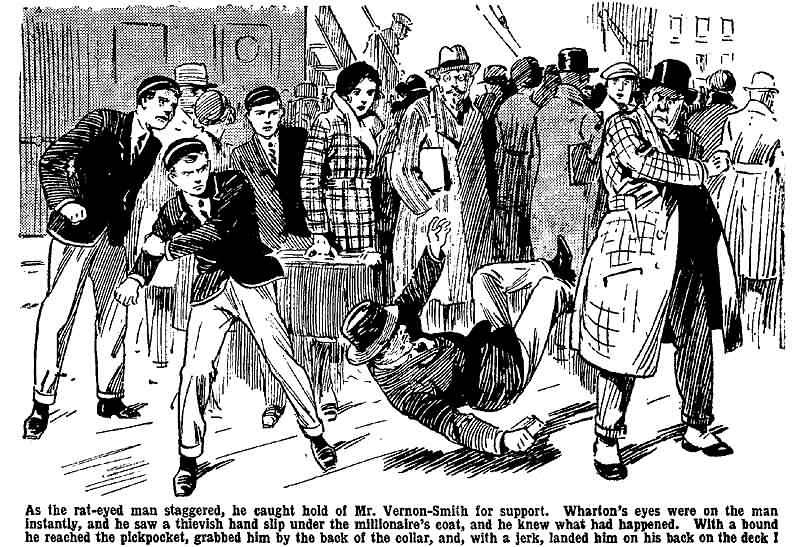
   
  
 **THE FIRST CHAPTER.  
  
 No admittance!**Tap, tap, tap!   
 Snore!  
 Tap, Tap!  
 Billy Bunter groaned.  
 “Are you awake?”  
 “Beast!”  
 “Wha-a-a-at?”  
 Billy Bunter turned his head on the pillow. He was not getting up yet---not if Bunter knew it! It was ten o’clock on a fine April morning was an. But the bright spring sunshine and the wind in the trees did not tempt Billy Bunter out of doors---or out of bed!  
 At Greyfriars school Bunter had to turn out at the clang of the rising belt, like the rest of the Remove. But on holiday Billy Bunter could take his ease. Away from Greyfriars, Billy Bunter never turned out of bed if he could help it till the yearning for breakfast drove him forth.  
 Tap, tap!  
 “Oh, go away!” yelled Bunter.  
 “But---”  
 “Shut up!”   
 Bunter was highly indignant---justly indignant! He was having a rotten beast Easter holiday---absolutely rotten!   
 Seacliff bungalow, on the chalky coast of Kent, a few miles from Folkestone, might have attracted some fellows. It did not attract Bunter.  
 He loathed it  
 Only one consideration kept him there. He had nowhere else to go. It was a case of any port in a storm.  
 A holiday in a lonely bungalow with a tutor who expected him to take lessons was not Bunter’s idea of a holiday.  
 Certainly Mr. Pickering, the tutor, had not been very successful in the matter of lessons. Making Bunter work was no easy task. Even Mr. Quelch, his Form- master at Greyfriars, had not found that easy.  
 Tap, tap, tap !  
 Bunter was glad that he had locked his door.  
 His first morning there the tutor man, receiving no response to his tapping, had entered and shaken him up. After that the fat Owl of the Remove carefully locked up his door at night.  
 “Master Vernon-Smith!” came the tired, rather squeaky voice of Mr. Pickering outside the bedroom door.  
 Billy Bunter snorted.  
 The mention of Herbert Vernon-Smith’s name had an exceedingly irritating effect on the Owl of the Remove. It was Smithy who had landed him in this.  
 It had seemed rather a catch to Bunter when Smithy had put him up to it at Greyfriars. Smithy’s father was wrathy with him---not without reason! The millionaire had ordered his son to proceed to Mr. Pickering’s when the school broke up, and smithy, who had his own plans made for Easter, had sent Bunter in his place, where he cleared off with Pon & Co. Highcliffe. It had worked like a charm---so far as that went. All would have been well if Bunter had found Seacliff Bungalow the sort of place he expected. But he hadn’t!  
 It was rotten!  
 All the while he had been at the place Bunter had eaten hardly twice as much as was good for him.  
 Eating was chief along the joys of life to Billy Bunter; sleeping came next. And if they didn’t give a fellow enough to eat, they might at least, Bunter considered, let him take it out in sleep.  
 Tap, tap, tap!  
 Bunter sat up in bed, his little round eyes gleaming.  
 “Will you let a fellow sleep?” he howled. “I’m not getting up yet! I’m not going to do any work! See! Yah!”  
 “Master Vernon-Smith---”  
 “Yah!” hooted Bunter.  
 “You really must get up---”  
 “Rats!”  
 “Your father---”  
 “What?”  
 “ Your father is here and cannot stay long---”  
 “Oh crikey!” gasped Bunter.  
 “He is waiting to see you!”  
 “Oh crumbs!”  
 “Please be quick!”   
 “Oh lor’!”  
 Mr. Pickering’s footsteps were heard retreating. No doubt he was satisfied that the news that his father had arrived would cause Master Vernon-Smith’s to turn out of bed at once and put in an appearance.  
 But in the peculiar circumstances it was not likely to do so.  
 Bunter sat in horror.  
 Mr. Vernon-Smith’s had arrived, expecting to find his son there. Indeed, the tutor, believing Bunter to the Vernon-Smith, had, of course, told him that his son was there, but not yet up.  
 This was the climax.  
 What Mr. Vernon-Smith’s would say---what he would do---when he found another Greyfriars fellow there pretending to be Herbert Vernon-Smith, Bunter hardly dared imagine.  
 “Beast!” he groaned.  
 Smithy had told him that his father was going abroad. That had made the scheme seemed perfectly safe  
 Yet here he was!  
 When he made such an astonishing discovery there was no doubt that the millionaire would be very angry with his son. But that was not what was worrying Bunter. He was not thinking of the result to Smithy; he was thinking of the result to himself. The angry millionaire might report this amazing deception to Dr. Locke, at Greyfriars. Worse than even that he might give Bunter the thrashing he undoubtedly deserved. In fact, there was no “might” about it; he was certain---absolutely certain---to give Bunter a thrashing.  
 “Oh crikey!” gasped the wretched Owl of the Remove. “Wha-a-a-at’s a fellow going to do?”  
 There was a heavy tread in the little hall of the bungalow. It was followed by a sharp knock at the door---or, rather, a bang. It was not the mild Mr. Pickering this time. Bunter knew who it was, and he fairly cringed.  
 “Herbert!” it was the deep, stern voice of Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith.  
 “Oh lor’!” breathed Bunter.  
 He blinked at the door. It was of rather flimsy construction, like the rest of the building, and it shook under the millionaire’s every knock. Billy Bunter was doubly glad that he had locked it. He wished now that there was a bolt on it---two or three strong bolts!  
 “Herbert, why are you not up? It is past ten o’clock! Come out of your room at once! If you are not dressed, put on a dressing gown!”  
 “Oh crikey!”  
 “What did you say?” Knock, knock! “I have no time to waste, Herbert! I have come down to Folksestone to take the boat for Boulogne. I determined to give you a look-in before I went, and I find you in bed---in bed at this hour! Open your door at once, you idle young rascal!”  
 Bunter did not answer. Mr. Vernon-Smith’s might not have known whose voice it was, but he would have known but it was not his son’s. Bunter drew one gleam of hope from the millionaires words. If Mr. Vernon-Smith was catching the channel boat he could not stay long. Bunter had only to sit tight and keep his door locked.  
 “Herbert!”  
 “No answer.  
 “Good gad! Is the boy sulking? Herbert, answer me at once!” roared the angry voice at the door. “How dare you not answer me! Do you dare to disregard your father?”  
 Bunter certainly would not have disregarded his father. But he was prepared to disregard Vernon-Smith’s father. He sat tight.  
 There was a snort of wrath at the door.  
 “Herbert, if you are sulking, I warn you to be careful. I am quite aware that you did not wish to spend your vacation here; you would have preferred to spend it with your disreputable associates. But I intend to see, sir, that you do nothing of the kind. Open this door at once!”  
 Billy Bunter would almost as soon have opened the door to a Royal Bengal tiger!  
 “Herbert! Mr. Vernon-Smith’s almost roared. He was both amazed and exasperated by the refusal of his son---as he supposed---to see him! He had been prepared to find that the Bounder of Greyfriars had his back up at being compelled to spend a dull and dreary Easter at the tutor’s bungalow in place of the uproarious: holiday he had anticipated. But he had not expected this!  
 “Will you open this door?” hooted Mr. Vernon-Smith.  
 “Oh lor’!” breathed Billy Bunter.  
 “Good gad! Is the boy out of his senses?” thundered Mr. Vernon-Smith. “Impudent---insolent---rebellious---”  
 “Oh crikey!  
 “What does this mean, Herbert?”  
 “Oh scissors!”  
 “Open this door at once!”  
 “No jolly fear!” breathed Bunter.  
 Knock! Thump! Bang! Thump!  
 Billy Bunter groped for his spectacles, and set them on his fat little nose, and blinked in terror at the door. It startled and it shook, as if it was going to yield under the angry thumping of the angry man in the hall. If it did------  
 Bang! Thump!  
 From the bottom of his fat heart Billy Bunter repented him that he had taken Smithy’s place at the tutor’s bungalow for Easter. But repentance, as usual, came too late! He was fairly “for it” now, and he could only sit and blinked in terror at the creaking door, as Mr. Vernon-Smith, angrier and angrier every moment, thumped and thumped and thumped.  
  
 **THE SECOND CHAPTER.  
  
 Astonishing!  
  
H**ALLO, hallo, hallo! Is that the place?”  
 “Looks as if it might be.”  
 “Seacliff Bungalow is the name.” said Harry Wharton. “I’ve got it in Redwing’s letter.”   
 “Poor old Smithy!” said Bob Cherry, staring from the window of the taxicab. “He must feel a bit like Robinson Crusoe there!”  
 “Then he’ll be all the gladder to see us!” grinned Nugent.  
 “The gladfulness,” remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, “will probably be terrific!”  
 Harry Wharton & Co. of the Greyfriars Remove were up earlier than Billy Bunter that fine, sunny April morning.  
 They had been up, in fact, very early.  
 It was going to be a busy day for the Famous Five.  
 They had left Wharton Lodge at a very every hour. It was still quite early when they landed out Folkestone from the terrain. They were going on one of those widely advertised day trips to Boulogne in the same day. They need not have arrived at Folkestone quite so early to take the Channel boat. But they were, so to speak, killing two birds with one stone.  
 Harry Wharton took a letter from his pocket. He had received it a day or two ago from Tom Redwing, the Bounder’s chum, who was gone to sea with his father for the holidays. The postmark was Hull, where it appeared that the ship had put in. From that letter it was easy to guess that Redwing was not easy in his mind about his wayward chum. It ran;  
  
 “Dear Wharton,---I remember you mentioning that you might be taking a trip across the Channel in the hols. If you happen to be at Folkestone you might give Smithy a look in. He’s with a tutor for the holidays---a Mr. Pickering---at a place called Seacliff Bungalow, at Ampinge, which, I believe, is a few miles from Folksestone. I’m sure he’d be glad to see a Greyfriars fellow; it must be rather a bore a rather a chap like Smithy.  
 “T. Redwing”   
  
 “If that’s the show, I’ve no doubt Smithy finds it rather a bore!” said Harry. “It looks lonely enough.”  
 There was no doubt that the bungalow looked rather solitary. Save for a few cottages near the cliffs, there was no other building in sight. The scenery was glorious. Great chalky cliffs and a rolling blue sea; and inland, the green, surging downs. But the chums of the remove knew that that was not likely to console Herbert Vernon-Smith very much.  
 “Poor old Smithy!” said Bob. “He was talking just before break-up of going for the holidays with Pon & Co. at Highcliffe. His father seems to have put paid to that!”  
 “All the better for him!” grunted Johnny Bull.  
 “The betterfulness is great!” agreed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. “But the borefulness of the esteemed and ludicrous Smithy is probably preposterous!”  
 “There’s a whacking big car at the gate!” remarked Frank Nugent. “I fancy I’ve seen that car before.”   
 “Smithy’s pater’s car!” said Bob. “I’ve seen it at Greyfriars! I know that chauffeur by sight, too! Looks as if Smithy’s pater is calling on him this morning, as well as our noble selves! Well, the more the merrier!”  
 That’s the place, anyhow!” said Harry, as he discerned the name “Seacliff” on the gate. And he called to the taxi driver to stop.  
 The chums of the Remove descended.  
 The gate gave on a long shingly path leading up to the bungalow, which lay well back from the road.  
 Near the gate stood a magnificent Rolls car, with a chauffeur standing like a statue beside it.  
 He touched his cap to the juniors, whom he evidently recognized as Greyfriars fellows. He had driven Mr. Vernon-Smith to the school often enough in that magnificent care   
 “Is Mr. Vernon-Smith here?” asked Harry.  
 “Yes, sir; in the house.” answered the chauffeur.  
 The chums of the Remove went up the path. They wondered as they went how Smithy was standing a vacation in such a spot. They could have enjoyed it cons themselves---boating, swimming and rambling on the rugged downs. But their ways were not Smithy’s ways. And they knew, too, that the Bounder of Greyfriars had been making plans for a wild and whirling time in the holidays, in company with Pon & Co., of Highcliffe.  
 Since Smithy’s narrow escape from being expelled, his once indulgent father seemed to have taken the stern Brutus as a model in dealing with him. How Smithy was standing it was quite an interesting question. They were not aware that he was not standing it at all; but had gone off with his Highcliffe friends, leaving Billy Bunter to “stand” it in his place!  
 “Hallo, hallo, hallo!” murmured Bob Cherry, as they neared the building. “Are they breaking up the happy home?”  
 Thump, thump! Bang! came from the open doorway of the bungalow. Someone, it seemed, was knocking out a door within with extraordinary vigour.  
 “What the bickens---“ murmured Wharton.  
 Thump, thump, thump!  
 The chums of the Remove exchanged curious glances. Evidently something of an unusual nature was going on at Seacliff Bungalow.  
 The front door stood wide open.  
 As they reached it a loud, deep, angry voice came to their ears---the voice of Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith, the Bounder’s father.  
 “Herbert! You important young rascal! How dare you! I repeat, how dare you your refuse to see me, your father!”  
 “Oh, my hat!” breathed Bob Cherry.  
 The juniors stopped at the doorway. They seemed to have arrived at a rather awkward moment. In that kindness of their hearts they had determined to give Smithy a look-in, as Redwing suggested in his letter. In fact, the lever hoped that Mr. Pickering might be induced to consent to Smithy taking a day’s leave, and come across B ologne with them on the trip. But certainly they did not want to barge in while a family row was going on! And it looked like it---and sounded like it. And an 1000 homes  
 In the little lounge hall of the bungalow they sighted a thin, worried looking gentleman in horn-rimmed glasses. This, as they guessed, was the tutor, Mr. Pickering. Looking past him, they spotted the portly figure of Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith standing at a door, on which he was thumping with a clenched hand. His plump face was almost purple.  
 “Herbert!” he roared, as the Famous Five stopped. “You idle young rascal, you should have been up hours ago! I insist on seeing you before I go back to Folkestone to take the boat! Do you hear? Unlock this door at once---at once! Do you hear me?”  
 If Herbert Vernon-Smith was in the locked room, there could be no doubt that he roared. Mr. Vernon-Smith’s a voice could be heard all over the building, and to a considerable distance beyond. But there came no reply.  
 “This is---is extraordinary!” said Mr. Pickering, in his tired squeaky voice. “The boys behavior is---is extraordinary!”  
 “Is he out of his senses?” hooted Mr. Vernon-Smith. “What can be the matter with the boy? What?”  
 Thump, thump, thump!  
 “Dear me!” Mr. Pickering spotted the juniors at the front doorway, and came towards them. “Who---what---”  
 “We’re friends of Vernon-Smith, sir.” said Harry Wharton. “As we were in Folkestone this morning, we thought we’d run along and see him. Isn’t he up yet?”  
 Mr. Vernon-Smith spun around from the bedroom door at the sound of the voices.  
 “What is that?” he hooted. “Who are--- Oh, Wharton!” the eye. The angry gentlemen calmed himself a little. He was well acquainted with the cheery Co. of Greyfriar and honoured them with his good opinion. “Oh, you came here to see my son?”  
 “Yes, sir.” said Harry. “I suppose we can see Smithy?”  
 “It appears that nobody can see him.” snorted Mr. Vernon-Smith. “He is not up, up, at last ten o’clock in the morning. His door was locked, and he refuses to answer me. I cannot understand him. He has always been reckless and rebellious, but this passes all bounds  
 He thumped on the bedroom door again.  
 “Herbert!” he roared.  
 No reply.  
 The chums of the Remove looked at one another in sheer amazement. If the Bounder was in that room, his conduct was absolutely inexplicable.  
 Mr. Vernon-Smith breathed wrath.  
 He was not a patient gentleman. But the most efficient of men might have been exasperated by this utter disregard. The millionaire really seemed on the verge of boiling over.  
 Harry Wharton & Co., hardly knowing what to say or do, or whether to stay or go, grouped in the little porch quite at a loss. Mr. Pickering blinked at them, and blinked at the millionaire, evidently in a state of wonder and distress. Mr. Vernon-Smith turned to him.  
 “Mr. Pickering, I must see my son! I will not be defied by my son, sir! I think the boy must be mad! He refuses to open his door! It must be forced! Have you any objection, sir? I will pay for the damage. You have no objection, I presume, to ny forcing this lock, which can easily be repaired? What---what?”  
 Taking Mr. Pickering’s permission for granted, at all events without waiting for a reply, Mr. Vernon-Smith turned to the door again. His portly shoulder bumped on it, hard and heavy. Both door and lock were flimsy enough. There was a crash as both went, and the door flew wide; and Mr. Vernon-Smith, taken rather by surprise by the sudden yielding of the door, pitched headlong into the room, and landed on his portly hands and knees!  
  
 **THE THIRD CHAPTER.  
  
 Not Herbert!**BILLY BUNTER quaked in sheer terror.  
 Sitting in the bed, blinking through his big spectacles at the door, he heard the millionaires words, and knew that the game was up.  
 Another minute and Smithy’s father would be in the room.  
 The hapless fat Owl cast a wild blink round him. There was a window which gave on the garden of the bungalow. But there was no time to drag back the curtains, open a window and flee; neither was Billy Bunter prepared to flee into the outer world in his pajamas, or rather, Smithy’s pyjamas. He quaked.  
 But there was no time to lose. Even as the angry gentleman in the hall crashed his shoulder on the flimsy door, Bunter bounded out of bed.  
 Another bound, and he was under the bed.  
 He vanished from sight as the door flew open, and Smithy’s father tumbled in.  
 It was a rather small single bed, and there was not a lot of room for the fattest fellow at Greyfriars underneath. But the bedclothes hung over the side of the beb, and hid him from sight.  
 He could only hope that Mr. Vernon-Smith wouldn’t look under the bed for his son. That was his only hope now.  
 He strove to still his breathing as he huddled there in quaking dread. Mr. Vernon-Smith’s ejaculation as he tumbled into the room were not reassuring to hear.  
 “Ow! Good gad! Wow! Wurrgh! Oooogh! Oh gad!”  
 “My dear sir!” gasped the bewildered Mr. Pickering. He ran forward to help his terrifying visitor to his feet.  
 But the millionaire scrambled up unaided. The expression on his face was alarming. His temper, already at boiling point, had boiled over in taking that tumble.  
 “Now, you disobedient young rascal!” gasped Mr. Vernon-Smith.  
 He stared round the roon.  
 Nobody was to be seen.  
 He gazed at the empty bed  
 “Where is he?” he hooted.  
 “Dear me!” Mr. Pickering, already in of a bewildered state, gazed at the unoccupied bed as if stupefied. “Dear me! He---he---he is---is not there!”  
 “Where is he?” roared Mr. Vernon-Smith. a  
 Harry Wharton & Co. came across the little hall. It occurred to all of them that a little friendly and tactful intervention might be needed in the present exacerbated state of Mr. Vernon-Smith’s temper. They stared blankly into the room. The Bounder was not there.  
 “The boy is not here!” roared Mr. Vernon-Smith, with an accusing glare at the tutor. “You told me that he was here---that he was not yet up!”  
 The elderly tutor was blinking at the bed through his horn rimmed glasses like a bemused owl.  
 “Someone was here!” roared Mr. Vernon-Smith. “I certainly had someone, though I received no answer. Certainly there was someone! Herbert---Herbert!” he roared. “Herbert!”  
 “He---he---he was here!” stuttered Mr. Pickering. “He answered me when I called him. He certainly answered me---”   
 “Oh crikey!” breathed Bob Cherry, at the doorway.  
 His eyes were fixed on the blankets that drooped and draped over the side of the bedstead. Flu and got into tangled bedclothes he could see a foot.  
 The foot was perfectly still. Its owner, evidently, was hiding under the bed, unaware that that extreme portion of his anatomy was in view. Mr. Vernon-Smith and the tuter had not yet observed it. But it was visible to Bob at the doorway, and visible to his chums when their glances followed his  
 “Oh, my hat!” murmured Harry Wharton.  
 “Oh scissors!” breathed Nugent.  
 “Herbert!” roared the hungry millionaire. He glared at the window. But it was shut and curtained. There had been no escape that way. Whoever had been in the room---and someone certainly had---was still there. “Good gad! Has the young rascal hidden himself, or what? He must be had his senses---absolutely out of his senses! Herbert!”  
 Echo answered; but there was no other answer.  
 Mr. Vernon-Smith’s strode across to a wardrobe that stood against one wall, and dragged open the door with a jerk that nearly overturned that article of furniture.  
 “Herbert!” he glared in among coats. “He is not here!”  
 “Dear me!” murmured Mr. Pickering.  
 “Herbert!”  
 Harry Wharton & Co. Stared silent. The wondered whether Smithy’s father would think of living under the bed. They did not feel called upon to draw his attention to it.  
 Purple with wrath, Mr. Vernon-Smith’s glared round the room. His eyes fixed on the bed at last.   
There was, in fact, no other hiding place possible in the room. He stamped towards the bed, and halted suddenly at the sight of a foot among the tangled blankets and sheets.  
 “Upon my word! The boy is mad!” he gasped. “He is there---under the bed! A son of mine---hiding under a bed! Mad---he must be mad! Absolutely out of his senses!”  
 “Dear me!” gasped Mr. Pickering, blinking at the foot.  
 “Herbert!”  
 No reply.  
 “Come out, you young rascal! Come out at once!” roared Mr. Vernon-Smith. “How dare you hide under a bed? Are you insane? What do you mean? Come out at once! I can see you there!”  
 “Oh crikey!” came a startled gasp.  
 Harry Wharton & Co. jumped as they heard that. It was not the Bounder’s voice. It was a familiar voice to their ears; but most certainly it was not Herbeert Vernon-Smith’s.  
 The stared at one another almost in stupefaction. Unless there were dreaming, that was the voice of Billy Bunter.  
 “Herbert, come out at once!” almost raved Mr. Vernon-Smith.  
 “I---I’m not here!” came a terrified squeak.  
 “What?”  
 “I---I mean------ Oh lor!”  
 “What does this mean?” gasped Mr. Vernon-Smith. “That is not my son’s voice. Who is there? Quotes  
 “Oh crikey!”  
 Mr. Vernon-Smith stooped, reached under the bed, and grasped a fat ankle. He tugged.  
 There was a fearful roar under the bed.  
 “Ow! Leggo! Yaroooh”  
 “We’re dreaming this” gasped Bob Cherry. “Its Bunter or his ghost!”  
 “But how the dickens---“  
 “The howfulness is terrific!”  
 “Yaroooh! Leggo! I’m not here!” shrieked Bunter. “I say—yaroooh! Whooop!  
 Help! Leggo! Yow-ow-whoooop!”  
 That terrific tug on the fat ankle was not to be denied. Out from under the bed, in a tangle of sheets and blankets, rolled a fat and gasping figure. It rolled yelling into the middle of the room, and Mr. Vernon-Smith stared at it with staring eyes. Evidently, it was not Herbert!   
  
  
 **THE FOURTH CHAPTER.   
  
 Awful for Bunter!  
  
“B**UNTER!”  
 Harry Wharton & Co. Stared at the fat, gasping Owl of the Remove, hardly able to believe their eyes.  
 Billy Bunter often turned up unexpectedly; but never had he turned up so unexpectedly as now.  
 Sitting up in tangled bedclothes, the Owl of the Remove set his spectacles straight on his fat little nose and blinked round him.   
 “Bunter!” gasped Bob Cherry. “It’s Bunter”  
 “The esteemed and ridiculous Bunter!” ejaculated Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.  
 “Bunter!” roared Mr. Vernon-Smith.   
 “Oh lor’! Oh crikey! I say, you fellows, keep him off!” gasped Bunter. “’ Tain’t my fault. It’s Smithy’s fault, the beast! Oh dear!”  
 “What does this mean?” Mr. Vernon-Smith spun round at the tutor. “Tell me what this means, Mr. Pickering! Explain yourself, sir! You told me that this was my son’s room---”  
 “Quite so------”  
“Then where is my son?”  
 “Eh?”  
 “Where is Herbert?”  
 “What?”  
 As Mr. Pickering was under the impression that William George Bunter was Herbert Vernon-Smith, he was naturally surprised by the question.  
 “Will you give me a sensible answer, sir?” roared Mr. Vernon-Smith. “Where is Herbert, sir?”  
 “Oh lor’!”  
 “There he is!” said the bewildered tutor. He pointed to the gasping Bunter. “There is the boy, sir!”  
 “Are you mad, Mr. Pickering?”  
 “Really, sir---”   
 “If that foolish boy had answered me I should have known that my son was not in the room. I cannot imagine why he did not answer me. Why did you not answer me, when you must have been aware that I supposed that Herbert was in this room?”   
 “Oh crikey!”  
 “Where is Herbert?”  
 “Oh dear!”  
 “Mr. Pickering, I demand to know at once where my son is! You told me that he was in this room, not yet out of bed. I have actually forced the door, was, and find only this boy, Bunter------”  
 “Bub-bub-Bunter!” stuttered the tutor. He was now in a state of hopeless bewilderment. “Did you say Bub-bub-Bunter, sir?”  
 “That boy’s name is Bunter. I suppose you are aware of it, as he seems to be staying here. What do you mean, sir? Are you wandering in your mind? Have I placed my son in the charge of an idiot, or what?”  
 “I---I---I fail to understand------”  
 “You fail to understand?” hooted Mr. Vernon-Smith. “What do you fail to understand, sir? Cannot you understand that I am here to see my son, and that I have no time to waste, as I catch the boat for Boulogne? Cannot you understand the English language, sir?”  
 Mr. Pickering blinked at him, owl-like. He was so utterly bewildered that he seemed almost in their a trance.  
 “Is---is---is not that boy Herbert Vernon-Smith?” he got out at last.  
 The millionaire jumped.  
 “That boy? Are you insane? That boy is named Bunter, as I have said. He is one of Herbert’s schoolfellows at Greyfriars. He is nothing like my son! What do you mean?”  
 Mr. Pickering almost fell down.  
 Harry Wharton & Co. looked on, transfixed. They had been aware that Billy Bunter was somewhere near Folkestone for the vacation. They had not expected to find him at Seacliff Bungalow, however. Still less had they dreamed of anything like this. Unless Mr. Pickering was a lunatic, his words meant that he had taken Billy Bunter for Herbert Vernon-Smith. Evidently, some extraordinary deception had been going on.  
 Mr. Pickering pressed his hand to his forehead. He felt as if his brain was spinning.  
 “You---you---you say that---that boy is not your son?” he babbled. “Then---then I do not understand. He—he came here and---”  
 “You cannot mean that that boy, Bunter, came here pretending to be Herbert Vernon-Smith!” gasped the millionaire.  
 “Oh lor’!”  
 “He---he---he certainly did!” gurgled the hapless tutor. “If he is not your son, then where is your son? I fail to understand this! You told me to expect your son here on the day Greyfriars school broke up for Easter. This boy came---“  
 “This boy!” gasped Mr. Vernon-Smith.  
 “Certainly, sir! This boy---this morning whom you call Bunter, but whom I received as Master Herbert Vernon-Smith------”  
 “Good gad!”  
 “If he is not master Herbert Vernon-Smith---”  
 “Do you think that I do not know my own son by sight, Mr. Pickering?” almost shrieked Mr. Vernon-Smith.  
 “Oh! Yes. No doubt---no doubt that! But---but---but---but if this morning is not he------”  
 “This boy is Bunter!”  
 “Dear me! Then------”  
 “And where is my son, sir?”  
 “I do not know. I have seen no one but this boy. If he is not your son, I know nothing of your son!”  
 “He has not been here at all?” roared the millionaire.  
 “Only this boy, whom you call Bunter, has been here. No other boy has been here. I fail------”  
 “And you allowed yourself to be imposed upon, sir, to such an extent?” gasped Mr. Vernon-Smith. “Are you a fool, sir?”  
 “Really, sir.” exclaimed Mr. Pickering, with some spirit, “really, sir, as I had never seen your son in my life, sir, I hardly see how you can expect me to know him by sight, sir.”  
 “But his boxes---his linen---his personal belongings. Surely someone must have noticed------”  
 “This boy’s baggage is marked with your son’s name, sir.” said Mr. Pickering. “He has two suitcases with Herbert Vernon-Smith’s initials on them. He has other things marked with the same initials, and with the name------”  
 “In that case, he must have stolen my son’s property with the intention of carrying out this impersonation!”  
 “Oh crikey!”  
 “The boy shall explain! Wharton!”   
 “Oh! Yes, Mr. Vernon-Smith!” gasped Harry.  
 “Hand me the walking stick I left in the hall.”  
 “Oh yes!”  
 Wharton handed in the walking stick, a thick, malacca. Mr. Vernon-Smith took a businesslike grip on it and stepped towards Bunter. There was a yell of apprehension from the fat junior.  
 “Yarooh! You keep off! I say, you fellows, keep him off! It wasn’t my fault! Oh lor’! Help!”  
 “Bunter! I find you here, in my son’s name, in possession of his property. Where is Herbert now?”  
 “Ow! I don’t know. Wow!”  
 “Was he a party to this deception?” roared Mr. Vernon-Smith.  
 The truth was dawning on millionaires mind now---as, indeed, it could hardly fail to do. Harry Wharton & Co. had guesscd already!  
 This, evidently, was a scheme of the Bounder’s for getting out of the dull and dreary vacation that his father had arranged for him. It was a rather amazing scheme, but there could scarcely be any doubt about it. The fact that the tutor had never seen his perspective pupil had made it easy enough. Naturally, when the Greyfriars fellow arrived on the gate appointed, with Herbert Vernon-Smith’s baggage, Mr. Pickering had taken him for Herbert Vernon-Smith! He could hardly have done anything else. And all the while the bounder of Greyfriars was carrying on with his own plans for the holidays, leaving Billy Bunter to keep up appearances for him at the tutor’s. Only Mr. Vernon-Smith’s unexpected visit had brought the scheme to light!  
 Billy Bunter blinked dismally at the Famous Five, and apprehensively at Mr. Vernon-Smith. The game was up now, with a vengeance! What he was to say to the irate millionaire Bunter did not know. But he had to say something---and what like from the malacca warned him that he had to say it quick!  
 “Ow! Keep off!” roared Bunter. “It wasn’t my fault! I never wanted to come here---wow! --- and I can tell you that I’m jolly well fed up, too! Hardly anything for a fellow to eat! If Smithy had told me what it was like, I wouldn’t have been found dead here. Oh dear! I might have gone home with Mauly---yaroooh!”  
 Whack!  
 “will you explain herself?” roared Mr. Vernon-Smith. “Where is my son, you young rascal?”  
 “How should I know?” yelled Bunter. “He cleared off, and landed me in this! The rotter! I dare say he knew what it was like! Fat lot he cared if a fellow didn’t get enough to eat! He said I could run up an account of grub at the shops! And there ain’t any shops!”  
 “Oh, my hat!” gasped Bob Cherry.  
 “Ha, ha, ha!”  
 “Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!” roared Bunter indignantly. “There ain’t a shop for miles and miles! I’ve been starved here! If a fellow had anywhere to go---I mean------”  
 “You came here representing yourself to be my son, to deceive this gentleman, while Herbert went somewhere else!” said Mr. Vernon-Smith, with a grim intensity of wrath, that was more alarming than his previous outburst of anger.  
 “You---you see------” stammered Bunter.  
 “Yes or no?”  
 “Ow! Yes! You---you see, Smithy said------“  
 “where did my son go?”  
 “I---I think------“

Th Th Th Th If If Th Whack!  
 “Yarooogh! He cleared off with those Highcliffe cads!” yelled Bunter. “Ponsonby and Gadsby and Monson! Wow!”  
 Mr. Vernon-Smith’s shut his lips hard. He was well acquainted with the Highcliffe friends of his son; he had seen Pon & Co. a good many times. Since Smithy’s disgrace at Greyfriars, and his narrow escape from the sack, he had forbidden Herbert to have anything more to do with them. This was how his commands had been obeyed  
 “So Herbert has gone with those blackguardly young rascals, and left you to carry on in his name here!” he said grimly.  
 “You---you see------” gasped Bunter.  
 “And I should never have known, had I not called here before going abroad!” Mr. Vernon-Smith turned his grim glare on the Famous Five. “Were you boys aware of this trickery?”  
 “Oh, my hat!” gasped Bob Cherry. “Not at all, sir.”  
 “We came here expecting to see Smithy!” said Harry Wharton. “I had a letter from his pal Redwing, saying that he was here---”  
 “And if you had found this young scoundrel passing under his name, would you have informed me?”  
 “Hem!”  
 It was rather a difficult question for the chums of the Remove to answer. Certainly they did not approve of Smithy’s trickery. But giving him away to his irate parent was quite another matter.  
 “Luckily, I was put on my guard!” he snapped. “Otherwise I should not be here. I should have been hoodwinked---kicking him completely, had not Mr. Smedley telephoned to me  
 “Mr. Smedley!” exclaimed Wharton. “at Greyfriars last telling You mean the man who took Mr. Quelch’s place at Greyfriars last term  
 “The Creeper and Crawler!” grunted Johnny Bull.  
 “Oh, the beast!” groaned Billy Bunter. “Of course, that beastly Nosey Parker had to nose it out, blow him! Why couldn’t he mind his own business?”  
 “You young rascal!” exclaimed Mr. Vernon-Smith. “Mr. Smedley knew nothing of your trickery here, or he would have told me. He warned me that he had some reason to believe that my son was in, and a of a set of Highcliffe boys, since the school broke up; company that he did not think good for him. He was doing his duty in bringing the matter to my notice---and I made it a point to call here to ascertain that Herbert was indeed here---and I have found---you!”  
 Mr. Vernon-Smith’s gripped the malacca, hard.  
 “Have you anything more to tell me, Bunter?”  
 "Ow! No! I say---”  
 Whack! Whack!   
 “Yaroooh!”  
 Whack! Whack!  
 “Yow-ow-ow!” Bunter rolled and roared. “Keep off! Leave off! I say, you fellows---whooooop!”  
 Whack! Whack! Whack!   
 “You young rascal!” panted Mr. Vernon-Smith. “I shall thrash you”--- whack, whack, whack---“for helping my son in this rascally deception!” Whack, whack!  
“I shall thrash you as you deserve.” Whack, whack! “I shall give you a lesson you will not forget in a hurry.” Whack, whack! “I am very glad I paid attention to Mr. Smedley’s telephone message”---whack, whack, whack---” and came here and “---whack, whack!---“found out the miserable trickery that was going on! Take that, and that, and that, and that!”  
 Whack! Whack! Whack! Whack!  
 “Yarooh! Help! Murder! Fire! I say, you fellows! Help! Yarooop! Oh crikey! Yow-ow-ow-ow-ow-wow!” roared Bunter, as he took them.  
 “There!” gasped Mr. Vernon-Smith, rather breathless from his exertions. “There! That will be a warning---“  
 “Whooooop!”  
 Mr. Vernon-Smith strode out of the room, grabbed up his hat from the hallstand, and stared out of the bungalow. In his angry exasperation he had not forgotten that he had to catch the boat for Boulogne that morning. He strode back to this car, hurled himself into it, and in a few moments more the car was roaring away on the road to Folkestone. In Mr. Pickering’s bungalow Billy Bunter was roaring louder than a dozen cars.  
  
 **THE FIFTH CHAPTER.  
  
 Bunter, Too!**“I SAY, you fellows---”  
 “Ha, ha, ha! ”  
 “Beasts!” roared Billy Bunter.  
 “Ha, ha, ha!” roared the Famous Five.  
 Billy Bunter regarded himself as an object for the deepest sympathy. The chums of Greyfriars did not seem to agree. In their opinion, Billy Bunter thoroughly deserved a jolly good whopping! There was little doubt about that---and still less doubt that he had got one! He had got a terrific whoping---that malacca had fairly rung and cracked on the fat person of the Owl of the Remove!  
 Mr. Pickering, still in a dazed and bewildered state, blinked after Mr. Vernon-Smith when he went; blinked after the car buzzing off down the road; blinked at the Famous Five, and finally blinked at Billy Bunter!  
 “You—Bunter---if your name is Bunter---get dressed!” he snapped. “Get dressed---and go!”  
 “Oh crikey!”  
 “If you are not gone in five minutes,” said Mr. Pickering. “I shall eject you by force! You are a rascal and an impostor! Get gone!”  
 “I---I say, what about breakfast?” gasped Bunter.  
 “You will have no breakfast here, you young rogue!”  
 “Oh crumbs! I---I say------”  
 “Enough!”  
 With a sniff of angry contempt, the tutor turned away from him. His look seemed to indicate a desire to give Bunter some more of what Mr. Vernon-Smith had given him; but doubtless he considered that the young rascal had had enough.  
 “I say, you fellows------” gasped Bunter in dismay.  
 “Good bye, Bunter!” chuckled Bob. “Come on, you men! As Smithy’s not here, there’s nothing for us to stay for.”  
 The chums of the Remove turned to go. Billy Bunter was bundling into his clothes at top speed now. Mr. Pickering had given him only five minutes! Bunter had a deep appreciation of what would happen if he was not gone in that space of time. Also, now that his game was up at Seacliff Bungalow, he did not want to lose sight of Harry Wharton & Co. He had stayed on there, simply because he had no other refuge for the holidays---except home, sweet home! But it was clear that he could stay on no longer!  
 “I say, you fellows, which for me!” he yelled. “I won’t be a minute! I say, you can give me a lift to Folkestone! I say------“  
 “Oh, all right---buck up, then!” called back Harry Wharton; and the juniors left the bungalow, and walked back to the road, where their taxi was waiting Mr. Vernon-Smith’s Rolls was already out of sight.  
 “Wharton larks” chuckled Bob Cherry. “Fancy coming here expecting to find Smithy---and finding that howling ass in his place! Redwing couldn’t have known anything about it---Smithy never let on to him! I wonder where that ass Smithy is now?”  
 Johnny Bull grunted.  
 “Playing the goat with those Highcliffe cads!” he said. “He was telling all the Remove, before that, that he was going to have a high old time in the hols to make up for toeing the line last term at school. I suppose his pater was wise to it, and that’s why he sent him here!”  
 “And he’d have got away with it if that spying worm Smedley hadn’t phoned to the old bean!” said Bob. “out the bickens did Smedley get on to it? I remember he was always watching Smithy last term! May have seen him joining up with Pon & Co., after sending Bunter here! Well, it’s all out now! Poor old Smithy!”  
 “It was a rotten trick!” grunted Johnny Bull.  
 “The rottenfulness was rather teriffic!” agreed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. “But the esteemed and ridiculous Smithy will have a preposterous time when he meets his infuriated and ludicrous pater.”  
 Harry Wharton nodded thoughtfully.  
 “Might give the chap a tip what to expect, if we knew where to get word to him.” he said. “But---”  
 “Not likely to see him again till next term!” said Frank Nugent. “Poor old Smithy! He’s rather a sweep, but---”  
 “Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here comes Bunter!”  
 There was a sound of a yell in the bungalow. The five minutes was up, and Bunter, apparently, was not quite ready. Ready or not, he came scuttling out of the front door, with Mr. Pickering’s horn rimmed glasses gleaming wrath after him. A foot just missed Bunter as he jumped.  
 “Beast!” roared Bunter.  
 “Go!” hooted Mr. Pickering. “Rascal! Impostor! Go!”  
 Bunter stopped on the path and blinked back at the tutor in the doorway. He had given up the idea of breakfast. It was clear that he was going to have no brekker at Seacliff Bungalow. But he had arrived there with luggage, and he did not want to go without it.  
 “Look here, you cheeky beast---” he bawled.  
 “Go!”  
 “My bags!” howled Bunter. “Suitcase---clothes---all my things---”  
 “Your things? You mean Master Vernon-Smith’s things!”  
 “Well, Smithy lent them to me! I’m not going without my bag!” roared Bunter indignantly.  
 “Master Vernon-Smith’s baggage will remain here until Master Vernon-Smith arrives, or until I receive instructions from Mr. Vernon-Smith!” answered Mr. Pickering. “Now go!”  
 “Look here------”  
 “Are you going?”  
 “Beast!  
 “ Mr. Pickering came striding out of the bungalow. During his few days with Billy Bunter he had not taken a liking to that fascinating youth. He had, in fact, entertained a considerable repugnance towards him.  
 He was as fed-up with Bunter as Bunter could possibly be with him. Only one consideration had saved the pupil from several thrashings at the hands of the tutor---the fact that Mr. Pickering could not afford to thrash a millionaire’s son. Mary he had discovered that his pupil was not a millionaires son at all, but a rascally young inposter so there was no reason why he should not hand out what he had been yearning, for some days, to and out.  
 The look on his face, as he strode out of the bungalow, warned Bunter what was coming. He ceased to argue about his baggage---or, rather, Smithy’s baggage---but turned, and bolted for the gate.  
 The tutor rushed after him.  
 Bunter reached the gate---just as Mr. Pickering reached Bunter.  
 Mr. Pickering’s foot shot out, and landed on the tightest trousers in Great Britain! Bunter flew!  
 “Whooop!”  
 Bump!  
 Bunter came through the gateway, flying, and landed sprawling!  
 “Oh, my hat!” gasped Bob Cherry.  
 “Ha, ha, ha!”  
    
  
“Now go!” roared Mr. Pickering. And he turned, tramped up the path to the bungalow, went in, and slammed the door.  
 “Ow! Wow! I say, you fellows!” gasped Bunter. “I say---groogh!---I say---ow!—that beast kicked me---wow-ow---oh, won’t I punch that beast Smithy’s nose next term at Greyfriars! Oh dear! Oh lor! Ow!”  
 “Roll into the taxi, fathead, if you want a lift!” said Harry Wharton. “We can’t stay here all day! We’ve got a boat to catch!”  
 Bunter rolled into the taxi. The chums of the Remove followed him. It was a close fit.  
 Back along the road to Folkestone went the taxi, packed. For the first mile Billy Bunter did nothing but gasp and grunt and gurgle. After that, he sat up, and took notice, as it were.  
 “I say, you fellows, did you say you were catching a boat?” he asked.  
 “Yes, ass! We’ll drop you at the station.” said Harry.  
 “Where are you going?”  
 “Oh, we’re going on to the Continent!” said bob cherry, and his comrades chuckled. They certainly were going on the Continent---though only for one day.  
 “Well, look here, I’ll come!” said Bunter. “I shall be jolly useful, you know, speaking French as I do! Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! The fact is, I can’t go back to that rotten bungalow, and I’m rather let down! Smithy’s really diddled me over these hols, you know I’ll come, old chaps! I’m afraid I couldn’t are you more than a week---”  
 “Still, if you’ll be in France more than a week, I might be able to stretch a point!” said Bunter generously. “I say, you fellows, how long are you going to be in France?”  
 “About six hours!” grinned Bob.  
 “Eh?” Bunter blinked at him. “you silly ass, you said you were going on the Continent!”  
 “So we are! Boulogne is on the Continent, isn’t it? And we’re going to Boulogne.”  
 “Trippers” said Bunter, with a curl of his fat lip. “Oh, my hat!”  
 “The tripfulness, my esteemed, idiotic Bunter!”  
 “Hardly good enough for you, old fat bean.” said Bob. “You couldn’t stand trippers! And if you could, the trippers couldn’t stand you! So we’ll drop you at the station!”  
 “Oh, really, Cherry! What I mean to say is that there’s nothing I enjoy like these---these trips!” said Bunter. “I’ll come with pleasure! I mean it! You will have to take a ticket for me, as I happen to be short of money------“  
 “Not really?”  
 “Yes, old chap, really! You see, staying at that beastly bungalow to oblige Smithy, I wasn’t able to get my own correspondence---and so I never got any remittances!” exclaimed Bunter. Press “I was expecting a postal order---I mean several postal orders, but in the circumstances, you see---“  
 “Ha, ha, ha!”  
 “Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I say, if we’re catching the same boat as Smithy’s pater, we’d better keep clear of him---I don’t want to see any more of him!”  
 “Ha, ha, ha!” yelled the Famous Five. They could quite believe that Billy Bunter did not want to see any more of Smithy’s pater!  
 “Oh, don’t cackle! I say, you fellows, I shall have to have some brekker before we go on the boat are”  
 “We’ll drop you somewhere for brekker---”  
 “I think perhaps we’d better go straight on the boat! After all, I can get some grub on the boat! That’s all right---don’t worry about it now.” Said Bunter. “I can hold out somehow till we get on the boat!”  
 “Is that fat slug sticking on to us?” inquired Johnny Bull.  
 “Oh, really, Bull---”  
 “Looks like it!” said Harry Wharton.   
 And Bunter did! He was very careful indeed not to lose sight of the Famous Five for a single moment till he went on the boat with them---then he dived down once into the refreshment department, and has lost to sight though perhaps to memory dear!  
  
 **THE SIXTH CHAPTER.  
  
 The Bounder!**  
  
“”HALLO, hallo, hallo!” ejaculated Bob Cherry blankly.  
 “What---”  
 “Smithy!”  
 “Oh, my only hat!”  
 The Channel boat was out of Folkestone Harbour, and chuning through the chops of the Channel. The white cliffs of England stretched in a chalky line astern.  
 Billy Bunter had gone down to feed at once, and he had not come up. He was not likely to you. He was not likely to reappear for some time. Bunter was busy. But the chums of the Remove did not miss his fascinating society. The boat was crowded. Harry Wharton & Co. were not the only trippers by any means. On a day trip there was no need of passports, which made the trip easy to the chums of the Remove, and to a swarm of other trippers.  
 The Famous Five strolled about the deck. There was not a lot of room for strolling, but they enjoyed the crowd and the bustle and the buzz of voices. As they were aware that Mr. Vernon-Smith was on the same boart, they kept an eye open for him, but they did not see him; probably the millionaire, like Bunter, was lunching on the steamer, save time when he landed---Mr. Vernon-Smith’s time being of immense and incalculable value! But though they did not see Mr. Vernon-Smith’s on the crowded deck, Bob Cherry was suddenly astounded by the sight of Herbert Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars.  
 Where Smithy was---except that he was not where he ought to have been---Harry Wharton & Co. had not the faintest idea they knew that he was with Pon & Co. of Highcliffe, that was all.  
 “And now---”  
 “Oh, crumbs!” breathed Nugent.  
 Three very elegant fellows stared in a group by one of the boats. The were Ponsonby, Gadsby, and Monson of the Fourth Form at Highcliffe School. Leaning on the boart at the davits, with his hands in his pockets, and a cap pushed back on his head, was Herbert Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars.  
 He did not see the Remove fellows. He was talking with Pon & Co., they were discussing something rather eagerly. As the juniors stared, gazing in astonishment on something like alarm, Pon’s voice floated to them on the wind.  
 “It’s roulette now, I tell you! They used to play a game called boule---in boule! But they have roulette in France now!”  
 That was the eager topic, evidently!  
 “Only a couple of miles out of Boulogne---Le Bosquet, they call the place.” Pon’s voice went on. “Jolly little place in a wood---variety show, dancing, restaurant, and roulette rooms! Absolutely ripping’! Quotes  
 “Toppin’!” said Monson.  
 “They order these things better in France, what?” grinned Gadsby.  
 The Bounder’s eyes were gleaming!  
 It was evident that he was looking forward, keenly, to a visit to Le Bosquet, that charming little place in a wood where they had roulette!” obviously, his father had been well advised to make for instance to keep him clear of his Highcliffe frienbs that vacation---though the arrangements had been rather a failure!  
 Harry Wharton’s face was very grave.  
 The Bounder’s blackguardism was no business of his. But it was clear that the reckless scapegrace of Greyfriars had no knowledge that his father was on that very steamer. Such an idea could not possibly have crossed his mind, or he would not have been launching there chatting carelessly with Pon & Co. But any minute, Mr. Vernon-Smith might come on deck --- any minute, his eyes might fall on his son, in the midst of the crowd on the deck of the steamer. What had happened at Mr. Pickering’s bungalow, was at hint of what was likely to happen if Mr. Vernon-Smith found his son on the channel boat---heading for France and a casino, in company with the young blackguards of Highcliffe!  
 “It;s Smithy!” said Frank Nugent. “The silly ass! He can’t know---”  
 Bob Cherry whistled.  
“Mr. Vernon-Smith must have gone down before they came on board!” he said. “If he comes up------”  
 “I’ll give Smithy the tip!” said Harry, in a low voice. “He can keep out of sight, stay on the boat, and go back in it. Goodness knows what will happen if his father spots him here.”  
 At that moment the Bounder raised his eyes, and they fell on the Greyfriars group. He started a little, and spoke to Pon & Co., And the three Highcliffe fellows looked round.  
 Pon & Co. Gave the Famous Five a supercilious stare, and then ostentatiously turned their backs on them. There was no love lost between the black sheep of Highcliffe, and the chums of Greyfriars, and it pleased Pon & Co. to be impertinent, in a place where it was scarcely practical to kick them for their impertinence.   
 Johnny Bull gave a growl.   
 “I’ve a jolly good mind---“  
 “No rows, old chap!” said Wharton hastily. “We’ve got to get Smithy out of this, somehow! I’ll speak to him. ”  
 Johnny Bull grunted, and moved on. Bob Cherry, Nugent, and the Nabob of Bhanipur followed him. Wharton hesitated a moment or two. The Bounder, after giving him a surprised stare, had turned his eyes away, and plainly did not want to speak to him, while he was in company with fellows with whom Harry Wharton & Co. were at daggers drawn. Neither did Wharton want to speak to him, in his present company, but he felt that there was no help for it. He simply could not leave the reckless fellow to be taken by surprise when his father came on deck.  
 He made his way through the crowd, and among innumerable legs stretched from deck-chairs, towards the Highcliffe group.  
 Pon & Co. saw him coming, but deliberately ignored him. Smithy give him a surly and impatient glance.  
 “Smithy------“ began Harry.   
 “What do you want?” snapped the Bounder impatiently. “Can’t you see I’m with these chaps?”  
 “Just a word------”  
 “Let’s get farther along, Smithy!” said Ponsonby, very distinctly “Too many of these cheap trippers about here.”  
 The Bounder grinned, and Wharton coloured.  
 “Yes, come on!” said Gadsby.  
 The Bounder detarched himself from the boat he was leaning on.. He was about to follow the Highcliffians, when Wharton caught his sleeve.  
 “Smithy------”  
 “Don’t be a fool!” snapped Vernon-Smith. “Let go my arm! What the thump are you bargin’ in for?”   
 “To give you a tip------”  
 “Can it!”  
 “I must tell you------”  
 “Are you comin’, Smithy?” asked Ponsonby, with an angry snap in his voice.  
 “Yes! Leave me alone, Wharton, you fool!” The Bounder angrily jerked his arm away.  
 “Your father’s on this steamer!” said Harry quietly.  
 The Bounder stopped dead.  
 “M-my father!” he stammered.  
 “Yes!”  
 “On this steamer!”  
 “Yes!”  
 “Good gad!”  
 The angry impatience faded out of the Bounder’s face. He cast a swift, apprehensive glance round the crowded deck. His breath came thick and fast.   
 “You’re sure?” he breathed.  
 “Yes!”  
 “You’ve seen him?”  
 “Yes!”  
 “Look here, Smithy, if you’re stoppin’ to talk to that fellow!” snapped Ponsonby.  
 The Bounder turned on him.  
 “Hold your silly tongue! Leave me alone!” he snarled.  
 Cecil Ponsonby stared at him blankly for a second. Then he turned on his heel, and walked away, with Gadsby and Monson. Herbert Vernon-Smith was left alone with the captain of the Greyfriars Remove.  
  
 **THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.   
  
 A Narrow Escape!**HARRY Wharton made a movement to go, but stopped, as the Bounder caught hold of his arm, in his turn.  
 Wharton was feeling inpatient, angry and contemptuous, but the intense alarm in Vernon-Smith’s face disarmed him. There was more at stake than Wharton knew, if the millionaire discovered his son in the act of disobedience and rebellion. Smithy’s face was almost white.  
 He moved so that the boat at the davits screened him a little from general view, drawing Wharton after him.  
 “Is that what you spoke to me for---to tell me that?” he muttered.  
 “What else?” grunted Wharton.  
 “Well, thanks--- thanks a hundred times over! By gad, I’m done for if the pater spots me!” breathed the Bounder.  
 “He told me he was going abroad for Easter---I thought he’d gone already! Fancy his taking the same boat---I say, you’re absolutely certain he’s on board?”  
 “I saw him go down to the saloon, before the boat pulled out of Folkestone Harbour!”  
 The Bounder caught his breath.  
 “Thank goodness he did! If he’d been on deck when we came on---Oh my hat! I shall have to keep doggo this trip! For goodness sake, if you should speak to him, don’t breathe a word about me. ”  
 “Of course not! But---”   
 “It would mean a fearful row for me!” whispered Vernon-Smith. “I suppose you guessed that, as you took the trouble to give me the tip! You know he’s been ratty with me, ever since the Head nearly sacked me last term. I suppose you t wouldn’t do for him to see me here with that Highcliffe crew---”  
 “More than that!” said Harry. “You see---”  
 “Much more than that, if you only knew! said Smithy. “I’m supposed to be with a tutor, at a bungalow near Folkestone, and if he saw me here, he would know--- oh, my hat!” He whistled. Then his face hardened. “He fancied I was going to spend the hols with a dashed tutor-wallah in a dashed bungalow---but I fixed that all right.’  
 “I know how you fixed it, Smithy, and------”  
 “What? How the thump do you know? Press”  
 “I had a letter from Redwing, and we gave you a look-in this morning, before we got on the boat------“  
 “Oh crumbs! Then you saw------”  
 “Bunter------”  
 “You didn’t give the game away to the tutor-wallah? You weren’t such a fool as that!” breathed the Bounder. “I never told Redwing---the silly ass to send you barging in here------”  
 “He thought you’d like to see some Greyfriars chaps in the circumstances, and---”  
 “So I should, I suppose, if I’d been there!” The Bounder laughed shortly. “but I fixed that up with that fat fool Bunter---he had nowhere to go for the hols, as usual, and he was glad of the chance! Pickering’s never seen me---it must have worked all right. You never let alone?”  
 “No; but---”  
 “That’s all right, then! Keep it dark!” said the Bounder. “The pater would be in a frightful wax if he ever spotted it.”  
 Wharton gave him a look of compassion. Evidently Vernon-Smith had not the faintest suspicion that his father had “spotted” that deception already! Wharton hesitated to overwhelm him with that news.  
 Vernon-Smith was recovering his confidence a little now.  
 “After all, I can keep clear of the pater on the steamer in the crowd like this!” he muttered. “It will be all right!”  
 “You’ll stay on the boat and go back to------”  
 “I’ll watch it!” sneered the Bounder. “I shall stay on the boat till the pater’s gone off it, certainly. I suppose he will be going for the Paris train, and I’ll give him time to clear  
 “Wharton compressed his lips.  
 He had spoken to smithy to put him on his guard; but certainly not to help him to carry on with his disregard of parental authority.  
 “But, look here, Smithy------”  
 “Oh, rot! Don’t give me any pi-jaw!” snapped the Bounder. “I’ngoing to have a plunge at roulette, and see if I can make something! I was kept short of money last term---but I thought it would be all right in the holidays! Instead of thart, I was booked for that dashed tutor’s bung---and nothing in the way of cash! I should be stony now if I hadn’t been able to sell some things in London and raise the wind. It’s not been easy to keep it up with that Highcliffe crowd---they wouldn’t have a lot of use for me if they knew I was on the rocks!” The Bounder’s lip curled in a sneer. “Well, I’m goin’ to try to make somethin’---neck or nothin’, see?”  
 Wharton looked at him. He could only feel pity for the fellow who supposed that it was possible to “make something” by playing roulette up of foreign casino! The Bounder, in point of fact, was not such a fool us to believe that money could be made at roulette; but he was in a desperate frame of mind and willing to take the wildest chances in his unusual and uncomfortable state of shortness of cash. Keeping under cover of the boat hanging at the davits, Vernon Smith cast another swift and searching glance over the crowded decks. But he saw nothing of the portly figure of the millionaire.  
 “It will be a plunge, anyhow!” he said, “and I may have luck! Don’t tell me what you think of it---I know that by heart! Just keep it dark; not a word about that fat fool at the bungalow---”  
 “I am bound to tell you, Smithy, old chap! Your father knows!”  
 “He knows?”   
 “He was there when we got there this morning.” said Harry. “Smedley seems to have suspected something, and he came down early for the boat, and went out to the bungalow to see you, and---  
 “I’m done for, then!”  
 The Bounder’s face was white.  
 “I’m sorry, old chap!” said Harry. “It was better for you to know------”  
 “Yes, yes! But this means---goodness knows what it means!” For a minute or so the Bounder seemed quite knocked over by the news that his father had discovered his trickery. But he pulled himself together; his face hardened, and his eyes glinted. “Well, if he knows, it means that I’n landed---all the more reason to carry on while I’ve got a chance!”  
 “If you go back in this steamer---go to the bungalow---make it up somehow with Mr. Pickering, and---”  
 “Rot!”  
 A tall silk hat, glistening in the April sunshine, caught the Bounder’s eye across the crowded deck. He gave one look, and turned to the rail, leaning over it, his face to the sea churning below. Wharton stared at his bike, surprised by the action; then he guessed what it meant, and glanced round. Plump and portly, Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith was coming along the deck. He had not noticed the juniors yet, but he was coming towards them, and it was only a matter of moments.  
 Wharton caught his breath.  
 There was nothing he could do---he could only wait and wonder what was going to happen.  
 The Bounder, leaning over the rail, looked like a fellow in the throes of seasickness---only his backwas to be seen. He remained in that position as Mr. Vernon-Smith came along with his heavy tread.  
 The millionaire noticed Wharton a moment or two later, and gave him a nod. To Wharton’s horror he stopped to speak.  
 Smithy, hanging on the rail, was motionless, but his heart was thumping. His father was not six feet from him.  
 His father, however, could see only a pair of white duck trousers, a lounge jacket, and a cap, if he looked at the Bounder. But Smithy’s heart beat almost to suffocation.  
 “Wharton! So you’re on this boat, what, what?” said Mr. Vernon-Smith.  
 “Yes, sir!” stammered Harry.  
 “Taking a holiday trip, what?”  
 “A day in Boulogne, sir!” answered Wharton. “I---I suppose you’re going on to Paris, sir?”  
 Mr. Vernon-Smith shook his head.  
 “No; I have business in the Pas-de-Calais!” he answered. “I shall be stopping a few days in Boulogne and Winnereux. One of your friends feeling the sea, what?” he glanced with an amused smile at the Bounder’s back. “Lucky for him it’s not a rough day, what, if he feels it on a fine day like this!”  
 And the millionaire walked on, greatly to Wharton’s relief. Evidently he had taken the fellow leaning over the rail for one of Wharton’s party, and supposed that he was seasick.  
 Vernon-Smith remained where he was to give his father to give his father time to clear. Wharton watched the portly form going along the deck.  
 A sallow man, with a short pointed beard, was lounging along after the portly millionaire. He had stopped when Mr. Vernon-Smith stopped; but he went on again when Mr. Vernon-Smith went on. He gave Wharton a lookas as he passed him, from sharp black eyes like a rat’s.  
 Harry Wharton would not have noticed him, but for the fact that he was watching Mr. Vernon-Smith himself. It struck him but the man with the pointeb beard and the rat’s eyes was interested in Mr. Vernon-Smith, for he loitered along only a few feet from him, accommodating his pace to that of the millionaire, and stopping whenever Mr. Vernon-Smith stopped. Both of them disappeared at last in the crowd.   
 Then the captain of the Remove turned to the Bounder.  
 “All clear, Smithy!” he whispered.  
 Smithy turned from the rail. His face was white, and his eyes had a hunted look.  
 “By gum, that was a close shave!” breathed the Bounder. “If I hadn’t thought of pretending to be seasick, I------” he shrugged his shoulders. “Well, a miss is as good as a mile. I shall be safe below. If he’s had his lunch, he won’t be going down again!”  
 “Look here, Smithy------”  
 Without answering, the Bounder sidled away in the crowd on deck, and disappeared below. Harry Wharton left him to it, and went to look for his friends.   
  
 **THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.   
  
 After the Feast the Reckoning!**“I Say, you fellows!”   
 “Jolly old France!” said Bob Cherry, pointing to the white cliffs that were rising into view ahead of the churning steamer. “Get your French ready, Bunter.”  
 “I say------” persisted Bunter. “The steward wants to see you, Wharton!”  
 “Eh?”  
 “The steward-----”  
 “What the thump does the steward want to see me for?” demanded Wharton.  
 “Oh, really, Wharton------”  
 “if he wants to see me he can, and get.” said Harry. “but I’m blessed if I know what he wants to see me for.”  
 The Famous Five were standing by the rail, watching the shores of la belle France rising into view, when Billy Bunter joined them with that rather unexpected news.  
 “Well, you don’t want a lot of argument before all those people." said Billy Bunter peevishly. “You’re going to pay the man, I suppose?”  
 “Pay him!” ejaculated Wharton.  
 “Well, they don’t give lunches away in this steamer, that I know of. I think I’d go down.” suggested Bunter. “The man’s suspicious already.”  
 “Suspicious?”  
 “Well, he didn’t seem satisfied when I said hat my friends were minding my money, and I had to go and speak to them------”  
 “Wha-a-at?”  
 “It’s all right if you go down, old chap. If you don’t want a suspicious man coming up here and asking for his money before a crowd of people. Dash it all, that isn’t the sort of thing a fellow expects one fellows ask him to join them on a trip!” said Bunter warmly. “I can jolly well tell you that I don’t want to be mixed up in any scene here.”  
 Harry Wharton & Co. gazed at Bunter. He had been a long time below, and evidently had packed away a good lunch. After the feast came the reckoning. That detail, however, did not seem to be Bunter’s business. Having dealt with the feast, he was prepared to leave the reckoning to others, which no doubt Bunter regarded as a fair division of labour.  
 “You fat scoundrel------” began Johnny Bull.  
 “Oh, really, Bull------”  
 “Haven’t you paid for your lunch?” demanded Frank Nugent.  
 “I mentioned to you fellows that I was stony, owing to being unable to get any of the postal-orders I was expecting while I was at that beastly bung!” said Bunter, with dignity. “I never had any brekker. I suppose you didn’t want me to miss my lunch, too?” if th if if  
 Harry Wharton laughed.  
 “You fat villain! I’ll stand you half a crown. You can go down and pay the steward yourself.”  
 “Oh really, Wharton-----”  
 “Better buck up before the man comes after you “I can see him looking out from the staircase now. He’s got an eye on you.”  
 “Oh, really, Cherry------”   
 “ Is it more than half-a-crown, you fat cormorant?” demanded Nugent.  
 “The morefulness is probably terrific!” grinned the Nabob of Bhanipur.  
 “Oh, really, Inky------”  
 “Pass round the hat!” chuckled Bob. “We’ll make up five bob for the fat bounder.  
 “I say, you fellows, don’t play they goat!” said Bunter. “I had to have some lunch, you know. I’ve been practically a starved at that bung. I never had any brekker. I say, I’ll square, of course, next term at Greyfriars. I hope you’re not going to be mean.”  
 “We’re not rolling in money, you fat ass! How much is it?” demanded Harry Wharton impatiently.  
 “Only thirty-five bob, old chap. ”  
 “What?” yelled the Famous Five.  
 “you see, I cut it rather fine, as you fellows had to pay!” exclaimed Bunter. “I didn’t really have enough------”  
 The chums of the Remove gazed at him. They were not exactly short of money. Kind relatives had “tipped” them in the hoard is, but their resources were, of course, rather limited. Thirty-five shillings a time for meals would soon---very soon!---have reduced them to the same stony state as Billy Bunter. They just gazed at him.  
 “You needn’t be afraid that I shan’t square.” said Bunter, with a touch of scorn. “I’m expecting several postal orders------”  
 “You’ve blowed thirty-five bob on your unearthly inside!” exclaimed Bob Cherry. “My only hat! And how much have you got towards it?”  
 “I---I’ve a penny------“  
 “A penny” gasped Bob.  
 “Only it’s a French penny.”  
 Harry Wharton slipped his half crown back into his pocket  
 “That won’t be of any use.” he remarked.  
 “Look here, cut down and pay the man, Wharton------”  
 “Any millionaire here who can afford thirty-five bob for a lunch?” asked Wharton. “If so, here’s a chance for him.”  
 “Don’t all speak at once!” grinned Bob.  
 “Ha, ha, ha!”  
 Apparently there were no millionaires present.  
 “I say, you fellows------” Billy Bunter began to feel alarmed. “I suppose you’re going to pay the man?”  
 “I jolly well know I’m not!” grumbled Johnny Bull.  
 “Oh, really, Bull, it’s a bit thick for a party of Public school chaps to bilk a steward on a steamer!” said Bunter. “Hardly Greyfriars style.”  
 “Let’s go for a trot.” suggested Bob.  
 “Let’s!” agreed his chums.  
 “I say, you fellows!” howled Bunter, as the Famous Five moved off. “What about that steward?”  
 “Echo answers what?” said Bob Cherry over his shoulder.  
 “Esteemed echo answers that the whatefulness is terrific!” chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.  
 “I say, beasts!” howled Bunter. “I say, rotters! Oh crikey!” He made a rush in pursuit of the Famous Five, stumbled over the legs of a French gentleman in a deck-chair, and landed on the deck. “Yaroooh!”  
 “Ha, ha, ha!”  
 “Beasts! I say, you fellows! Oh crikey!” gasped Bunter.  
 He scrambled up and blinked round through his big spectacles. Harry Wharton & Co. had disappeared from sight.  
 A hand touched Bunter on a fat shoulder. He blinked round at a man in a white coat and a peaked cap. If he had been suspicious before, he was more than suspicious now.   
 “Now, sir!” said the steward grimly  
 “I---I---I’m looking for my friends!” gasped Bunter.  
 “Better find them, then.” said the man significantly. “You won’t be allowed to leave the boat till you’ve paid for your lunch.”  
 “Oh crikey!”  
 “I’ve had bilks on the boat before.” said the steward.  
 “Look here, you cheeky beast------”  
 “That’s enough! I’m keeping an eye on you. You won’t be allowed off the boat, you can take that from me.”   
 “Oh lor’!” gasped Bunter.  
 He resumed his search for his friends, but there were not easy to find when they did not want to be found. Billy Bunter had enjoyed that lunch. He was not enjoying the consequences. It was really terrifying to think of what might happen if Harry Wharton & Co. did not settle with that steward. Visions of being handed over to a gendarme when the board reached Boulogne danced before Bunter’s terrified vision. He even wished that he had not lunched so heartily.  
 Ten minutes later he wished that still more. It was a fine day, but there were chops in the middle of the Channel. Bunter had not noticed the motion of the steamer while he was lunching; his first arts had been concentrated on the task of parking the greatest possible quantity of food in the shortest possible time. But he noticed it now, and he began to notice it more and more.  
 “Groooogh!” said Bunter.  
 He ceased his search for the elusive Co. He ceased to worry about the suspicious steward, and the unpaid lunch. He ceased even to think of the awful possibility of the gendarme. He had matters nearer at hand to think of.  
 “Urrrggh!” gurgled Bunter.  
 He rushed to the side. He hung over the rail. He gasped, he gurgled, he groaned. Lunches, stewards, gendarmes did not matter now. Nothing mattered now. Bunter hung over the rail and longed for death to end his sufferings.  
  
 **THE NINTH CHAPTER.  
  
 Painful for Ponsonby!**“HALLO, hallo, hallo!!” murmured Bob Cherry.  
 Harry Wharton & Co. smiled.   
 Ponsonby, Gadsby, and Monson, of the Highcliffe Fourth, were leaning in an elegant row on the rail. They made it a point to bestow supercilious glances on the Famous Five as the latter strolled along, which did not disturb the equanimity of the cheery Co. in the very least. Smithy was still below, keeping out of sight, and his nutty pals were probably wondering what had become of him.  
 A porter gentleman, who promenaded the deck as if the steamer belongeb to him, spotted Pon & Co. in his promenade, halted, and fixed his eyes on them. That was why the Famous Five smiled. Mr. Vernon-Smith’s look seemed to indicate that there was thunder in the air. Certainly he had no suspicion that his son was on board that very steamer, crossing to France with the Highcliffians. But he was aware that the scapegrace of Greyfriars had gone off with Pon & Co., instead of turning up at the tutor’s bungalow.  
But for Wharton’s warning to the Bounder, no doubt the millionaire would have found his son in their company at that moment. Luckily that hab not happened.  
 “Oh!” said Mr. Vernon-Smith, in a deep voice. “You!”  
 Pon & Co. glanced at him.  
 They knew Smithy’s father, of course, and they raised their hats, though in a rather perfunctory manner. It suited them to consort with the millionaire’s son, unaware of the present straitened state of his finances. But their private opinion of Smithy was that he was a rank outsider, and that his wealthy father in the city was a still ranker outsider. They were by nature disrespectful young rascals. They saluted Mr. Vernon-Smith, but there was more than a touch of superciliousness in the salute. Conscious of their own ineffable superiority, they could hardly help revealing that consciousness in their manner to the City gentleman.  
 “Oh, fancy meetin’ you, sir!” drawled Ponsonby. “Charmin’ day for a crossin’, sir!”  
 “You young rascal!”  
 “Eh?”  
 Shaken out of his ineffable superiority by that reply, Ponsonby stared blankly at the millionaire.  
 Harry Wharton & Co. smiled still more. They looked on with interest at this little scene.  
 “You young blackguards!” said Mr. Vernon-Smith.  
 “Oh gad!” murmured Monson. “Anything the matter, sir?”  
 “So I meet you here!” said Mr. Vernon-Smith. “I am glad to meet you, and tell you my opinion of you. If I had met you in company with my son, I would have laid my walking stick about you!”  
 “Good gad!” murmured Ponsonby.  
 He had been offended by the way the Bounder had “chucked” him when Wharton turned up. But he was no doubt now that Smithy was not present. He did not want to make a closer acquaintance with Smith’s father’s malacca cane.  
 “I am given to understand,” said Mr. Vernon-Smith, in a voice that caused a dozen or more passengers to look round, press “that my son joined you when he left school against my commands.”  
 “Quite unaware of it, sir!” said Ponsonby, recovered his coolness, and his impudence at the same time. “I should have thought you’d be glad, sir!”  
 “Glad!” repeated Mr. Vernon-Smith.  
 “Well, it’s rather a catch for Smithy, sir, to get into a little decent society sometimes, isn’t it?” asked Pon. “You City people are generally rather glad to barge in among your betters, if you’ll excuse my puttin’ it like that, sir!”  
 Gadsby and Monson grinned.  
 The City millionaire was, in their opinion, a dashed old bargee, and: Pon was the man to put such a bargee in his place.  
 Mr. Vernon-Smith’s face became purple.  
 “You impudent rascal!” he gasped.  
 “Look here, let’s get out of this!” muttered Gadsby. “If we can stand Smithy, we’re not bound to stand his pater! Kickin’ up a shindy------”  
 But it was not so easy for the Highcliffians to get out of it. Mr. Vernon Smith was already intensely angry with Pon &., whom he regarded, rightly, as being partly the cause of his sons disgrace at Greyfriars. Pon’s impudence gave the finishing touch to this wrath.  
 As the three Highcliffians moved to turn their backs on him with the contempt which in their lofty opinion, such a bargee deserved, Mr. Vernon Smith made a stride at them.   
 He grabbed Cecil Ponsonby by the collar with his left hand and wielded the malacca with his right.  
 Whack! came the heavy cane on the seat of Pon’s elegant trousers. The yell that Ponsonby uttered rang the length of the steamer.  
 The dandy of Highcliffe struggled wildly.  
 “Let go!” he roared. “you blithering old fool, let go! You dashed old ruffian! How dare you lay hands on me! Barge him over, you men”  
    
  
 Gadsby and Monson made a half hearted move to their comrade’s aid. Two licks from the malacca, one each, drove them jumping back.  
 Fifty people, at least, were staring at the startling scene. Mr. Vernon-Smith did not care in the very least. Holding Pon by his collar, in spite of his frantic struggles, he whacked with the malacca.  
 “Oh gad! Help! Leggo! Oh, you old idiot!” shrieked Ponsonby.  
 It was a fearful come down for Pon’s supercilious loftiness. He struggled and wriggled, and roared and howled.  
 “Look here------” gasped Gadsby.  
 “L-look here------“stuttered Monson.  
 “There!” gasped Mr. Vernon Smith, throwing Ponsonby away from him, and sending him staggering along the deck. “That’s for your impudence, you young scoundrel! And if I find my son consorting with you again, I will thrash you to within an inch of your life, by gad!”  
 Ponsonby did not stay to listen. Crimson with mortification, and wriggling with pain, the dandy of Highcliffe scuttled away, breathing rage and vengeance.  
 Mr. Vernon Smith, sublimely regardless of the sea of staring eyes fixed on him, tucked his malacca under his arm, and walked on.  
 “Oh, my hat!” murmured Bob Cherry.  
 The chums of the Remove chuckled.  
 “The old bean was in a bait!” murmured Johnny Bull. “Nice for smithy when he joins his pals again, what?”  
 “I shouldn’t wonder if there’s going to be a row in that happy family circle!” chuckled Bob.  
 “Ha, ha, ha!”  
 At a distance Pon & Co. were muttering together, with a furious looks. It was very probable that, after Smith his father had dealt with them in that drastic way, they would give Smithy a rather warm reception when he joined up again! Certainly, there were not likely to welcome him, so long as his father was anywhere in the offing! It looked as if Mr. Vernon Smith---though unknowingly---had put “paid” to his son’s reckless escapade with his Highcliffe friends that day---which undoubtedly was all the better for Smithy!  
  
 **THE TENTH CHAPTER.  
  
 The Apache!**“Bunter!”  
 “Urrrrggh!”  
 “Oh, my hat!: Poor old Bunter!”  
If if th if limo the fifties and they have the isn and a sense of this isn’t some seconds of the found a home to hidden “Yurrrggh!”  
 “Thirty-five bob’s worth wasted!” sighed Bob Cherry.   
 “Ha, ha, ha!”  
 “Ooooo-er!” moaned Billy Bunter.   
 The fat Owl of the Remove had not found the juniors when he looked for them. But the juniors found him---quite easily---when they looked for Bunter! Sounds of woe guided them to a fat and flabby figure that hung on the steamer’s rail.   
 The channel boat was grunting and churning into the landing place at Boulogne-sur-Mer, and it was time to collect Bunter. The Famous Five had settled with the steward, though they did not intend to mention that to Bunter. They did not want any more thirty-five shilling bills to pay for the fat Owl. And if, as Bob remarked, that lunch was a sheer waste---judging by the aspect of Billy Bunter when they found him.   
 Groaning, the fat junior turned a sickly fat face to them.  
 “I say, you fellows! I’m did-dud-dod-dying!” he gurgled. “I---=I say, I’m suffering fearfully! If I did-dud-dod-die------”  
 “No such luck!” said Johnny Bull heartlessly.   
 “Beast!” groaned Bunter.  
 “Pull yourself together, old fat man!” said Harry Wharton. “the boat’s stopping in a few minutes---we’re in quite calm water now! We’ve got to keep together to get ashore.”  
 Bunter blinked round him dolefully and dismally. He was still feeling rather bad; but he realised now that the worst was past. Boulogne harbour and the quays crowded with Frenchmen, the houses rising on the hill, the great white building of the Casino, make his eyes. And he was encouraged---terra firma was at hand!   
 “I say, you fellows------”  
 “Feeling better?” asked Bob cheerily.  
 “Oh! Yes! I---I haven’t been---exactly---sick, you know!” said Bunter. Evidently he was feeling better. “I’m never seasick, you know. I’m a pretty good sailor------”   
 “Three whoppers all at once!” remarked Bob. “You’re not pretty, you’re not good, and you’re no sailor!”  
 “Ha, ha, ha!”  
 “Beast! I say, what about that steward?” Bunter remembered the steward now. “I say, he says I can’t go off the boat without paying------”  
 “Keep an eye open for him!” said Bob, with a wink at his comrades.  
 “But I say, suppose he keeps me on the boat---”  
 “He wouldn’t put up with your company for thirty-five shillings. Nobody would.” said Bob reassuringly. “If he tried it on, he’d soon offer you another thirty-five bob to clear!”  
 “Beast!” roared Bunter. “I tell you------”  
 “Bow-wow! Come on!”  
 The fat Owl rolled away with the chums of the Remove, keeping his eyes---and his spectacles---on the alert for the steward. That steward was not likely to turn up and cause trouble, as he had been paid. Still, Bunter did not know that, and he was watchful and wary.  
 Harry Wharton looked round two see if Vernon Smith was in sight; but the Bounder did not appear. He was keeping “doggo” till his father was off the boat. Mr. Vernon Smith’s shining silk hat was seen, gleaming in the April sun, and Wharton, as he glanced at him, noticed the man with the pointed beard and the rats eyes close to the portly figure of the millionaire. The two came into collision in the moving crowd, and Mr. Vernon Smith gave a sudden start, clapped one hand to his coat over his breast pocket, and with the other pushed the Frenchman away. He gave him a suspicious glare as he did so.  
 “Mille pardons, monsieur!” said the man with the pointed beard, and the millionaire gave a grunt by way of reply.  
 The rat-eyed man disappeared in the crowd.  
 “Did you see that?” said Harry Wharton. “That sallow-faced sportsman has been haunting Smithy’s pater ever since we left Folkestone! I wonder--”   
 “The old bean glared at him as if he was a pickpocket!” grinned Bob.  
 “I was just wondering if he was!” said Harry. “He’s been jolly interested in Mr. Vernon Smith, though I don’t think the old boy noticed him before. I think we might as well keep an eye on him as we go off---anything might happen in a scrum like this  
 “I say, you fellows---”  
 “Beware of pickpockets, Bunter!” said Bob Cherry solemnly. “Lucky you’ve left all those postal orders at home---but that magnificent gold watch of yours is worth fourpence of anybody’s money------”  
 “Ha, ha, ha!”  
 “We’re getting in.” said Nugent, as the siren shrieked hoarsely. “there go Pon & Co., shoving for front places. They don’t seem to be waiting for their pal Smithy!”   
 The steamer came to her moorings and the usual crowd of “facteurs” came leaping aboard for baggage. The trippers had little or no baggage, and were not bothered by the porters, one of whom, however, immediately grabbed Mr. Vernon-Smithy’s suitcase.  
 As the millionaire was traveling alone he was carrying his own bag; but it was difficult for any traveller at Boulogne, to retain possession of his own baggage! As the facteur got it from him Mr. Vernon-Smithy grunted and gave him directions in bad French, and as two or three passengers jostled by the sallow man with the rat’s eyes bumped into one of them, staggered, and caught hold of Mr. Vernon-Smith for support  
   
  
 Harry Wharton’s eyes were on him instantly.  
 “Good gad!” exclaimed Mr. Vernon-Smith, staggering under the man’s weight. “Where are you running? What------”  
 “Mille pardons, monsieur!” The rat-eyed man detached himself, and was slipping away through the crowd when Harry Wharton made a bound forward.  
 But for the fact that he had been watching the millionaire, Wharton would never have discerned the pick-pocket’s action; it was done so swiftly and so skillfully that Mr. Vernon-Smith’s himself was unaware of it! But Wharton, watching him, had seen the thievish hand slip under the coat, and he knew what had happened.  
 With are bound he reached the man, grabbed him by the back of the collar, and, with that unexpected jerk, landed him on his back on the deck.  
 So sudden and unexpected was that tackle that the Frenchman went over without resistance, crashing backwards on the planks with a startled gasp.  
 There was a buzz on all sides.  
 “What the dooce------”  
 “Qu ‘est---que c’est?”  
 “Look out------“  
 “Mon Dieu!”  
 “Wharton!” gasped Mr. Vernon-Smith. “What------”  
 “You’ve been robbed, sir!” gasped Wharton. “This man—I saw him---”  
 “What!”  
 The millionaire’s hand flew to his breast pocket. It came out empty. He almost felt himself at the sprawling Frenchman, his face red with wrath.  
 “My pocket-book!” he roared.  
 Are buzzing, excited crowd surrounded the scene, with loud exclamations in mingled French and English. The rat-eyed man tore himself loose from Wharton and leaped up like a cat, his face white and desperate. But Mr. Vernon-Smith’s grasp was on him, and as they struggled a fat, well-filled pocket book fell to the deck. The thief had had no time to pocket it safely before Wharton dragged him over.  
 “Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here’s the jolly old goods!” Bob Cherry pounced on it and picked it up. “Here’s your pocket book, sir.”  
 Mr. Vernon-Smith’s turned to him at once, releasing the thief. But it was now plain to all and a dozen hands were stretching out to seize the pick-pocket.  
 But the passengers started back as there was a sudden gleam of steel in the sunshine. The desperate rascal had drawn a knife!  
 A moment’s respite was enough for him. With the cat like activity of the true “Apache,” the ret eyed man leaped to the rail, and thence made another bound to the quay. Three or four porters, two or three gendarmes, made a move at him, but he vanished at the speed of a hunted hare. It was only a matter of seconds before he was lost to sight.  
 “Good gad!” gasped Mr. Vernon-Smith, as he took the pocket book from Bob Cherry. The escape of the thief did not trouble him as he had recovered his property. “Thank you, my boy! Thank you, Wharton! That scoundrel would have had my passport, my papers, and five hundred pounds, by gad!”  
 The millionaire returned the pocket book to its place and carefully buttoned his coat over it.  
 “Glad I spotted him, sir!” said Harry, smiling.  
 “You’ve got keen eyes, my boy---I had no idea. Thanks again!” said Mr. Vernon-Smith. And with a nod he moved away, and the juniors did not see him again.  
 A quarter of an hour later they were on shore in la belle France, and Billy Bunter gave a grunt of relief.   
 “All right now!” he remarked. “That beast of a steward never spotted me.”  
 “”Ha, ha, ha! Quotes  
 “Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I say, you fellows, what about lunch?” asked Bunter.  
 “Oh, my hat! How many lunches do you want to-day?”  
 “Well, I’ve lost that one!” said Bunter. “I can tell you I’m jolly hungry! Let’s look for a place to feed, shall we? You can leave the talking French to me  
 And as the chums of the Remove were ready for lunch Bunter had his way, and they looked for a place.  
 “I say, you fellows, this looks a decent show!” said Bunter, stopping before the Hotel Magnifique. “I say, there’s old Smith going in---trust him to spot a good place---bloated millionaire, you know! Let’s sample it, shall we? Looks as if you could get a decent feed here.”  
 “You’re the only man in this party that can afford thirty-five bob lunches, old fat bean.” said Bob Cherry. “You sample it, and we’ll look for something cheaper.”  
 “Oh, really, Cherry---”  
 “Good-bye, Bunter!  
 “Beast!”  
 Billy Bunter did not “sample” the Hotel Magnifique! He rolled on after the trippers, and they sampled a place which was not nearly so magnificent---with prices in proportion. But it was quite a good lunch---so good, in fact, that Billy Bunter packed away several, one after another---his wild adventures on the Channel having left him plenty of room for them! After which, the Greyfriars trippers out cheerily to have a look at Boulongne in the bright April sunshine.  
  
 **THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.  
  
 Smithy on His Own!**Pon, I’ve been looking for you!” growled Herbert Vernon-Smith.  
 He came quickly towards the Highcliffe trio as there were sauntering away from the quay.  
 Pon & Co. had recovered their superb equanimity, which had been considerably ruffled on the steamer by the encounter with Mr. Vernon-Smith. Elegant and got keys, the sauntered along and did not waste a glance on the Bounder when they saw him. And taking no notice of Vernon-Smiths rather surly greeting, they walked on, regardless of him.  
 The Bounder stared at them blankly for a moment, and then started after them. As they still walked on he caught Ponsonby by the arm.  
 “What does this mean, Pon?” he snapped. There was evidently a rift in the lute, though Smithy did not yet know why.  
 Pon & Co. came to a halt and faced the Bounder. There was a cold and deadly glitter in Pon’s eyes, and Gatsby and Monson looked surly and rather uncomfortable. Pon jerked his arm free.  
 “Keep your paws to yourself, please, Vernon-Smith!” he said in a very distinct tone. “And keep your distance, please!”  
 The Bounder breathed hard. It was rather an ill-asserted friendship, for while Pon & Co. regarded Smithy as a rank outsider, Smithy despised them heartily for their uppishness, their snobbishness, and their vicious, brainless rottenness generally. But he did not want to quarrel with them now; he had a use for them. So, with some difficulty, he curbed his temper and answered quietly.  
 “Nothing to get shirty about, Pon! I had to speak to Wharton---he tipped me that my pater was in the offing!—I had to get out of sight---that’s why I didn’t join you again. If the pater knew------”  
 “I’m not interested in your pater, or in you.” said Ponsonby icily. “I’m fed up with the whole crew of you.”  
 “What do you mean?”  
 “Find out!”  
 “Your pater pitched into Pon, Smithy.” said Gadsby. “You can’t expect a fellow to stand it.”  
 “Oh, my hat!” exclaimed the Bounder.  
 Ponsonby gritted his teeth.  
 “The dashed old bargee had the insolence to lay his low hands on me, if you want to know!” he said. “Confound his impudence! By gad, I wish I’d knocked him down on the steamer---the blackguardly old ruffian!”  
 The Bounder’s eyes glittered.  
 “You’re speakin’ of my father, Ponsonby!” he said in a tone that might have warned the dandy of Highcliffe, but for his bid to reach and resentment at the way Mr. Vernon-Smiths had handled him  
. It was strange, their perhaps, that the Bounder, in the very act of disrespectful disobedience to his father, should display quick and passionate   
resentment at a single word of disrespect from anyone else.  
 He did not want to quarrel with Pon. He was Pon’s guest at present, and Pon was footing the bill for that trip to France---a rather important matter to Smithy, shot of money as he was, and anxious to try his luck at the roulette table at Le Bouquet. The fellow who had lately had much more money than was good for him was counting every half-crown, every shilling now. Certainly he did not want to be thrown on his own resources at this juncture.  
 But he forgot all that in a moment as Ponsonby spoke of his father. The Bounder’s recklessness had its good points as well as its bad.  
 “Your father! A dashed bargee, like his son!” said Ponsonby with bitter contempt. He fancies we’re not good enough company for you. Good gad! You---as rank an outsider as I’ve ever struck! By gad, I wish I’d knocked him spinnin’, the ruffianly old hooligan------“  
 Smack!   
 Herbert Vernon-Smith’s open hand came across Pon’s face with a crack like a pistol shot.  
 With a yell, Pon staggered back.  
 The Bounder followed him up with clenched fists and blazing eyes.  
 “You cur!” he snarled. “You speak of my father like that; you’re not fit to black his boots, you rotten worm! Put up your hands, you cur, and I’ll give you the thrashin’ of your life!”  
 “Here, chuck it!” exclaimed Gadsby  
 “For goodness’ sake------” gasped Monson. “We shall have a crowd round--- a jabbering French crowd------”  
 But that smack in the face had roused even Ponsonby’s fighting blood. He sprang like at tiger at Vernon-Smith, yelling to his comments to back him up. Fair play was not an article in the code of the dandy of Highcliffe.  
 Vernon-Smiths, with grim jaw and gleaming eyes, met him with left and right. Gadsby and exchanged a glance and rushed in to help their leader .  
 But a terrific right hander from the Bounder had already sent Ponsonby spinning, and he crashed down on the cobbles, panting.  
 Like lightning the Bounder turned on the other two Highcliffians.  
 “Come on!” he snapped, between his teeth. “By gum, if I can’t lick tghree funkin’ worms like you Highcliffe rats, you can kick me from one end of Boulogne to the other.”  
 Gadsby and Monson backed away from a whirlwind attack, but they did not back fast enough. A drive on the chin sent Gadsby whirling; on upper-cut laid Monson by his side.  
 The Bounder gave the sprawling trio a stare of contempt, laughed mockingly, and turned away.  
 With his hands in his pockets, whistling carelessly, he walked off the scene, leaving Pon & Co. to pick themselves up, under the staring, grinning faces of the score of loungers on the quay.   
 He did not glanced back as he went. He was done with Pon & Co. now—with a vengeance!  
 But his face grew thoughtful as he walked through the streets of Boulogne-sur-Mer. The break with Pon & Co. rather disconcerted his plans for the holidays. He would be at a loose end when he returned to England on the night boat. He could not go home; he could hardly go to Mr. Pickering’s after what had happened there even if he wanted to---which he certainly did not! He had a few pounds in his pockets, which he had raised by selling trinkets in London. When that was gone--- but if he had luck at Le Bouquet--- There was comfort in that thought!  
 At the back of his mind Smithy knew out exceedingly rotten a reed that was to lean upon. But his state was getting desperate now. He dared not meet his father---he was going to avoid meeting him till the end of the vacation---but there was a chill doubt in his mind whether at the end of the vacation he would be allowed to go back to Greyfriars at all.  
 That depended on his father---and he was well aware of how deep and bitter his father’s anger would be after the discovery he had made at the tutor’s a bungalow. There had been a time when the Bounder’s luck was a proverb in the Greyfriars Remove, but his luck seemed to have turned against him at last and let him down with a bump. Which ever way he looked now he saw only trouble.  
 He shrugged his shoulders with bitter recklessness. He might have luck at le Bouquet, and a fellow with plenty of money in his pockets could have a good time. Then he remembered what he had heard his father say to Wharton; the millionaire was not going on to Paris, he was staying in Boulogne for some reason connected with his business in France. At the alarming thought that he might run into him in the crowded streets, the Bounder made up his mind to get out of the town at once, and he was soon on board a clanging tram jolting and jarring on the way to Le Bouquet.  
  
 **THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.  
  
 A Walk for Bunter!**“I say, you fellows!”  
 “Another lunch?” inquired Johnny Bull sarcastically.  
 “Yah!”  
 Even Billy Bunter did not want another lunch yet. He was not even thinking of tea yet! Blinking at the casino building through his big spectacles, Billy Bunter was thinking of the fact that that attractive establishment was open at Easter to take toll of the foreign tourists. Certainly nobody in Boulogne was likely to take toll from Billy Bunter---not, at all events, to a greater extent than a French penny! True, he was now in France, where that coin, refused at home more times than Bunter could remember, was current coin. But it was hardly sufficient capital for trying his luck at the Casino!  
 “I say, you fellows, let’s go in here.” said Bunter. “I heard Smithy say at of Greyfriars that they have roulette here now---”  
 “Fathead!”  
 “No masters or prefects about---what?” said Bunter, with a fat wink. “Let’s go it a bit---what? You can leave it to me, you know; you fellows stand something for me to play with---six and balance---and we’ll whack out the winnings. That’s fair.”  
 “And who’s going to whack out the losings?” asked Bob.  
 “Well, be a sport, you know.” said Bunter. “You have to take your chance of that, of course.”  
 “More like a cert than a chance, I think!” chuckled Bob. “They don’t build a building like that and run it on losses. Plenty of mugs going in there, fatty, with you you making one more!”  
 “I say, you fellows, it’s a chance, you know, now we’re in France. When in Rome, do as Rome does, you know! urged Bunter.  
 “Kick him!” said Johnny Bull.  
 “Beast!”  
 “The kickfulness is the proper caper.” agreed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. “Turn roundfully, my esteemed idiotic Bunter.”  
 “Yah! If you fellows don’t want to come in, I’ll go on my own.” suggested Bunter. “Blessed if I see what you’re funky about; but I don’t mind. Lend me a tenner------”  
 “You blithering owl!” said Harry Wharton. “We’re not going into a gambling den. My uncle gave us leave for this excursion on the understanding that we behaved ourselves decently.”  
 “Oh, blow your silly old uncle------ Yaroooh! Leggo my ear, you beast!” roared Bunter . “Leggo! Wow! I’ll call a jongdum! Whooop!”  
 “Ha, ha, ha!”  
 Bunter jerked his fat ear away and rubbed it. He glared at the grinning five with a glare that almost cracked his spectacles.  
 “Look here, you rotters, I’n jolly well going in!” he snorted. “Only I happen to be short of money. Lend me a few pounds------”  
 “Hallo, hallo, hallo! Is that that steward” exclaimed Bob Cherry, glancing along the street.  
 “Oh crikey! I say, you fellows, come on! I---I don’t want to see that steward! Come on!” gasped Bunter.  
 The fat Owl of the Remove led the way at a trot. Harry Wharton & Co. followed him, laughing. There was no steward in sight; but Billy Bunter, still under the impression that he owed thirty-five shillings for his gorge on the boat, was easily alarmed.  
 “Here’s the tram!” called out Bob Cherry. “This way, Bunter!”  
 “Where are we going on a tram?” demanded Bunter peevishly.  
 “Le Bosquet---jolly little place a few miles along the coast.” answered Bob. “Bosquet-dans-le-Foret------”  
 “What the thump is a forry?” demanded Bunter.  
 “Forest, fathead --- Bosquet – in – the – Forest! There’s a band and a tea garden, and we’re going to have tea there!”  
 “Is that the place Smithy was talking about at Greyfriars?” asked Bunter. “Oh, all right! There’s a rather decent little casino there, where the mob don’t go! That will suit me, if you fellows will lend me------”  
 “I’ll lend you my boot, if you don’t ring off!” growled Johnny Bull.  
 “Beast! I say, you fellows, why not take a car?” bemanded Bunter. “I’d much rather go in a car! As quotes  
 “Same here!” agreed Bob. “But you can go on the tram for sixpence---and there aren’t any sixpenny cars in Boulogne, that I know of.”  
 “If you’re going to be mean on a holiday, Cherry---“  
 “The meanfulness is going to be terrific!” grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. “Here is the esteemed tram, my idiotic Bunter!”  
 Billy Bunter blinked peevishly at the tram. Plenty of other trippers were going on it, as well as a variety of natives. Bunter grunted. He would have preferred to do the thing in style. A big Mercedes car came honking along, the chauffeur sounding his horn like a machine gun, in the way of French chauffeurs. Sitting in the car was a portly gentleman in a shining silk hat. It was Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith  
 The millionaire noticed the Greyfriars fellows in the crowd at the tram depot, through which his big car was honking its way, and gave them a nod and a smile. They “capped” him politely as he passed.  
 “I say, you fellows.” exclaimed Bunter, “that’s old Smith! I say, he’s going the same way. What about asking him for a lift in his car?”  
 “Fathead!”  
 “Oh, really, Wharton! As you got his pocket-book back from that pickpocket he couldn’t very well refuse---as quotes  
 “Shut up, Bunter!”  
 The millionaire’s Mercedes was a big car, but the chums of the Remove certainly had no idea of asking him to give six fellows a lift in it. Big as it was, it would have been rather overcrowded with such a party.  
 “Look here, you silly ass------” hooted Bunter.  
 “Rats!”  
 The car passed on, and once free of the crowd, broke in to speed, and roared away on the road to Le Bosquet-dans-le-Foret. It was at that select and delectable sport, apparently, that Mr. Vernon-Smiths had business---little dreaming that his son also had business there, though of a very different kind. Certainly roulette was not likely to attract Mr. Vernon-Smith!   
 The trippers clambered into the tram, Bunter grunting discontentedly. The Mercedes vanished from sight by the time that tram got into motion.  
 “Not even a seat for a fellow!” growled Bunter. “Look here, you silly asses, find a fellow a seat---see!”  
 The tram was crowded, and a good many people were standing. That would not have mattered, only Bunter was among the standers! That muttered very much indeed.  
 “I say, you fellows---” squeaked Bunter.  
 “Oh, shut up, Bunter!”  
 “Blessed if there isn’t another beastly froggy butting in, though we’re full up already! Blow these froggies!”  
 “You potty porpoise, some of these froggies understand English!” hissed Bob Cherry.  
 “I don’t care---blow ‘em!” growled Bunter.  
 Billy Bunter was the end of tourist who had no politeness to waste on mere foreigners.  
 A Frenchman jumped on the tram in motion, and crowded in. Billy Bunter gave him an indignant blink. The man glanced at him, and then his glance travelled to the other juniors, and he gave a little start. His eyes, black and bright like a rat’s, gleamed at them for a second, and then he quickly turned his face away, and stood with his back to them.  
 Harry Wharton fixed his eyes on the man.  
 Those gleaming rat like black eyes seemed familiar, and he had noticed that the man seemed to recognise the Greyfriars party.  
 “Is that the man of the steamer, you fellows?” asked Harry, in a low voice. “He looks like it to me.”  
 The man on the tram was clean shaven, and the pickpocket on the steamer had had a black beard. But the sallow complexion, the rat-like eyes, were the same; and it was easy to guess that the rascal had shaved off his beard, to change his appearance, after his escape from the steamer.  
 “I was just thinking so.” said Frank Nugent. He could only see the back of the man’s head now, in a black slouched hat. “But------”  
 “If a fellow was sure------”  
 “If it’s that sportsman, he’s had a shave!” said Bob Cherry. “Let him rip, old bean---we haven’t come here for a row.”  
 Wharton hesitated.  
 He was almost certain that the clean-shaven man with the ratty eyes was the man who had lifted Mr. Vernon-Smith’s pocket-book on the steamer. But he could not be certain, and, as bob remarked, the Greyfriars fellows had not come there to get mixed up in a row with a native. The train was already out of the Boulogne, clattering along the road that led to Le Bouquet.  
 It was rather difficult to decide what to do, or whether to do anything at all; but the rat-eyed man settled the matter himself, by pushing through the crowded passengers and alighting from the tram  
 The vehicle rolled on its clattering, clanging way, leaving the rat eyed man walking  
 . “That settles it!” said Frank Nugent. He jolly well got off because he guessed we knew him!”  
 “I wonder!” muttered Harry.  
 “not much doubt about it now!” said Johnny Bull.  
 “I mean, I wonder where he’s still got an eye on Mr. Vernon-Smith! He’s gone up this road on a car, and the man jumped on the tram after it had started! It looks------”  
 “Well, he’s left behind now!” said Bob. “If he’s after Smithy’s pater again, he won’t catch up that whacking car in a hurry!”  
 “I say you fellows---”  
 “Oh, dry up, Bunter!”  
 “Blow these froggies---swarming into a tram and not giving a fellow room to sit down---”  
 “It’s a French tram, isn’t it, you blithering owl? Haven’t the French a right to use their own trams?”  
 “Blow ‘em!” said Bunter. “If that fat hold blighter would squeeze up a bit there might be room for a fellow! Fat old frump!”  
 A rather stout French gentleman, whose plump knees rather incommoded the fat Owl as he stood, stared at him through a pair of gold-rimmed pince-nez. He smiled.  
 “Grinning at a fellow!” growled Bunter. “Grinning like a blessed baboon!”  
 “Will you shut up?” hissed Bob.  
 “No, I won’t! He doesn’t understand a word---these froggies are so ignorant! Cunning old monkey!”  
 “Thank you, young sir!” said the French gentleman, in perfect English. “I am much indebted to you for your kind opinion, expressed so courteously.”   
 “Oh crikey!” gasped Bunter.  
 Even the fat Owl was rather taken aback. The other fellows were crimson.  
 “Not at all, monsieur!” said the French gentleman. “Your young friend is very amusing!”   
 The tram clanged to a halt at a stopping place, half-way to Le Bouquet.  
The Famous Five exchanged a glance and Bob Cherry hooked Bunter by the collar.  
 “I say, you fellows, we don’t get off here---”  
 “We do!” answered Bob grimly.  
 And they did!  
 The tram: clanged. Billy Bunter blinked at the Famous Five through his big spectacles, as Bob released his collar, in almost speechless wrath. On either side of them the long country road stretched, seemingly endless.  
 “Look here, what have we got off the tram for?” bawled Bunter. “You can’t get a car here.”  
 “We’re going to walk the rest!”  
 “You silly ass, it’s miles!” yelled Bunter.  
 “About two!” agreed Nugent.  
 “Do you think I’m going to walk two miles?” snrieked Bunter.  
 “Please yourself!”  
 Harry Wharton & Co. started to walk. Billy Bunter glared after them, and then followed.  
 He realised that he was landed in that walk, as a punishment for his bad manners on the tram. Which was simply exasperating to Bunter. Bad manners did not worry him much, but a two mile walk did!  
 “I say, you fellows, let’s wait for the next tram!” gasped Bunter.  
 “Wait, by all means!” assented Bob.  
 “Well, you wait, too------”  
 “No fear!”  
 “Beast!” roared Bunter.  
 The Famous Five walked on cheerily.  
 Bunter rolled after them, snorting.  
 “Don’t walk so fast, you beasts!” he roared. “do you think this is a foot -race?” I’m not going to run, you rotters!”  
 “Take your time, old fat bean!” said Bob, over his shoulder.  
 “Beast!” groaned Bunter.  
 The Famous Five walked briskly. Billy Bunter’s little fat legs went like clockwork as he trotted behind. By the time they reache Le Bosquet-dans-le- Foret those little fat legs felt as if they were dropping off.  
  
 **THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.  
  
 The Casino in the Wood.**HERBERT VERNON-SMITH sat at one of the little tables under the spreading branches of a beech, and scowled.  
 It was a pleasant scene that was spread before the Bounder’s eyes. There was no doubt that the Le Bosquet-dans-le-Foret was a pretty spot. There was not exactly a forest, though no doubt there had been one once. But there was a shady wood old beeches and oaks and larches and in the middle was a white building facing the sea.  
 Through the trees the sea could be seen, darkening now as the evening closed in. Coloured lanterns were lighted among the trees, giving the scene a fairy like effect. Among the spreading trees many little tables were set, and busy garcons came and went with trays. Through the wood was a path up from the road where the trams stopped, and every ten minutes or so a new tram landed a new party, who came up the path under the coloured lamps. The Bounder watched them sourly.  
 The casino of Le Bosquet was open for a variety show and refreshments, but the gaming-room did not open till eight o’clock.. AtBoulogne the big casino was open afternoon and evening; but Le Bosquet was a more select spot, and catered for punters only in the evening.  
 Sitting at the little table under the branches Smithy was waiting for eight o’clock with soul impatience. His original plan had been to roll around in a car with Pon & Co., Died with one of the big hotels, and then come out to Le Bosquet to tempt fortune at roulette. That plan had been knocked sky-high. He was done with Pon & Co. Where the Highcliffe fellows were, and what they were doing, he did not know, and did not care. He had had his tea, and was smoking a cigarette after it, and idly watching the bunches of people who came up the path through the wood from the trams.  
 Crowds of people passed under his eyes without exciting his interest in the least, but he gave a start at the sight of a portly figure and a shining silk hat.  
 “Oh gad!” breathed the Bounder.  
 There was a “Petit Journal” on the table, and he picked it up at once, and held it as if reading it to conceal his face.  
 It was his father who was coming up the dusky path, in company with a dapper French gentleman.  
 Mr. Vernon-Smith walked by within a dozen paces of his son without a glance at the sitting figure behind the “Petit Journal.” Smithy could hear him speaking as he passed.  
 What was his father doing at Le Bosquet certainly it was not the roulette that attracted him. The Bounder grinned at the idea of the hard headed City man throwing money away on a gaming table. He knew the dapper Frenchman by sight---up man named Poncet, with whom his father had had many business deals. The deep voice of the millionaire reached him as he sat there behind the newspaper. Mr. Vernon-Smith was speaking in English---doubtless Monsieur Poncet’s English was better than Mr. Vernon-Smith’s French.  
 “I dare say it’s a good thing. I’m looking into it, at any rate. Hotel, restaurant, sea baths---um------”  
 The voice passed out of hearing. Vernon-Smith lowered the “Petit Journal,” and stared after the portly figure.  
 He hardly needed telling that his father was there on business---holidays had no appeal for the city to gentleman. Those few words had apprised him of what the business was. Mr. Vernon-Smith had many irons in the fire, and now apparently he was taken up a speculation in property on the French coast---no doubt a paying proposition in Mr. Vernon-Smith’s capable hands. He had told his son that he would be abroad at Easter---and this was why.  
 The two figures passed out of sight, entering the casino building by a private door. The Bounder shrugged his shoulders.  
 After all, it was unlucky that his father was there, but it mattered little. It was absolutely certain that Vernon-Smith would not enter the gaming-room, and that was where Smithy was going to be. Probably his father would dine with M. Poncet and talk business in his office, and perhaps walk round and look at the place. It was easy enough to keep clear of him.  
 The Bounder lighted another cigarette.  
 More people were coming up the dusky path from the road. They went by in twos and threes and little bunches, chattering in French or English. Again the Bounder gave a start at the sight of a familiar face.   
 Harry Wharton & Co. came sauntering cheerily along. Behind them rolled and grunted Billy Bunter. The fat Owl’s squeak to Smithy’s ears.  
 “I say, you fellows, here’s some tables and chairs! I say, let’s sit down, you beasts! I’m dropping!”  
 “Drop quietly.” suggested Bob Cherry.  
 “Beast!” groaned Bunter.  
 “May as well have tea here.” said Harry Wharton. “Looks rather jolly. There’s a show afterwards, and we shall have time can to see it, and take the tram that for the boat. Here! Hallo, Smithy!”  
 “Hallo, hallo, hallo!”  
 “The esteemed and ridiculous Smithy!” said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.  
 The Bounder gave the Famous Five a curt nod. He was not particularly pleased to see them. However, he had the grace to take the cigarettes from his mouth and drop it into the grass.  
 Billy Bunter, forgetting for a moment that he was dropping, blinked rather uneasily at the Bounder. He had not seen him on the steamer, though he had learned from the top of the Co. that Smithy was somewhere in the offing. He did not want to beat to get too near the Bounder, after the disastrous outcome of the trick he had played et that tutor’s bungalow. Certainly it was not Bunter’s fault that the millionaire’s unexpected visit had bowled him out; but Smithy’s temper was rather unreliable at the best of times.  
 “I say, you fellows, let’s go farther on!” squeaked Bunter.  
 “Rot! This is all right!” said Bob Cherry. “Like a little cheerful and entertaining society, Smithy, old bean?”  
 The Bounder grinned. His sour mood was not quite proof against Bob’s cheerful good temper.  
 “Squat down!” he said. “Lots of room! Less to see you, in fact. I’ve got to wait here till eight. I’m on my own now.” he added, with a sarcastic grin. “My pater seems to have put up Pon’s back on the boat, and I’ve had a row with those Highcliffe cads.”  
 Harry Wharton & Co. had noticed that the Highcliffe crowd were not with the Bounder, or they certainly would not have stopped at Smithy’s table. They were not surprised to hear that there had been a “row”---in fact, they had rather expected it.  
 They sat down, Bunter still eyeing the Bounder rather uneasily. To his relief, however, Vernon-Smith did not seem to observe his fat existence.   
 “Garcon!” howled Bunter. “Here! Ici! Allea this way, garsong! Where’s that fool of a waiter? I saw the beast a minute ago! Where’s that silly dummy?”  
 “Here, sir!” said a voice behind Bunter. He blinked round at the garcon.  
 “Oh crikey! Do all these beastly froggies speak English?” growled Bunter. “Ow! Who’s that kicking me? Wow! Bob Cherry, you beast! Wow!”  
 “Harry Wharton gave the orders, and a well-laden tray was brought to the table. Billy Bunter’s little round eyes gleamed behind his big, round spectacles at the sight of a pile of sticky pastries. There was comfort in that sight for the Owl of the Remove, and he proceeded immediately to deal with them. Wharton leaned towards the Bounder, and spoke in a low voice.  
 “I fancy your pater came this way from Boulogne, Smithy.  
 “I’ve seen him.”   
 “Oh, then he’s here!  
 “Gone into the building with a French johnny. I suppose he’s here to buy up the place, or somethin’ of the sort.” The Bounder shrugged his shoulders. “Don’t mention me if you see him, of course.”  
 “Of course not. But---”  
 “And don’t give me any pi-jaw!” sneered the Bounder.  
 “I wasn’t going to, Smithy.” said Harry quietly. “But look here, old chap! You say you’re off the that Highcliffe crew. “Why not join up with us, and come back on the boat when we go? Your father was fearfully wrathy about not finding you at that tutor’s, but if he knew you were in decent company---”   
 “Yours?” grinned the Bounder.  
 “Yes, ours.” said Harry. “We may not be quite so festive as Pon & Co., but I hope we’re rather more decent. Stick to us now we’re together, and if you’d like to come home with me, my uncle and aunt would make you welcome at Wharton launch. If your father you you were there, and not with those Highcliffe blackguards, it would make a lot of difference.”  
 “You’re a decent chap, Wharton.” said the Bounder slowly. “I know you mean well. But you’re not here to play roulette, I suppose?”  
 “Don’t be an ass!”  
 “Well, I am!”  
 “You’re a silly ass, then!”  
 “Oh, quite!” drawled the Bounder. “Let it go at that!”  
 “I say, you fellows, these cakes are jolly good!” Billy Bunter’s voice came rather indistinctly; his mouth was full. “jolly nearly as good as ou@ French chef makes at Bunter Court. Not quite, but jolly nearly! Tell the garcon to bring a dozen more, Wharton! Here, I say, garcon, apportez beaucoup mure de cakes------”  
 “Ha, ha, ha!”  
 “Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! You fellows were always jealous of my French  
 “Hallo, hallo, hallo!” murmured Bob Cherry. “Spot that blighter?”  
 A man with watchful, rat-like black eyes came lounging up the wooded path. The juniors knew him again at once. It was the man on the tram---as they suspected, the pick pocket of the steamer. He lounged along smoking a cigarette.  
 That’s the jolly old Apache!” said Bob.  
 and ferns “What about him?” asked the Bounder, glancing at the man.  
 “I believe he’s the man who tried to pick your father’s pocket on the steamer,” said Harry, “and I can’t help thinking that he’s watching for another chance, and that’s why he’s here.  
 The man with the rat’s eyes spotted the party of schoolboys at the table. He turned instantly from the path and disappeared among the trees.  
 The Bounder laughed carelessly.   
 “If that’s his game, the pater can take care of himself all right.” he said. The juniors finished their tea and rose from the table.  
 “Coming into the show with us, Smithy?” asked Bob.  
 “Thanks, no.”  
 “I say, you fellows, you can go in to the show.” said Bunter.” I’ll stick to Smithy, if you’ll lend me------”  
 “Take hold of his ear, Bob!”  
 “Yaroooh!”  
 The Famous Five walked on to the building, from which sweet strains of music were coming, and Bunter rolled after them. They went into the “show,” where Bunter made the happy discovery that refreshments could be had during the entertainment. The Famous Five give their attention to the variety show, while Bunter gave his attention to a variety of refreshments  
. From another part of the building, in the pauses of the music, there came occasionally the sound of a droning voice:  
 Faites vos jeux, messieurs! Monsieurs, marquez vos jeux!”  
 Billy Bunter pricked up his fat ears at the sound of the croupier’s voice in the adjoining “salle des jeux!” But the Famous Five, while prepared to stand refreshments for the fat Owl, had made it quite clear that there were not prepared to stand him a plunge at roulette. So the Owl of the Remove grunted and devoted himself to sticky cakes.  
  
 **THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER**

**The Man In the Dark!**“OH, gad! breathed the Bounder.  
 He stopped suddenly.  
 The stars were out over Le-Bosquet-dans-le-Foret! The façade of the white walled casino, who lighted up a theatre, shone through the dusky wood. Plenty of people were going in, some heading for the “show” where Harry Wharton & Co. had gone in, others for the “ salle des jeux,” where the ivory ball spun and clicked on the roulette wheel. The latter was Vernon-Smith’s destination, as he came up the broad, granite steps to the wide balcony in front of the building, where the entrance was. But he stopped suddenly and backed into cover of a tub of palms on the steps at the sight of a portly figure and a gleaming silk hat.  
 Mr. Vernon-Smith, smoking an after-dinner cigar, was pacing the balcony with Monsieur Poncet, the two of them deep in talk.  
 Apparently the millionaire was going into business matters with his French business acquaintance. Unconscious of the close proximity of his scapegrace son, Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith walked and talked in front of the casino vestibule.  
 The Bounder breathed hard in his cover behind the palms.  
 It was a day of narrow escapes for him. But this escape had been the narrowest of all. Had he stepped on the wide balcony in the glare of bright light there was no doubt whatever that Mr. Vernon-Smith would have spotted him.  
 Impatiently, with a black brow, the Bounder waited for his father to go. Cool as he was, iron-nerved and reckless, he felt a chill at the bare thought of meeting his father there. Mr. Vernon-Smith would not need telling why he was there, and the discovery of such a shady escapade would give the finishing touch to his wrath.  
 But Mr. Vernon-Smith was in no hurry to go.  
 While people passed, and passed, going into the casino, the millionaire continued to pace to and fro with the Frenchman, deep in conversation. The Bounder heard nine o’clock strike from somewhere  
 He gritted his teeth.  
 By that time---before that time---he should have had his “plunge, ” and known his fate, but for this unlucky happening. How long were they going to parade there, talking?  
 But as nine o’clock struck, Monsieur Poncet made a movement. The two gentlemen parted, and the Frenchman went into the building.  
 The Bounder stood still, watching his father from behind the tub of palms. Mr. Vernon-Smith had long ago thrown away the stump of his cigar. Now he walked to the edge of the broad, granite steps and took out another from his case, and stood there while he lighted it.  
 Then, to the Bounder’s dismay, he descended the steps. Either he was going for a stroll round, or he was going back to his car, which awaited him on the road at the edge of the wood. In either case, he was coming down the casinos steps, and as soon as he passed the palm that screened the Bounder he would see him!  
 Smithy had no time for thinking. He had to act swiftly, or face discovery!  
 Turning, he ran down the steps, jumping from one to another. In a few seconds he was at the bottom and sprinting across the open space to the path through the dusky wood.  
 Mr. Vernon-Smith undoubtedly spotted the running figure, but the back view of a boy running told him nothing. Certainly, it did not cross his mind that it was his scapegrace son. He was thinking, not of Herbert, but of his business deals with Monsieur Poncet. He descended the steps slowly and walked across, the way the Bounder had gone.  
 Once under the overshadowing trees on the path through the wood, the Bounder halted, panting.  
 He looked back.  
 The tea-tables under the trees were deserted now, the chairs packed away. Nobody was to be seen on the path, which had been thronged an hour or two ago. It was likely to remain deserted, now, till the crowd poured out of the casino, at a much later hour. There was a glimmer of coloured lamps in the branches, but the path was very dusky.  
 Looking back, as if from a dusky tunnel, the Bounder spotted a portly form against the bright light of the casino front. Mr. Vernon-Smith was coming into the path through the wood. Evidently, he was walking back to the road to his car.  
 The bounder turned, and ran on. His idea was to get to a server distance and then dodge in among the trees and wait in cover till you if you were given the La guess this his father had passed.  
 Crash!  
 Deserted as the dusky path seemed, there was one other figure there as well as the Bounder’s. In the deep gloom Smithy crashed into it, sending it tottering, and staggering back himself from the collision.  
 “Parbleu!” muttered a savage, angry voice. “Nom d’un nom! Nom d’un nom d’un chien!”  
 “Name of a dog!” was absurd enough in English, but in French it was a very angry expression indeed.  
 The Bounder, recovering himself, peered at an angry face, sallow in hue, with bright, black eyes that gleamed and glittered like a rat’s. It was the man that had been pointed out to him by the Greyfriars fellows.  
 “Sorry! gasped the Bounder. “I didn’t see you------”  
 “Comment! Voila un cochon!” snarled the Apache. “Un Anglais, donc! Pah! Allez-vous-en, alors!”  
 The man looked a savage ruffian enough in the dusk, with his gleaming eyes, and the bounder was glad enough to pass him without further trouble.  
 Avoiding the man, he hurried on his way. Behind him, the heavy tread of Mr. Vernon-Smith had become audible. The delay, brief as it had been, had given the millionaire time to drop here. The Bounder broke into a run again.  
 Suddenly he stopped.  
 Back into his mind flashed what the juniors had told him! That rat-eyed Apache was lurking in the darkness on the lonely path through the word. And his father---  
 He stopped—and turned!  
 He told himself that there was nothing in it---the fellows had very likely been mistaken; he was a fool, doubly a fool, to risk being spotted, now that his way was clear.  
 Yet he stopped, peering back along the dusky path! That savage, sallow face with its rat’s eyes haunted him. The man had been lurking silently on the dusky path in the wood--- Smithy had not hearb a sound from him, or he would not have run into him as he had done. And his father was coming. If they had been right------  
 He teared and listened, with thumping heart. Scapegrace and rebel, in the very act of recklessly disregarding authority, dodging out of sight of his own father in order to carry on with his reckless folly, nevertheless, the Bounder forgot everything else at the bare thought of danger to his father!  
 From the silence and the darkness of the shadowy wood a sound came to him. It was an inarticulate sound---up choked cry---it was followed by scuffling---  
 He stopped for no more! With a desperate rush, he raced back along the path. He knew what was happening---he could see nothing---but he knew that is for was in the grasp of the Apache, and his feet hardly touched the ground as he ran to his aid.  
  
 **THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.  
  
 Father and Son!**

“Great Gad---Oh------”  
 Mr. Vernon-Smith was taken utterly by surprise.  
 He had forgotten the incident on the channel boat long ago. It had never occurred to him that the thief of the steamer might be watching for another chance on land. He was thinking, as he came along the dusty woodland path, of coure big business bureau which was to add another hundred thousand pounds or so to his millions. He did not even see the lurking dark shadow under the trees; he was totally unaware of danger till the Apache, likely human tiger he was, sprang.  
 He went over backwards into the grass, the cigar flying from his mouth, the silk hat from his head. He fell heavily, the live Apache---as lithe and supple and swift as the Red Indian from whom the slang name was taken—landing on him, pinning him down.  
 “Taisez-vous!” came hissing from the thief, “Pas un mot!”  
 “You scoundrel!” panted the millionaire.  
 “Le portefeuille, vite!” hissed the Apache. A thievish hand was already groping for the pocket-book.  
 But Mr. Vernon-Smith, taken by surprise as he was, was not the man to submit to robbery if he could help it. There were many business papers and a wad of banknotes in the portefeuille for which is the thief was already groping. Plump and portly as he was, Mr. Vernon-Smith was no weakling, and no coward; he grappled fiercely with the ruffian and strove to throw him off.  
 Exerting all his strength, he gained his knees, struggling with his lithe assailant.   
 For a few moments they struggled. The thief was the more active of the two, as agile as a cat; but the Englishman was stronger. Mr. Vernon-Smith heaved himself to his feet, the Apache clinging to him cat-like. There came a hissing oath from the thief, and a flash of cold, sharp steel in the shadows. The Apache had drawn his knife---the ready weapon of the Paris Apache.  
 Neither of them, in the excitement of the brief struggle, had heard running feet on the grassy path. But it was well for Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith at that moment that help was at hand. A savage hand, with the knife in it, was flung back for a murderous stab when a breathless figure hurtled out of the gloom and a clenched fist crashed into a sallow face.  
 A scream of startled rage broke from the Apache as he turned on his new and unexpected assailant.  
 “Great gad!” gasped Mr. Vernon-Smith.  
 The knife flashed in the shadows. As much by luck as intention the bounder dodged the fierce slash, but the keen grazed his arm as he eluded it, and he felt the support of blood in his sleeve. Unheeding it, he hurled himself at the ruffian, smashing both fists into the sallow, wolfish face, and with a gasping grunt, the thief went over on his back in the grass.  
 He was down---if only for a second! But the Bounder had his wits about him, he was giving the desperate wretch no chance to rise again, with that murderous steel in his hand. With a swift leap he was on him, crashing both feet in the pit of the sprawling rascal’s stomach.   
 The wretch crumpled under him, gurgling. The knife dropped from his hand as he clawed wildly at the grass in a spasmodic struggle for breath. Smithy pounced on the knife the next second, snatched it up, and sent it flying among the trees.  
 “Who---who---what------” Mr. Vernon-Smith was gasping. In did as he could only dimly see the boyish figure that had rushed to his aid.  
 Smithy leaned over the sprawling Apache for a moment---ready to deal with him. But the man was utterly helpless and winded, and could only sprawl and gurgle and gasp.  
 The Bounder turned to his father.  
 “You’re not hurt?” he panted.  
 “No! Very little---Oh!” gasped Mr. Vernon-Smith. “The scoundrel---he would have---but who---who---what---” He peered at the Bounder, struck by the familiar tones of his voice. “It’s not possible---who------ Great gad, that’s not Herbert!”  
 He caught the Bounder by the shoulder, drew him nearer, and peered into his face. The millionaire was shaken and breathless from the struggle, but he forgot that and everything else at the sight of his son! He stared at him blankly.  
 “H-Herbert!” he stuttered. “You! Herbert! Quotes  
 “Yes, father!” muttered the Bounder.   
 “You here---good gad---and you---you------” Mr. Vernon Smith broke off. The gurgling, gro8ning Apache was making an effort to rise. The millionaire. And an and picked up the malacca he had dropped when you was attacked.  
 “Take that step, Herbert, and stun that scoundrel if he stirs.”  
 “What-ho!” grinned Smithy.  
 He stood over the Apache, the heavy stick in his hand. The rat like eyes scintillated up at him, but the ruffian sank back and remained in the grass. He was beaten, and the Bounder would have cracked his head without the slightest compunction at an attempt to give trouble. Groaning for breath, the wretch lay in the grass, the Bounder watching him.  
 Mr. Vernon-Smith picked up his hat and replaced it on his head. There was an extraordinary expression on his face. He knew from what his son had saved him---the Bounder’s intervention had only come in time to prevent the Apache from using his knife. There was a minute of silence; Smithy, watching the Apache, wondering how his father was going to take it; how very conscious of the blood that was oozing down his left arm from the cut he had received.  
 “Herbert! I find you here!” said Mr. Vernon-Smith at last. “this morning I called up Mr. Pickens and discovered your trickery.”  
 Smithy made no answer.  
 “I saw your Highcliffe friends on the boat--- By gad! You must have crossed with them, as I find you here! Were you on the boat”  
 “Yes!”  
 “And you kept out of my sight?”  
 “Yes!”   
 “To come here---”  
 “And for what,” said Mr. Vernon-Smith, in a deep voice, “are you here?”  
 The Bounder made no reply to that.  
 “But I need not ask!” said the millionaire grimly. “you are here to gamble in the casino with those young scoundrels of Highcliffe---”  
 “Not with them,” said the Bounder. “I’ve rowed with them and we’ve parted.” Up up up  
 “No doubt---no doubt---after the way I handled your precious friend Ponsonby on the boat! But you are here---I know why you are here, you disgraceful young rascal. ”  
 “You wouldn’t have known I was here, but---“ the Bounder broke off. But his words recalled to the millionaires mind the service he had rendered him, which he had forgotten for a moment in his rising wrath  
 “But for that!” said Mr. Vernon-Smith, breathing hard.  
 “Oh, don’t let that make any difference!” said the Bounder flippantly. “I cleared off from the tutor’s---you found that fool Bunter there in my place. I’ve sold things in London to raise the wind for a plunge here. You want an excuse to throw me out and adopt your precious nephew Lucius Teggers in my place! Well, now that you’ve got it! Don’t mind me!”  
 “You insolent young rascal!” roared Mr. Vernon-Smith, his wrath breaking out. “By Jove, I’ve a mind to take you at your word! I’ve a mind---”  
 “Hadn’t you better call a gendarme to take charge of this sportsman?” drawled the Bounder. “I’d like to get this scratch tied up.”  
 “What!” Mr. Vernon-Smith’s wrath vanished in a flash. “What? Are you hurt, Herbert? Why did you not say so? What---”  
 “Nothing to speak of---only a scratch really---”  
 “You young fool! How dare you not tell me at once?” The alarm and anxiety in the millionaire’s look and tone, struck the Bounder with remorse. Bitterly as Mr. Vernon-Smith was incensed against his scapegrace son, prepared to disinherit him if he did not mend his ways, that anxiety told clearly his son still was to him; clearer, perhaps, than he realised himself.  
 “It’s nothing, father!” muttered the Bounder. “only a graze from the brute’s knife---a scratch---I---I---I say, dad, I---I’m sorry that I’ve played the fool---I’ll go straight back to that dashed tutor’s if you like---I’ll stick there---”  
 “Never mind that, you young fool---what does that matter now?” rasped the millionaire “Let me see---come with me---at once---”  
 “That blighter will get away------”  
 “Nonsense! Come!”  
 Mr. Vernon-Smith grasped his son’s arm, to drag him up the path towards the distant lights of the casino building. There was a yell of pain from Smithy; it was his injured arm that the millionaire grasped. It was echoed by a cry of alarm from Mr. Vernon-Smith, as he felt his fingers wet from the schoolboys sleeve.  
 “Herbert! You are wounded!” he panted.  
 “I tell you it’s only a scratch---nothing------“  
 “Come at once---instantly!” gasped Mr. Vernon-Smith. “Give me your arm---I will help you---come---come------”  
 He almost dragged the Bounder up the path. As they disappeared, the Apache crawled to his feet and crawled away into the wood. He vanished, unheeded by either. Ten minutes later, the cut on the Bounder’s arm, which was in fact little more than a scratch, was being bound up, in Monsieur Poncet’s rooms in the casino building, under the anxious eye of Mr. Vernon-Smith, and gendarmes were dispatched to look for the Apache. And the Bounder was thinking that, after all, the day’s adventures had not turned out so badly---though it was quite certain now that he was not going to have that “plunge” at the roulette-table at Le Bosquet-dans-le-Foret.  
  
 **THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.  
  
 Homeward Bound!**“WHAT about supper?” asked Billy Bunter.  
 “Nothing about supper, old fat man.”  
 “Oh, really, Cherry------”  
 “Where on earth are you going to put it?” demanded Johnny Bull.  
 “Beast!”  
 Really it was rather a problem where Billy Bunter was going to park the supper---if any! How many sticky cakes he had packed away, during the show, even Bunter could hardly have entered. He was looking very shiny and sticky, as he rolled out after the performance, with the Famous Five. Anyhow, there was no supper for Bunter.  
 “Time to take the tram back to Boulogne, for the boat!” said Harry Wharton. “Just about time! I wish that silly ass Smithy was coming back with us.”  
 “Thanks!” said a quiet voice at his shoulder.  
 “Hallo, hallo, hallo!” ejaculated Bob Cherry.  
 The Famous Five turned to look at the Bounder. His face was a little pale, but smiling, and his left arm was held a little stiffly. He gave them a nod and a grin.  
 “Mean that, Wharton?” he asked.  
 Harry Wharton laughed.  
 “Yes---I didn’t know you heard me, Smithy, but I certainly mean it. Be a sensible chap, and come back with us.  
 “ Have I ever been a sensible chap?” grinned the Bounder.  
 “My esteemed Smithy, it is never too late for the cracked pitcher to mend, by going longest to the well for a stitch in time, as the English proverb remarkably observes!” said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.  
 “Good old English proverb!” said the Bounder. “That jolly old moonshee in Bhanipur who taught you English, was a nut on proverbs, Inky. I’ve been waiting here for you chaps to come out.”  
 “I say, Smithy, how did you get on?” exclaimed Billy Bunter eagerly. “Did you break the bank?”  
 “Shot up, Bunter!”  
 “Shan’t! I say, old chap, did you get away with the stuff? Did you stick ’em?” gasped Bunter. “I was going in to try my luck, only those rotters were to jolly mean to lend me any money. Have you had any luck?”   
 “Fathead!” answered the Bounder. “I haven’t been in the casino, and I’m not goin’. You men coming along to the tram?”  
 Vernon-Smith walked down the steps with the Famous Five, joining the crowd going down the path through the wood to the road. That path, so dusky and lonely when the Apache had attacked Mr. Vernon-Smith there, was now a crowded with people heading for the trams. Perplexed as they were, Harry Wharton & Co. were glad enough that Smithy had joined up, and hoped that he was going to stick to them.  
 “Anything wrong with your fin, Smithy?” asked Harry.  
 “Scratch from a knife.” answered Smithy. “Nothin’ much, and I’ve had it bandaged, under the pater’s affection eye.”  
 “You’ve seen your father, then?” “  
 “Well, yes.” The Bounder laughed. “That sportsman- you pointed out to me—you remember him?”  
 “Yes. What about him?”   
 “He tried it on again, and I happened to be near at hand. He was handlin’ his sticker---hence this jolly old scratch! And hence,” added the Bounder, with a grin, “the restoration of peace and a friendly footin’ in the jolly old family circle! I’ve left the pater in a fairly good temper---and nothin’ more is going to be said about my boltin’ from the tutor’s. And the understandin’, of course, that I chuck up what I came here for, and go back like a good boy! Bein’ a good boy isn’t really my long suit---but in the jolly old circs, I’m playin’ up.”  
 “You’re catching our boat, then?” asked Bob.  
 “Yes---that’s a condition! The pater trusts me, so far as to travel home with you! That’s why I’m bestowin’ on you the inestimable boon of my improvin’ society.”  
 “Good!” said Harry.  
 It was a cheery party that crowded on the tram and clanged away to Boulogne. Bunter, perhaps, was not so cheery as the rest. He was doubtful whether he was going to get any supper---also he was thinking of the immense fortune he might have made out Le Bosquet, had the beasts he was with lent him sufficient cash for a plunge at roulette.  
 But nobody heeded Bunter. The Bounder seemed in good spirits, in spite of his stiff arm. His luck, which had seemed to let him down so severely, had turned in his favour again. He had hardly ventured to think of what might be the outcome of his reckless and rebellious escapade; and tonight it was washed out, forgiven, if not forgotten, and he was able to make a fresh start.  
 “Hallo, hallo, hallo seen that sportsman before?” exclaimed Bob Cherry suddenly, as the tram clanged past a little group, in the light of a roadside lamp.  
 Two French police, in their cloaks, were holding either arm of a sallow, savage faced man with rat-like eyes, marching him along the road. It was the Apache, safely held between the two gendarmes.  
 “That’s the johnny!” said the Bounder. “They’ve got him, then!”  
 “The gotfulness is terrific!”  
 The tram clanged on, and the gendarmes and their prisoner disappeared in the night.  
 The Greyfriars party left the tram at the depot in Boulogne, to walk down to the quay. Billy Bunter halted.  
 “I say, you fellows, what about supper” he asked. Bunter had asked that question before, with getting a satisfactory answer. He had no better luck now.   
 “Is that a conundrum this?” inquired Bob Cherry.  
 “Eh? No, you ass! What about supper?” demanded Bunter.  
 “The answer is a lemon!” suggested Bob.  
 “Ha, ha, ha ha!”  
 “You silly ass!” hooted Bunter. “Look here! Why can’t we have supper?”  
 “because one rode a horse, and the other a rhododendron!” answered Bob, just as if the Owl of the Remove was asking conundrums.  
 “Ha, ha, ha!”  
 “Beast!”  
 Supperless, Billy Bunter rolled on the steamer with the chums of the Remove. A little later, when the channel boat was out in the Channel, the fat Owl had reason to be glad that he had not added a supper at Boulogne to the sticky cakes of Le Bosquet-dans-le-Foret.  
 The lights of Boulogne-sur-Mer were sinking astern, and the juniors were watching the shadowed sea for the lights of Folkestone, when strange, weird, and woeful sounds came from a fat figure that hubdled in a state of collapse in a deckchair.   
 “Hallo, hallo, hallo! What’s that?” exclaimed Bob Cherry, peering round in the gloom face.  
 Groan!  
 “Is that Bunter?”  
 Groan!  
 “Anything the matter?”  
 Groan!   
 “Look here, you fat duffer,” said Bob, not for the moment discerning what the trouble was. “If you really want to stuff, you can get something on the boat! There’s s supper downstairs, and we’ll lend you---”  
 “Beast!”  
 “Wha-a-at?”  
 “D-d-don’t talk to me about supper!” gurgled Bunter. “Don’t mention food to me, you unfeeling brute! Gurrggh!”  
 “Oh, my hat! I see!” Bob chuckled. “I thought you were rather overdoing the speaks at Le Bosquet, old fat been! Poor old Bunter!”  
 “Gurrrrggh!”  
 “Buck up, old bean!” said Bob. “Think what a lot of room you’ll have for supper when we get home!”  
 “Yurrrggh! Quotes  
 The crossing lasted little over an hour. But to billy Bunter it seemed to last years and years.  
 But at last the Greyfriars party landed in Folkestone. Billy Bunter was still gurgling a little as he rolled over the gangway with the Famous Five. The Bounder’s face was rather thoughtful. Harry Wharton touched him on the arm—not the damaged one.  
 “Look here, Smithy! Are you bound to go back to the tutor’s” he asked. “If your father knew you were with us---”  
 “He does know.”  
 “If you’d told him we wanted you to come back with us for the rest of the hols---“  
 “I did!”  
 “Well, then---” said Harry.  
 The Bounder grinned.  
 “I told him you’d asked me, and he said that if I went with your crowd, it would be all right!”  
 “Good egg!” said the captain of the Remove. “That’s that, then! This way for the train!”  
 “The goodfulness of the esteemed egg is terrific!” dthe decorativeeclared Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.  
 “I say, you fellows------”  
 “Where are you going, Bunter?” asked Harry.  
 Bunter blinked at him.  
 “Well, I’m not going home.” he said. “you see, the decorators are in at Bunter Court! It’s rather too late to go to Mauleverer’s---Mauly wants me for the vac, but I can’t get to Hampshire tonight! I’ll tell you what, Wharton---I’ll come home with you, old chap!”  
 “Oh!”  
 “That’s settled!”  
 “Is it?”  
 “Yes, old chap. And now, what about supper before we take the train?” asked Bunter. “I’m hungry! The sea always makes me hungry---”  
 “Not to mention what happens to you on the sea!” murmured Bob.  
 “Ha, ha, ha!”  
 “Beast! What about supper, Wharton?”  
 “Nothing!”  
 “If you’re going to be stingy with a guest, Wharton------”  
 “Oh, my hat! There’s only one train tonight, and it goes in five minutes. But state in Folkestone for supper if you like! Come on, you fellows”  
 Billy Bunter decided not to stay in Folkestone for supper. He was very careful not to miss that train. At long last the Greyfriars trippers reached:---where Bunter was able to find a satisfactory answer to that important question---what about supper?  
THE END.