two breakers of bounds safe back to bed. He arrived at a rather exciting moment.

Swipe, swipe!

"Yaroooh! Help! Whoop! Beast! Stoppit!"

"Vernon-Smith!" roared the Remove master. He strode into the dormitory with a brow of thunder.

"Oh!" gasped the Bounder. He ceased to swipe with the pillow.

"How dare you, Vernon-Smith! Go to bed at once! Bunter, go to bed!"

"Ow! Wow! Ow!"

"I am informed," said Mr. Quelch, in a grinding voice, "that you two boys of my Form have been out of House bounds at this hour of the night. As the matter is in the headmaster's hands, I shall not deal with you myself. If the Head should decide to expel you from the school, Vernon-Smith, I shall assuredly not utter one word on your behalf. I think it probable that tomorrow will be your last day at Greyfriars!"

"And Bunter's, too, sir?" sneered the Bounder.

"Ow! I say, sir——"

"That stupid boy, whom you have led into your own reckless ways, Vernon-Smith, will certainly be severely punished——"

"Ow!"

"But it is quite easy to see who was the ringleader in this disgraceful adventure," said Mr. Quelch sternly. "Obviously, that foolish boy was only following your guidance. I have no doubt whatever that Dr. Locke will take

the severest possible view of the matter, and I can hold out no hope that you will be allowed to remain here."

And Mr. Quelch turned out the light, and left the dormitory—leaving the scapegrace of Greyfriars to what sleep he could get after that.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Sentence!

"LOOKS rotten for the Highcliffe match!"

Bob Cherry made that remark after breakfast in the morning, when the Famous Five went out into the quad.

Harry Wharton nodded.

"Looks as if Smithy won't be playing after all!" he said.

"The silly goat!" growled Johnny Bull. "It serves him jolly well right—but we want him in the cricket, all the same."

"Mayn't be the sack," said Nugent, hopefully. "After all, he seems to have done Larry a jolly good turn. Locke's bound to consider that."

"Um!" said Wharton, doubtfully.

Few fellows in the Remove doubted that Herbert Vernon-Smith would be "bunked" that morning. It was not as if it had been the Bounder's first offence. He had offended again and again; but somehow his luck had always pulled him through. The eye of suspicion was always on him, more or less; and now he had been caught fairly in the act.

Breaking bounds at night was too serious an offence to be passed over; and the Bounder knew quite well the risk he had been running. It was in his favour that he had warned Mr.

Lascelles in the moment of danger, thereby betraying himself. Also that he had only been going for a joyride to a fair—if the Head believed that! But it was quite possible that the Head would not believe that his intentions had been so harmless.

Smithy was suspected, and more than suspected, of "pub-haunting," and he was not a fellow whose word could be taken by a master. In the Remove, among fellows he knew, the Bounder would have scorned to lie; but he held the rather dangerous doctrine that all was fair in war—and he was at war with authority. To a master he would lie with a cool composure and untroubled conscience. But the result was that a master would not take his word—honesty would have been the best policy in the long run.

Smithy, as he walked in the quad, waiting to be called before the Head, was not thinking of the cricket—keen as he was on games. His fate hung in the balance—he did not know whether the gates of Greyfriars would close behind him for the last time that day. The doubt and suspense were bitter enough—and he put them down to Mr. Lascelles' account—and his feelings towards Larry were bitter indeed.

The man might have let him off, and kept the whole thing dark, after what he had done—that was how the Bounder looked at it. But for him, Lascelles would have had a cracked and bandaged head that morning. Yet he had reported the breaker of bounds to the chief beak.

That Mr. Lascelles could not have acted otherwise, the Bounder did not consider. He was in no mood to be just. The matter could not have been kept secret, unless Pug Pilkinton had been allowed to go free, instead of being

handed over to the police. Even Smithy realised that that would have been a lot to ask. Still, in his angry ponderings on the subject, he came back to the undoubted fact that he never would have been caught had he not intervened to save Lascelles from injury. For that, it was up to Larry to see him through! So the Bounder considered. Bitterness and anger, resentment and revenge, ran riot in his breast as he paced in the quad that sunny June morning.

Billy Bunter was the picture of woe. He did not fear the sack—but he feared a flogging. Almost, he would have preferred the sack—it did not hurt so much.

When Mr. Quelch appeared in the doorway, and beckoned the two culprits into the House, the Bounder went in scowling, and the fat Owl in fear and trembling.

"You will follow me to Dr. Locke's study!" said the Remove master, briefly.

And they followed him. They were to be dealt with before classes began; and the Bounder wondered bitterly whether he would ever sit in the Remove Form Room again.

He had half expected to see the games master with the Head, but Mr. Lascelles was not there. He had said all that he had to say to Dr. Locke; and his presence was not required.

"Here are the boys, sir!" said Mr. Quelch. Quelch's face was grim, and his eyes stony. The whole affair was deeply annoying to the Remove master.

Dr. Locke fixed his eyes on the two delinquents as they stood before him. Billy Bunter's fat knees knocked together, and his eyes goggled dismally behind his big spectacles. The Bounder stood erect, cool and calm. If he was going to take the knock, he was going to take it without flinching. That attitude did not please the headmaster, and Dr. Locke's frown deepened.

"Vernon-Smith! You were found out of the House at a late hour last night. With what intention had you left the House?"

"I was going to Lantham Fair, sir!" answered the Bounder.

"I—I—I wasn't, sir," gasped Bunter.

Dr. Locke turned on the fat junior.

"You were going with Vernon-Smith, Bunter?"

"Only for a walk in the quad, sir!" groaned Bunter. "I—I never knew there was a fair at Lantham, sir."

"You had better tell Dr. Locke the truth, Bunter, you foolish boy," snapped Mr. Quelch.

"Oh! Yes, sir! Certainly, sir! I—I always do, sir. It was only a lark!" groaned Bunter.

"The matter is serious enough, Vernon-Smith; but I should certainly take a less serious view of your conduct if I could be assured that you intended to go to the fair at Lantham, and not to some more disreputable place," said the Head sternly, "but I regret to say that I cannot take your word; and your companion does not bear out your statement."

"I told a lot of fellows I was going to the fair, sir."

"Possibly. But as you are not a truthful boy, that counts for nothing," answered the Head dryly. And the Bounder winced.

"I—I'm truthful, sir," groaned Bunter. "You ask my beak, sir—"

"What?"

"I—I mean my Form master—you ask him, and he will tell you that I'm the most truthful chap in the Remove—"

"On the other hand, you are the most untruthful boy in my Form, Bunter!" said Mr. Quelch grimly.

"Oh, really, sir—"

"I certainly think, sir, that there is

no doubt that Vernon-Smith was the leader in this escapade, and that this foolish, obtuse boy—Bunter—was led into it by him!" said Mr. Quelch.

"I have no doubt of that," said Dr. Locke.

The Bounder sneered. It was what the beaks naturally would think, considering the characters of the two. They were not aware that the fatuous Bunter had hooked on to the Bounder against his will, and certainly would not have taken Vernon-Smith's word for it. The Bounder's system of "stuffing" the beaks was coming home to roost now, as it were.

"You state that you were not going to Lantham Fair, Bunter, as Vernon-Smith has declared?" asked the Head.

"Oh, no, sir!" gasped Bunter, too obtuse to understand that his denial made matters worse. "Not at all, sir! I never knew there was a fair at Lantham—I never heard Wharton and Nugent talking about going there on Saturday afternoon, sir!"

"I warn you to keep to the truth, Bunter!"

"Oh, certainly, sir! I—I wouldn't go to the fair, sir, if—if I was asked!" gasped Bunter. "I'd have refused, just as Wharton did when Smithy asked him in the study last night—"

"Vernon-Smith asked my head boy to accompany him on this escapade?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"Oh! No, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I never heard them talking in the study, sir—I was nowhere near the keyhole. As for listening to what they said, I'd scorn it!"

"Bless my soul!" said the Head, blinking at Bunter over his glasses.

"And they all turned it down," went on Bunter. "And—and—and I never told Smithy I'd come, as they were afraid. Did I, Smithy?"

"You did!" answered Smithy.

"Oh, you rotter!" gasped Bunter. "I jolly well didn't! I came after you from the dorm to fetch you back. I told you it was—was—was wrong to go to the fair after lights out, and—and—and—"

"Silence, Bunter! It would appear from this foolish boy's ramblings, Mr. Quelch, that Vernon-Smith actually was going to the fair," said Dr. Locke.

"It would appear so, sir," said the Remove master.

"But I wasn't, sir!" wailed Bunter. "I never told Smithy I'd wake the House if he didn't let me come—"

"Bless my soul!"

Vernon-Smith grinned. Billy Bunter was thinking only of his own fat skin, but he was unconsciously serving the Bounder's turn. There was a perceptible lightening of the tense atmosphere in the Head's study. The two masters were getting an inkling of what had really happened. Smithy had hitherto figured as the "villain of the piece" leading a foolish young rascal into lawlessness. It was growing clear that that, at least, was not the case.

"Bunter," rapped Mr. Quelch, "did you force yourself on Vernon-Smith against his will?"

"Oh, no, sir! It was all his fault!" said Bunter. "I shouldn't have been awake at all, only I heard him speaking to Skinner, and Skinner funked it. Another minute and I should have been asleep."

"Bunter came against my wish, sir," said the Bounder.

"I should not believe that, Vernon-Smith, but it seems to be borne out by Bunter's confused statements," said the Head. "If you were a boy whose word could be taken, the matter would be

very different. However, it seems clear, Mr. Quelch, that Vernon-Smith did not intentionally lead this stupid boy into sharing his escapade."

"I think so, sir."

"It seems clear, too, that his object was to visit the fair—a serious matter enough, but not so bad as I feared. A foolish, reckless, lawless adventure—but that is the worst that can be said of it," said Dr. Locke. "In these circumstances, and taking into account the service which he undoubtedly rendered Mr. Lascelles—" The Head paused.

The Bounder's heart grew lighter.

Bunter, without knowing it—and certainly without intending it—had saved him from the worst. He was not to be "sacked." Smithy realised that it had been fortunate for him, after all, that Bunter had "hooked on." His own word would not have been taken. But the beaks were satisfied now that they had to deal only with a reckless escapade; that Smithy's destination had not been the Cross Keys, at Friardale, or the Three Fishers up the river!

The Head remained silent for a few minutes, considering the judgment he would deliver. Probably he was glad enough himself that it had turned out possible to avoid an expulsion in the school.

"In the circumstances," he resumed at length, "I shall not expel you, Vernon-Smith. I shall administer a very severe flogging—which, I trust, will be a warning to you. Bunter I shall leave to you, Mr. Quelch, and you will deal with him as you think fit."

"Oh lor'!"

"Very well, sir."

"The school will assemble in Hall to witness the flogging," said the Head, rising. "It will take place before classes. Vernon-Smith, I earnestly hope that this punishment will induce you to respect the laws of the school to which you belong—and to which you will cease to belong if you should come before me again on such a charge!"

The Bounder made no reply to that. Had he told the Head his thoughts on that subject, probably Dr. Locke would have changed his mind and sacked him on the spot. In silence he followed Mr. Quelch from the study.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

A Mutual Surprise!

LARRY LASCELLES stood in his study, by the window, with a letter in his hand, at which he was gazing with almost popping eyes. That letter, whatever it contained, seemed to have astonished Mr. Lascelles—in fact, to have petrified him.

He stood as if transfixed, gazing at it in the bright June sunshine at the study window. Larry was due for a maths "set" at nine o'clock, and nine was chiming from the old clock-tower of Greyfriars. For once, Lascelles, usually the soul of punctuality, had forgotten a class. The chime died away, and the sounds of scurrying feet in the passages, the hum of voices, died also. Mr. Lascelles still stood transfixed, staring at the letter in his hand.

"Great gad!" he said at last.

The letter was written in a flowing, rather sprawling, hand. It was signed by a name that Lascelles knew well—only too well—the name of his cousin, Archie Valence.

In other days, as a fighting-man in the ring, Larry had come a good deal into contact with that rather disreputable cousin of his, but at Greyfriars Archie was "taboo"—he had never

visited Lascelles at the school. Archie, with his hat on the side of his head, a cigar sticking out of the corner of his mouth, a tie that could be seen a quarter of a mile off, and spats that leaped to the eye, was not the sort of visitor a Greyfriars master wanted the boys to see. Archie had played many parts in his time—punting on the races, poker-playing in the smoke-rooms on Atlantic liners—and his latest occupation was promoting fights. That was why the one-time boxer, now a Greyfriars master, had heard from him again.

A letter from Archie, cadging a loan—to be repaid at some very uncertain date—would not have surprised Mr. Lascelles. The young master had had many missives of that sort. But the letter that he now held in his hand was a startling one. It amazed and mystified Larry. It ran:

"Dear Larry,—Writing as per promise on the phone. Right as rain! You're up to meet the Game Chicken—all fixed and settled, but for a few details, which I must discuss with you. When can I see you? The sooner the quicker. If you'd rather I didn't blow into the jolly old scholastic headquarters, I can meet you at the Pagoda, in Lantham. I suppose you're keeping this quiet, in the circus. Phone me Lantham 120 any time Thursday.

*"Yours to a cinder,
"ARCHIE."*

"Is the man mad?" said Mr. Lascelles, speaking aloud in his amazement.

"Is he stark mad? Has he been talking this rot? And is that why Pug fancied that I was going to knock his man out? My only hat!"

He stared at the letter again. He had wondered why Pug was so earnestly convinced that he was "up" to fight the Chicken. This seemed to explain it. Archie Valence, apparently, had put him up, taking his consent for granted. But the reference to a promise on the phone was utterly mystifying. He had not talked to his cousin on the phone since he had been at Greyfriars. He had warned Archie in the plainest terms not to ring him up at the school, and, so far as he knew, Archie had never done so.

He crumpled the letter at last into his pocket, and crossed to his telephone. The quickest way of elucidating the mystery was to ring up Lantham 120, that was clear. Mr. Lascelles' face was grim as he rang up the exchange. He had some very plain language to speak to the happy Archie.

"Hallo! Who's speaking?" came a voice over the wires.

"Is that you, Archie?"
"Larry, old bean! Little me—waitin' to hear from you! Never been so glad to hear your melodious toot!" came Archie's fruity voice—the very tones of which told a tale of fat cigars and whiskies-and-sodas. "You had my billet-doux this mornin'—what?"

"What does it mean?"
"Eh? What it says, old thing! Can you run across here to-day?"

"If I do I shall give you my left, Archie."
"Wha-a-t?"

"You utter fool! What do you mean by writing me such a letter? Haven't you sense enough to understand that I threw up the ring when I became a Public school master? I should never have entered it only a man had to live till he could get a post. You know that! You utter ass, are you fool enough to imagine that I should throw up my position here to take up boxing again! Are you mad?"

"I think you are, Larry!" came Archie's astonished and indignant voice. "Mean to say you're letting me down? You've changed your mind—"

"Certainly not!"
"Then you're meeting the Chicken?"
"No!" hooted Mr. Lascelles.

"Then what the dooce do you mean? I admit I talked about fixing this up before I asked you, hoping to bring you round. But nothing was settled—it couldn't be without your consent. But I put it to you plain on Monday—"

"What?" roared Mr. Lascelles. "I never heard from you on Monday! I haven't heard from you for months."

"You—you—you haven't heard from me for—for months?" stuttered Archie. "No! As it happens, I heard your name mentioned on Monday. Pug Pilkinton mentioned it. He fancied that I was booked for a fight, and that you were putting me up. He laid for me with another rascal, like the double-crossing rotter he is! I told him there was nothing in it!"

"Was that before I phoned?"
"You did not phone! If you did, I did not take the call."

(Continued on next page.)



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"But you answered me!" hooted Archie. "I phoned you a few minutes after six on Monday."

"You must be mad! It was at six o'clock on Monday that Pug and Snipey were going for me in the lane a mile from here."

"Great Carnera! You're mad! You answered the phone, and agreed to meet the Chicken, and told me I could put you up."

"I did nothing of the kind!"

"You did!" yelled Archie.

"I did not! I was not in the school at the time."

"Then who phoned in your name?"

"Nobody! There can have been nobody in my study—and if there had been, nobody could have answered you in my name and made such an arrangement. Don't be a fool, Archie! Do you imagine that you are going to rush me into a prize-fight with a silly tale like that?"

"Larry, don't be a rotter! I can't back out now—I tell you it's cut and dried! I've signed! Do you get that?"

"More fool you! You've asked me this before, and I've told you it was impossible. You ought to understand that! Do you think my headmaster would give me leave to fight in the ring again, you ass?"

"I supposed you were keeping it quiet—"

"You supposed that I was deceiving a man who trusted me? You're a rotter through and through, Archie!"

"Oh, cut it out! You can't back out now and let me down! I tell you I can't meet my engagements if you do, and it's ruin!"

"That's your look-out! If you use a man's name without his leave, you can take the consequences!"

"I had your leave—you gave it me! I admit I was surprised when you played up so willingly. But you did—you know you did! You gave me full authority to act for you—"

"I suppose you had been drinking on Monday, and dreamed it!" snapped Mr. Lascelles contemptuously. "I was not on the phone at all, and if I had been I should have told you what I thought of you!"

"You agreed—"

"That's enough!"

"Larry! You can't let me down now! It's gone too far!" Archie's voice had lost its fruity tone—it was a shriek on the phone. "I'm relyin' on this fight to pull me through—I've got you backed—"

"Serve you right!"

"You're lettin' me down?"

"You can call it that, if you like! I'm having nothing whatever to do with you, you ass! You must have dreamed that phone talk on Monday—I've told you I was not even in the school at the time. By gad, I've a mind to come over to Lantham and bring a horsewhip with me!"

"Larry, be a sport! You can't let me down at this stage—"

"Go and eat coke!"

Mr. Lascelles slammed the receiver back on the hooks with a slam that made the telephone rock. He strode across the study to the door, and went out with a flushed face and a glinting eye. He remembered the maths set, for which he was now ten minutes late.

Hardly had he left the study when the telephone-bell rang. It rang again and again at short intervals, unheeded by Larry Lascelles, who was far away from his study with his mathematics class. But Trotter, the page, came in at last and took up the receiver.

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"'Allo!" said Trotter.

"Larry! Is that you, Larry?!" came Archie's agitated voice.

"'Ouse page speakin'," said Trotter stolidly. "Mr. Lascelles is in his class-room, sir. Can I take a message?"

"Tell him to come to the phone at once—urgent! Say it's Archie."

"Yessir."

Trotter left the study, leaving the receiver off. He came back from Mr. Lascelles' class-room in a couple of minutes, alone. There was a grin on Trotter's stolid face as he took up the receiver again.

"You there, sir?"

"Yes, yes! Larry—"

"Mr. Lascelles says, sir, that he can't be bothered, and that he doesn't want any message from you, sir!"

"Hang you!"

"Wot!" gasped Trotter, nearly dropping the receiver.

"Tell him he's a rotten, double-crossing cur!" yelled Archie, from the Lantham end. "Tell him I'll make him smart for it!"

"Oh, my eye!" gasped Trotter.

And he put up the receiver. He was not likely to deliver messages like that to a Greyfriars master. At short intervals during the following hour the telephone bell rang again and again in Mr. Lascelles' study, unheeded. And the unhappy Archie, raging at the Lantham end, raged in vain.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Smithy Hits Back!

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH hardly knew how he got through classes in the Remove room that morning.

Mr. Quelch, tempering the wind to the shorn lamb, as it were, was very easy with him—in fact, letting him alone all through lessons. The Bounder had only to sit it out. But a Head's flogging was not a light infliction, and the Head had laid it on well. Dr. Locke had a light hand, as a rule, in inflicting punishment, but there were times when it was judicious not to spare the rod. And the Bounder had been through it, hard.

Most of the Remove fellows sympathised. They considered that it was rough luck.

The Bounder, after all, had been up to no great harm—it had not been one of his pub-haunting stunts—there was nothing disgraceful about his action, though it was reckless and lawless. And he might have evaded detection if he had not shown up, of his own accord, to warn Lascelles of danger. It was rough luck, and they sympathised.

Sympathy, however, did not help the smarting Bounder much. He sat, or, rather, wriggled and squirmed, in class, with a pale, savage face and scowling brows. He had no resentment towards the Head—a flogging for breaking bounds after lights out was all in the day's work—and it might have been worse.

But towards Larry Lascelles his feelings were deep and bitter. The man he had saved from a cracked head had handed him over—to this! It was an unreasonable way of looking at it—but Smithy was in no frame of mind to be reasonable. Probably he found some solace in finding an object upon which to concentrate his hatred and bitterness as he writhed after his severe punishment. It was all due to Lascelles, and he was going to make Lascelles pay for it somehow.

"How" was rather a problem, but vague, unformed schemes were already afloat in the back of his mind. Lascelles was mixed up in prize-ring stunts again. He was boxing for a purse, unknown to his chief. Smithy had no doubt about that—partly because he did not want to have any doubt about it. He was assured that Lascelles had lied to the Head that night in Dr. Locke's study, and if the truth came out—it would be the "push" for Larry if the Head knew that he had been taken in.

Smithy was thinking of that while Mr. Quelch so kindly let him off lessons.

Billy Bunter, meanwhile, was punctuating his lessons with grunts and groans. Bunter had been caned. He had not had half so much in the way of punishment as Smithy, but he was the fellow to make more than twice as much fuss about it. Bunter, however, was not an object of sympathy. The Remove fellows considered that he had asked for it—in fact, begged for it—and that it served him right—as no doubt it did. Certainly it was likely to be a long time before the fat Owl "hooked on" to the Bounder again for a night out of bounds!

When the Remove were dismissed, the Bounder slouched out with a scowling face. Redwing glanced at him, hesitated, but did not join him. Being in Smithy's company at present meant listening to fierce invectives against Lascelles, and Redwing, who liked and respected the games master, did not want to hear Smithy's tirades on that subject. The Bounder slouched away by himself, still feeling bitter twinges from the flogging, and in a black and savage temper.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Feeling it, old bean?" asked Bob Cherry by way of comfort.

"Oh, no! Enjoyin' myself hugely!" answered Vernon-Smith, with savage sarcasm. "The Beak only gave me a flick or two!"

"It'll wear off, old son," said Bob. "Locke did lay it on. It sounded like pistol-shots in Hall. But after all, Smithy, you've had luck. It might have been the sack, you know!"

"I know that. But it was pretty tough, all the same!" The Bounder gritted his teeth. "And to think that I asked for it—that I got it, just to save Lascelles from a cracked head!"

"Well, that's hardly the way to look at it," said Bob, laughing. "I'm jolly glad you saved old Larry's nut, Smithy. He couldn't have kept it dark."

"It would have been kept dark enough if I'd let his old pal Pug knock him on the head!" snarled the Bounder. "I wish I had now."

"Rot! You don't, really," said Bob. "You played up like a good little man, and you'll be glad of it when you've got over that whopping. Thank goodness you'll still be here to play Higheliffe!"

"I don't owe that to Lascelles," said the Bounder sourly. "The rotter!"

Bob shook his head.

"Easy does it, old chap! Larry isn't a rotter. He's a real white man!"

"Not a rotter, when he's fooling old Locke and pulling his leg?" sneered the Bounder. "Making out that he's shocked at a fellow getting out of bounds, and he's booked for a prize-fight—"

"Bosh, old bean!"

"He's put up to fight some bruiser called the Game Chicken. That's why that ruffian was trying to knock him out last night. And I'll tell you what I'm going to do," said the Bounder, with bitter emphasis. "I'm going to find out when and where the fight takes place,



Swipe, swipe, swipe! "Whoop! Stop it!" shrieked Bunter, staggering under the hefty swipes of the Bounder's pillow. "Help! Rescue! Fire! Yarooooh!" The door opened suddenly, and Mr. Quelch, with a grim brow, looked into the dormitory. "Vernon-Smith!" he roared. "How dare you!"

and show Lascelles up to the whole school. I'll make it the talk of Greyfriars! And I'll see him get the boot from here when old Locke finds out that he's spoofed him, see?"

"Bow-wow!" said Bob. "Come and have an ice, old bean, and cool your temper."

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

Bob laughed and walked away, leaving the Bounder slouching and scowling.

Mr. Lascelles, in flannels, came out of the House with Wingate and Gwynne of the Sixth. Smithy watched him with bitter eyes. Very handsome and fit the games master looked as he walked down to the senior nets with the two Sixth Form men. Harry Wharton & Co. followed on. Lascelles was always worth watching on the cricket ground.

Lascelles did not look like a man who had a deceitful secret to keep; the Bounder had to admit that. But the fellow had plenty of nerve, Smithy told himself scornfully. Sometimes Lascelles was away from the school, on leave, for two or three days at a time in the cricket season, playing in big matches. But the Bounder, his mind seething with suspicion, was wondering now whether it really was cricket that took the games master away on those occasions. More likely, Smithy told himself, he was at his old game of punching for a purse in the roped ring, deceiving the Head, who was the easiest man in the world to deceive. And that was the man who had reported Smithy for a flogging! Well, perhaps Smithy would have something to report—if luck favoured him!

The Bounder stood watching Lascelles till he was out of sight. His bitter thoughts were working. Lascelles was

safe out of the House for an hour at least. Vernon-Smith went into the House and went quietly along Masters' Passage. None of the "beaks" was in sight, and the Bounder coolly let himself into Mr. Lascelles' study, and shut the door after him.

His heart was beating fast, but he was quite cool and quite determined. Spying and prying were not really in Smithy's line at all; but he was there now to spy and to pry, though he did not apply those names himself to his actions. Lascelles had watched for him in the quad that eventful night—well, he was going to watch Lascelles in his turn. If Larry really was mixed up in matters of the ring again, surely there would be some evidence of it in his study, among his papers—a letter or two at least. Evidence was what the Bounder wanted.

The desk in the study was locked, and the Bounder, now absolutely unscrupulous, tried his own bunch of keys on it, but in vain.

A coat hung on the door, but Smithy hesitated to go through the pockets. It came into his mind that this sort of thing was altogether too much like Bunter. But his hesitation was brief. He set his lips and ran his fingers through the pockets.

A crumpled letter came out in his hand.

He hesitated to look at it. It went sorely against the grain. But again his hesitation was brief. He unfolded the letter and looked.

"Oh gad!" he gasped the next moment.

It was the letter that had so astonished Mr. Lascelles that morning—the letter from Archie Valenco.

"Archie," the signature, was the name Pug had mentioned in the Head's study. The Bounder read the letter and read it again, his eyes starting.

It came into his mind in those moments that he had only half believed that Lascelles was engaged in a deception. That was proved to him by his surprise at finding this proof.

For it was proof!

What could be clearer? The man "Archie" wrote plainly enough. He referred in plain terms to the fight with the Game Chicken, to Lascelles "keeping it dark," and to a communication on the telephone on the subject. It was proof positive!

Smithy's eyes blazed.

"By gad, I've got him!" he breathed.

He thrust the letter into his pocket. What he was going to do with it he could not decide as yet, but ultimately it should meet Dr. Locke's eyes. He held the fate of the games master of Greyfriars in the hollow of his hand!

Quietly he left the study and walked away. Lascelles would miss that letter sooner or later, but he would not dare to inquire after it. Smithy grinned at that thought. Smithy had been through bitter suspense that morning. Larry could go through it in his turn. And when the Bounder chose the blow would fall!

Smithy was still feeling sharp twinges from his flogging, but his face wore a smile as he strolled down to the cricket ground. Tom Redwing joined him, relieved to see him looking so cheerful. "Feeling better, old chap?" he asked.

"Heaps!" said the Bounder. "Let's have a look at Lascelles. He's givin' "

them some bowlin' stunts. May be our last chance of seein' him at it."

"Eh? Why?" asked Redwing, puzzled. "He's not leaving, is he?"

"I fancy he may be gone before long," chuckled the Bounder. "What do you think old Locke would do, Reddy, if he found that the games master here was keeping up his connection with the ring and punching for a purse?"

"Well, I suppose he would ask him to resign," said Redwing. "But that's all rot, Smithy! Lascelles is doing nothing of the kind. Dr. Locke would never permit it, and he's not the man to deceive anybody."

The Bounder laughed, but he said no more. He stood watching Larry Lascelles for some time, with a mocking light in his eyes. The young man's face was cheery and careless. He did not glance at the Bounder or notice him standing among the fellows who were looking on. Smithy's hand grasped the crumpled letter in his pocket. Lascelles would not have been so careless and cheery if he had known that the letter from Archie was in the possession of the scapegrace he had handed over for a flogging! The Bounder grinned as he reflected how utterly the fellow was at his mercy!

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

About a Chicken!

MR. QUELCH raised his eyebrows.

The telephone-bell was buzzing in Lascelles' study along the passage. A dozen times that day, at least, it had buzzed. It was growing rather remarkable. It rang so emphatically, so persistently, and so frequently, that all the other beaks were aware of

it, and remarked on it. It was getting quite a nuisance, in fact. Every time the receiver was lifted, whether by Trotter or by Mr. Lascelles himself, the voice of Archie was heard from Lantham—sometimes angry, sometimes plaintive, sometimes distressed, always persistent. Now, after class, it was ringing once more, and Mr. Quelch, coming along Masters' Passage, heard it and raised his eyebrows. It really was growing troublesome.

Prout looked out of his study. Capper looked out of his study. They glanced at Mr. Quelch's raised eyebrows, raised their own, and popped back again, grunting. Mr. Quelch walked on to his study, and was glad to see Lascelles coming into the passage.

"I think the telephone is ringing in your study, Mr. Lascelles," the Remove master observed in a very dry tone.

Larry flushed faintly.

"Thank you!" he said.

He walked on rather quickly to his study, threw the door shut after him, and strode across to the telephone with glinting eyes. Other masters were fed-up with that persistent ring, but not so much as Larry. The games master was fed-up to the back teeth.

He jerked the receiver off the hooks and fairly barked:

"Who's there?"

"Larry! It's you!" came Archie's plaintive voice. "Larry, old man, do give me a chance to speak! For the love of Mike, old bean, don't let me down at this stage!"

"Listen to me, Archie Valence!" said Mr. Lascelles in a low, concentrated voice. "You've been ringing me up all day! The whole House is beginning to take notice of it. It's got to stop!"

"You can't let me down! If you

didn't want to meet the Chicken you should have said so when I phoned last Monday. You took it on then, and you've got to stand for it now."

"I never answered the phone on Monday, as I've told you five or six times."

"That's a lie!"

"What?" roared Larry.

"A lie!" came in a furious howl from the other end. "Just a lie! And, by gad, if you let me down and try to ride off on a rotten lie like that I'll make you pay for it somehow, Larry Lascelles!"

Mr. Lascelles set his lips hard.

"Now, listen to me, Archie!" he said. "That's the limit! It looks as if someone must have answered the phone when I was out, and pulled your leg. I can't understand it—but if you got an answer, it was some sort of trickery. Now you've got to stop persecuting me. If you ring me up once more—once, mind—I'll jump on my jigger and come straight over to Lantham—and you won't know your own face in the glass after I've called on you. I mean that—every word! I'll thrash you within an inch of your life!"

"You double-crossin' rotter—"

"That's enough! If you've been fooled, serve you right for bothering me at all! Leave me alone, or look out for yourself!"

With that the games master of Greyfriars slammed the receiver back on the hooks.

The bell did not ring again.

Archie evidently did not want his features altered to such an extent that he would not know them in the glass! And Lascelles' voice had been too savagely earnest to leave him in doubt.

The games master paced his study with a knitted brow, thinking. He could not doubt now that someone actually had answered the phone when Archie rang up on Monday afternoon; the man's desperate persistence proved that he had been deceived by some trickster. Mr. Lascelles was rather keen to discover that trickster and teach him not to play tricks on a master's telephone.

It was a puzzling matter; for obviously no one could have known that Archie was going to ring up—Lascelles himself had not known. Someone must have heard the bell ring and answered it—someone who had come to the study. The thing must have been unpremeditated—done on the spur of the moment by someone who happened to be there. Who had been there? Nobody had any business in the study, unless it was some junior who had to bring in an impot. And Mr. Lascelles, following that line of thought, recalled that a Remove boy—Bunter—had had an impot to bring to him at six o'clock on Monday.

He remembered, too, that when he had come in, soon after six, he had met that Remove boy in Masters' Passage; Bunter had been coming away, after being caned by Quelch. Had he been to the study? He had said that he hadn't—which counted for nothing! Certainly he had not handed over his impot, or left it in the study—but that counted for nothing, either. Bunter was more likely to turn up with an excuse than with work done. On the other hand, the fat, obtuse, dense Owl of the Remove was hardly the fellow to play such a trick—so it seemed to Mr. Lascelles. But it seemed probable that Bunter had been there at the time—and extremely unlikely that anyone else had been there. And Mr. Lascelles resolved to question Billy Bunter on the subject. If the fat Owl had mischievously caused him all

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this trouble, the fat Owl required a severe lesson.

Mr. Lascelles looked out of his study window. The Remove were out after class, and he called to Harry Wharton, who was in the quad.

"Wharton! Please send Bunter to my study."

"Certainly, sir!"

The captain of the Remove went to look for Bunter. Mr. Lascelles paced his study with a frowning brow till there came a tap at his door, and it opened to reveal the fat and fatuous countenance of the Owl of the Remove.

Bunter came in with a rather hopeful expression on his fat face. He had no impot for Lascelles now—and the cheerful Owl had long since forgotten his trickery on the telephone on Monday. So he could not guess why Lascelles had sent for him, unless it was to ask him to tea. Tea with a beak was not, as a rule, a very enjoyable function—but anything in the eating line was welcome to W. G. Bunter! So he came in quite brightly.

His face fell a little as he saw no sign of tea in the study. But if it wasn't tea, what on earth did the beast want him for? It must be tea!

"I have sent for you, Bunter—" began Mr. Lascelles, with his keen eyes on the fat face.

"Yes, sir, I've come," said Bunter. "Very pleased, sir!"

"Indeed!" said Mr. Lascelles rather grimly.

"Oh, yes, sir!" said Bunter. "Some fellows hate teeing with beaks—"

"What?"

"I mean with masters, sir! They say they never get enough to eat, and the beak keeps on jawing all the time! But I don't mind, sir. Can I help with the—the shopping, sir?"

"I have not sent for you to tea, Bunter."

"Oh!"

"I think you came to my study at six o'clock last Monday, Bunter. You had some geometry to do for me."

"Yes—no—I mean—" Bunter tried to remember. "Oh, sir! I did it later—you remember you told me to have it done by bed-time—I hadn't been to your study, sir! Owing to the injury to my hand—I mean owing to Quelch spotting me—that is to say, I—I—I—"

"You came to this study, I think, and found that I was absent," said Mr. Lascelles. "I was delayed, as it happened, in Friardale Lane. Did you wait for me?"

"Well, I—I thought I ought to wait, sir, to—to explain about my hand being cut, sir—I mean I—I thought you'd like me to wait—"

"Then you did come to the study?"

"Oh, no, sir! Never came near it! I wasn't in this part of the House at all on Monday."

"I met you in this passage when I came in, Bunter."

"I—I—I mean Quelch called me into his study as I was passing—that is, I wasn't exactly passing—I—I—" Bunter spluttered. "I—I say, sir, c-c-can I go now? Wingate of the Sixth wants me to give him some bowling, sir."

"It is clear that you were in this study, Bunter, at six o'clock on Monday. Did the telephone-bell ring while you were here?"

"Oh lor'! I mean no, sir! I never heard it! I should have been bound to hear it, sir, if it had rung, sitting in that armchair!" stammered Bunter.

"Did you answer the phone?"

"I—I might have—have just taken the receiver off, sir, to stop the row," groaned Bunter. "It was kicking up no end of a row, sir!"

"And what did you say on the phone?" asked Mr. Lascelles, watching the hapless Owl's fat face very curiously. It seemed impossible that this fat, obtuse fellow could have pulled the leg of a man of the world like Archie Valence, yet it was clear that that must have been the case.

"Nothing, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I—I thought I'd better take the receiver off and stop the bell ringing, that's all, sir! I never even thought of hearing what the man had to say—I'm not curious, sir, or inquisitive, or anything of that kind."

"I think I understand, Bunter," said Mr. Lascelles very quietly. "Your motive was a foolish and contemptible curiosity to hear what did not concern you. But why did you tell the man falsehoods? And how did you know anything about my affairs?"

"I didn't, sir!" said Bunter promptly. "I just let him run on! I don't see any harm in speaking to a poulterer on the phone—"

"A—a what?" stuttered Mr. Lascelles.

"I think he was a poulterer, sir," said Bunter. "I couldn't make it out, but he was talking about chickens—"

"Chickens!" gasped Mr. Lascelles.

"What name did he give, Bunter?"

"Archer, I think, sir—or something like Archer," answered Bunter. "He said something about cricket and boxing, I think; but chiefly about chickens. He said something about handling a chicken—I remember that distinctly."

Mr. Lascelles gazed at him!

"That's all, sir," said Bunter. "I'd have told you, only I thought you might be waxy—I mean, I forgot all about it—that is, I—I mean I wasn't in the study at all, sir, when Archer rang up. Ca-can I go now?"

"I think you are the stupidest boy in the wide world, Bunter," said Mr. Lascelles. "You have caused a misunderstanding and a great deal of trouble by answering the telephone in my name."

"I never said I was you, sir—that man Archer thought so of his own accord. I mean, I never said anything at all! I—I'll pay for the chicken, sir—"

"Wha-at?"

"I mean, if he's delivered the chicken, sir, and—and you don't want it, I—I'll pay for it!" gasped Bunter. "I—I'm expecting a postal order very shortly, sir—"

"Upon my word!" said Mr. Lascelles.

"I—I think the man was rather mad, sir!" ventured Bunter. "He said something about putting his shirt on you—as if you'd want his shirt! And he asked if you thought you could handle a chicken, as if you were a cook! I don't know who he was—there isn't any poultry-shop in Courtfield with the name of Archer, that I know of—"

"That will do, Bunter! Come with me!" said Mr. Lascelles. "You must learn to mind your own business, and I have no doubt that your Form master will be prepared to give you instruction."

"Oh lor'!" gasped Bunter.

Mr. Lascelles dropped a heavy hand on a fat shoulder, and led William George Bunter along the passage to Quelch's study. Bunter entered that dread apartment in fear and trembling.

"I regret, sir," said Mr. Lascelles, "to have to report this boy to you for playing tricks on my telephone. His folly has had the result of causing a misunderstanding, which has led to a man ringing me up continually to-day."

"Bunter—"

"I—I didn't, sir!" gasped Bunter. "It—it's all a mistake, sir! I wasn't in

the study at all, and the telephone-bell never rang while I was there, sir, and I only answered it to tell the man Mr. Lascelles had gone out, sir. And—and—and I'll pay for the chicken if it's been delivered!"

"You may leave Bunter to me, Mr. Lascelles," said the Remove master grimly.

The games master quitted the study, and Billy Bunter would have been very glad to do the same. But there were some rather painful proceedings to be gone through first. The whacking of a cane was audible in the passage, and a series of wild yells audible across the quad!

When Billy Bunter departed he looked as if he was practising as a contortionist! He wriggled his weary way to the Remove passage, and blinked dismally into Study No. 1, where Harry Wharton & Co. had gathered to tea.

"I say, you fellows—" groaned Bunter.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! How did Bunter know we had a cake?" asked Bob Cherry.

"I say, I've been whopped!" groaned Bunter. "Just because I answered the phone for Lascelles the other day to oblige him! I'm always doing these good-natured things—and look what I get! It was only a poulterer talking about a chicken, too, and I offered to pay for the chicken! Ow! Wow! I say, you fellows, I don't mind if I have some of that cake!"

"We do!" said Nugent.

But what the tea-party in Study No. 1 minded evidently did not matter—for Bunter had some, and then had some more, and some more after that!

Bunter did not go till the cake was gone!

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Neck or Nothing!

"LARRY!"

"Sacked?"

"I fancy so!" drawled the Bounder.

The fellows in the Rag, after tea, stared at Herbert Vernon-Smith. The Bounder's manner was quite cool; his eyes gleamed with malicious mischief.

Tom Redwing looked at him rather uncasily; the other fellows in amazement.

"What do you happen to mean, if you mean anything?" asked Harry Wharton curtly.

"Exactly what I say—neither more nor less!" said Herbert Vernon-Smith. "Lascelles caught me kickin' over the traces, and felt bound to report me to the beak! I've caught Lascelles kickin' over the traces, and feel bound to report him to the beak! One good turn deserves another!"

"And what's he done?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Booked for a glove fight—"

"Rats!"

"The ratfulness is terrific!"

"You'll see!" drawled the Bounder. "I'm goin' to see old Locke about it now! I fancy it's the boot for Lascelles! He made me squirm—and I'm goin' to make him squirm!"

Vernon-Smith walked out of the Rag. A score of fellows followed him. They followed him as far as the corner of Head's passage, where they saw him—from a distance—tap at Dr. Locke's door and enter. And in amazement they waited for the result.

The Bounder, cool and iron-nerved as he was, felt a slight trepidation as he entered the presence of the headmaster.

(Continued on page 28.)

ALLISON OF AVONSHIRE!

By JOHN BREARLEY.



Bill is Determined!

OUT on the pitch Terry, the Grammarian skipper, had just hit a boundary, and he and Frank Peters were strolling back to their wickets. Len, Bill noted, had been sent out into the country, and was pacing up and down, with head lowered, hands in pockets, sulking. Frazer, one of the Avonshire's professional change bowlers, had taken up the attack in his stead.

Moodily Bill turned away. What putrid luck to get out like he'd done, just when he was getting set for a slashing knock!

"Busted head or not, I'm jolly well going to bowl against the pro's this afternoon!" he mumbled, and doggedly made his way across the dressing-room to the washbasins, where he soused his groggy head in cold water, and dried it gingerly.

Feeling a little better after that, he returned to the window, just in time to see another Grammarian disaster.

Terry, rendered over-confident by his boundary, had jumped out to drive Frazer for a "sixer," only to be beautifully stumped on the legside by Dick Hayes.

Shaking his head ruefully, the Grammarian skipper came slowly back to the pav, amid long and loud applause. He had played his usual sound, steady innings, and it was bad luck that the first mistake he had made should have proved fatal.

"Blow it! I ought to be kicked, falling for old Frazer's leg-spinner like that!" he snorted as he entered the dressing-room. "How're you feeling, Bill? Pretty rotten?"

Dumping his bat and gloves, he came over and looked at his chum keenly.

"You ought to get changed, chump. Want a hand? I'll help you."

Bill's heart skipped a beat, and he wheeled sharply from the window.

"Changed?" he queried, his face white and anxious. "What for?"

Terry raised his eyebrows. "Well, you ass, you don't think

you're going to play any more, do you?" he asked. "'Cos you're not. Not with that head. Old Tom says so, and I say so. In fact, I've already arranged with Jerry Tempest for Phillips to act as sub for you this afternoon."

Stubbornly Bill thrust out a square chin, his anxious expression changing to one of cast-iron determination.

For a moment he hesitated before spilling all that had been on his mind for the last two days, then came to a decision. After all, he could trust Terry. They had been the best of pals since the day they had first entered the Grammar school. He came a step closer to his chum.

"Listen, Terry! You've got to let me bowl this afternoon," he said, with an emphasis that made the skipper stare. "I'll be all right after lunch, I feel sure. And—and this match means a lot to me—a whole lot, savvy? I'm sort of regarding it as a County trial all for myself."

"Wha-at?"
 "That's right. Oh, I know it may sound a bit selfish, but I don't mean it that way, Terry. You know that. It's just—well, it's like this." The words came with a sudden, insistent rush. "You know how things are at home with us. Dad's broke, and needs money badly, and he won't let me leave school,

THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

Simon Allison, once part-owner of the great Allison Motor Works, invents a powerful supercharger, but fails through lack of funds to put it on the market. An attempt on the part of his rascally nephew, Len Allison—"boss" of the works and a "big noise" in the county cricket team—to terrify the old man into parting with the supercharger at a low price fails. Shortly after this, Bill Allison, Simon's son, turns out for his school—who are doing badly against Avonshire Club and Ground—to face the demon bowler, Len Allison. Just when he looks like getting set, Bill is felled by one of his cousin's express deliveries that catches him full on the forehead. Left alone in the school pavilion, he staggers to the window and looks out.

(Now read on.)

either, to try to help by earning some. Well"—Bill's chest heaved in a long, deep breath. "I'm going to leave school this term and chance it. Sorry and all that, but I must. And as dad won't let me go in for engines and cars, I'm going in for the only other thing I'm any good at."

Terry whistled softly, half guessing his big chum's intention.

To him, Bill, the humorous, easy-going "madman," as the school called him, seemed to have changed curiously all at once. He looked older, somehow; older and surprisingly grim. Just like his indomitable father, in fact. The Grammarian skipper blinked.

"You mean—"

"Yes," nodded Bill firmly. "If I can bowl well against first-class batsmen today, I'm going to leave school and ask to be taken on as an Avonshire county professional."

"Wh-what—?"

"And I'm going to do something, anyway, to beat those two swabs, Len and 'Corsica,' Phil Valetti, too!" he added fiercely to himself as the astounded Terry sank down on a bench.

The Test!

Bill's cool announcement struck Terry all of a heap.

For the first few seconds he could do nothing but gasp like a newly landed fish. Had it not been for the dull ache in his head, and the importance of the occasion, Bill would have laughed outright, so ludicrous was his chum's expression.

"You say you're going to chuck up your scholarship here and—and turn pro for Avonshire!" cried the incredulous Grammarian skipper, after he had got his breath back.

Bill gave him another determined look.

"Yes—or, at least, I'll ask the County for the job if I can bowl well against the Club and Ground this afternoon!" he answered. "So, Terry, old hoss, you've jolly well got to let me play on—see?"

He glanced through the window at the sunlit field, where the School's seventh-wicket pair were making a dogged stand, then turned again to Terry.

"We've still got three wickets to fall, and it'll be lunch-time in about ten minutes. Counting that in, it ought to give me about a couple of hours to sit quiet and get over this biff on the nut. I'll be O.K. all right by the time we take the field—I've got to be!" Bill added sturdily.

Terry grunted and bent down, fiddling with his bootlace to hide a worried frown. If anything further happened to his chum part of the responsibility, of course, would fall on him. Nevertheless, now that Bill had explained why he was so desperately anxious to carry on, Terry was just as keen to help him.

"We-ell," he said at last, "if you think you'll be fit enough, you obstinate chump, you can bowl your bloomin' arm off as far as I'm concerned. And, golly, I wish you all the luck, old son, apart from winning the match. I know your dad's hard-up—you've told me that yourself," he grinned awkwardly. "But leaving school and turning pro! He'll kick about that, won't he?"

"He'll kick like an Army mule," agreed Bill, with forced airiness. "Still, the noble family of Allison needs money—lots of it—at least, one branch of it does, I know!"

Bill sighed, his thoughts switching involuntarily to his prosperous-seeming cousin, Len. But then his old cheeriness came to the fore again, and he struck a mock-dramatic attitude.

"And behold, the young hero will venture forth to restore the family fortunes!" he chuckled—"that is, unless the pro's paste me all over the shop this afternoon, and old Jerry Tempest laughs himself silly when I apply for the job!"

"They won't paste you!"

Terry eyed Bill Allison seriously, albeit with the sheepish air of one about to pay a pal a compliment to his face.

"You're the best bowler this school ever had, Bill, and if you once do get a footing in first class cricket you'll show 'em something. Old Janes says so, and he never throws laurels at a chap unless he earns 'em. And I think he's right!"

"I 'umbly bows," grinned Bill; but he flushed a little and gave Terry a little dig in the ribs. "Thanks, skipper! I feel better already. Now that's settled I'll just—Hallo! Lunch!"

Outside, the players were strolling back to the pavilion with the score 92 for 6. The seventh-wicket pair had continued to hold the fort valiantly.

During the interval, Bill's bruised forehead was doctored again by Tom Janes, and the old coach, like Terry, took some persuading before he would agree to the Grammarians' star bowler playing again that day. In the end, however, Bill won the day. And certainly, now that he was keyed-up with excitement, the tall, tough youngster did look a whole lot better.

To give himself every chance of recovery, too, Bill sneaked off to a quiet corner of the balcony after lunch, where he sat nursing his throbbing head and watching the play by himself.

Len Allison, after his display of bad temper and bowling in the morning, had again been banished to the long field, where, judging by the frequent guffaws and his own surly attitude, he was coming in for a spot of barracking from the local fans. Against the less-violent attack of the other C. & G. bowlers the Grammar School tail wagged stoutly.

Thus, it was past three o'clock when the last wicket fell, and Bill had had a longer rest than he had reckoned on.

All out 144 was the final score—a much better total than the school had expected at one time. But, with six first-class batsmen, including Len, opposed to them—

"H'm!"

Bill rose and grimly waggled the fingers of his left hand.

"My little ones, you've got some work to do now, or else we're in for a real right tanning!" he murmured to himself.

So thought the rest of the Grammarian XI.

"On your toes now, chaps!" ordered Terry, as he led his team out after the umpires. "We haven't done so badly, but they ought to get the runs easily unless—"

Then, suddenly looking up, he caught sight of Bill's rugged face, and smiled thoughtfully.

"No-o! P'r'aps they won't get 'em so easily, after all. Our William means

"COME INTO THE OFFICE, BOYS!"

WELL, chums, you've got another topping souvenir photo-plate to add to your collection this week. And don't forget there

are five more of these fine photogravure plates to come. If you haven't already given a standing order for the MAGNET, you should do so now, as the demand for your favourite paper is greater than ever. You'd be awfully disappointed if you missed one of these free gifts, wouldn't you? Next week's photogravure plate is a real corker, and shows "THE DREAD-NOUGHT DIVER," who, encased in his all-metal suit, explores the ocean's depths for sunken treasure, or does valuable work in the salvaging of wrecks. Lowered over the side of the diving-ship on the end of a steel rope attached to a crane, he is able to talk to the crew of the ship by means of a telephone. Your collection will not be complete without next week's photo-plate, chums.

I feel that I must draw your attention to our stupendous offer of a "Rigby" super model flying plane, which is offered at the astonishingly low price of 4½d. to all readers of the MAGNET.

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Now for next week's programme:

"THE KIDNAPPED MASTER!"

By Frank Richards

is the title of the long complete yarn of Greyfriars. The title alone is sufficient to tell you that you are in for a rattling fine story that will hold your interest to the very end. There'll be another gripping instalment of "Allison of Avonshire!" and a full-of-fun issue of the ever-popular "Greyfriars Herald." "Umpiro," the MAGNET's special cricket contributor, will be at your disposal to answer any intricate problems you care to put before him, while, to complete a super issue, there will be another handsome free photogravure plate to put in your album. Don't miss this issue, chums!

YOUR EDITOR.

business," murmured the Grammar School captain to himself. Moistening a finger, he held it up to test the slight breeze. "Alec, you open the bowling, and Bill—second over from the top end. Wind's blowing across the wicket—ought to help you a bit—what?"

Bill nodded without speaking. Whilst the others were passing the ball about between themselves he walked on to examine the wicket.

The pitch, having been treated to the light roller, was hard and smooth—not likely to help a spin-bowler much, Bill noted glumly. Still, he did find one slightly worn patch well up on the leg side, which he eyed more hopefully. The ball would turn quickly enough on that all right—if he could only find and keep his length.

"Men in!" came Terry's sharp call at that moment; and Bill went quietly to his place in the slips, pressing his cap more firmly over the bandage.

To Terry's inquiring glance he answered only by a wink, and rubbed his hands with an air of briskness which he was very far from feeling.

Mr. Jerry Tempest and Forbes, Avonshire's No. 1, came out to start the innings for the C. & G., and against Alec Bromley's fast bowling they opened the scoring with disheartening ease.

The one-time captain and present secretary of the County cut the first ball for a single, and Forbes, after playing the next three cannily, drove the last two for a 4 and a 3. The School supporters wriggled uneasily in their seats as the field crossed over.

Then Terry tossed the ball back to Bill, and Bill's own private Test match began!

"Good old Bill!"

"Go it, madman! Schooooool!"

It was a heart-warming shout of encouragement that broke from the School the moment Bill gave his cap to the umpire and began rolling his sleeves higher. The locals all joined in, too, partly in sympathy for the youngster with his bandaged head, but chiefly because they knew of his feats in school cricket the season before, and looked upon him as a coming "big noise."

That friendly ovation, however, went through Bill's aching head like a red-hot knife.

For one ghastly second he was seized with the horrible fear that he was about to faint.

Never before in his life had he felt so rotten, now that the test had come. Stage-fright, as well as pain, made him feel sick and dizzy, while tiny brilliant specks of light danced jerkily before his eyes. He swung his left arm clumsily, to loosen it—and the ball nearly slipped from his moist, nerveless fingers. Suddenly he realised that everyone—batsmen, fieldsmen, and umpires—were staring at him, half-curiously, half-anxiously.

"Are you all right, lad? I've already called 'Play' once!" exclaimed Tom Janes, in a low voice.

Bill's already pale face went a shade whiter.

"Sorry—didn't hear you! Yes, I'm fine!" he mumbled. Then, to himself: "Come on, you fool! Here's the chance you've been waiting for, haven't you? Pull your blessed self together!"

(Will Bill Allison's nerves fail him, or will he—? Whatever you do, chums, be sure and read the follow-up of this great sporting story which will appear in next week's Free Gift issue of the MAGNET.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,321:

THE BOXING 'BEAK'!

(Continued from page 25.)

Dr. Locke peered at him over his glasses.

Smithy breathed rather hard, but he did not falter.

"Vernon-Smith! What—"

"I feel bound to tell you, sir, that what that bruiser was saying in this study last night was true—"

"What? What?" ejaculated the astonished Head.

"Will you look at this letter, sir?"

Vernon-Smith laid on the Head's writing-table the letter from Archie, which he had taken from the pocket of the coat in Lascelles' study.

In complete astonishment Dr. Locke looked at the letter.

Thunder gathered in his brow.

"Vernon-Smith! This letter, apparently, is the property of Mr. Lascelles—"

"Yes, sir!"

"How did it come into your possession? How dare you show it to me?" thundered the Head.

The Bounder quailed a little. But he kept firm. He was taking a risk, and he knew it; but he had the nerve to take it.

"I thought I ought to bring it to your notice, sir! Let Mr. Lascelles explain it—if he can!"

The Head gave him one cold, hard, chilling glare, and then touched the bell. Trotter came to the door, and was told to request Mr. Lascelles to step to the study.

In a few minutes Mr. Lascelles entered the study. He glanced in some surprise at Vernon-Smith.

"You desired to see me, Dr. Locke?"

"Yes, Mr. Lascelles! Is that letter your property?"

Larry Lascelles started violently. For a moment he was dumbfounded by the sight of Archie's letter lying on the Head's table. But he recovered himself very quickly.

"Yes, sir," he said quietly. "That letter is my property."

"Please take it."

Mr. Lascelles took it.

"This boy, Vernon-Smith, brought it to me and placed it here," said the Head. "I regret that I have seen it, Mr. Lascelles."

"Not at all, sir," said Lascelles. "I have no objection whatever to your seeing it, and since you have seen it I shall certainly explain the matter."

The Bounder's lip curled. He fancied that Larry would have some difficulty in explaining that letter.

"I have not asked you for an explanation, Mr. Lascelles," said the Head—

though there was no doubt that he required one.

"I shall give it unmasked, then, sir," said Lascelles, with a smile. "This letter is from a former connection of mine who has urged me many times—I need not say in vain—to re-engage in boxing contests. Last Monday he went so far as to ring me up on the telephone and repeat his urgings. I was out of the House at the time, but it happened that a junior had gone to my study, and he answered the phone, causing the man to believe that I was speaking."

Vernon-Smith stared. He could not see what all this was leading to.

"I have reported this junior to his Form master, and he has been caned for his trickery," continued Mr. Lascelles. "Unfortunately, the harm was done. His foolish talk on the telephone caused this man, Archie Valence, to believe that I had acceded to his demands, and agreed to do as he wished. I was unaware of this until this morning, when the letter arrived from him—greatly to my astonishment. I have since inquired into the matter, and learned of the trick that was played. I have now explained to the man that he was deceived, and warned him from making any further communication to me. That is all, sir."

The Bounder stood, almost stupefied.

To his suspicious mind this seemed about the thinnest story he had ever heard. He wondered whether even the simple old Head could swallow it!

Evidently the Head did—though he was not so simple as the Bounder supposed.

"It was really unnecessary to explain, Mr. Lascelles—and I need not say that I am entirely satisfied with your explanation," said Dr. Locke. "Vernon-Smith will now explain how this letter came into his possession."

The Bounder gritted his teeth. It was neck or nothing now!

"I knew that Mr. Lascelles was deceiving you, sir," he said, in a clear, hard voice, "and I looked for some proof of it. I took that letter from his study."

"You knew—you dare to say—"

"He is deceiving you now, sir," said the Bounder stubbornly. "If you believe him, I can't help it, but that letter proves—"

"Silence!" exclaimed the Head.

"Vernon-Smith, you dare to stand in my presence and cast doubt on the word of a member of my staff! You confess to having purloined a letter from a master's study. You will go and pack your box immediately—you leave Greyfriars to-day! I shall request Mr. Quelch to take you to the station! Go!"

The Bounder felt an icy shiver. He had done it now—the game was up! His malice had recoiled on his own head—it was not Larry who was going to be sacked, but the Bounder himself! But he was game! He gave the games master one black, bitter look, and turned to the door.

"Stop!" said Mr. Lascelles quietly.

He turned to the Head.

"Dr. Locke—may I speak a word for this boy? He has acted foolishly, maliciously, disrespectfully, but he rendered me a service last night, and indirectly resulting from it he was flogged this morning. That is the cause of his present conduct, and I am convinced that he will think better of it, and regret his folly."

Dr. Locke was silent for a moment or two. During those moments, which seemed ages long to him, the Bounder stood in suspense.

"Very well, Mr. Lascelles," said the Head at last. "If you are prepared to forgive this boy's offence—"

"Quite, sir."

"Then I shall leave his punishment in your hands, sir," said Dr. Locke slowly, with visible reluctance.

Mr. Lascelles smiled faintly.

"Thank you very much, sir! In that case I shall let the matter rest where it is, and leave the boy to his own reflections and better nature."

The Head made Vernon-Smith a sign to leave the study.

He went.

He was spared. The man he had sought to injure had spared him. At the moment, that seemed like the culmination of bitterness to the defeated Bounder. His face was white, his eyes glittering as he left the study and went down the passage. He had forgotten the crowd of fellows waiting for him at the corner—but they had not forgotten him.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here he comes!"

"What's the jolly old verdict, Smithy?"

"Larry got the push—or you?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Bounder did not answer. He shoved his way savagely through the crowd and tramped away. And a chuckle from the Removites followed him as he went.

THE END.

(Don't miss the grand sequel to this yarn, chums. It's entitled: "THE KIDNAPPED MASTER!" and will appear in next Saturday's MAGNET, which will also contain another handsome Free Photogravure Plate. Be sure and order your copy early!)

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All applications for Advertisement Space in this publication should be addressed to the Advertisement Manager, UNION JACK SERIES, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

10-6-33

GREYFRIARS SPEEDWAY!
Positively opening (beaks and prefects permitting) on the waste ground behind the cycle-shed at 3 p.m. Wednesday next. Competitors allowed to race on motor-bikes, push-bikes, or roller-skates. No prizes, but plenty of cheers! For details, write the Secretary, Remove Speedway, c/o, Secretary, Greyfriars Herald."

THE NEW Greyfriars Herald

EXTRA GOOD EDITION

No. 36 (New Series). EDITED BY H. RY WHARTON. June 10th, 1933.

YE OLDE VILLAGE FAYRE!
Take our tip and take a trip to Ye Olde Village Fayre at Friarstale! We arrange everything—perfect's pass-out, booked seat in charabanc, and reduced prices at all the shows. What more can you ask? Send deposit 2s. 6d., and name your night! OKAY NIGHT-LIFE SERVICES, Inc. (Proprietor: Fisher T. Fish), Study No. 14, Remove.

AS OTHERS SEE THEM

What I Think of Donald Ogilvy

By Monty Newland

Donald Ogilvy is a Scotsman. I'm a Jew. If the funny stories that are told about our respective races contained any basis of truth, you'd expect me to be an oily, unscrupulous unwarrior and Ogilvy a pawky, humorless, haggle-swinging tightwad. What I'm like myself, it's not up to me to say, but I can say for certain, anyway, that Ogilvy is absolutely the opposite of the Scot they depict in the comic papers.

Ogilvy is just the normal, healthy, fun-loving Briton of a kind which (fortunately for the future of this little island!) can be duplicated at any school in the country. Plucky as they make 'em, loyal and chivalrous to a degree, yet devoid of false sentimentality, of average ability in class work and of more than average ability at sports, he commands the admiration of his friends and the sincere respect of his rivals.

Of his enemies I can say nothing, for one excellent reason—he has none!

The Scots are reputed to be mean, but looking for a needle in a haystack. One Scottish characteristic he does possess, though, is shrewdness. You have to get up very early in the morning to catch Donald Ogilvy napping. I can assure you.

Shrewdness is a trait which he doesn't possess and doesn't pretend to understand. The only distinction he makes is between those who are good sports and those who are not, and, incidentally, he can discriminate very well between the two. But to look down on a fellow because he's poor or of another race or creed is something of which Ogilvy is utterly incapable.

In brief, Donald Ogilvy is a jolly good fellow and I, for one, am proud to know him! (Now that's what we call a first-class bouquet! Whether Ogilvy will give Newland a bouquet or a brickbat in return you'll be able to find out in our next number!—Ed.)

DICKY NUGENT'S WEEKLY WISDOM

Bolsover minor recently had the cheek to suggest I should change the title of this lecture to "Dickie Nugent's WEAKLY Wisdom!"

He is at present in the sunny recovering from one black eye and two thick ears. So whatever he thinks about my wisdom, he's never likely to suffer from the delusion that there's anything WEAKLY about my muck!

BRAVO, SKINNER!

In a competition to see who could walk farthest on his hands Skinner gave in after a few yards because he felt his nose itching. Grakers, Skinner, old scout! It's the first time in history you've ever been known to "come up to scratch"!!

WINDOW-LEDGE JOY

Let Flowers Brighten Studies

We strongly recommend prose and French irregular verbs that should have been lodged outside your study window.

The sight of half a dozen geraniums in flower-pots every time you look out of the window is one to inspire any summer evenings nothing is more calculated to make a fellow enjoy doing his prep.

Squiff has been telling us about his little display.

"It's wonderful what a difference they've made," he said, as he toyed with an anthrimum in his button-hole.

"Once I used to sit down to prep, dejected and morose—unable to do justice to Latin

Lony's Little Letters

Dear Editor.—Since the functional operations of that protopopote, the Weather Clerk, are of moment to all who evince an inclination to participation in outdoor recreative avocations, I take the liberty of appending, from a friend with a predisposition to faddical accomplishment, a meteorological prognostication appropriate to the forthcoming quarter.

A preliminary extraneous rotary atmospheric impulse actuated contrarily from an area of high barometric pressure is suggestive of the maintenance of principally propitious conditions up to the penultimate month of the period, when a meteorological deterioration may circumscribe consequent upon the formation of a centripetal temperature phenomenon and an intensification of humidity up to the re-emergence of solar multifariousness for that period distinguished by anteriority in relation to that preceding it.

I am sure that this information will be of immense interest and benefit to your readers.

Yours helpfully,
ALONZO TODD.

(The interest and benefit would doubtless be terrific if our readers have any idea what Lony's talking about! But if it really is meant to be a weather forecast, we can quite believe the English climate capable of doing all he says!—Ed.)

WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT?



TIDAL WAVE ON RIVER

Measure-Makers' Panic

A disaster which caught hundreds of pleasure-makers unprepared occurred on the River Sark after school last Tuesday, when a tidal wave of tremendous proportions surged along the entire length of the river. Many boats were overturned and belchers were swept downstream or on to the banks like matchsticks.

The phenomenon was graphically described to a representative of the "Greyfriars Herald" by Tom Brown who was strolling along the towpath at the time.

"The river was flowing along perfectly peacefully and normally," Brown said, "when suddenly, in the distance, a veritable mountain of water appeared, racing downstream at an almost incredible speed.

"It was a terrifying sight, and the thunderous roar with which it swept along simply froze the marrow in my bones.

"Pleachers on the river banks fled precipitately for higher ground, and fellows on his pet corn and the other got a thousand lines between them.

Nevertheless, we strongly advise you to grow flowers on the ledge outside your study window.

PROPHECY FULFILLED

Fish has just had "six" from the Head for selling a dud gramophone to a Mr. Time, of Courtfield.

We always said Fish would be "doing Time" one of these days!

MAULY'S IMPREGNABLE STUDY

Electric Ejector's Amazing Success

Mauly's new Electric Ejector is the sensation of the week in the Remove. For months Lord Maulover has been puzzled to know how to keep fellows out of his study during his frequent snoozes. Keys he always loses, and bolts are soon broken by persistent callers, and the problem seemed beyond the wit of man till he conceived the idea of writing Bernard Glyn, the celebrated St. Jim's inventor.

Glyn soon got to the root of the trouble and the result was the Electric Ejector.

The Electric Ejector is really an amazing little machine. It starts work as soon as the intending visitor sets foot on a switch which is concealed under the line outside the study door. As soon as this happens a voice from a loudspeaker cries "Buzz off, there's a good fellow!" and an electric sign above the door flashes out a message: "His Lordship is asleep."

Should the caller, however, remain adamant and put his hand on the door handle, a circuit is completed and he receives a violent electric shock.

The shock is sufficiently powerful to scare off all but the most obstinate. If the caller happens to be one of that kind, however, the Electric Ejector has one further surprise in store for him. The moment he succeeds in opening the door, a big scoop sweeps through the doorway, gathers him up, carries him out, and throws



HIKE ON BLACK PIKE

Remove Enjoy Day Out

The Remove Hiking Club took advantage of the day's holiday given last week in honour of the Head's birthday to do the trip up to the top of Black Pike. Believe us, readers, you'd have enjoyed every minute of it if you'd been there.

Fully a score of enthusiasts assembled in the morning under the leadership of Wharton and the tramp started in brilliant sunshine. The beauty of nature quickly captivated the hikers and the miles passed pleasantly in quiet discussion on philosophical subjects and contemplation of the flora and fauna observed en route.

Perhaps "miles" is a slight exaggeration, now we come to think of it, for we had only gone a hundred yards when we ran into Trumper & Co., from Courtfield. Trumper & Co., for reasons best known to themselves, saw fit to make derisive remarks and cut-calls, so we abandoned philosophical discussion for the time being and sallied into them.

Having left the Courtfield fellows strewn in little pieces all over the lane, we went on our way rejoicing.

A health fite on the lower slopes of Black Pike engaged our attention before we had time to resume philosophy. Two strenuous hours passed before we had it under control, and warm work it was, too!

Someone suggested lunch. Then we made the discovery that some ripsters had taken a fancy to our lunch baskets and we had a three mile chase and a terrific scrap with the Roman gentlemen before we got them back!

We should have made excellent progress after lunch, but for running into a shepherd on the hillside who had sprained his ankle. This necessitated our carrying him to his cottage in Fegg village and escorting the sheep back to the farm. After a delay of about three hours we started off again.

Undoubtedly we would have been philosophising and contemplating flora and fauna like one o'clock after that if a wretched sam-mise hadn't come on and caused us to lose our way entirely.

The sea-mist rather spoiled the latter stages of the hike, tempers getting a little frayed in the warm arguments that developed on the subject of where we were and how we could get back. However, we arrived back safely at Greyfriars only an hour after looking-up time, with not more than about ten scripps to mar the homeward journey.

We didn't exactly achieve all we had set out for. But things don't always go according to programme, and we're all agreed that we had a rattling good day.

There's something soothing and restful about a day's hike in the country, after the hurly-burly of everyday life, isn't there?

GREYFRIARS FACTS WHILE YOU WAIT!



HELP!

The Head has suggested that we devote a column a week to uplifting articles by members of the Board of Governors.

We've gently but firmly declined. As we explained to the Head, our readers have long since got "bored" of Governors!

