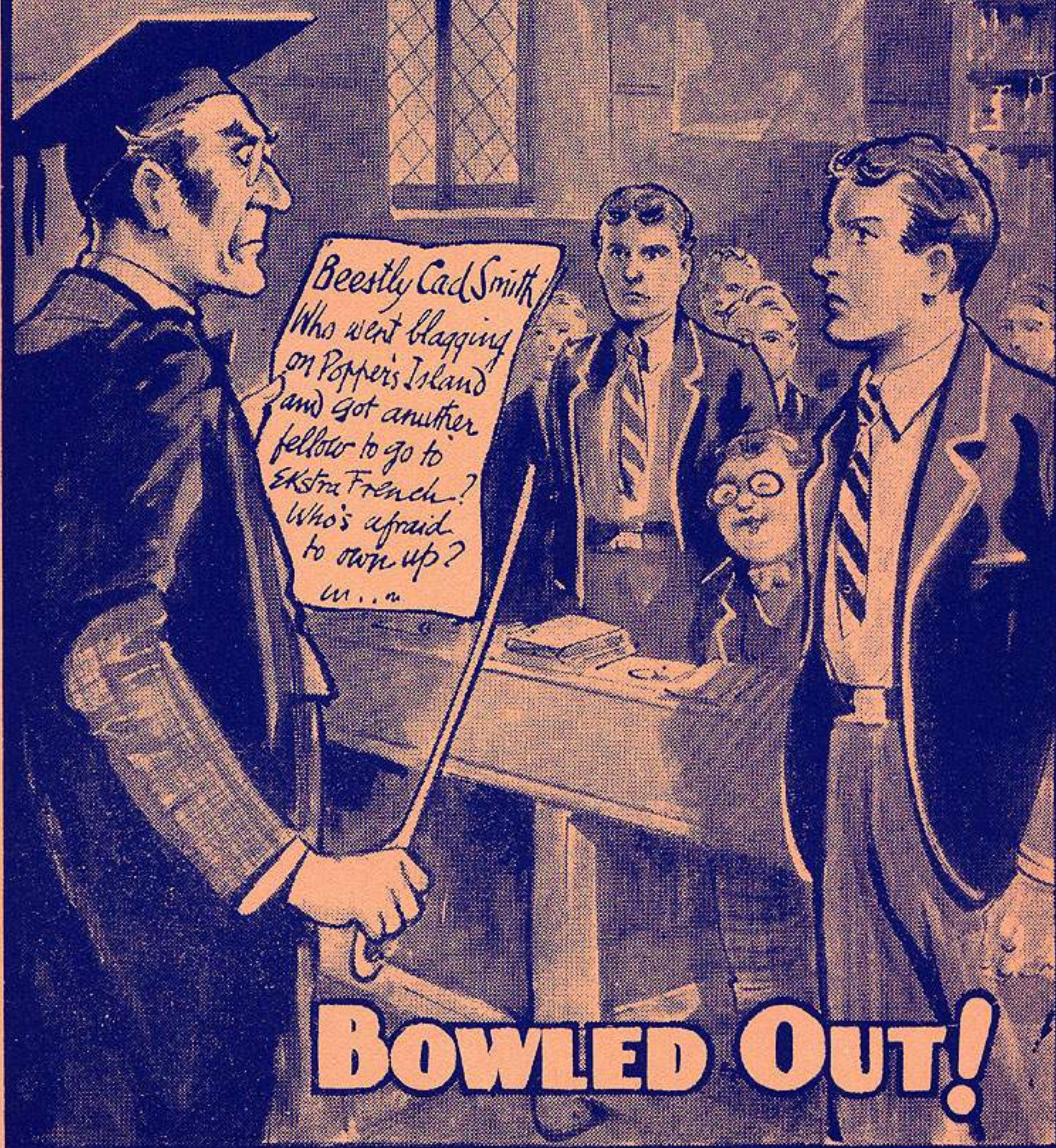


"THE PERFECT ALIBI!" Great Greyfriars Yarn by Frank Richards

The Magnet ^{2^D}

Billy Bunter's
Own Paper



BOWLED OUT!



THIS WEEK BY
GERALD LODER,
Sixth Former and Prefect.

I MAY as well tell you frankly that I don't care twopence whether you like this "page" or not. I didn't want the trouble of writing it, for I've no ambition at all to shine in the literary game. Probably the Editor will refuse to print it, anyway. (EDITOR'S NOTE: Wrong guess, Loder. I shall print whatever the fellows send me, whether I like it, or whether I don't. My wish is to show readers the type of fellows they are—not the type I wish they were. See?)

My only reason for accepting the Editor's invitation is that it seems to be "the thing to do" at Greyfriars, and if one doesn't follow the crowd, one is looked on as an outsider. That's what they call tradition, and it's a very great thing. Always respect tradition, dear lads, and you'll never go wrong. (Play the game, cads! On the ball, hounds! Don't let the good old British Empah down!)

Tradition says sternly: "No good Briton should have a mind of his own. Every thoughtful British boy should bow down to the dusty old rules and fusty old ideas that were invented in the reign of King Cole and are still going strong. I am a Dictator and my laws are Absolute. Defy me at your peril!"

Let's see how this works out in ordinary school life. Take sport, for instance. Sport used to mean a relaxation for the leisure hour—a healthy, harmless game for athletic and weak-minded youths. But sport is now part of tradition. It is no longer a game, but a government. Great are the champions of sport. George Wingate is not a mere clod-hopper who can kick a ball into a goal—he is a mighty and magnificent being, like Jove of old, before whose glance we all turn pale and shrivel.

To be a "footer captain" is better than to be a mere scholar, however brilliant. Scholars like Edison, Marconi, Lister, Pasteur and others have given the world such brilliant gifts that they should be acclaimed as world heroes for all time to come. Yet one is prepared to bet they all had to cringe before their footer captains. What is Bessemer compared with Bradman? He merely invented steel, while Bradman—breathe the word!—plays cricket!

Moreover, sport is no longer a "leisure hour" occupation—far from it. The thing is now compulsory; one has to play footer by inexorable law. It is no excuse to say that you "don't like football." The Carthaginian slaves didn't like being heaved into Moloch's sacrificial fire, but they were heaved all the same. And tradition is our modern Moloch. When he speaks we must obey.

But why? We often sing "Britons never shall be slaves!" and all the time we're the most miserable slaves in existence. Why must I play football when I loathe the stupid game? Is it because I am too low and wretched to be allowed to hold my own opinions? If so, why bother to educate me at all?

Moloch seldom troubles to answer these questions, but if he did, the dialogue might run something like this:

MOLOCH (in a hoarse, gruff, hinge-creaking voice): "It is for your own good, my little man. It teaches you to cultivate the 'team spirit' and to play for your side instead of yourself. That's the way I run the British Empah."

ME: "Well, with all due respect to you, I don't think much of the way you run the British Empah. In fact, and to be brutally blunt, it's a load of hooey. The British Empah manages to muddle along in spite of you—that's the plain fact. You and your fatuous gang, with their huntin' and shootin' and 'Play the game, cads!' have done more to run the Empah into war and ruin than

fifty thousand earthquakes at a time. As for the 'team spirit'—don't make me laugh! I don't want any, thanks. I prefer to live my own life in the way I think best, and to rely on my own brains to help me. Got that, Moloch?"

MOLOCH: "Thou perverse worm, thou hast no brains!"

ME: "Then I'll live without 'em. I'm not a sheep, to be led by the nose."

(EDITOR: "Wrong, guess again, Loder—you're a black sheep!")

MOLOCH: "What does it matter if you don't like football? You don't like Greek, but you have to learn it. Discipline, my dear man, discipline! Everyone must learn discipline."

ME: "That's what I complain of—it's the wrong sort of discipline. Instead of teaching us the discipline of freedom, you make us obey a lot of stuffy old rules. Your brand of discipline doesn't lead to self-reliance, but to meek and unthinking obedience. A man ought to know his own mind, not to do exactly as he's told. When one of your slaves goes to Parliament, he has to vote as his Party Leader tells him—not as he thinks himself. If he goes to Law, he has to obey a lot of dusty old dictates which he knows are wrong. He follows the leader who shouts the loudest, because he's never been encouraged to think for himself."

MOLOCH: "If fellows thought for themselves it would be far too dangerous."

ME: "Yes, dangerous to YOU—because the first thing they'd do would be to blow you sky high with your old rules and regulations for company. And then we should enjoy cricket and football again, because we shouldn't be forced to play them."

But tut-tut! This will make me very unpopular at Greyfriars, and I fear also with the readers of this journal. I confess this saddens me—but courage, dear heart! I can't be more unpopular than I am already. That is very soothing, don't you know?

SECOND THOUGHTS!

You mustn't think, though, that I disagree with discipline entirely. I mean, we must have prefects to keep the juniors in order. Tradition's all right, as far as that goes. Juniors ought to be thrashed—it does them good. It's a kid's nature to be cheeky and idle, and he must be soundly lammed until he's cured.

Personally, I believe with Solomon that to spare the rod is to spoil the child. I have never been guilty of this mistake. I thrash with reluctance, of course; but I do it thoroughly. All the while I am stripping the hide



off some cheeky young sweep, I comfort myself by remembering that it is for his own good.

And I maintain strongly that it is not only juniors who need a touch of the ash to keep them in order. There are Fifth Formers who would be all the better for it. Coker is one. I have often been tempted to give him a hiding, though it's not usual to interfere with the Fifth. But—well, Coker's a mad ass. He would almost certainly smash me, without troubling to think that he'd be bunked for it.

I should like to see Coker bunked, but a broken nose or a couple of black eyes is a dear price to pay for that pleasure.



NOTHING DOING!

Says the Editor, in his letter: "Please tell us something about your home, your ambitions, your friends, etcetera."

To which my simple reply is—Rats!

If any reader has an overwhelming curiosity about my home, ambitions, friends, etc., let him come to Greyfriars and I shall have great pleasure in kicking him for his impertinence.

But readers won't know this. The Editor won't put this in—he'll make some oily and plausible excuse for not giving these details. Well, it'll give me a laugh.

(EDITOR: "Still guessing wrong, my pet! I've no objection to my readers discovering the sort of toad you are. They know, anyway!")

PUZZLE PICTURE

Said Robert Burns: "Oh, wad some power the giftie gie us to see ourselves as others see us!" It may interest GEORGE WINGATE (left) and COKER (right) to know exactly how I see them. That's why I did the above drawing. It's not at all exaggerated.

LODER'S LATEST!

The person I loathe most at Greyfriars is Horace Hacker, M.A. Yesterday he came up to me and said:

"I understand, Loder, that you have given a boy of my Form 819,200 lines to write."

"I gave Hoskins of your Form 100 lines," I replied, "but that was a fortnight ago, and he hasn't written them yet."

"Did you not tell Hoskins the following day that because his lines were not written they were doubled?"

"Yes, that's so."

"The same thing occurred the next day?"

"Why not?" I demanded warmly.

"And you have doubled it every day for a fortnight—and it now amounts to 819,200 lines. To-morrow it will be 1,638,400 lines. I must see Dr. Locke about this."

And he walked off. To-day the whole school is sniggering about it.

GERALD LODER

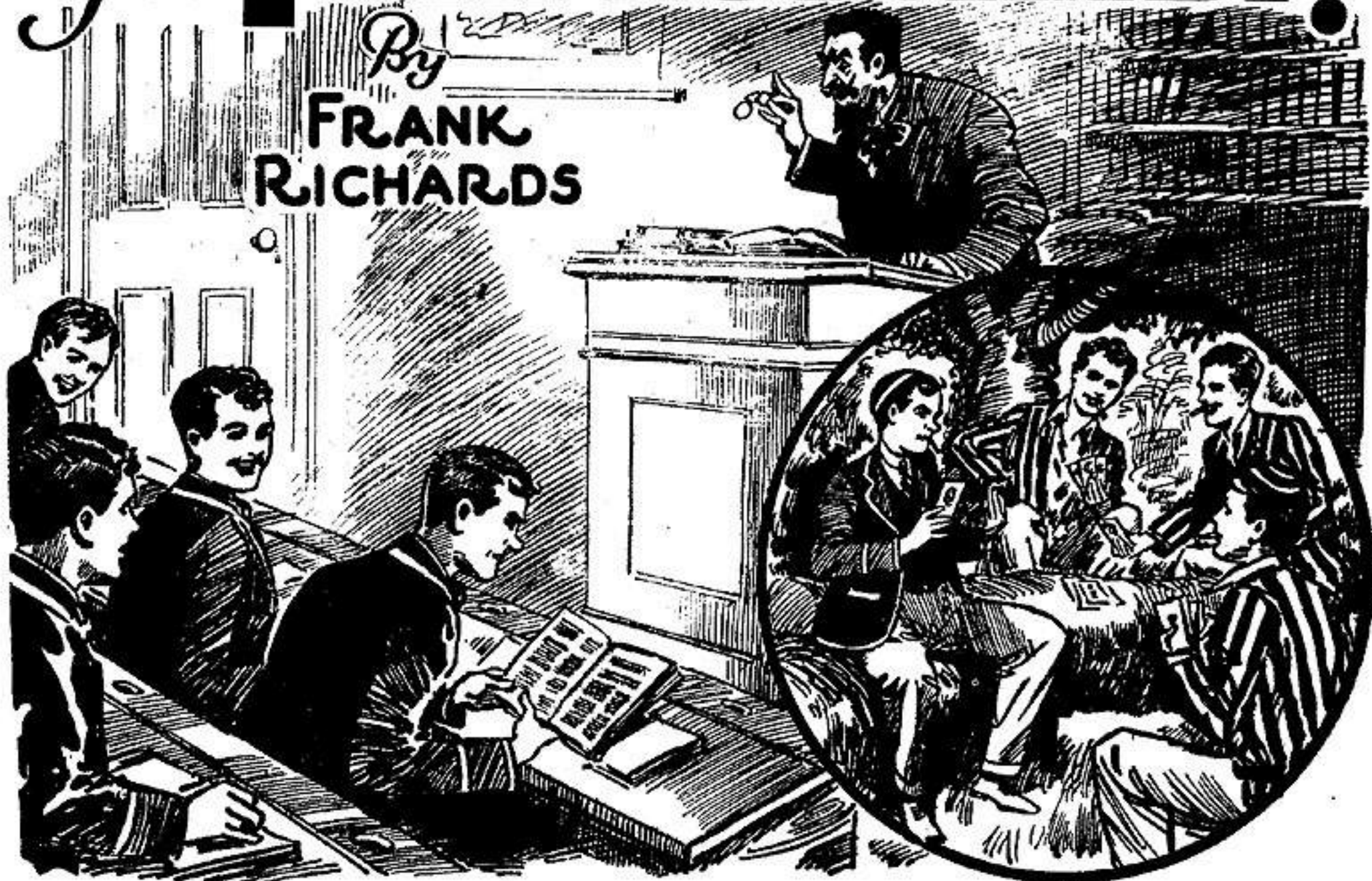
Most fellows have their good points, however badly they behave as a rule; but it must be confessed that Loder of the Sixth has singularly few. He is capable of rare and unexpected acts of generosity, and he has a sense of humour of the sarcastic and ironical kind. These things apart, he is a bad character. He disdains all ordinary decent actions, he looks for the worst motive in everything, he is suspicious, tyrannical, treacherous and cunning. All shady things appeal to his nature, at the same time he is hypocritical enough to pretend to be down on them. Skinner's cartoon (for which he will probably be skinned instead of Skinner) shows him launching thunderbolts at a wretched cigarette-smoking jag, while from his own pockets streams of shady things are pouring—and it suns him up nicely. Smoking, gambling, breaking bounds, horse-racing—these are Loder's amusements. His pals, Walker and Carue, fellow-prefects in the Sixth, are men of the same kidney. If the Head knew the secrets of these three precious prefects, they'd be expelled to-morrow!

(Cartoon by HAROLD SKINNER.)

AWKWARD FOR SMITHY! Time and again has Herbert Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, run risks, trusting to his luck. But for once his luck looks like letting him down with a crash, unless he can establish—

The PERFECT ALIBI!

By
FRANK RICHARDS



SENSATIONAL SCHOOL STORY OF HARRY WHARTON & CO., OF GREYFRIARS, STARRING VERNON-SMITH AND HIS COUSIN BERTIE.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Billy Bunter Causes Trouble!

“WHICH are you?” Bob Cherry asked that question, and there was a laugh from some of the Remove fellows gathered at the door of the Form-room.

The bell was ringing for third school at Greyfriars. Most of the Remove were already on the spot, and many of them glanced curiously at the junior coming up the passage, to whom Bob addressed his rather unusual question.

Any fellow would have said at the first glance that that junior was Herbert Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars.

But since Smithy's Cousin Vernon had come into the Greyfriars Remove a second glance was needed, or a third.

Really and truly, a fellow could not be sure whether it was Smith, or Smithy's cousin and double.

When the two were together it was fairly easy to sort them out; when they were apart it was not so easy.

“I say, you fellows, that's Smithy!” squeaked Billy Bunter. “Look how he's scowling.”

And there was a chuckle.

A black look came over the junior's face at Bob Cherry's question. It was like gall and wormwood to the Bounder of Greyfriars to be mistaken for his cousin. He had refused at first to believe that such a mistake was possible, or that the likeness was anything like so strong as fellows made out.

When he had to admit the fact it only irritated him all the more.

“Fool!” was his answer to Bob.

Bob Cherry grinned cheerfully.

“All serene, Smithy, old man!” he said. “I know yo now, of course. No mistaking your happy looks, or your polished manners.”

“Ha, ha, ha!”

“I say, you fellows, I can always tell 'em apart,” said Billy Bunter. “Vernon doesn't scowl like Smithy, and he doesn't swank so much—”

“Shut up, you fat ass!” muttered Tom Redwing.

“Shan't!” retorted Bunter independently. “Then you can always tell Vernon, because he isn't always rattling money in his pockets—”

“He hasn't much to rattle!” remarked Skinner.

“Vernon's civil, too!” went on Bunter. “He can speak to a chap without biting his head off. He doesn't let his temper rip like Smithy! I can't make out why Smithy bars him. Perhaps it's because he bars Smithy! He, he, he!”

Vernon-Smith stood leaning against the Form-room door, his hands in his pockets. He affected not to hear the remarks of the fat and fatuous Owl of the Remove, but his ears were burning. Smithy disliked that relation of his intensely, and a single word in praise of Bertie Vernon was enough to make his eyes gleam unpleasantly. And the fact was that very many fellows in the Remove thought Bertie Vernon a much

more agreeable fellow than his cousin, Smithy.

“Here he comes,” went on the cheery fat Owl, as another fellow appeared in the corridor. “Now look at him, you fellows. He ain't swaggering as if the whole school belonged to him, is he?”

“Shut up, fathead!” said Harry Wharton.

“Oh, really, Wharton—”

“You talk too much, old fat man!” said Johnny Bull. “Pack it up!”

“Well, lots of fellows say the same,” said Bunter. “He's a jolly respectable relation for Smithy to have, I think! Not loud, like Smithy, you know!”

The junior coming to the Form-room was Smithy over again so far as looks went. Herbert Vernon undoubtedly was the double of Herbert Vernon-Smith. But Billy Bunter's remarks, fatuous as they were, were founded on facts noticed by all the Remove.

Vernon's manner and bearing were quieter than the Bounder's; there was nothing about him that leaped to the eye; his face, though exactly like Smithy's in features, especially the rather jutting nose, had more repose in its expression. Skinner had remarked—not to Smithy—that he looked like a second edition of the Bounder, but better got-up. There was a spot of refinement about him that the rather aggressive Bounder lacked.

Even Redwing, the Bounder's chum, had to notice it, though he would not admit it even to himself. He liked Smithy, and he did not like Vernon—

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though he did not dislike him, much as the Bounder wanted him to.

Bunter rattled on:

"Smithy says that the Vernons are his shabby-genteel relations, and haven't got a bean to bless themselves with. He's told everybody that. Haven't you, Smithy? But I can tell you fellows that money ain't everything, though Smithy thinks it is. He, he, he!"

The Bounder made a movement.

Hitherto the fat Owl had run on unchecked—perhaps because Mr. Quelch was due at the Form-room, and Smithy did not want his Form-master to arrive and find him booting Bunter.

If that was his reason, he forgot it now. He stepped away from the Form-room door and made a stride towards Bunter, who, blinking at the approaching junior through his big spectacles, had his back to Smithy.

Smithy's foot shot out and landed on Billy Bunter's tight trousers with a heavy thud.

"Yaroooh!" roared Bunter, as he spun.

Bunter did not seem to have expected that. Really, knowing Smithy's temper as he did, he might have. But he hadn't, and that thud on his tight trousers seemed to take the Owl of the Remove quite by surprise.

He spun along the passage yelling.

Smithy, having started, followed it up. As Bunter hurtled down the passage the Bounder hurtled after him, still kicking.

Bertie Vernon halted, staring at them.

Thud, thud!

"Yaroooh! Yarooop! Stoppit!" roared Bunter. "Beast! Oh crikey! I say, Vernon, make him stoppit!"

Billy Bunter dodged round Bertie Vernon.

He gasped and spluttered behind the new junior, grabbing at the back of his jacket to keep Vernon between him and the Bounder.

Vernon gave a shake to shake him off, but the fat Owl was not to be shaken off; he grabbed and clutched.

The Bounder gave Vernon a black look.

"Get aside!" he snapped.

"Don't you think you've booted the fat ass enough?" drawled Vernon. His voice, like his looks, was the Bounder's over again, but he spoke more slowly and much less sharply.

"I'm going to boot him down the passage and back again!" roared the Bounder. "If you don't get out of the way I'll boot you, too!"

Bertie Vernon's face became more than ever like the Bounder's with the grim expression that came over it.

"Try it on!" he said quietly. "You're not going to touch Bunter again! Don't be such a rotten bully!"

"You cheeky cad!" roared Smithy.

"Oh, shut up!" snapped Vernon. "Can't you keep your rotten temper in public? You make a fellow ashamed of being connected with you."

Vernon-Smith forgot Bunter at that. He clenched his fists and fairly flew at the new junior.

The new fellow's hands came up like lightning. Perhaps he was no more averse from a combat than Smithy was. All the Remove knew that there was no love lost on either side.

"Cave!" hooted Bob Cherry along the passage.

"Stop it, you duffers!"

"Here comes Quelch!"

"Smithy! Vernon! Cave!"

A tall and angular figure turned a corner up the passage. Mr. Quelch had

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arrived! He stared past the crowd of juniors at the Form-room door at the startling scene farther down the passage, then he almost flew past them.

"Vernon-Smith!" he thundered. "Vernon! Cease this instantly! How dare you! Upon my word!"

The next moment he had grasped the Bounder by the collar with one hand and the new junior with the other and fairly wrenched them apart.

Smithy went staggering against one wall; Bertie Vernon against the other, panting. And the Remove master glared at them alternatively with a terrifying glare.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Quelch Comes Down Heavy!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. stood looking on in silence.

What had happened was what all the Remove had been expecting since Bertie Vernon had come to Greyfriars School.

Vernon had only been in the school a couple of days, but in that short time there would have been trouble already had not Vernon kept his temper better than the Bounder kept his. Bunter, now, was the immediate cause of the outbreak of hostilities, but it had been bound to come.

Smithy, of course, was to blame. Smithy was often in trouble, and he was generally to blame. Bunter had asked to be booted, but the Bounder, as usual, was over-doing it. Any member of the Famous Five would have intervened as Vernon had done. Smithy's ungoverned temper was always landing him in rows, and now it had landed him in another.

"Vernon-Smith!" Mr. Quelch seemed to have no difficulty in sorting out those two members of his Form who were so remarkably alike. Quelch's gimlet eyes picked out many minor points of difference. "Vernon-Smith, I shall give you a detention this afternoon for this disgraceful outbreak of temper."

The Bounder panted with rage.

"And Vernon, too?" he snarled.

"We were both fighting!"

"I saw you, as I turned the corner, attack Vernon!" said Mr. Quelch sternly. "I have no doubt whatever what had occurred. Vernon was protecting that foolish boy, Bunter. Is not that the case, Bunter?"

"I—I—I got behind Vernon, sir!" gasped Billy Bunter. "I—I—I don't like being kicked, sir."

"Go to the Form-room!" said Mr. Quelch. "You, Vernon-Smith, will go into Monsieur Charpentier's class for extra French this afternoon! Not a word! Go to the Form-room!"

The Bounder choked back his rage with difficulty. Had he uttered what was on the tip of his tongue, he would not have had extra French that afternoon; he would have been taken to the headmaster for a flogging, if not for the sack. But he had to shut his teeth to keep the angry words back.

Mr. Quelch unlocked the Form-room door, and the Remove went in.

The Bounder sat in his place with a black, sullen brow.

Bertie Vernon took no further notice of him. Those strangely assorted relations barred one another, but in rather different ways.

The Bounder's way was to be aggressive, ready for a row at any moment. Vernon's way was to be quiet, cool, and disdainful, which was perhaps a good deal more irritating.

As he sat in class, Smithy's eyes

several times gleamed round at his double.

Vernon seemed quite unconscious of his existence.

But if Bertie Vernon did not choose to take any heed of Smithy, Billy Bunter did. Billy Bunter was wriggling most uncomfortably as he sat. Smithy's boot had landed thrice on Bunter, and it had landed hard every time.

Bunter had been booted, many a time, and oft; but, as he had confided to Mr. Quelch, he did not like it. Very much indeed Bunter did not like it. The Bounder had been in a bad temper, and he had booted hard. Bunter wriggled, and cast a series of hostile and inimical blinks through his big spectacles at Herbert Vernon-Smith.

And when a little later Mr. Quelch's back was momentarily turned, Billy Bunter leaned over, and emitted a stage whisper:

"Yah! Cad! I'll jolly well lick you after class! Yah!"

Mr. Quelch's gimlet eyes shot round.

"Are you whispering in class, Bunter?" he inquired.

"Oh, no, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I never spoke to Smithy, sir! I—I didn't call him a cad, sir!"

"What?"

"I—I—I never opened my mouth, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I never spoke a word—not a syllable, sir! You can ask Cherry; he heard me."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence! If you speak in class again, Bunter, I shall give you a detention!"

"Oh, yes, sir!"

And Billy Bunter was silent after that. Quelch's ears seemed to be as sharp as his eyes, which were well known to be as sharp as gimlets.

But though he was silent, Bunter was not done with Smithy yet. Bunter had a pain, and Bunter was fearfully annoyed. Had Bunter been a fighting man, he would have waited for Smithy after class, and mopped up the quad with him. But as the fat Owl could hardly have mopped up Smithy's little finger, that was a hopeless proposition. But there were other ways and means.

A quarter of an hour later, when Mr. Quelch was looking in his desk, a leaf from an exercise-book floated over to Vernon-Smith's desk, and landed there. It bore an inscription in a scrawling hand:

"Beestly kad!

Hoo rattles his munny in his trousis

pokkets!

Yah!"

There was a subdued chuckle from juniors who saw that fearfully insulting message. Vernon-Smith's face flamed. Bunter was out of his reach; but he picked up a school book from his desk, and whizzed it at the fat Owl.

Crash!

"Yoo-hoop!" roared Bunter, in surprise and anguish.

The book caught him under a fat chin. Only the Bounder of Greyfriars would have ventured to buzz a book at a fellow's head in class. But when Smithy was in one of his tantrums, he was quite reckless.

Mr. Quelch spun round.

"What—" he hooted.

"Owl!" roared Bunter, clasping his fat chin. "Wow! Oh crikey! My jaw's broken! I can't speak! Owl! Wow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What is this?" thundered Mr. Quelch. "I will keep order in this



"I'm going to boot Bunter down the passage, and back again!" roared Vernon-Smith. "If you don't get out of the way, I'll boot you, too!" "Try it on!" said his cousin, his fists clenching.

class! Who threw that book? Was it you, Vernon-Smith?"

The Bounder snarled.

"The fat fool sent me this message, and I let him have my Latin grammar back for it!" he snapped.

"Stand out before the Form!"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"Silence, Bunter!"

"Yes, sir! Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

"Vernon-Smith, bend over that desk!" Mr. Quelch swished his cane.

For a moment the Bounder of Greyfriars glared defiance. He stood erect, with defiant eyes on his Form-master.

The Remove hardly breathed. Often and often was the reckless scapegrace of the Form on the verge of mutiny. It looked, at this moment, as if Smithy was going over the verge.

"Do you hear me, Vernon-Smith?" Quelch's voice was not loud, but it was deep. "You will obey me instantly, or you will be expelled from this school within the hour! Bend over that desk!"

Almost choking, the Bounder bent over. The cane swished, and swished, and swished again. The Bounder made no sound, but his face was white.

"Now go back to your place, Vernon-Smith!"

In dead silence Smithy went back to his place.

Mr. Quelch picked up the message that still lay on his desk. He glanced over it, and fixed his eyes on Billy Bunter, who was painfully rubbing his fat chin.

"Bunter!"

"Oh, yes, sir! I never wrote that, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"You will go into detention this afternoon, Bunter! I shall give your name to Monsieur Charpentier for extra French!"

"Oh lor'! But I—I—I—never—"

"And if you utter one more untruth, Bunter, I shall cane you!"

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

Mr. Quelch crumpled Bunter's message to the Bounder, and tossed it into the wastepaper-basket. And third school went on to its end without any more whispers, or any more messages from Bunter. Bunter was still fearfully annoyed. But he had something else to think about now—a half-holiday spent at extra French in Mossoo's detention class. Which was such an awful prospect that it banished even the booting from Billy Bunter's fat mind.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Who Cares For Quelch?

"I SAY, you fellows!"

"Scoot!"

"If it's a picnic—"

"It isn't!"

"Well, if it is, I'll come."

"Fathead! It isn't!"

"Well, I'll come, all the same," declared Billy Bunter. "You'll want a fellow with you who knows how to handle a boat."

"Oh crikey!"

After dinner that afternoon the Famous Five of the Remove were pushing out their boat. It was rather an old boat, the common property of the five; but it was roomy. There was room for Billy Bunter in it as well as the crew. But—a happened only too often—Billy Bunter's room was preferred to his company.

Not that Billy Bunter had any keen desire for boating. There was always a chance, if a fellow was in a boat with other fellows, that he might be expected to do something, and Billy Bunter had a rooted objection to doing anything that entailed even a spot of exertion.

But Bunter had no doubt that it was a picnic.

The Famous Five were going to pull up the Sark that bright May afternoon in their old boat. Pulling up the river was quite a happy way of spending the afternoon to fellows who liked a little strenuous exertion much more than William George Bunter did.

But it really was not easy for Billy Bunter to believe that they were going to pull up the river, just for the sake of pulling up the river. Bunter would as soon have pulled up a tree as pulled up a river, if there was nothing else to it.

But pulling to some shady spot for a picnic was sense. A short pull and a long feed was Bunter's idea of a happy half-holiday.

Bunter knew that these fellows were not so bright as himself. But he was not going to believe that they were such fools as to lug and tug that old boat about for nothing. He was sure it was a picnic.

"Where's the grub?" he inquired, blinking into the boat as the chums of the Remove slid it from the raft into the water. "I don't see the grub. Is it packed in the locker?"

"The grubfulness is not terrific, my esteemed fat Bunter!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, with a dusky grin.

"Oh, really, Inky—"

"It isn't a picnic, you fat ass!" said Harry Wharton. "And if it was, you've got detention. Have you forgotten that Quelch has bunged you in extra French?"

"It was all that beast Smithy's fault!"

"That won't make any difference if you cut, fathead!" said Frank Nugent. "You have to get in at three! Buzz off!"

"Well, I'll chance it for the sake of sticking to my old pals," declared Bunter. "I'm not the fellow to let my

pals down on a half-holiday. I'm coming, old chaps!"

"Hook it! There's Loder of the Sixth coming round the boathouse!" said Bob Cherry. "He may be after you!"

"Blow Loder! I don't suppose he knows I've got a detention. I'm not going in to extra French. I hate French! I'm not going to have Froggy talking through his nose at me all the afternoon! Besides, it's so fearfully unjust!" exclaimed Bunter indignantly. "Quelch gave me a detention for writing that note to Smithy in class. You all heard me say that I never wrote it!"

"You fat chump!"

"That's the sort of justice we get here!" said Bunter bitterly. "Quelch makes a fellow out to be a liar before all the Form! Ungentlemanly, I call it!"

"But you did write it!" howled Johnny Bull.

"You keep on arguing!" said Bunter peevishly. "I'm not going in to detention for nothing. Very likely Mossos won't report me to Quelch for cutting! He often doesn't report a chap! Anyhow, I shan't get it so bad as Smithy!" Bunter chuckled. "Smithy will get it right in the neck!"

The Famous Five all stared at Bunter.

"Is Smithy cutting?" exclaimed Harry.

"He, he, he! I heard him tell Redwing he was—Reddy was arguing with him no end!" grinned Bunter. "He said Smithy was certain to be spotted—you see, Quelch will jolly well make sure he goes in for French! He's got his knife into Smithy! I shouldn't

wonder if Smithy gets sacked. I hope so. Serve him jolly well right!"

"The ass!" muttered Harry Wharton. "Quelch is sure to look into No. 10 and see whether Smithy's there!"

"Sure to!" agreed Bunter. "Smithy will be spotted all right. He don't care when he's got his back up. He will jolly well care afterwards when he's walked in to the Head. He, he, he! But never mind Smithy! Make room for a chap!"

The boat was floating beside the school raft now.

Bob Cherry was about to push off when Bunter grabbed the gunwale.

"Hold on for a chap!" he gasped.

"Leave go, you fat ass!" hooted Bob.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Do you want a dip in the river?" roared Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Here, Wharton!" Loder of the Sixth came across the raft. "Hold on! Have you seen that new kid, Vernon, down here?"

Bob Cherry gave his friends a wink, and they all grinned. They all knew Loder's interest in that new kid, Vernon!

Loder had caught him at Lantham a few days before he came to Greyfriars School, and taken him for his cousin Smithy. He had caught him, as he supposed, out of bounds, and grabbed him. And the boy, grabbed by a perfect stranger, had hacked Loder's shin to get away.

Loder's mistake had been a natural one; dozens of fellows had made a similar mistake. But Vernon could hardly be blamed for having used any means he could to get out of the

clutches of a big fellow who had collared him, he did not know why!

But Loder had not forgotten that hack. He still had a bruise on his shin and a malevolent eye on Bertie Vernon.

"I haven't seen him, Loder!" answered Harry Wharton.

"He doesn't seem to be in sight!" grunted Loder.

He stood for some moments, staring up the towpath by the shining Sark. Then he turned away and went back to the school.

"What the dickens is Loder after?" asked Bob Cherry. "Vernon's not a chap like Smithy—I mean, except in looks. At least, if he is, I've seen no sign of it, so far!"

"He doesn't keep smokes or racing papers in the study, anyhow!" said Harry Wharton. "He seems a decent enough chap to me. But Loder fancies that he's after something—that's plain enough!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hook it, you fat ass!" said Harry Wharton. "You've got to get into detention. Roll away, like a good barrel, or you'll have Quelch on your track!"

"Who cares for Quelch?" retorted Bunter. "Bother Quelch! Blow Quelch! I'm not going to knuckle under to injustice! I told him I never wrote that note to Smithy—besides, everything I put in it was true—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh cackle!" snorted Bunter. "If Quelch thinks I'm the fellow to stand injustice, he's jolly well making a mistake, and I'm the fellow to tell him so. I ain't afraid of beaks like some chaps! I've got spirit!"

"Roll off, you frabjous fathead!"

"Shan't! I ain't going in to extra French! Who cares for Quelch?" hooted Bunter. "Perhaps you do! You can say 'Yes, sir,' and 'Oh, sir,' and 'Please, sir,' and 'No, sir.' You've got no spirit! I'm standing up to him, see?"

An angular figure came round the corner of the boathouse. Its gimlet eyes fixed on Bunter.

Quelch, about to take a walk down the riverside that sunny afternoon, was, perhaps, surprised to see the fat Owl preparing to go on board a boat, when he was due shortly for detention. Quelch's face set in an expressive expression as he glanced across at Bunter.

Bunter and the boat's crew did not notice Quelch—they were not looking in his direction. The Famous Five wanted to get off—but while Billy Bunter was clutching the gunwale they could not push off without hooking the fat Owl into the water. An extra wash would have done Bunter no harm—still, they did not want to dip him headlong into the Sark.

"Now look here, you burbling bloater," said Bob Cherry, "there isn't going to be any picnic—"

"He, he, he!"

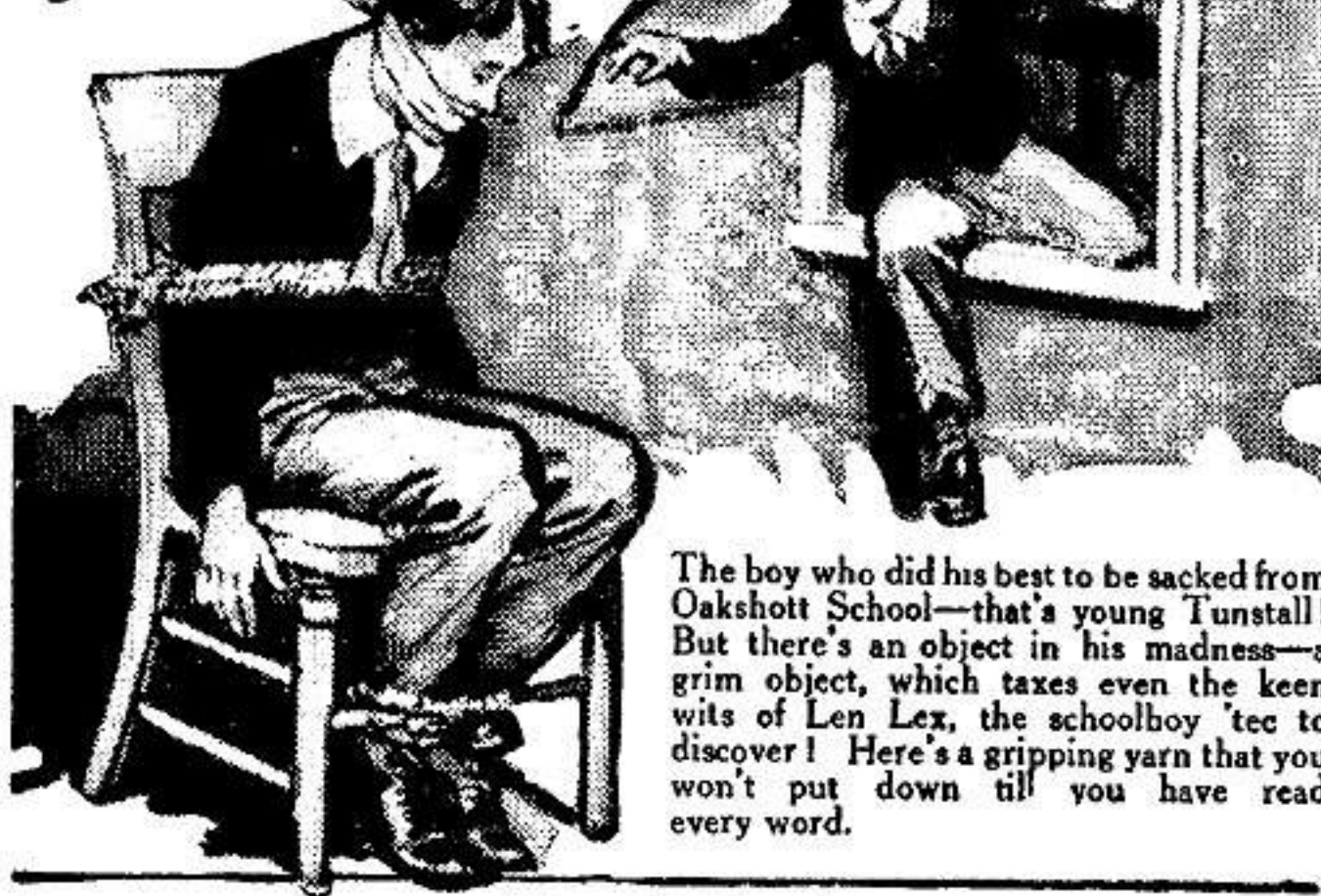
"There isn't a spot of grub in the boat!"

"Well, if you're teeing at a place up the river, I don't mind—just as good as a picnic! In fact, better!" agreed Bunter. "I shall stand my whack, of course. I hope you fellows don't think I'm the fellow to stick you for paying for my tea! I think you might know me better than that by this time! I've told you that I'm expecting a postal order, and if you lend me some money till it comes—"

"Hand me that boat-hook, Franky. I'll puncture him!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

Asking for the Sack!



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"Now, if you don't want to burst all over the raft, sheer off!" hooted Bob. "We can't take you up the river when you're booked for detention, so sheer off!"

"I tell you I ain't going into detention!" roared Bunter. "I tell you I ain't going to stand injustice, and if Quelch thinks I am, I'll jolly well tell him to his face that he's got another guess coming, see?"

An angular figure made a stride across the raft.

"Who cares for Quelch?" went on Bunter. "I can tell you—"

"Bunter!"

"Oh!"

Bunter jumped. So did the five fellows in the boat. Quelch dawned on all of them suddenly.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "Oh crikey!" He spun round, blinking at his Form-master like a startled fat rabbit. "Oh jiminy!"

"What did you say, Bunter?" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, nothing, sir!" stuttered Bunter.

Bunter had asked who cared for Quelch? The answer to that one was quite easy—Bunter did! Judging by his terrified fat countenance, Bunter cared very much! He blinked at his Form-master in horror. He did not tell him that he had another guess coming. He just goggled at him with dropping jaw.

"It appears, Bunter, that it was your intention to go out this afternoon, regardless of the fact that you are detained?"

"Oh, no, sir! I—I was just telling these fellows I couldn't come, bub-bub-because I'm detained, sir. I—I shouldn't like to miss extra French, sir. I—I—I'm so fuf-fuf-fond of French!"

Quelch's gimlet eyes bored into Bunter.

"You will go back to the House at once, Bunter!"

"Oh, yes, sir! I—I was just going. I—I was only telling these chaps I—I couldn't come on their picnic, because of—"

"I shall look into Monsieur Charpentier's class-room this afternoon, Bunter. If you are not there—"

"Oh, yes, sir! No, sir! Oh, sir! Oh crikey! I—I mean, I—I'm going in at once, sir! 'Tain't time yet, sir, but, I—I'm going in, bib-bub-because I'm so—so keen on French, sir—"

"Go!" rapped Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, yes, sir!" groaned Bunter.

The fat Owl rolled away; and, like the German river in the poem, he rolled rapidly.

Mr. Quelch frowned after him, and turned to walk down the river. And the Famous Five, grinning, pushed off the raft, and pulled up the Sark.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Out Of Bounds!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"

"Smithy!"

"Or his double!"

"Which?" grinned Bob

Cherry. "Which is it?"

The boat was out of sight of Greyfriars, pulling up the shining Sark, and was almost level with the riverside inn, the Three Fishers. Then the boat's crew sighted a figure on the towpath, waving a hand to them.

The distance was not great. But it was not easy to tell whether that fellow was Herbert Vernon-Smith or Bertie Vernon.

Certainly it ought not to have been Smithy, a mile from the school, when

Smithy was due for extra French in Class-room No. 10. But from their knowledge of the Bounder, and also from what Bunter had said, the Famous Five were not likely to be surprised at seeing Smithy kicking over the traces.

Whichever fellow it was, he was waving to the boat, and evidently wanted to speak to the crew; so they pulled in to the bank. A closer view left them in no doubt that it was the Bounder.

Now that the doubles were seen every day in the Remove their remarkable resemblance was causing less confusion than at first. At a casual glance they were as like as two peas out of the same pod; but a scrutiny revealed their identity.

"You, Smithy!" said Bob. "What are you doing here?"

"Walking up the river."

"What about extra French?"

"Blow extra French!"

"Quelch—"

"Who cares for Quelch?" sneered the Bounder.

That question, from Billy Bunter, made the Famous Five smile. But from the Bounder it did not make them smile. It made them uneasy.

"I'd chuck it, Smithy, old man," said Harry Wharton, with friendly earnestness. "Look here, we heard Quelch say he was going to look into Class-room No. 10 this afternoon—he heard Bunter talking out of his hat. You're not taking a chance, old fellow; you're up against a dead certainty."

The Bounder shrugged his shoulders.

It was easy to see that he was in a bitter temper and a mood of utter recklessness. What had happened that morning had put the Bounder's back up, and in that unhappy state he was regardless of consequences.

"Quelch will spot you," said Bob. "There's no sense in asking for it like this, Smithy. Look here, old fellow, if you like we'll turn back and run you down to the raft, and you can get in almost in time. Mossoo isn't the man to make a fuss about a fellow being a spot late; he's a good little ass! You'll pull through all right."

"What did I get extra French for?" asked the Bounder bitterly. "I was scrapping with Vernon. Did he get extra French?"

It was difficult to answer that. Smithy had been punished because he was to blame. Vernon had been unpunished because he was not to blame. But evidently a sense of injustice rankled in the Bounder's breast.

"I've cut!" went on Smithy. "I'm not going back!"

"I wish you would," said Harry. "It's no good backing up against a beak even if you think you're in the right. You'll have to go up to the Head, and goodness knows how it may turn out."

"I didn't wave to you to ask for good advice," said Vernon-Smith. "Will you give me a lift in your boat?"

"Back to the school—yes, rather!"

The Famous Five were by no means keen on giving up their pull up the river. But they would gladly have done so to save the obstinate and wilful rebel of the Form from serious trouble.

But they were not required to make that sacrifice!

The Bounder shook his head impatiently.

"No; up to Popper's Island!" he answered.

The boat's crew looked at him. Popper's Island was out of school bounds. Smithy was not only cutting extra French, but breaking bounds if he could. He seemed bent on piling it on!

"For goodness' sake, Smithy, don't be such an ass!" exclaimed Frank Nugent. "You know the island's out of bounds—"

"You never go there yourselves, bounds or not?" sneered Smithy.

"Well, yes; but—"

"But you're not bad hats like me, and you're never so naughty as to cut a detention class!" sneered Smithy. "Speech may be taken as read! Will you give me a lift or not? I couldn't get a boat out—I should have been stopped—but I've got to get across to the island; I'm meeting some friends there this afternoon. Will you give me a lift across?"

Harry Wharton shook his head.

"We're not going to make matters worse for you, Smithy," he answered. "You'll get trouble enough without that."

"Please yourselves!" sneered Smithy. "I can hire a boat at the Three Fishers!"

"You ass!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Stop!"

"Hold on, Smithy!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "Look here—"

The captain of the Remove hardly knew what to do. Popper's Island was out of bounds. But the Three Fishers was not merely out of bounds, it was a disreputable place that a fellow might be expelled for entering. If Smithy were seen there his number was up at Greyfriars.

"Oh, cut the cackle!" snapped the Bounder. "If you'll give me a lift to the island, say so—if not, push off, and be blown to you!"

Harry glanced at his companions. It was rather a problem. Certainly they did not want to give the reckless fellow, already booked for trouble, a lift out of bounds. But that was preferable to seeing him walk into the disreputable pub for a boat; and evidently he meant what he said.

"Oh, let's!" granted Bob Cherry.

"Jump in!" said Harry.

The Bounder stepped into the boat, and the chums of the Remove pushed off again. They pulled on up the river in silence.

They were concerned for the scape-grace of the Remove, but they were angry with him, too. The Bounder had no right to place fellows in a position like this. They had to help him in a reckless escapade to keep him out of worse trouble. Certainly they could have left him to his own devices, to do as he liked; but they did not want to see Smithy sacked.

They could guess, too, who were the "friends" he had arranged to meet in such a secluded spot as Popper's Island that afternoon. Ponsonby & Co. of Highcliffe, they had no doubt; with cigarettes and banker to pass the time, far from the eyes of beaks and prefects.

The Bounder sat with a sneer on his face as they pulled. He could read their thoughts easily enough, and it gave him a sort of sardonic amusement to place them in this awkward position.

They pulled hard, only anxious to have done with their unwelcome passenger.

The Three Fishers dropped behind. The boat pulled into the channel between the island and the bank.

Harry Wharton stood up and scanned the bank, bordered by the deep, dusky woods of Popper Court. No one was in sight.

"Pull in!" he said.

And the boat rocked in to the little landing-place on the island.

There was no sign of any other boat there or of anyone on the island. Pon & Co.—if it were the Highcliffe fellows
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Smithy was going to meet there—had not yet arrived.

"Hop it!" granted Johnny Bull. The Bounder jumped ashore on Popper's Island.

The boat pushed off at once. Smithy stood grinning after the Famous Five.

"Going farther up?" he called out. "Yes; as far as Courtfield Bridge."

"If you pass a Highcliffe boat give Pon word that I'm here."

Wharton looked back at him. "If we pass Ponsonby and his crew we'll give them a splash if we give them anything!" he answered. "You can get somebody else to give your messages to that rowdy gang!"

"Go and eat coke then!" retorted the Bounder.

He disappeared among the trees on the island.

Harry Wharton & Co. pulled on up the Sark. They went with rather glum faces. The bad hat of the Remove was booked for a Head's flogging. In his present mood of bitter recklessness he did not care—but there was no doubt that he would care later!

It was a glorious May afternoon, and a pull up the river between banks shaded by sweeping woods was thoroughly enjoyable. But the Famous Five could not help thinking of the row that would be on when they returned to Greyfriars, with Herbert Vernon-Smith the centre of it. And they were rather inclined to regret that they had not ducked Smithy in the Sark instead of landing him on Popper's Island.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Startling Request!

"VERNON!"

The new junior at Greyfriars glanced round in surprise.

He was standing at the window of Study No. 1, which he shared with Wharton and Nugent. He was looking down into the quad at fellows who passed and re-passed, feeling, probably, like many new boys in a big school, lonely in a crowd.

Vernon was on good terms with his studymates and with most fellows in the Remove. He had only one enemy—his relative and double. But he had, so far, made no friends in his Form, and on his first half-holiday in his new school he was doubtless feeling left. In fact, he was thinking of taking out his bicycle and riding across to Lantham Chase, where his uncle lived and where he had passed a couple of weeks before coming to Greyfriars.

But though he was thinking of it, he did not intend to do it. He would have liked to run home for the afternoon; but he had not come to school to run home after a couple of days. Vernon was not only like his cousin in looks, but in strength of character. The more he wanted to run home, the less he was likely to be guilty of the weakness of doing so. "Biting on the bullet" was the Bounder's way, and it was Bertie Vernon's way also.

He looked surprised as he turned from the window and glanced at the junior who had stepped in at the open door of the study.

It was Tom Redwing.

As Redwing was Smithy's chum, and Smithy at daggers drawn with the new junior, Vernon certainly had not expected to see him in that study. But he gave him a nod.

"Want anything?" he asked.

"Yes!"

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"Cough it up!" said Vernon, more and more surprised. Then he smiled.

"You haven't come here for a row, have you, Redwing?"

"No!"

"I shall have rows enough with my sweet-tempered cousin, without his pals joining in!" said Vernon. "And I think you're too sensible a chap to keep up a grudge over what happened before I came here. When you spoke to me that day in Pegg Lane, I hadn't the foggiest idea that you were taking me for my cousin—"

"I know! That's all right."

"I'm sorry now that I lost my temper and punched you. But what was a fellow to think? A perfect stranger came up to me and fancied that I was hanging about to sneak in at the back door of a low pub—you'll admit it was enough to get a fellow's goat!"

Vernon gave a sarcastic laugh.

"I understand now, of course—since I've been here. If it had been Vernon-Smith, no doubt he would have been hanging about there for that very reason. But I'm not that sort, and it put my back up! But—now I understand how it came about, I'm sorry! Anyhow, you needn't mind that punch I gave you—you could have knocked me off my feet if you'd liked—I'm no match for you, and I know it."

Redwing smiled.

"That's all right," he said. "I haven't come here to speak about that—I'd rather forget all about it. It's something else."

"Carry on!" said Vernon.

"It's about Smithy," said Redwing, colouring.

"Oh, all right!" Vernon gave a shrug of the shoulders that was very like Vernon-Smith. "I understand! Where and when?"

"I don't mean that!" said Redwing hastily. Evidently Bertie Vernon took it for granted that he had come to arrange the preliminaries for a fight. "I—I want you to do Smithy a good turn."

"Eh?"

"You know he's in extra French this afternoon?"

"I heard Quelch tell him so."

"He's gone out!"

"Like him, isn't it?" said Vernon contemptuously. "Every other fellow here has to toe the line. Not Vernon-Smith! What a bounder the fellow is!"

Redwing's face crimsoned.

"That will do!" he snapped. "I was a fool to come here! Go and eat coke, and be hanged to you!"

He swung round to the door.

Vernon stared at him for a moment. Then he coloured and spoke hastily:

"Sorry! That slipped out! You know we bar one another! I forgot for a moment you were his pal. I'm really sorry!"

Redwing paused. Vernon's tone was sincere enough. He was biting his lip with vexation. The Vernon branch of that happy family were very particular on points of good-breeding. On all points, Bertie prided himself on not resembling his cousin Herbert—except in looks, which could not be helped. In manners he was very careful indeed that there should be no resemblance. And he had, for the moment, let slip a remark that might have been made by Smithy!

"If you've got anything to say to me, carry on with it," said the new junior. "I don't want to make myself unpleasant, like—There I go again!" He laughed. "Get it off

your chest, Redwing! I'll be fearfully careful."

Tom Redwing smiled.

"Well, I'll say what I came to say!" he said. "If Smithy knew, he would be as mad as a hatter; but I don't care for that. I've got to pull him out of this if I can. You've been here long enough to see that Quelch has a down on Smithy—"

"And to see that he has plenty of reason for it! Oh, my hat! There I go again! I'll be dumb!"

"Never mind that," said Redwing. "Nobody knows Smithy like I do, and, in the main, there's not a better fellow breathing. But never mind that, either. What I mean is that Smithy's booked for more trouble than another fellow when he kicks over the traces. Any other fellow who cut a detention class would get lines, or perhaps six—but Smithy will go up to the Head. He's done that kind of thing too often, and Quelch's back is up."

"Form-masters generally expect to be obeyed by fellows in their Forms," remarked Vernon. "Like their cheek, no doubt; but there it is!"

Redwing did not answer that remark.

"A couple of weeks ago Smithy was in detention, and Quelch told him plainly he would be sacked if he cut," he went on. "He hasn't said so now—but—but it might come to that. Anyhow, it will be a Head's flogging—and that will only make a fellow like Smithy play the goat more than ever."

Bertie Vernon opened his lips to speak, but shut them again without speaking.

Redwing went on slowly:

"He's asked for it now! I know that! But you're his relation—his cousin—you can't want the disgrace of a near relation being expelled, if it comes to that. It would stick to you a good bit."

"Looks to me as if I've got to face that," said Vernon, with a shrug of the shoulders. "From what I've seen of him, I can hardly make out why he hasn't been sacked already. But what are you driving at? I don't like him any more than he likes me—we barred one another, even as small kids. We had a scrap at ten years old. But I'd certainly rather he wasn't sacked—I don't want to be pointed out as the fellow whose cousin was expelled. But I can't do anything, can I?"

"Yes!"

"Well, I'll do it, then—if you'll tell me when!" said Vernon, staring at him.

"I'm dashed if I can begin to guess what you're getting at, Redwing."

"You know you're as like as two peas—"

"Oh! don't rub that in!"

"If you went into the French class Mossos would take it for granted that it was Smithy—"

"Wha-a-t?"

"Don't you see? Smithy's for extra French—and it's never been known for a fellow to go into extra French of his own accord! Mossos knows that you two are just alike, but he would never dream that it was you—coming in to detention of your own accord."

"Oh, great pip!" gasped Vernon.

"I know it's asking a lot," said Redwing, colouring; "but—"

"I should jolly well say it is!" exclaimed Vernon, staring at Jim blankly. "You're asking me to stick in extra French for two hours on a half-holiday on account of a fellow who loathes the sight of me?"

"Smithy would do it like a shot, in similar circumstances!" said Redwing.

"Think he would?"

"I know he would! It's just the



Crash! "Yoo-hoop!" roared Bunter. "Wow! Oh crikey! My jaw's broken! Ow! Wow!" "What is this?" thundered Mr. Quelch. "I will keep order in this class! Who threw that book? Was it you, Vernon-Smith?" The Bounder glared.

thing he would do for a fellow—friend or foe."

"That wants some getting down! I can't see Smithy doing it for me!" said Vernon dryly. "And Smithy likes diddling beaks—not the sort of thing that appeals to me at all. I haven't come to Greyfriars to set up as boss of the show. And suppose Quelch looks in—"

"That's the point!" said Redwing. "I'm sure that he will! But he will take you for Smithy, as a matter of course. Think he'd guess that any fellow went into extra French because he liked it?"

Vernon laughed.

"No; it's safe enough if you come to that. But if I know anything of Smithy he will be as mad as a hatter at your asking me to do anything for him."

"I don't care about that if I steer him clear of the Head!"

Vernon laughed again.

"And you're the old sobersides, the fellow serious as a judge, who never kicks over the traces, and always toes the line, and wouldn't be found dead in a rag on a beak—plotting to diddle two beaks at once!"

"I'm thinking of Smithy—"

"Well, I've never envied Vernon-Smith anything else, not even his money, but I think I do envy him his pal a little!" said Bertie, still laughing. "It will be a bit of a lark, anyhow! But look here, it's a quarter-past three—Mossoo's class is at three."

"Mossoo always goes easy with a fellow who's late."

"Oh, all right! I dare say Smithy will punch my head for this—though I think he's more likely to punch yours. I'll get my French books—"

"I've got Smithy's here—his name's in them, see?"

"So you took it for granted?" Vernon chuckled. "You knew I'd do it! How the dooce did you know?"

"I don't think you're a bad sort," said Redwing. "I wish you'd try to be better friends with Smithy!"

"So encouraging, isn't he?" said Vernon. "Never mind that! Give me those French books, and I'll hop in on Froggy."

"It's jolly decent of you, Vernon—"

"Rot!"

Bertie Vernon cut down the stairs, with Smithy's French class-books under his arm.

Tom Redwing watched him go, with a lighter heart.

Likely enough there would be a row with Smithy for what he had done. He cared nothing for that; so long as he saved his scapegrace chum from the dire trouble he was begging for. A row in Study No. 4, even a scrap in that study, was better than the long jump for Smithy!

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Smithy's Other Self!

BILLY BUNTER groaned.

A quarter of an hour had elapsed out of the two hours that Bunter was booked for extra French.

In a quarter of an hour there were only fifteen minutes! But every one of those minutes seemed inordinately long to Bunter. They seemed to crawl by like tired snails.

Looking at the clock in Class-room No. 10, the fat Owl could hardly believe that only fifteen minutes had passed. It seemed more like fifteen hours, if not fifteen days!

Other fellows were in extra French

as well as Bunter. They did not matter. Bunter did!

Monsieur Charpentier had quite a numerous detention class that afternoon. He had Bunter, Skinner, Bolsover major, Wibley, Snoop, Hazeldene, and Ogilvy, of the Remove; and Fry, Dabney, Wilkinson, and three or four more of the Fourth; and Hobson of the Shell, and five other fellows of that Form.

Probably Mossoo was not enjoying life!

Nobody could really like being detention master. And a detention class was more troublesome than an ordinary class—especially to an irresolute little gentleman like Henri Adolphe Charpentier. Only too often were there rags in such a class; and Mossoo was constitutionally incapable of handling a rag.

Slamming desk-lids was rather the rule than the exception in extra French. And the law of gravitation seemed to exercise unusual influence over fellows' books—to judge by the frequency with which they dropped on the floor.

But Bunter found no consolation in ragging! Bunter groaned under extra French, and could not be comforted.

Those beasts Harry Wharton & Co. were, Bunter had no doubt, enjoying a picnic up the river. Bunter might have been sharing in that picnic—but for extra French!

Lord Mauleverer was somewhere about; and Bunter might have raised a little loan from Mauly, and expended the same in jam tarts—but for extra French!

Bunter might have been reposing his fat person under a shady tree—but for extra French! He might have been curled up in a deep armchair in the Rag—but for extra French! He might

have been exploring the Remove studies while all the fellows were out, like a lion seeking what he might devour—but for extra French!

In fact there was no end to the list of delightful things that Bunter might have been doing—but for extra French! And extra French, in itself, was awful—absolutely mouldy and putrid!

It was all that beast Smithy's fault! Bunter had a grain of comfort—Smithy had not turned up for extra French! Smithy was booked for awful trouble—after extra French! Serve him right!

And even that grain of comfort was wrested from the sad and suffering Owl when the class-room clock indicated twenty minutes past three! For then, the door of Class-room No. 10 opened and a Remove junior came in; at whom the detention master and the whole class glanced.

Elsewhere, perhaps, it might have been discerned that the newcomer was Bertie Vernon. But Bertie was not down for extra French—and Smithy was—so every eye in the room took the newcomer for Smithy—arriving late!

Billy Bunter gave him an inimical blink! Skinner sneered. Smithy had made out that he was cutting extra French; but it was all swank; for here he was, with his books under his arm! Skinner winked at Snoop. Other fellows thought it was very sensible of Smithy to have decided, after all, not to play the giddy ox! But they all supposed that the newcomer was Smithy.

"Smeat!" Monsieur Charpentier rapped at him. He had already marked Vernon-Smith on his list as absent. "Smeat! C'est vous! You are late!"

"Sorry, sir!" said the newcomer, with unusual respect and meekness.

"But you are verree late, Smeat," persisted the French master. "Zis is not to treat your master viz respect."

"I really did not mean to be disrespectful, sir! I hope you will excuse me this once!"

Monsieur Charpentier blinked at him. He had expected, as a matter of course, cheek from the Bounder. He was quite disarmed by this unusual respect.

"Verree well, Smeat!" he said graciously. "I excuse you zis vunce; I say no more about him, Smeat! You may go to your place."

"Thank you, sir!"

"I had made one note of your name, Smeat, for report to Monsieur Quelch!" said the French master. "But zat is to finish—I mark him out."

"You are very good, sir!"

"Du tout!" said Mossoo graciously. "Not at all! Zat is all left." By which, perhaps, Mossoo meant that it was all right!

Fellows glanced curiously at the newcomer as he sat down. Nobody dreamed that he was not Smithy—in the detention class! But they wondered what his game was—with his respectful air to that little ass Froggy! Skinner concluded that the Bounder was lying low, as a preliminary to a rag.

All the detention class livened up after his entrance. A rag would be a delightful break in the monotony. Smithy was the man for a rag—and the man to carry a rag to a wilder and more utterly reckless extent than any other fellow in the Lower School at Greyfriars. Fellows sat up, with new life, as it were, and waited for the Bounder to begin.

But the Bounder did not begin! In all that class nobody was giving Mossoo much attention before the late-comer came in; and Mossoo, who only wanted to get through quietly, did not claim very much attention. But after

that late arrival, he had one attentive pupil. The fellow who was expected to rag gave him his best attention.

Bertie Vernon was playing the Bounder's part. But he had no intention of playing it in the style of the Bounder. His tastes were not the same as Smithy's.

After about ten minutes a note was passed along to him. In Mossoo's class, notes might be passed along almost under the master's nose—Mossoo never noticed any infraction of discipline if he could help it.

Vernon stared at the note as it was dropped on his desk. It was written in Skinner's hand, and ran:

"Lost your nerve?"

For a moment he did not understand. He looked round, and met Harold Skinner's mocking grin.

Then he understood! Smithy was expected to rag, and Skinner wanted to know whether Smithy had lost his nerve? Vernon laughed.

He scribbled an answer on the back of the note, and it was passed along to Skinner, who had the pleasure of reading:

"Silly ass!"

A few minutes later Billy Bunter dropped a book, and, in picking it up, contrived to get near enough to whisper to Smithy's double:

"Beast!" hissed Bunter.

Vernon started.

"You fat ass, what's the matter with you?" he asked.

"Cad!"

"You blithering owl——"

"You landed me in this, you swab!" hissed Bunter. "I hope that cousin of yours will lick you! You ain't so much like him as you make out! You're uglier! Yah!"

After which deadly insult, Bunter rolled back to his place, leaving Vernon grinning.

Bang!

It was Bolsover major's desk-lid! As Smithy was not beginning, Bolsover thought he would give him a little encouragement! That was how he did it! That terrific bang rang through Class-room No. 10 like a shot! Monsieur Charpentier jumped like a kangaroo.

"Mon Dieu! Vat is zat?" he exclaimed. "Who go to do zat? Is zat you, Skinnair?"

"Oh, no, sir!"

"Is zat you, Vibley?"

"Oh, no, sir!"

"Is zat you, Smeat?"

"No, sir!"

"I demand to know!" squealed Monsieur Charpentier. After an hour of that detention class Mossoo was getting excited and irritable. "I vill not have zis class turn into one garden of ze bear! Ze noise is too much, also he is too often! Smeat, I demand one more time if you do zis zing!"

Bertie Vernon coloured uncomfortably. He disliked extremely answering to the name of Smith, but he had landed himself in that. All the fellows were grinning as Mossoo picked on him. That member of the detention class had done nothing, but Smithy's reputation was well known. Mossoo suspected that member of the class as a matter of course.

"It was not I, sir," said Vernon.

"Zen do not do him again, Smeat! I demand zat you do not do him vun more time!" snapped Monsieur Charpentier, evidently sceptical of that denial. "You are one verree bad boy, Smeat! Keep ze order viz you."

Bertie Vernon sat with flushed cheeks, probably regretting that he had acceded to Redwing's request.

He had intended to keep perfect order—a rare thing in extra French. He was not going to act like the rowdy Bounder in a single respect. But the reputation of the fellow whose place he had taken was rather too strong for him. He had to have, so to speak, the game as well as the name. If other fellows ragged he was going to get the benefit of it.

However, there was peace for a while. But behind the spectacles of William George Bunter there was a vengeful gleam.

Bunter knew what he was going to do. In the firm belief that this was Smithy, who was the cause of extra French for him, the fat Owl was going to make Smithy sit up for his sins. And if there was a row, who but the hardened ragger of the Remove would get the butt-end of the trouble?

As soon as Mossoo's back was turned—Mossoo was always mislaying something and having to look for it—the vengeful fat Owl weighed in.

A pellet composed of blotting-paper kneaded up in ink landed on the jutting nose that was Smithy's over again. Plop!

Vernon jumped.

Ink splattered his face, and the inky pellet dropped on his waistcoat. He gave a startled, angry exclamation.

"Who did that? Who——" He rose in his place, staring round.

"Smeat!" Monsieur Charpentier spun round at him, with almost a roar. "Vill you be quiet, zen? Vill you sit down viz yourself and make not ze noise? Mon Dieu! Vat is zat on ze figure? You make a game viz ink, isn't it? You verree bad boy, tres mauvais garcon, you are ze verree baddest boy in zis class, or in any ozzer class! Voila, done!"

Rap!

Vernon gave a howl as Mossoo's pointer rapped sharply on his knuckles. He gave the French master a glare worthy of the Bounder at his best—or his worst!

"I did nothing!" he roared.

"Silence, done!"

"I tell you——" shouted Vernon.

"Mais, je vous dis, silence! You speak vun more time, and I make you to go to ze headmaster!" hooted Monsieur Charpentier.

Bertie Vernon sat breathing rage.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Dog With A Bad Name!

"SMITHY'S waking up!" murmured Skinner.

He was!

It was not Smithy, but he was waking up!

If anyone had doubted that that member of the detention class was Smithy, he could not have doubted it now. The sullen, sulky resentment in the face was Smithy all over.

The truth was that Vernon's temper was little better than Vernon-Smith's, though generally much better controlled. Now that he was angry and irritated the Bounder's double was more than ever the Bounder's double.

Skinner's whisper was caused by a copy of the "Henriade" whizzing across the class-room. Monsieur Charpentier was looking in his desk for some paper he wanted—and of which, of course, he had forgotten the precise whereabouts.

The "Henriade" landed on Mossoo's coat-tails, and Mossoo bounded almost clear of the floor in his astonishment.

He spun round at his class. He glared at the book on the floor, and then he glared at the class.

"Who zrow a book?" he squealed.

Only a general grin answered that question. Every fellow knew who had thrown the book, but nobody was likely to inform Mossoo.

"Allons! I demand to know who zrow a book!" shrieked Monsieur Charpentier. "Smeet, is it zat you zrow a book?"

It was a natural suspicion. Most fellows ragged, more or less, in extra French, but the Bounder of Greyfriars was the only fellow who had the temerity to buzz a book at a master, even a French master—at least, until his cousin had come to the school. It was Smithy or nobody!

"He, he, he!" gurgled Billy Bunter. The beast was for it now!

"Smeet! Will you answer viz yourself?"

No answer.

A black and sullen stare was all that Monsieur Charpentier got from the Bounder's double.

Breathing wrath, the French master picked up the book and looked at the name on the fly-leaf. To his surprise, the name was not H. Vernon-Smith; it was R. D. Ogilvy.

"Mon Dieu! Zen it is you zat zrow a book, you Ogilvee?" exclaimed Mossoo.

"Oh, no, sir!" answered Ogilvy promptly.

"Ze name is in ze livre—ze book!"

"Some fellow took it off my desk, sir."

"Mais je comprends!" Mossoo realised that the ragger would not hurl a book with his own name in it. "Smeet, you take a book from Ogilvee?"

"I don't see why you should pick on me, sir!" answered Bertie Vernon in quite the cheeky manner of the Bounder.

"I zink zat I know he is you zat zrow a book! You are one verree bad boy, Smeet! I excuse you for zat you come late to ze class, and zen you make one riot! You zrow a book! J'en suis sur, mais bien sur! I keep vun eye on you after zis, Smeet! I catch you, and you are beaten viz a cane."

Vernon shrugged his shoulders.

Mossoo's eyes gleamed at him, but he let it go at that. He had not seen the hurler of the book, and moral certainty was not proof. But, as he had said, he kept an eye on "Smeet" after that.

Bang!

A desk lid slammed a few minutes later.

"Smeet!" shrieked Monsieur Charpentier. "Zis time I see you. Viz my own eye I see you, Smeet!"

"Quite an accident, sir!" drawled Vernon.

"I believe it not! Stand out, Smeot!" Monsieur grabbed the seldom-used cane from his desk and bore down on Smithy's double. "Hold you out ze hand!" Mossoo caned on the palm, instead of making a fellow bend over. "You hear me? Hold you out ze hand!"

Vernon set his lips. By this time he was as angry, sullen, and aggressive as the genuine Bounder could have been. All his good intentions had been flung to the winds. Slowly he held out his hand for the cut.

Mossoo swished the cane. He was fearfully exasperated, and he put great force into that swish. A weak man putting his foot down is always liable to err on the side of severity. There was no doubt that that cut would have

hurt severely had it landed on the outspread palm.

But it did not. That palm was jerked back in time.

The next moment there was a fearful yell in the class-room. The descending cane, meeting with no resistance, whacked on Mossoo's own knee with a crack like a pistol shot.

"Woooooooh!" roared Mossoo.

He dropped the cane, yelling with anguish. There was a howl of merriment from the detention class as he hopped on one leg.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

But that roar of laughter died suddenly. The class-room door opened, and a terrifying visage looked in.

Mr. Quelch had made it a point to glance into Class-room No. 10 that afternoon during the detention class to make sure that Bunter and Vernon-Smith were there. He glanced in at an unfortunate moment for Smithy's double.

At a glance the Remove master saw what had happened. He strode in with a brow of thunder.

"Vernon-Smith!" It was the first time that Mr. Quelch had made a mistake in dealing with the doubles. But he could, of course, have no doubt now—finding Vernon in Vernon-Smith's place in extra French, and engaged in a reckless rag on the French master. "Vernon-Smith, how dare you!"

Bertie Vernon breathed hard. He was for it now!

"Ow!" wailed Mossoo. "Wow! Helas! I am damage! Le genou he is verree painful! I have a verree large pain in ze genou! Smeet, you verree bad boy— Mon Dieu! How zat genou he suffair!"

"I am sorry, Monsieur Charpentier, that this boy of my Form should give you so much trouble," said the Remove master. "Pray allow me to deal with him. May I borrow your cane? Thank you."

Mr. Quelch gripped the cane.

"Vernon-Smith, bend over that desk!"

In silence Bertie Vernon bent over the desk. He had not foreseen anything like this when he had taken the Bounder's place. It was Smithy's bad reputation that had landed him in it—he had taken the place of a dog with a bad name!

Swish, swish, swish!

Quelch laid it on. He put plenty of beef into those swishes. They fairly rang!

Bertie had to shut his teeth hard to keep back a yell. But even in that he was like the Bounder—he would not make a sound under the severest infliction.

Swish, swish, swish!

It was a full six, and every one of them a swipe!

Bertie Vernon's face was quite pale when Quelch had finished.

Mr. Quelch laid down the cane.

Vernon almost tottered to his place. He sat with pale face and compressed lips. His eyes were burning.

"Monsieur Charpentier, pray inform me if you have any further trouble with this boy of my Form!" said Mr. Quelch quietly. "If there is any further insubordination on his part, I will take him to Dr. Locke to be dealt with!"

"Mais oui, monsieur!" mumbled Monsieur Charpentier, caressing his painful knee.

Mr. Quelch left the class-room.

There was no more trouble in extra French. Bertie Vernon had had enough, if not a little too much; and the warning had been enough for the

others. Extra French went on quietly and dismally to its welcome end.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Where Is Vernon?

"WHARTON!"

"Oh, my hat! Loder again!"

"Blow Loder!"

The Remove boat was a good distance past Popper's Island when that call came from the towpath.

The Famous Five all looked round—at Loder of the Sixth. Loder was riding a bike—which was not permitted on the towpath. No doubt he was in a hurry.

He jumped down, and waved his hand to the juniors in the boat. Unwillingly, they pulled in to the shore. Loder was a Sixth Form prefect, and as such had to be regarded.

Loder stood with one hand on his machine scanning the boat as it pulled in. He seemed to be searching it with his eyes, as if to ascertain that there was no one on board with the Famous Five.

That was easy enough to ascertain; though what was in Gerald Loder's mind the juniors could not guess.

"What do you want, Loder?" asked Harry, standing up and holding on to a bush on the bank.

"Where is Vernon?" rapped Loder.

"Who?"

"The new kid—Vernon!"

"How the dickens should I know?" asked Harry, in astonishment. "He was in the study, I believe, when we came out; I haven't seen him since."

"I want the truth from you, Wharton!" said Loder, in his most disagreeable tone.

The captain of the Remove checked the reply that rose to his lips. Remove juniors could not tell Sixth Form prefects what they thought of them!

"You'll get nothing else, Loder," he said quietly.

"Vernon was in your boat."

"He certainly was not!"

"He was seen to enter your boat."

"Nobody here saw him, then!"

Loder glared at the five. They understood that there was a mistake—somebody had seen Vernon-Smith enter that boat. But they were not going to mention that to Loder. Smithy had been left on a spot that was strictly out of bounds, so the less said about Smithy, the better.

"I want to know where you left him," said Loder, breathing hard. "He was seen to enter that boat. Price of the Fifth saw him."

"Price must have wonderful eyesight to see what never happened!" remarked Bob Cherry. "Priceless, in fact!"

"Where did you leave him?" demanded Loder.

"In my study at Greyfriars!" answered Harry. "That's the last I've seen of him. May be there yet, for all I know."

"He was in that boat!" roared Loder. "When I asked you at the raft, you said you hadn't seen him. I know why now. You'd fixed it up to pick him up farther up the river, and you did!"

"If we wanted Vernon in the boat, and he wanted to come, he would have stepped in at the raft!" said Wharton. "Why the dickens do you fancy we should make a secret of it? He could come with us if he liked!"

"Yes, if he was going anywhere he dared let his Form-master hear of!" said Loder, with a sneer. "But he

hasn't covered up his tracks like this for nothing. I want to know where you left him!"

"In the study."

Loder set his lips. Price of the Fifth, unnoticed by the juniors, had evidently seen Vernon-Smith step into the boat, or spotted him as it pulled on. Loder had got that from Price.

Price, probably, did not know which of the doubles he had seen. But Loder did—or thought he did! He knew that Herbert Vernon-Smith was in extra French that afternoon. So if a fellow exactly like Vernon-Smith had been seen on the river, it was Bertie Vernon!

Loder scanned Wharton's face and the other faces in the boat.

"Are you telling the truth?" he snapped at last. "Do you mean to say that Price was mistaken?"

"He certainly was if he thought he saw the new kid in this boat!" answered the captain of the Remove.

"Well, I can't make that out!" grunted Loder. "There's only one fellow at Greyfriars like him to look at—his cousin in his Form. It couldn't have been Vernon-Smith that Price saw!"

Harry Wharton & Co. made no rejoinder to that. Loder was getting on dangerous ground!

"That young rascal's in extra French," added Loder—"I know that!"

The Famous Five could not help wondering how Loder knew that—as it certainly was not the case.

"There's no doubt about that!" growled Loder. "I can't tell one of the young cads from the other; but I saw Vernon-Smith going in to extra French, so that settles that!"

"You saw him!" ejaculated Wharton.

"I saw him—I made sure about that! The young sweep went in late, but he went—he's with Mossos now!"

"Oh!"

The Famous Five wondered, rather dizzily, how Loder could have seen Vernon-Smith going in to extra French when they had landed him on Popper's Island, and knew that he was there now!

"I've got to know where Vernon is," went on Loder. "I know exactly how he's likely to be occupied on a half-holiday out of sight. I know what he was up to when I caught him at Lantham last week and took him for Vernon-Smith! He was coming out of a tobacconist's then!"

"Vernon's explained that, Loder!" said Harry. "We know the place—it's a sweetstuff shop as well as a tobacconist's. He went in there for chocolates. There's two divisions in the shop, and—"

"You can pack all that up!" snapped Loder. "I'm not exactly a fool! Wingate saw a fellow at the Three Fishers that he took for Vernon-Smith, and the young sweep nearly got landed for it, but it came out that he was somewhere else. So I know who was at the Three Fishers."

The Famous Five were silent. They knew that it had been Smithy at the Three Fishers on that occasion, though they had not known at the time.

"Now he disappears on a half-holiday!" said Loder. "Well, I want to know where he is, and what he's up to. I've got my duty to do as a prefect."

"Does your shin still hurt, Loder?" asked Bob Cherry demurely.

Loder gave him a glare. His duty as a prefect was chiefly founded on that hack on his shin, as all the Famous Five were aware.

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"Look here, Loder," said Harry Wharton, "Vernon's not that kind of chap at all! He's been at the school only a few days, but he's in my study; and I know a decent chap when I see one. Vernon isn't at all the fellow to play the goat!"

"Not in the least," said Frank Nugent, with a nod. "Not a spot of that sort of thing about him, Loder!"

"When I want advice from fags, I'll ask for it!" snarled Loder. "What I want to know now is where did you leave that young sweep Vernon?"

"In my study at the school," answered Harry coolly.

"You lying young rascal!" roared Loder, his temper breaking out. "You know where he is, and you're keeping it dark, because you know that he's out of bounds. You landed him somewhere to help him cover up his tracks!"

"We never landed him at all!"

"He's not in the boat now!"

"He hasn't been in the boat!"

A voice floated over the water from a boat coming down on the current.

"Greyfriars cads—kickin' up a row as usual!"

The Famous Five knew that voice—the drawling voice of Cecil Ponsonby, of the Fourth Form at Highcliffe School.

They glanced round. A handsome boat—expensive, like all the possessions of the dandy of Highcliffe—was passing quite close to them. Gadsby and Monson were pulling lazily, Ponsonby reclining elegantly in the stern. He gave the Greyfriars fellows a supercilious smile as their eyes turned on him.

Gadsby and Monson glanced round at the Remove boat as Pon spoke.

"What a crew!"

"What a crowd!"

Those two polite remarks floated across.

Johnny Bull lifted his oar and landed it on the surface of the Sark with a terrific whack!

Splash!

Quite a waterspout flew up!

Three yells blended into one from the Highcliffe boat, as Pon & Co. were splashed right and left.

Supercilious loftiness vanished from their faces on the spot! They glared and yelled.

"Have another?" demanded Johnny, with a glare rather like that of a war-like bulldog. "You've only got to be cheeky again, you Highcliffe cads!"

"Splash the cad back!" panted Gadsby.

"Oh, get on!" snapped Ponsonby. The dandy of Highcliffe did not want to enter into a splashing contest. "Keep clear of that crew!"

And the Highcliffe boat pulled on.

Johnny put the oar to the bank, and pushed off. He had had enough of Loder.

"Look here——" hooted Loder.

Unheeding further, the Famous Five pulled out from the bank and continued on their way up the river. Prefect or not, they were fed up with Loder.

The bully of the Sixth glared after them as they went—but he was feeling a little uncertain now.

If Bertie Vernon had been picked up by that boat, and they were making a secret of it, Loder could draw his own conclusions. But if Price of the Fifth had made a mistake he was on a false scent. And perhaps, at the bottom of his heart, Loder realised that it was that bruise on his shin that made him feel so certain that Bertie Vernon was a bad hat like his cousin in the Remove.

Angry and uncertain, he turned his bike to wheel it away down the river.

He had mounted that bike to overtake the Remove boat, after getting that spot of information from Price of the Fifth. He had, it seemed, had his ride for nothing.

Harry Wharton & Co. pulled on, glad to get away from Loder without further questioning.

It was a fact that Bertie Vernon had not been in the boat, as they had told Loder. But it was also a fact that Herbert Vernon-Smith had been in it; a fact they were anxious should not come to light.

"Lucky the dear man never asked us about Smithy!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"The luckfulness is terrific."

"Blessed if I make him out!" said Harry Wharton. "He seems to fancy that he saw Smithy go into extra French—and we jolly well know that Smithy didn't! I hope he won't pinch Smithy in rooting after Smithy's cousin."

"That Highcliffe crew are going to join up with Smithy on Popper's Island, now!" growled Johnny Bull. "Serve him right if Loder cops him!"

"True, O king!" said Bob. "But we don't want old Smithy copped all the same. He's got enough coming to him without being copped out of bounds over and above. If Loder's so jolly keen to cop a man playing the goat, he can cop himself some time when he drops in at the Cross Keys for cigarettes!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the Co. chuckled as they pulled on.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Loder In Luck!

"OH gad!" ejaculated Loder suddenly.

He was still at a distance from Popper's Island, wheeling his bike down the towpath on his way back to school. But he was near enough to see the Highcliffe boat pull in to the landing place facing the Popper Court shore.

Loder was not interested in the Highcliffe crew. But he was very keenly interested in the figure that stood there, meeting them as they landed.

There was a fellow already on the island. It was either Vernon-Smith or his cousin Vernon.

Loder had seen Vernon-Smith going into Class-room No. 10—or had, at least no doubt that he had! So the fellow on the island was the fellow he wanted—Bertie Vernon!

He came to a halt, his eyes fixed staringly, gloatingly, on that fellow! He had caught the young rascal at last. His suspicions were well founded. That young rascal was of the same kidney as his cousin in the Remove—Loder had been as good as sure of it, and now he had proof.

He was out of bounds. He was trespassing on Sir Hilton Popper's island. Both these offences were serious. But these were not all. It was not merely to ramble on an island in the river that Bertie Vernon was there—with such a crew as those Highcliffe sweeps! Loder could guess pretty accurately why the black sheep of two schools had met at that remote spot.

Loder wheeled his bike on down the towpath his eyes on the island.

Ponsonby, Gadsby, and Monson had landed and joined the Greyfriars junior; the four of them pulled the Highcliffe boat out of sight among the thick clustering willows. Then they disappeared among the trees on the island.



As Mossoo swished with his cane, Vernon jerked back his hand. The descending cane, meeting with no resistance, whacked on the French master's own knee, with a crack like a pistol shot. "Woooooooh!" roared Mossoo, as he hopped on one leg.

They were out of sight before Loder, reaching the spot on the bank opposite the island, came to a halt again.

Leaning his bike against a tree at the back of the towpath, the prefect stood staring across at Popper's Island—seeing nothing but willows, and the trees behind. There was no sign or sound to indicate that anyone was there—the young rascals were keeping carefully in cover. Had not Loder spotted them as he came down the towpath, he would never have guessed that they were there. But he knew now.

He looked up and down the river. But there was no boat in sight by which he could have obtained a lift across to the island. It was likely enough however that a Greyfriars boat would appear on the Sark, on a half-holiday, as far up as Popper's Island—or that some other boat might come along.

Loder waited.

All he wanted was a lift across. The Greyfriars junior there evidently had landed from Wharton's boat, and intended to leave in the Highcliffe craft. Loder could do the same—with his hand on the young rascal's collar! He leaned on a tree by the towpath, and kept his eyes on the river.

It was about a quarter of an hour later that he sighted a Greyfriars boat pulling up the river. Three Fifth Form men were in it—Coker, Potter, and Greene.

Potter and Greene were rowing. Coker was telling them how to do it! Loder waved his hand to them.

"Pull in here, you fellows!" he called: not very loudly, for he did not want his voice to reach the young rascals on the island, and put them on their guard.

Coker stared round at him.

"What does that Sixth Form ass want?" he grunted. "We've got no time to waste on Sixth Form fatheads! We shan't get to Courtfield till to-

morrow as it is, the way you fellows pull! Keep her steady!"

Potter and Greene, however, were not so regardless of a Sixth Form prefect as was Horace Coker.

Taking no heed of that great man, they swerved in to the bank.

"I said keep her steady!" hooted Coker. "My hat! Is that how you fellows row! Trying to dig up the bank, or what?"

"Give me a lift across to the island, will you?" called out Loder.

"Look here——" began Coker.

"Yes, if you like!" said Greene. "Jump in!"

"Look here, Greene——"

"Here you are, Loder!" said Potter, holding on to a bush.

"Look here, Potter——"

Loder stepped in.

"This happens to be my boat, Loder!" snorted Coker of the Fifth. "I haven't come out this afternoon picking up passengers!"

"Don't be a fool!" said Loder. "Pull across, you chaps!"

Horace Coker stared at him.

"Did you say don't be a fool?" he asked, breathing hard.

"Yes; shut up!"

"You cheeky ass——" hooted Coker.

"I said shut up! Any more lip, and I'll order you back to school!" snapped Loder.

Coker of the Fifth gazed at him. He was strongly tempted to dip Loder's head in the Sark! Fortunately, he resisted that temptation. He sat breathing indignation, while Potter and Greene pulled across to Popper's Island. Reaching the bank, Loder jumped out of the boat.

Then the Fifth Form boat pulled on up the river—Coker so breathless with indignation that for a good five minutes he forgot to tell Potter and Greene how to row.

Loder, landed on the island, stood

looking around him. The island was thickly wooded; a big oak-tree in the centre, topping the smaller growths. There was a path through the thickets, winding towards the big tree in the centre of the island. Loder had been there before, and knew his way about. He had no doubt that the young rascals were under the shady branches of that big oak, screened there from view from either bank.

Quietly, Loder trod up that path. He had his bird now fairly in the net. There was no escape for Bertie Vernon! But he gave no warning of his approach. The young rascal was not going to have a chance of dodging.

In a few minutes, Loder stepping softly, reached the end of the path in a glade in the middle of the little island.

A grim smile came over his face at what he saw there.

Four juniors were seated on logs or in the grass, round another log that served the purpose of a card-table. Every one of them had a cigarette in his mouth.

Herbert Vernon-Smith, Ponsonby, Cadshy, and Monson were playing banker, and so intent on their game, and feeling so secure in that remote spot, that they did not look up when Loder appeared.

For a full minute Loder stood staring at them grimly.

Had Bertie Vernon never come to Greyfriars he would have known at once that the Remove fellow there was Herbert Vernon-Smith. But now he did not suppose for a moment that it was Vernon-Smith.

Vernon-Smith—to Loder's certain knowledge—was in Class-room No. 10 at the school, suffering under extra French with Monsieur Charpentier. So this fellow, who looked so exactly like him, was, of course, his cousin, Bertie.

(Continued on page 16.)

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(Continued from page 13.)

Vernon—the fellow who had hacked Loder's shin at Lantham!

Loder had got his man!

He stepped out into the glade at last. Then at length the young rascals saw him, and there was a general jump.

The Bounder's cigarette dropped into the grass as he leaped to his feet. His eyes blazed at Loder.

"Oh gad!" murmured Pon, at the sight of a Greyfriars prefect. Gadsby and Monson stared.

Greyfriars prefects had no terrors for the Highcliffians. But it was a different matter with the black sheep of Greyfriars! Herbert Vernon-Smith was fairly caught.

He had expected trouble for cutting extra French. That was not to be avoided, and he faced the prospect with reckless hardihood. But he had not looked for this! Caught out of bounds by a prefect, smoking and gambling with a disreputable set from another school—Smithy knew what that meant! Utter dismay mingled with rage in his face.

His eyes burned at Loder.

"So I've got you, you young sweep!" said Loder pleasantly.

The Bounder did not speak. He only glared.

"You won't hack my shin this time," said Loder. "I'll take care of that! You won't spin a yarn about getting chocolates at a baccy shop! I've got you fair and square, Vernon, you young sweep, and you're coming back to Greyfriars with me now!"

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Stranded!

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH caught his breath.

His heart gave a jump.

For one moment of utter dismay he had seen himself caught, pinned down, marched in to his headmaster to be sacked. He was absolutely cornered—caught in the very act. Dodging was useless; whether Loder took him back to Greyfriars or not mattered nothing—Loder had only to report what he had seen.

Again and again had the Bounder run such reckless risks, trusting to his luck—and this time his luck had let him down with a crash!

But Loder's words gave him a flash of hope.

For some reason, utterly incomprehensible to Smithy, Loder took him for his Cousin Vernon. The likeness alone did not account for it. On his looks he might have been one or the other, but Loder spoke with absolute certainty.

He had some reason—unknown to Smithy—for believing that Vernon was on Popper's Island—not Smithy!

What that reason was Smithy neither knew nor cared. He saw in it a chance of escape.

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The Bounder's thoughts raced as Loder came towards him across the glade.

There was no chance if Loder took him back to the school. He would then be identified beyond doubt.

But if he escaped Loder and got back to the school alone, Loder would be left in his mistake.

After that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to prove which of the doubles had been spotted gambling with Pon & Co.

It was a sporting chance, at least. That resemblance to Bertie Vernon had been nothing but an angry irritation to Smithy so far. Now it looked like coming in useful.

Loder dropped a hand on his shoulder. He was making sure of his man—and making sure that he did not get another hack like that at Lantham a week ago.

The Bounder did not resist. He was watching for an opportunity. For the moment meek submission was his game. Already a scheme was working in his mind. Smithy was rapid on the uptake.

"Come along!" smiled Loder. "I've got you, my beauty! I don't know whether the Head will sack a man that's been only a few days in the school, but I fancy the chances are that way!"

Pon & Co. blinked at Loder. They knew nothing of Bertie Vernon, and Loder's words had no meaning to their ears.

"You needn't stick your knuckles in my neck, Loder," said the Bounder coolly. "I'm coming. No good hacking your shins this time—I can't cut on an island, you know! This isn't Lantham High Street."

With cool presence of mind Smithy was playing up to Loder's mistake.

"Quite!" grinned Loder. "But I'll take care of you, all the same, Vernon. If you, young Highcliffe cads want to get off this island you'd better come in the boat, I'm taking it."

"It's our boat," grunted Monson.

"I'm taking it all the same," said Loder. "You can please yourselves about rowing it across—or staying here."

"I don't see letting you use our boat!" said Ponsonby defiantly.

"Don't you?" said Loder. "Well, stop me if you can!"

Pon & Co. were not prepared to make the attempt to stop a big Sixth Form man from taking the boat. Loder was going to take it, and he did not care very much whether he knocked the three spinning first.

The Bounder broke in.

"Come on, you fellows!" he said. "I'm copped. The best thing I can do is to go quietly."

"That's sense," agreed Loder. "Quietly or not, you're coming; and you start the hacking game again, my beauty, and I'll give you the hiding of your life before I chuck you into the boat."

"You'll only make things worse for me, you fellows, if you make a fuss," said Vernon-Smith. "Come on!"

"Oh, all right!" grunted Pon.

"You fellows get the boat out of the willows," said the Bounder. "I've got to face it now, and the sooner it's through the better!"

Pon & Co. nodded, and went down the path through the thickets to the landing-place.

Loder followed them, with his grip on the Bounder's collar.

The three Highcliffians sullenly sorted the boat out of the willows. As it was pulled to the landing-place they got into it, and Loder, releasing the Bounder's collar, grasped it by the gun-

wale. He did not mean to give Pon & Co. a chance of pushing off without him and his prisoner.

"Get in, Vernon!" he snapped.

"Yes, Loder!" said the Bounder meekly.

He stepped towards the boat as if with the intention of stepping in. His manner up to that moment was so submissive—like that of a fellow who, having been fairly caught, knew that he had no chance—that Loder was quite taken in. But at that moment the Bounder acted suddenly, unexpectedly, and efficiently.

Instead of stepping into the boat he turned, and with the swiftness of a lightning flash charged at Loder.

Crash!

That sudden charge sent Loder of the Sixth spinning. He lost his grasp on the boat's gunwale, stumbled over, and fell on his elbow in the grass.

Before he had quite touched the ground the Bounder was leaping into the boat.

He crashed into it, the impetus of his leap sending it spinning away from the shore.

Smithy sprawled headlong among the legs of the startled and stumbling Highcliffians.

The boat rocked half-way across to the bank of the river.

"Oh gad!" gasped Ponsonby, as he stumbled and fell.

"What the thump—" howled Gadsby.

Heedless of the spluttering Highcliffians, Vernon-Smith scrambled up. He grasped at an oar, staring back at the island.

Loder had leaped to his feet. He was shouting with fury from the island.

"Stop! Come back! Vernon, you young scoundrel, come back at once! What good do you think this will do you, you fool? Come back, I tell you!"

The Bounder laughed breathlessly. He grabbed another oar and started to row. While Pon & Co. still spluttered and stumbled the Bounder pulled, and the boat glided farther from the island. Between the current and the Bounder's desperate pull it went down the river, slanting across to the bank.

Loder, left on the island, fairly raved.

He brandished his fist, roared, yelled, and threatened.

The Bounder, as he pulled, looked back at him and grinned. Loder, stranded on Popper's Island, was left almost dancing with rage.

In a few minutes the thickets on the island hid him from sight.

The Bounder laughed as he pulled on to the bank lower down the river.

"Oh gad!" stuttered Ponsonby. "You mad ass, Smithy! What good do you think this will do you? You've made that man Loder as mad as a hatter! He will make it all the worse for you with your beak!"

"Will he?" grinned the Bounder.

"Well, won't he?"

"Not quite!" Smithy chuckled. "I'm not playing the fool for nothing! No fear! Didn't you hear that fool call me Vernon? Vernon's a relation of mine who's just come to the school—he's a bit like me, and that fool Loder has taken me for him! See now?"

"Oh gad! He must be a lot like you, I should think, if a man of your own school could take you for him."

"He thinks I'm Vernon, anyhow! Didn't you hear him? Vernon hacked his shin for him last week! He's got his knife into Vernon! He'd rather catch Vernon than me!" Smithy chuckled again. "He wouldn't think that I was Vernon any more if he walked me into Greyfriars with Vernon standing there! Got it now?"

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Gadsby. "Mean to say you're going to put this on your relation?"

"No such luck!" sneered the Bounder. "Once I get clear, they can't prove which chap it was on the island—and they can't sack two! Loder thinks it was Vernon—now! He may think differently later! But I don't see how they're going to prove which it was—unless Vernon can prove a jolly strong alibi! I don't suppose he can—a new kid's most likely on his own, on his first half-holiday at the school. It's a chance, anyhow—owing to that fool making such a mistake."

Ponsonby whistled.

"Well, you're not the man to lose a chance, for a cert!" he said. "Going back now?"

"Yes!" The Bounder pushed the boat in, laid down the oars, and jumped on the bank. "I'm going to be at the nets when they want me—harmless occupation for a half-holiday."

He cut across the towpath to take the shortest cut through the woods back to Greyfriars.

Ponsonby & Co. pushed off in the boat and pulled up the river again. A yell greeted them as they pulled past Popper's Island. There stood Loder, of the Greyfriars Sixth, almost raving.

"Pull in!" he roared. "Do you hear me? You young scoundrels, pull in and take me off this island!"

Pon & Co. were not likely to oblige Loder! Had they been disposed to oblige him, they would hardly have trusted themselves within reach of the enraged prefect! But they were not in the least disposed to oblige the prefect who had broken up the cheery party on the island! They laughed as they pulled by, keeping a wide distance from the island.

Loder roared and raved, and shook an infuriated fist.

Pon & Co. looked back at him, laughing, till the boat disappeared up the river.

Gerald Loder was left stranded on Popper's Island; in the worst temper ever!

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Amazing News!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"
"Is that Loder?"

"Smithy's game's up, then!" said Harry Wharton.

It was a couple of hours later that the Remove boat came down the river.

A waving, shouting figure on Popper's Island caught the eyes of the Famous Five as they approached the channel between the island and the bank.

Loder of the Sixth, by that time, was in a state of fury to which no words could possibly have done justice. For two long, long hours he had been a Crusoe on Popper's Island.

During that time no boat had passed. But he knew that Coker's boat, and the Remove boat, were up the river, and he watched for their return. It was the Remove boat that came in sight, and Loder waved and shouted and howled to it.

The Famous Five pulled in to the landing place. Loder was glad enough to see them, but his angry glare expressed anything but gratitude.

"Stranded here, Loder?" asked Harry Wharton, puzzled. It was clear that the bully of the Sixth was stranded, but the juniors could not guess how or why.

"Bring that boat in, you young fool!" was Loder's reply; and as the boat edged closer in, Loder jumped into it.

"Anybody else on the island?" asked Bob.

"No! You can take me down to the boathouse. Get going!"

"Quite a pleasure, Loder!" said Bob politely. And the chums of the Remove pulled on down the river, puzzled, and very curious to know what had happened on Popper's Island.

Loder scowled at them as they went.

"You told me you had not landed young Vernon there!" snarled Loder.

"We hadn't!"

"I caught him there, playing cards and smoking with a gang from Highcliffe!" hooted Loder. "What do you say now?"

"You caught Vernon there?" exclaimed Harry Wharton blankly.

"Yes, I did, and the young scoundrel barged me over and left me stranded. He will pay for that, along with the rest!" said Loder viciously. "He's got it coming, when I get back to the school."

The Famous Five exchanged glances. The thought occurred to all of them at once that Loder had mistaken Smithy for his double. On the other hand, it was several hours since they had landed Smithy there, and in that time he might have gone and Vernon might have arrived there for all they knew. They looked at one another, and rowed on in silence.

"You knew that he was on the island!" snapped Loder.

"We never knew that Vernon was on the island—if he was!" answered Harry Wharton. "I've told you that I haven't seen him since we came out this afternoon. You can believe it or not, as you choose."

"Oh, shut up!" snapped Loder.

He sat scowling, while the juniors pulled down to the school boathouse. They were glad enough to be rid of him when they bumped on the raft, and Loder jumped up. He went off to the school at once with long strides—evidently keen and eager to make his belated report.

"Well, this is a go!" said Bob with a whistle, as the Co. put away the boat. "He's copped somebody on that island—but which?"

"Smithy!" said Johnny Bull.

"He thinks it was Vernon," said Bob. "But if the chap was playing cards and smoking with that Highcliffe crew, that sounds like Smithy! I don't believe Vernon is that sort."

"I'm sure he isn't!" said Nugent. "No sign of it in the study, anyhow."

"Then it must have been Smithy!"

"Must have been!" said Harry.

"I suppose there's no doubt that it really was Smithy we landed there, and not that dashed cousin of his!" said Bob.

"Oh, my hat!"

"I'm sure of that!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Well, yes, so am I! But it's jolly queer! Loder said that he saw Smithy going in to extra French—and he thinks he copped Vernon! 'Nuff to make a fellow's brain turn round, between the two of them."

The Famous Five left the boathouse in a thoughtful and rather worried mood.

Billy Bunter met them in the quad, bestowing on them a reproachful blink through his big spectacles.

"I've been waiting for you fellows to come in!" he said. "I've waited tea for you!"

"Standing us a tea, old fat man?" grinned Bob. "Kind invitation accepted with many thanks!"

"Eh? Oh, no! You see, my postal order never came, after all! You're

standing me one—it comes to the same thing really."

"Not quite! Can't you wait tea for somebody else?"

"Oh really, Cherry! I say, you fellows, Smithy's been ragging like billy-c this afternoon!" said Bunter with a fat chuckle. "He got Mossoo with a book in Class-room No. 10! He, he, he!"

"Smithy did!" yelled the Famous Five in chorus.

"Yes. In extra French, you know."

"Smithy wasn't in extra French this afternoon, you fat ass!" roared Bob.

"Eh? He jolly well was!" answered Bunter. "He came in late, and Mossoo let him off for that; but Smithy wasn't long in getting going! He, he, he! I say, Quelch came in and gave him six!"

The Famous Five gazed at Billy Bunter. They had landed Smithy on Popper's Island, while extra French was going on in Class-room No. 10! Now Bunter stated that Quelch had come in and given Smithy six, in extra French. They gazed at the fat Owl, dumbfounded.

Bunter blinked at them in surprise. He could see nothing to be astonished at.

"I say, you fellows, you know Smithy!" he said. "He always rags in the French class! But he did go over the limit this time! He, he, he!"

"He wasn't in extra French, because he couldn't have been!" hooted Bob.

"I don't see what you fellows know about it, as you've been out all the afternoon. I was in extra French, and saw him."

"You want some new specs, old fat man! Smithy was miles away!"

"He, he, he! Mossoo didn't think so when Smithy got him on the coat tails with Oggie's 'Henriade'!" giggled Bunter.

"Smithy got Mossoo on the coat tails with Oggie's 'Henriade'?" repeated Harry Wharton, like a fellow in a dream.

"Yes, rather! And I say, he pulled his hand away when Froggy was going to cane him, and Froggy got it on his own knee—he, he, he! You should have seen him dance! Like a hen on hot bricks! He, he, he!" Bunter chortled. "That was why Quelch came in and gave him six!"

"Is that fat chump dreaming, or trying to pull our leg, or what?" asked Bob Cherry. "Unless we've been dreaming ourselves, Smithy wasn't within miles of extra French."

"Eh? Lots of fellows saw him!" said Bunter. "There were about twenty in extra French this afternoon. Ask Hazel. I say, Hazel, wasn't Smithy in extra French this afternoon?"

"Was he?" exclaimed Bob, as Hazel-dene looked round.

"Wasn't he, rather?" said Hazel, laughing. "Never saw even Smithy carry on a rag like that before. He went right over the odds this time."

"Smithy did?" gasped Nugent.

"Yes. Quelch gave him six."

"He gave Smithy six?"

"Yes. He barged in, just when Smithy made Froggy cane his own knee."

Bolsover major came up.

"No end of larks in extra French this afternoon, you fellows," he said. "You should have seen Smithy! Smithy was in tremendous form!"

The Famous Five could only blink. Smithy had been in extra French; he had ragged in the detention class, and Quelch had come in to deal with him. Then who was the fellow they had landed on Popper's Island?

They went into the House in almost a dazed state. In the doorway they came on Vernon-Smith. He was in flannels, and had apparently only recently come in from cricket. They looked at him, twice and thrice, before they decided that he was Smithy. He gave them a nod and a grin.

"Been at the nets?" asked Harry.

"Yes. I've been putting in a lot of practice, while you fellows have been loafing about a river," answered the Bounder. "Had a good time?"

"When did you get off Popper's Island?" asked Bob Cherry.

"What island?"

"Popper's, you ass!"

"Is that a joke?" asked Smithy coolly.

"You know it isn't. Are you going to make out that we never gave you a lift to Popper's Island this afternoon?" demanded Bob hotly.

"Are you going to make out that you did?" sneered the Bounder. "If you landed any fellow on Popper's Island, you'd better forget all about it."

And the Bounder walked away before any of the Famous Five could answer. They went up to the study, with their brains rather in a whirl.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

All Serene For Smithy!

TOM REDWING looked round as Smithy came into Study No. 4. Tea was ready in that study—a dish of toast keeping warm in the fender.

Tom had been waiting for Smithy—not in a very happy mood, for he had no doubt that there would be a row when Smithy learned what had been done for him.

The Bounder kicked the door shut, threw himself into the armchair, and stretched out his legs, his hands deep in the pockets of his flannel bags. There was a discontented scowl on his face.

"I can't make it out!" he grunted.

"You've been at cricket?" asked Tom, with a glance at the flannels.

"Yes; more than an hour."

"I never knew you'd come in."

The Bounder grinned sourly.

"I hiked straight down to the nets when I got back," he answered. "Nice harmless occupation, in case a fellow was suspected of anything else. But I can't make out why I've not been called up. Extra French was over long ago, and Mossoo must have reported that I cut. Why hasn't Quelch weighed in?"

"Oh!" said Tom.

"It beats me! I passed Quelch coming to the House, and he never even looked at me," said Vernon-Smith. "Think Mossoo hasn't reported me for being absent? He lets it slip sometimes. He hates rows. But I was absolutely certain that Quelch would look in at Class-room No. 10 while the class was on. You said you were sure that he would."

"I was quite sure."

"Well, if he did, he knows I cut. Why hasn't he nailed me?" snarled the Bounder. "Is he playing cat-and-mouse? He knows I'm in gates. He knows he's got me booked for a Head's flogging, if he chooses—and he will jolly well choose you can bank on that! I've asked for it, haven't I? It might even be the sack, if Quelch made a point of it. What's he leaving it hanging over my head like this for? It's like Quelch to come down like a ton of bricks, but it's not like him to play cat-and-mouse."

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"He doesn't know you cut."

"How do you know, fathead?"

"Because Vernon took your place in extra French, and Mossoo and everybody else thought you were there."

The Bounder sat bolt upright as if he had been electrified.

"What!" he yelled.

"I asked him, and he did it," said Tom quietly. "I asked him to save you from getting the chopper for your silly, fatheaded, cheeky impudence, Smithy—for that's what it was, whatever you like to call it yourself. He was willing to do it. He doesn't want his relation sacked—that's where he comes in."

"You asked that cur——" stuttered the Bounder. His face flamed with rage. "You had the cheek to ask that cur to do me a favour? Are you mad, Tom Redwing? I'd be sacked a dozen times over before I'd take anything at his hands. You knew that."

"Yes, I knew that."

"And still you had the neck——"

"Yes, I had the neck, if you like to call it that, Smithy. You're not going to get yourself sacked, if I can help it. I was thinking of your father, whom you had forgotten—as well as of you."

The Bounder's eyes flashed.

"You fool! You cheeky fool! You dared to ask that cur to do me a favour! You dared——" He choked with rage.

"I'd ask him again," said Tom coolly. "Whether it would have been a flogging, or the sack, I can't say. You deserved a flogging. But you're not going home in disgrace, if I can stop you."

The Bounder sat silent, glaring at him. He was too enraged to speak for some moments. The bare idea of being placed under an obligation to the fellow he disliked and barred roused him to fury.

"You—you asked——" he muttered, at last.

"I've said so." Redwing lifted the dish of toast to the table. "Ready for tea?"

"Hang tea!" snarled the Bounder.

"Are you going to row before tea, or after tea?" asked Redwing, with a touch of contempt. "I suppose there's a row coming. I've saved you from getting kicked out of the school; and I know the kind of thanks to expect."

The Bounder gave him a bitter look.

"You're a fool," he said. "A fool—a fool! I'd rather have been sacked than put under an obligation to that cad!"

"Would your father rather?"

"Oh, shut up!"

Redwing shrugged his shoulders.

There was a silence for some time in the study. Very obviously the Bounder found it very hard to hold in his rage at what Redwing had done. At the same time, Tom's words had put him in mind of his father, whom he had, as Redwing said, forgotten in his headstrong proceedings of that afternoon.

"It wouldn't have been the sack," he muttered at last. "A man isn't bunked for cutting extra French. Lots of fellows have done it. I can stand a flogging."

"It might have been—for you. You've piled it on rather too thick. I wasn't taking the chance."

"You're a fool!"

"Very likely," said Redwing, with another shrug.

"And that cad jumped at it," said the Bounder bitterly. "It would amuse him to put me under an obligation. By gum, I'll show him what I think of it when I see him again! I'll

make it plain that I never wanted him to do anything for me."

"He can guess that, without being told," answered Redwing. "And he never jumped at it. He did it, and it was pretty decent. Two hours of extra French on a half-holiday is no great catch."

"Then Quelch thinks I was in Mossoo's class?" said the Bounder. "That's why I haven't been called up."

"That's why."

"Do you know whether he looked in?"

"Yes."

"And saw that cad there, and fancied it was me."

"He saw Vernon, and fancied he was you. No wonder, from what I've heard of what went on, too," said Redwing. "Vernon seems to have taken a leaf out of your book, and ragged Froggy right and left."

"I never thought he was that sort."

"Neither did I. But that's what I've heard. And Skinner's told me that Quelch came in and gave him six."

"Oh, my hat!" The Bounder burst into a laugh. "That's rich! He's got six for me! He's welcome to them!"

The Bounder came to the tea-table. The news that his double had got six seemed to have consoled him, and cheered him up. He laughed again as he helped himself to toast.

"He won't be likely to play such a game again in a hurry," he said. "I'm glad he got six. It may teach him to mind his own business." Then, as another thought came into his mind, he whistled. "Oh gad! Great gad! I understand now. Loder must have known that he—that is, I—was in extra French. That's why he was so certain that I was Vernon."

Redwing started.

"What's that, Smithy? Have you been getting into a row with Loder?" he exclaimed.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Bounder. "Oh, my hat! This is rich! Loder copped me on Popper's Island this afternoon with that Highcliffe gang."

"Smithy!" exclaimed Redwing, in dismay.

"O.K.!" grinned the Bounder. "All serene! Ha, ha, ha! I wondered why the fool took me for Vernon. He might have guessed who I was—with that gang, playing banker. But he thought I was Vernon! I see it now! I was supposed to be in extra French. Perhaps he saw Vernon going in. Ha, ha, ha! Anyhow, he was quite certain that I was Vernon—I left him thinking so!"

"Oh!" gasped Redwing.

Smithy rubbed his hands with glee.

"By gum! That cad's asked for it, and he will get it now! I never asked him to palm himself off as me. He can take what he's asked for!"

Redwing sat staring at him. Not for a moment had he dreamed of anything like this. He was overwhelmed with dismay.

"You—you fool!" he gasped. "You not only cut—you had to get mixed up in something shady and to get caught! Oh, you fool!"

The Bounder chuckled.

"Loder was after that cad. He got a hack from him at Lantham. And Loder isn't the man to forget a thing like that! He was after him—and got me! But he thought he'd got him! I don't know how he spotted me—but he did—jumped right on me on the island! But as soon as he called me Vernon, you can bet I played up!"

"Smithy!"

"I thought it would be left in the air—both of us denying that we'd ever



With the swiftness of a lightning flash, Vernon-Smith charged at Loder. Crash! The sudden charge sent Loder spinning on the grassy bank. Next moment, the Bounder had leapt into the boat, sending it spinning away from the shore!

been near the island, see? They couldn't sack two for what one had done—they'd have to give both the benefit of the doubt! That's how I thought it would work. But this lets me out!" The Bounder roared. "It's fixed now that I was in extra French—and that cad must be the chap on the island, as Loder thought he was! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Smithy!" gasped Redwing. "You can't let that go on!"

"Can't I?" grinned the Bounder. "I never asked him to take my name, did I? If he does it without being asked, he can take the consequences! I thought Loder's bungling gave me a sporting chance—but it turns out to be a dead cert—through that cad butting in without being asked! If he takes the name, he can take the game along with it! Ha, ha! He wanted to put me under an obligation—well, he has! He can take the whole bag of tricks!"

The study door opened, and Skinner looked in.

"Vernon's not here, I suppose?" he asked.

"Is he likely to be in this study?" sneered Smithy.

"Well, he can't be found. I suppose he's still out of gates!" said Skinner. "Quelch is sending fellows to look for him. Looks to me as if that cousin of yours is in a row, Smithy!"

"That's fearfully painful news to me!" said Smithy, grinning. "What ever can the dear fellow have done?"

"Loder's with Quelch."

"Loder? Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, I suppose you'd be glad, as you bar the fellow," said Skinner. "But it looks pretty serious. There's a rumour that Loder copped him out of bounds—cards and smokes, and that sort of thing! Loder seems to have told some fellows before he saw Quelch—that's what I've heard!"

"Shocking, ain't it?" said the Bounder. "Bit rough on a respectable fellow like me to have a relation come here and play that sort of game!"

Skinner chuckled.

"Jolly lucky for you you were in extra French!" he said. "You might have got landed in this—it sounds more like you than Vernon!"

"Yes, isn't it lucky? A lot of fellows saw me in Mossoo's class, though—so that's O.K.!" chuckled Smithy. "Quelch himself, too—what?"

"Well, Quelch won't have forgotten that he came in and gave you six for ragging Froggy!" said Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha! A fellow couldn't have a better alibi! No good Vernon saying that it was I, and not him, that Loder spotted!"

"Hardly! By gum, though, a chap so like you might get by on that, if everybody didn't know that you were in Class-room No. 10 this afternoon!"

"Everybody's evidence will be good enough," grinned Smithy. "Even jolly old Quelch himself as a witness. All right for me!"

Smithy went out of the study with Skinner. He seemed in the greatest of spirits now.

Tom Redwing was left overwhelmed with dismay.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Called To Account!

BERTIE VERNON came in at the school gates.

It was close on lock-up, and Gosling was coming out of his lodge with his keys.

The new junior noticed that Gosling gave him rather a curious look, and wondered why.

"Ho," said Gosling, "you've got back, then?"

Vernon looked at him.

"Yes, just in time," he answered. "I've had rather a long walk. But I'm in time. What do you mean, Gosling?"

"You go to your Form-master's study, Master Vernon!" answered Gosling. "Wot I says is this 'ere—that's Mr. Quelch's orders!"

"All right," said Bertie, and he walked on, wondering what his Form-master specially wanted him for, with a faint uneasiness.

He had as he had said had a long walk, having gone for a ramble to get some fresh air after two hours in Mossoo's detention class. Gosling's significant look, and the order to go at once to his Form-master's study, looked like trouble of some sort; and the doubt occurred to his mind that Quelch might somehow have discovered the trick that had been played in the French class.

But that was improbable. Quelch had certainly taken him for Smithy when he had given him six in Class-room No. 10. All the fellows there had taken him for Smithy. It seemed hardly possible that anything could have come out. Even the fact that he had ragged the French master, and had been caned for it, added to his security, so far as that went.

But that something was up he could see very clearly as he walked across to the House. Dozens of fellows turned to look at him.

"I say, you fellows, here he is!" squeaked Billy Bunter.

"So you've got back!" exclaimed Bolsover major.

"Loder got in an hour ago," said Peter Todd.

"Loder!" repeated Bertie, staring at Peter. "I'm not interested in Loder that I know of!"

"Aren't you?" grinned Peter. "I

can tell you that he's fearfully interested in you!"

"I guess so!" chortled Fisher T. Fish. "Say, big boy, Loder's been telling the world! I'm telling you, it's all over the shop!"

"What is?" asked Bertie Vernon blankly.

Whatever was up, he could see that it had nothing to do with the deception in the French class. Loder of the Sixth could have nothing to do with that—but Loder was mixed up in this!

"Oh, come off!" said Skinner. "Loder's let it out all over the school that he copped you! You've been looked for all over Greyfriars!"

"I haven't the faintest idea what you're driving at!" said Bertie impatiently. "Am I up for a row, or what?"

"Sort of!" chuckled Skinner.

"Didn't Loder cop you on Popper's Island?" exclaimed Hazeldene.

"Hardly! I haven't been near Popper's Island! I went the other way when I went out."

The juniors stared at him.

"Well, you'd better tell Quelch that!" gasped Skinner. "He may believe it!"

"Hold on, Vernon!" said Peter Todd kindly. "You're new here, and you don't know Quelch! He's a downy bird! It's simply useless to try to stuff Quelch!"

"Who's thinking of stuffing him?" snapped Bertie.

"Well, you seem to be from what you said! Besides, it's rot! Loder saw you, and you can't get out of that!"

"If Loder's seen me anywhere, I never saw Loder!" said Bertie, puzzled and getting angry. "Has he copped that cousin of mine and taken him for me? He copped me at Lantham last week and took me for Smith!"

"That chicken won't fight!" said Skinner contemptuously. "You see, Smithy was in Mossco's class this afternoon at the time, ragging Froggy, and getting six from Quelch! If you fancy you can stick it on Smithy, wash it out, my pippin!"

"Oh!" gasped Vernon.

He pushed through the juniors and went into the House. His brow was black as he made his way to his Form-master's study.

He had an inkling now of what must have happened. He had never thought of anything of the kind any more than Tom Redwing had. Smithy had cut extra French from sheer obstinacy and sulky defiance. That was all that he had known, or that Redwing had known. But it dawned on him now that the bad hat of the Remove had hunted other trouble as well, and had been spotted in it. He had let himself into more than he had dreamed of.

He tapped at Quelch's door and entered.

Quelch was in the study, putting away papers; it was near time for calling-over.

"Gosling says——" began Bertie.

The gimlet eyes fixed on him.

"So you are here at last, Vernon!" said Mr. Quelch, in a deep voice. "No doubt you were reluctant to return, in the circumstances; but you have come in at last. But for the fact that you are a new boy here, and have been only a few days in the school, I should take you to your headmaster to be dealt with!"

Bertie Vernon breathed hard.

"Have I done anything, sir?" he asked, very quietly, though his heart was beating unpleasantly. He could

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see that his cousin Smithy must have done something, and something pretty serious. No one's doings but Smithy's could have been put on him.

"Have you done anything?" repeated Mr. Quelch. "I hardly understand you, Vernon. Perhaps you are not aware that Loder has returned from Popper's Island, where you had the audacity to leave him stranded, and has made his report to me."

"I have not been on Popper's Island, sir, or anywhere near it."

Mr. Quelch stared at him.

"Have you the impudence, Vernon, to attempt to cast doubt on a report made to me by a Sixth Form prefect?" he exclaimed.

"I do not know what Loder has reported yet, sir," muttered Bertie.

"I will tell you, then," said Mr. Quelch grimly. "Loder has reported that he found you on an island outside school bounds, smoking and card-playing with a set of young blackguards from another school. With boys of another school I have nothing to do; but with you, Vernon, I shall deal—and very severely. I am surprised as well as shocked by this; hitherto you have given me the impression of being a self-respecting and well-conducted boy. Unfortunately, there is no doubt in the matter as a Sixth Form prefect actually saw you, and would have brought you back to the school with him had you not audaciously contrived to leave him stranded on the island."

"Loder did not see me there, sir, as I have been nowhere near the place," said Bertie steadily. "He must have taken another fellow for me."

Mr. Quelch started for a moment.

"Are you alluding to your cousin—Vernon-Smith?" he exclaimed.

"I have nothing to say about my cousin, sir. I have only to say that Loder certainly did not see me on Popper's Island, as I was not there."

"There is no boy at Greyfriars, excepting your cousin, who could possibly be mistaken for you, Vernon. Your cousin, as it happens, was in extra French at the time; I am aware of that, of my own knowledge, as I caned him in Class-room No. 10 for insolence to the French master."

Bertie was silent.

"From a comparison of times," said Mr. Quelch, "it would seem that Loder landed on Popper's Island almost in the very moments when I was punishing Vernon-Smith in the detention class. He found you there! I trust, Vernon"—Mr. Quelch's voice deepened—"that so base a thought did not enter your mind as that of attempting to place your guilt on your cousin's shoulders, had it been possible to do so."

The new junior crimsoned.

"I was not on Popper's Island this afternoon!" he said. "Loder made a mistake."

"That is impossible, in the circumstances," said Mr. Quelch. "Had your cousin been out of gates at the time, doubt certainly would have existed. To my own knowledge he was in a class-room. Nevertheless, I will ask you where you were at four o'clock this afternoon, the time approximately when Loder states that he saw you on Popper's Island. Where were you, and what were you doing at that hour?"

Bertie made no reply.

He could easily have answered. At that hour he was getting six from the cane of the Form-master who was now addressing him!

But he could not tell Mr. Quelch that. He stood silent.

"You have nothing to say?" rapped the Remove master.

"I have not been on Popper's Island!"

"That will do!" A bell was beginning to ring in the distance. "Leave my study now; I will deal with you after calling-over."

In silence the Bounder's double left his Form-master's study.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Coming To Blows!

YOU rotten blackguard!" Harry Wharton & Co. glanced round as they heard those words uttered in low, tense tones.

It was in break the following morning, and the Famous Five were in the quad.

At a little distance Bertie Vernon stood under one of the old elms, his hands in his pockets, a moody frown on his face—which was so like the Bounder's frequent expression that the Co. took him for the moment for Smithy.

But the next moment they saw Smithy. When the two were together there was no doubt which was which.

Smithy was not frowning like the cousin; he was smiling—a mocking, sardonic smile—and it was that smile that had drawn the words from Bertie.

"Pass on, old beans!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Family rows ain't our bizney!"

And the Famous Five accelerated. They did not want to hear the compliments that the relations paid one another.

But Vernon-Smith came to a halt. His malicious grin widened.

"What's bitin' you, my dear relative?" he asked. "I haven't said a word to you about disgracin' me."

"What?"

"It's pretty thick," said Smithy. "A near relation of mine caught smokin' and gamblin'! But I'm not rubbin' it in."

Bertie's face flamed.

"You rotter!" he said. "You've landed this on me! You've made me out to be a shady blackguard like yourself!"

"Did I land it on you?" grinned the Bounder. "Did I ask you to butt in and borrow my name and do me a favour? You jolly well knew that I'd have stopped you fast enough if I'd been on the spot and known what you were doing. Did you expect thanks for it?"

"From you—no!" said Bertie contemptuously.

"You meddled of your own accord—and I wish you joy of your meddlin'!" said Smithy laughing.

"I never knew you'd be caught blagging out of bounds! You couldn't keep decent just for one afternoon! I might have guessed what you'd be up to, knowing you as I do——"

"You've got your own remedy if you don't like it! Go to Quelch and tell him you spoofed him and spoofed Froggy. Go and tell him what you did of your own accord and haven't the pluck to stand for now it's turned out tough!" sneered the Bounder.

"I've said nothing to Quelch; I'm not going to say anything. You know that! I was a fool to do what I did, but I did it! Even if I let it out you'd lie like a trooper about it! Don't I know you?"

The Bounder chuckled.

"I can't see myself owning up to

being the chap Loder copped," he said. "That's not up to me. It would have been a case of doubt, owing to that fool's bungling, and both of us safe—if you hadn't barged in unasked! Am I to blame because you took my name without asking my leave? You've asked for this, my pippin, and now you can stand for it!"

"You rotter!" breathed Bertie.

"What have you got?" grinned Smithy. "I haven't heard anything about a Beak's flogging on the cards! Are you let off lightly as a new kid who doesn't know any better? Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yes," said Bertie Vernon, between his teeth, "I'm let off lightly as a new kid—for what you did! I've got detention for four half-holidays and five hundred lines! For what you did!"

Smithy laughed with sheer amusement.

"You won't butt into my bizney again in a hurry!" he said.

"It's not that I care for!" said the new junior bitterly. "I can stand that. But making me out a shady black-guard—a fellow like you——"

"Is that where you feel the pain?" said the Bounder banteringly. "Quelch thinks you're a naughty bad hat! Ha, ha, ha!"

"That makes you laugh, does it?"

"Yes, rather! Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Bounder. "Best joke I've heard this term! Ha, ha, ha!"

Smack!

Smithy's loud laugh ceased suddenly as the new junior's hand shot out and landed across his face with a loud, ringing smack.

"That will stop your laughing, anyhow, you cad!" exclaimed Bertie Vernon.

It did!

Smithy staggered under that hefty smack. The next moment he was springing at his double, hitting out right and left.

Vernon's hands flew up to meet him. In a split second they were fighting furiously—in full sight of a hundred fellows, of two or three masters, and of the windows of the House.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry stared round from a distance. "Oh, my hat! Look at them!"

"I say, you fellows, they're going it!" squeaked Billy Bunter in great excitement. "I say, was it Smithy smacked Vernon's chivvy, or was it Vernon smacked Smithy's chivvy?"

"There's Quelch!" breathed Harry Wharton.

"Scrapping—right under Quelch's jolly old eye!" said Johnny Bull. "But it was Vernon started it this time! I saw him smack Smithy's face!"

"Six of one and half a dozen of the other," said Frank Nugent. "It was bound to come. They might have picked a quieter spot for their family rows, though."

Dozens of fellows crowded round the spot where Vernon-Smith and Vernon were grappling in fierce combat—regardless of countless staring eyes, and even of the approach of their Form-master.

Mr. Quelch had been walking in the quad with Prout when that loud smack on Smithy's face rang like a pistol shot. With a brow of thunder the Remove master swept down on the combatants.

Scrapping was not a very uncommon occurrence among the juniors. But a fierce fight in the middle of the quad, in sight of all the school, was very uncommon indeed. It roused Quelch's deepest ire. He saw Mr. Prout and

Mr. Capper exchange a glance expressive of their opinion of Quelch's Form. Quelch came down on the fighting juniors like a wolf on the fold.

"Boys!" he thundered.

Even with their exasperated Form-master's angry voice thundering in their ears it seemed that the two were going to carry on.

But Harry Wharton grasped Smithy by the shoulders, Bob Cherry got a grip on Vernon, and they were dragged away from one another.

"How dare you!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, his voice trembling with anger. "Under my very eyes! Vernon, you are to blame for this! I saw you strike Vernon-Smith—I saw your action! Go into the House at once! Remain there till third school! Go!"

Vernon gave him a look, an evil look that was very like the Bounder. Then, in silence, he tramped away to the House.

Mr. Quelch stalked away in great wrath.

The Bounder rubbed a flushed and burning face. But he grinned as he rubbed it. Bertie Vernon had butted into his school, as Smithy regarded it, and Smithy had resolved to make Greyfriars as unpleasant as he could for Bertie. But, really, the new junior seemed to be playing the Bounder's game for him.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

After Pride Comes A Fall!

"OH!" ejaculated Harry Wharton. He was surprised—not agreeably, perhaps.

After class that day some of the Remove fellows were at junior nets.

Bertie Vernon had come with the others—looking, in flannels, more like the Bounder than ever. The captain of the Remove, willing to see what the new fellow could do at cricket, asked him to send down a few. Bertie had sent down one—and Wharton's wicket went to pieces.

"Oh!" repeated Harry.

"Good man!" said Bob Cherry.

"Fluke!" said another voice—the Bounder's.

Bertie gave him a glance.

"Think so?" he drawled.

"I don't think—I know!" retorted the Bounder. "You can't bowl!"

"If Smithy don't like a fellow that fellow can't bowl!" remarked Johnny Bull sarcastically. "Clear as Euclid!"

"The clearfulness is not terrific, my esteemed Smithy!" grinned Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

The Bounder grunted. He was a keen cricketer himself and a very good one. As his cousin was so like him in other respects it was really to be expected that he would be a good cricketer, too. But Smithy did not want to admit anything of the kind.

"Well, if the fellow can take my wicket like that I'll eat my bat!" he snapped.

"Done!" said Bertie at once.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Well, I thought it was a pretty good one," he said. "Take the willow, Smithy, and see if you can stop the next."

"I'd stop five hundred like that with a fountain-pen!" sneered the Bounder.

"Try it with the willow."

"Oh, rats!"

The Bounder slouched to the wickets in Wharton's place.

Bob Cherry tossed the ball back to Vernon. He gave him a difficult catch to see whether he would muff it. Bertie Vernon caught the ball with a careless

left hand—looking, at least, careless. But he caught it.

"Good man!" said Bob.

"Rot!" said Smithy.

Bob chuckled.

"Don't be a goat!" he said. "You look out for that man, Smithy, unless you want to eat that bat! It's tough, you know!"

"Silly ass!"

But the Bounder did look out. He stood at the wicket as watchful as a cat. Whether Bertie could bowl or not, Smithy was not going to give him a chance, if he could help it, of spread-eagling the wicket as he had spread-eagled Wharton's. His boastful words would have been rather ridiculous if Bertie had taken his wicket.

All the juniors gathered round to see that contest. The Bounder was a mighty man with the willow, a tower of strength in the Remove eleven. But a fellow who had bowled Wharton was equal to bowling the Bounder—unless, as Smithy had declared, it was a fluke.

Smithy was all watchful care.

Bertie did not seem to be going all out. There was, indeed, an air of casualness about him as he took a little run and sent the ball down. But the ball went like a bullet, and, watchful as the Bounder was, it seemed to surprise him.

Clack!

"Man down!" yelled Bob Cherry.

"How's that?"

Vernon-Smith stood staring at his wicket. The leg stump had been uprooted—the bails were down. How, the Bounder hardly knew—unless he was dealing with a bowler of very unusual skill, far and away above the average of junior cricket.

Smithy was a good cricketer, but he was, at the best of times, a bad loser. Smithy loved the limelight. He liked to succeed at everything. Smithy had been seen to scowl when his wicket went down in a match. But losing his wicket to the fellow he barred, a mere "new kid," and after the boastful words he had uttered, was like gall and worm-wood to the Bounder. His face flushed with rage as he stared at his wrecked wicket.

"Another fluke, Smithy?" called out Bolsover major. And there was a laugh.

"If that chap can't bowl, Smithy can't bat!" remarked Russell. "Think you'd have done better with a fountain-pen, Smithy?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Bounder set his lips savagely. Swank needed to be backed up by success. Swank followed by defeat was ridiculous. Smithy did not like making a fool of himself.

"Who's going to eat his bat?" asked Bolsover major. And there was another laugh.

Smithy almost choked.

"Try that again!" he snarled.

"Oh, all right!" drawled Bertie.

The new junior was enjoying this, if Smithy was not. He caught the ball as Harry Wharton tossed it back.

The whole crowd watched him eagerly as he bowled again. All the Remove fellows could see that Vernon was a prize packet in the bowling line—as good as Hurree Janset Ram Singh. Only the Bounder could not, or would not, see what even Billy Bunter could have seen.

The ball came down like a bullet again. Very nearly it caught the Bounder napping, but not quite. Smack rang the willow, and the ball went back like a shot, and Smithy breathed again. He knew that he had had a narrow escape, but he had saved his sticks.

But had he? There was another smack like an echo, and a roar:

"Caught!"

"Oh, well caught!"

"Caught and bowled, Vernon! Good man!"

Smithy stared at the bowler with almost unbelieving eyes. Vernon had made a sudden leap, with sweeping hand, as the ball whizzed back, and the round red ball was in his palm! He held it up to general view, with a grin on his face that maddened the Bounder.

"Another fluke!" roared Bolsover major. "Flukes are cheap to-day!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"By gum, that new kid can play cricket!" said Peter Todd. "That's a man for the eleven, Wharton."

"Looks like it!" agreed Harry.

Vernon-Smith stood at the wicket, with a crimson face. He was a good batsman, but it did not look as if his batting was as good as Bertie's bowling. Smithy had come down to practice that afternoon intending to show, as usual, that he was a man who could not be spared from the Remove eleven. He had succeeded in showing that the fellow he barred was a valuable recruit for that eleven—which was not Smithy's wish at all.

"Trying again, Smithy?" grinned Bob.

The Bounder nodded; he was too enraged to speak. In that mood no fellow could hope to put in good batting; a bad temper is about the worst thing a batsman can take to the wicket with him. What Smithy needed now more than anything else was a calm temper and a cool head—and he had neither! He was simply asking for it now.

What he asked for came promptly. His middle stump flew away, and there was a shout and a laugh.

"Bowled!"

"The jolly old hat trick!"

"What price that for a fluke, Smithy?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Bounder flung his bat on the pitch. It was an exhibition of passionate temper that was not likely to check the derision of the Remove fellows. He was stalking away, with a scarlet face, when Bertie Vernon called out coolly:

"I'm waiting!"

Smithy gave him a savage glare.

"You can wait!" he snarled. "I want nothing more from you!"

"But I'm waiting to see you eat your bat!" said Vernon.

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

Vernon-Smith stared at Bertie, too furious to speak. His boastful words had come home to roost, as it were; he could hardly have made them good! For a moment or two he looked as if he would rush at his double, hitting out right and left, and three or four fellows quickly interposed between them. If Smithy let his temper rip at the nets the cricketers were quite ready to show Smithy in the plainest possible manner that his temper was not wanted there.

But the Bounder restrained himself, and stalked away, breathing rage.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Gets The News!

"DON'T come in!"

"But—"

"I said don't come in!"

Billy Bunter, in the doorway of Study No. 7 in the Remove, blinked curiously along the passage through his big spectacles.

Tom Redwing had stopped at the

door of Study No. 1, and pushed it open, with the evident intention of entering.

The sharp voice within the study stopped him; and it reached Bunter's ears, as well as Redwing's.

But Redwing halted only for a moment. Then he went into the study, regardless of the inhospitable words.

Billy Bunter grinned, and stepped out of Study No. 7. He knew who was in Study No. 1; not Wharton or Nugent. It was Bertie Vernon's voice that had snapped at Redwing.

Bunter was curious. Redwing was so quiet, good-natured, and inoffensive a fellow that no one ever rowed with him, except sometimes his own chum, the Bounder. But this looked like a row and the fat, inquisitive Owl wanted to know.

When Billy Bunter wanted to know anything, he had no scruples whatever about the method of acquiring knowledge! The Peeping Tom of the Remove stepped quietly along the passage, to hear what was going on in Wharton's study.

Redwing's voice came clearly to his fat ears.

"I'm sorry, Vernon! I feel bound to speak to you about it! I feel rotten about it, as I think you might guess."

"Lot of use that is now!"

"I never dreamed that it would turn out anything like this when I asked you to take Smithy's place in extra French yesterday!" said Tom Redwing earnestly. "I only thought of keeping Smithy out of a row—I never dreamed of landing you in one."

Billy Bunter jumped!

"You might have known!" said Bertie bitterly. "You know Smith better than any other fellow here! You might have guessed that he'd be mixed up in something blackguardly on a half-holiday. Isn't that his usual style?"

"I thought he had out, from sheer temper—and so he did, really! I never thought of anything else."

"Well, it can't be helped now! I'm not whining about it, am I?" snapped Bertie. "Just keep your distance and leave me alone! That's all I want! You're that cad's pal, and I want to have nothing to do with you."

"I only want to tell you I'm sorry how it turned out! You might remember, too, that it was partly your own fault."

"For taking that rotter's place?"

"I don't mean that; I asked you to do that, and it was jolly decent of you to play up. I mean, Loder was after you yesterday—not Smithy! It was because you hacked his shin at Lantham one day before you came to this school. He caught Smithy by accident—getting after you. Smithy would never have been spotted at all, if you hadn't put Loder's back up."

"So it's my fault that Loder is a fool and Smithy a blackguard!" sneered Bertie. "Well, now you've said your piece, get out of my study and let me see the last of you!"

"That's not all! I don't see how this can go on," said Redwing. "It's worrying me a lot. I asked you to do what you did—and if you like I'm ready to go to Quelch and let him know. It's not fair that he should think you a gambling rotter, because I asked you to do a fellow a good turn, and you did it!"

"Rot!"

"I've told Smithy so!" said Redwing. "You've a right to be seen clear, and Smithy's not the man to hide behind another chap! You'd get

it pretty stiff for playing that trick in extra French, and so should I, for putting you up to it; but it would see you clear so far as Loder's report is concerned. That's your right; and if you claim it, Smithy must take his chance."

"Well, I don't claim it!" snapped Bertie. "I was a fool to do what I did—but I'm not going to howl now it's turned out as I might have expected it to do. I'm saying nothing about it, and you're saying nothing."

"Well, I thought I ought to say that much!" said Redwing.

"Now you've said it, get out!"

"That's that, then!" said Redwing quietly. And he turned and left the study, without another word.

He almost ran into Billy Bunter in the passage.

Bunter gave him a cheery grin!

"I say, Redwing, was it Vernon, after all, in extra French yesterday?" he asked. "I say, we all thought it was Smithy! He carried on just like Smithy! I say, I buzzed an ink-ball at him, thinking he was Smithy, you know! I say—Leggo, you beast! Yaroooooh!"

Bang!

Billy Bunter's fat head tapped on the wall of the passage.

"Ow! Beast! Wow! Beast! I say—Beast!" roared the fat Removeite.

Bang!

"Whoop!"

Redwing went back to his own study, leaving the fat Owl roaring.

Billy Bunter's methods of acquiring information often led to results like this—but Bunter never enjoyed such results, when they occurred. He rubbed his fat head and roared.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" came another roar as the Famous Five came up to tea. "Enjoying life, Bunter?"

"Ow! That beast Redwing—wow! I say, you fellows—yow-ow-ow!" Bunter rubbed his suffering nut. "I say—ow! That beast Redwing hanged my bed—I mean, he banged my head—wow! But I say, you fellows, did you know about Smithy?"

"Smithy?" repeated Bob. "What's the latest. Smithy in a row again?"

"He was the fellow that Loder copped!" gasped Bunter. "I say, it wasn't Smithy in extra French yesterday—it was Vernon! Fancy that!"

"Wha-a-t?"

"Redwing put him up to it, just to save Smithy's bacon!" gasped Bunter, in great excitement at having such a startling item of news to impart. "And then Smithy goes and gets copped—and they think it was Vernon—because Smithy—I mean Vernon—was in extra French at the time! See?"

"Oh!" gasped the Famous Five together.

They had been utterly perplexed by the strange and mysterious happenings of the previous day. Feeling quite sure that it was Smithy whom they had landed on Popper's Island, the irrefragable evidence that Smithy had been in extra French at the time simply flabbergasted them. Billy Bunter's startling information let in light.

"How do you know?" demanded Bob.

"I just heard Redwing and Vernon saying so—I happened to stop to tie my shoe lace, while they were talking about it," explained Bunter. "I heard it entirely by accident, of course! That beast Redwing thought I was listening, and banged my head—never gave a chap time to explain that he was only stopping to pick up a pencil—"



"I've come here to say that I'm disgusted with you, Smithy!" said Bunter, valiantly standing his ground. "I regard you with contempt and scorn, too! Got that?" The Bouncer gazed at the fat Removite. With a fighting man like Bob Cherry behind him, Bunter felt safe.

I mean, to pick up a shoe lace—that is, to tie a pencil—I mean—"

"But why the thump should Vernon have done that for Smithy, when they're at daggers drawn?" exclaimed Bob.

"Goodness knows!" said Harry Wharton. "If they'd been friends, we might have guessed! But it's clear enough—I jolly well know that it was Smithy and not his cousin that we gave a lift to Popper's Island—"

"Quelch would be pretty mad if he knew!" said Nugent with a whistle. "You'd better not jaw about this, Bunter, you fat ass!"

"I'm not the fellow to jaw, I hope!" said Bunter with dignity. "Have you ever known me repeat anything I heard just by chance?"

"Oh crikey!"

"I shan't say a word, of course! It was entirely by accident that I stopped to get a bullseye out of my pocket and heard what they said. Besides, fellows shouldn't jaw with a study door open if they don't want to be heard! Still, I shall keep it dark! I might mention it to a friend or two, in confidence. That's all."

Billy Bunter rolled away to the stairs! Evidently it was not going to be long before the fat Owl mentioned it to a friend or two in confidence! Billy Bunter's list of friends, in the circumstances, was likely to include every fellow who would listen to him.

"Well, it won't be long before it's all over the Remove now," said Bob. "I wonder we never guessed, really—knowing jolly well that it was Smithy we landed on the island. Of course, he might have cleared and the other fellow turned up, before Loder came—but—"

"But he didn't!" said Harry. "We know what happened now—and half Greyfriars will know it before roll."

The Famous Five went into Study No. 1.

Bertie Vernon gave them a rather peculiar look as they came in. Plainly he had heard Bunter's excited squeak from the passage.

"So it was you, and not Smithy, in extra French yesterday!" said Harry Wharton. "What the thump did you do it for?"

"Did I do it?" drawled Bertie.

"Bunter says he heard you and Redwing saying so."

"I'm not responsible for Bunter's gabble."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Well, the cat's out of the bag now," he said. "If you wanted to keep it dark, you shouldn't have talked with Bunter in the offing. Bunter's telling the world at the present moment. I suppose that's what you were rowing with Smithy about in break this morning."

"You can suppose anything you like, of course."

"Oh, rats!"

Bertie Vernon left the study with a knitted brow. As he went down the passage, the Famous Five heard Bols-over major's loud voice from the landing.

"Here, Vernon! Was it really you in extra French yesterday?" Bunter says—

Harry Wharton & Co. exchanged a grin. Evidently Billy Bunter had lost no time in mentioning it to a friend or two.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Hitting Back!

"BOB, old fellow—"

"Stony!" said Bob Cherry sadly.

"Eh? I didn't ask you whether you were stony, you fathead!"

said Billy Bunter, blinking at Bob through his big spectacles. "Wharrer you mean?"

"Oh! You called me old fellow, so I thought I'd mention it," said Bob affably.

"Oh, really, Cherry! Look here, come with me, will you, old chap?" asked Bunter. "I want to speak to Smithy. I've got something special to say to him."

"You don't want my help to speak to Smithy, do you?" asked Bob, in astonishment.

"Well, yes. You see, he's such an ill-tempered beast!" explained Bunter. "I want you to keep him off, see? He might jump at a fellow."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Tain't far to his study," urged Bunter. "Stand by a pal, you know. You could whop Smith, old fellow! I could, if you come to that, but I—I don't want to—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob. "Better keep to that, Bunty. Don't ever want to. If you begin whopping Smithy, we shall lose our Bunter."

"Well, look here, I want to speak to him," explained Bunter. "But you know Smithy. Look how he pitched into me on Wednesday morning, simply because I was mentioning, in a casual way, that he was no class compared with that cousin of his."

"So tactful," agreed Bob.

"Well, I'm a tactful chap, really," said Bunter. "Some fellows have tact, some haven't. I happen to have, see? But you saw how shirty Smithy got—pitching into a chap for nothing. Then look how he scrapped in the quad with Vernon in break yesterday!"

"The chap smacked his chivvy."

"I dare say he asked for it. Look how he got his rag out at the nets. I've heard that he chucked his bat at

Vernon's head yesterday, just for taking his wicket."

"He chucked it on the ground."

"Well, I dare say he meant it for Vernon's head. And to-day he was punching Bolsover major. Bolsover never did anything that I know of, except ask him if he was mean enough to leave a row on another fellow's shoulders. But Smithy flew out in a temper at once."

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"Altogether he's a fearfully savage beast, and it ain't really safe to go near him," said Bunter. "But I've got something special to say. It's really important. I say, old fellow, do come along while I speak to him! I know he'll fly out at a chap."

"Oh, all right!" said Bob, good-naturedly.

Billy Bunter had caught Bob on the Remove landing after class on Friday. Bunter had been hanging about for some time; but it was all right now. He rolled up the passage to Study No. 4 quite briskly. In company with the champion fighting man of the Remove, he felt safe in bearding the lion in his den—Smithy in his study.

Bob, considerably puzzled, but always obliging, went with him. It was true that Smithy was far from amiable that day. Since the true story of Wednesday's happenings had been tattled and talked up and down the Remove, Smithy had not exactly enjoyed life.

It was all very well for Smithy to take the view that Bertie Vernon had barged into his affairs unmasked and could take what was coming to him, and serve him jolly well right. Smithy did not find that view generally shared.

Most of the fellows thought that Vernon had done an extremely good-natured thing—especially as it was for a fellow he was not friendly with, and that, as it had turned out, Smithy ought to have set him right with Quelch.

Smithy had no intention of doing anything of the kind. Quelch's grim manner towards the new junior amused him.

Mr. Quelch had had a very good im-

pression of the new boy to begin with. That good impression had been completely destroyed.

He regarded him now as a young rascal, like his cousin in the Remove, and as unscrupulously untruthful.

It was impossible for Quelch to take any other view, unless he learned that it was not Bertie whom Loder of the Sixth had caught on Popper's Island. And Bertie's own act had placed the Bounder's blame firmly on his own shoulders.

Which amused the sardonic Bounder. There was no help for Bertie, unless he told Quelch the facts, which he could not do. He was not going to figure in the public eye as a fellow who had done a thing of his own accord, and was afraid to stand for what he had done.

The cat was out of the bag now, so far as the Remove were concerned. Bunter's friend or two had multiplied, till all the Form had heard the story. And plenty of fellows took the view that Smithy was acting like a rotter in leaving his blame on another fellow, which irritated and exasperated the Bounder to the limit.

That day he had had several rows, and at least one scrap, and he was so savage in the study that Redwing had left him to himself.

It was not, therefore, a propitious time for Bunter to pay a call. And not till he was able to do so under convoy of the hardest hitter in the Lower School did the fat Owl make the venture.

Now, however, it was all right, and Bunter banged the door of Study No. 4 open, in quite a brisk and cheerful way.

Smithy was sprawling in the study armchair, smoking a cigarette. He glared round at the two faces in the doorway.

"Get out!" he snapped.

"I say, Smithy—" began Bunter.

"Shut up, and get out! You, too, Cherry!"

"Keep your wool on, old bean!" said Bob cheerfully. "I'm not coming in. Bunter asked me to come here

while he spoke to you, in case you fly out at him."

Smithy stared at him furiously, but he controlled his temper. Even the Bounder did not want to get the reputation of a fellow whom it was not safe to approach.

"If the fat fool has anything to say, he can say it, I suppose!" he snapped. "Get it off your chest and out, you fat frog!"

"Beast!" retorted Bunter independently.

"Is that what you came here to say, you podgy piffler?"

"If you call me names, I'll jolly well call you names, see?" Billy Bunter blinked round at Bob. "Don't you go, old chap. I ain't afraid of Smithy. But don't you go!"

"Cut it short, then," said Bob. "I can't stick here for ever!"

"Oh, all right! Look here, Smithy, you listen to this. Everybody knows now that it was you that Loder copped on Popper's Island the other day. All the fellows think Quelch ought to know. It's pretty thick for a decent chap like Vernon to be tarred with your brush."

The Bounder sat up, breathing hard. The baleful look he gave Bunter would have caused the fat Owl to scuttle like a fat rabbit, but for the sustaining presence of Bob Cherry.

As it was, Bunter valiantly stood his ground.

"You kicked me on Wednesday," went on Bunter. "That ain't why I've come here to speak to you now. I've come here to say I'm disgusted with you, Smithy."

"What?" yelled the Bounder.

"I regard you," continued Bunter, "with contempt. Got that? K-o-n-t-e-m-p-t—contempt! And scorn, too! Got that? S-k-o-r-n—scorn! That's how I look at you, Smithy. You're a rotten sneak! Got that? S-n-e-e-k—sneak! And I've jolly well come here to tell you so to your face!"

The Bounder gazed at him.

Bob Cherry gasped. This was what Bunter had to say to Smithy. No wonder he had wanted a fighting man at hand when he said it.

Smithy had booted Bunter. He had booted him hard. Booting Smithy back was not practical politics for Bunter. So this was how the fat Owl was getting his own back. This peculiar affair of Smithy and his double gave Bunter his chance. It came, indeed, like a windfall. Bunter was going to rub this in. So here he was, bearding the lion in his den, with Bob Cherry at hand to stop the lion's leap, as it were.

Bunter's eyes and spectacles gleamed scorn at the astonished and enraged Bounder.

"Yah!" he continued! "Sneak! Hiding behind another chap! Dirty sneak! Worm! Swab!"

"You blithering fat frump!" roared Bob Cherry. "Shut up and mizzle! Get out of it before Smithy eats you up alive!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Get going, you fat ass!"

"Shan't! You stop there, Bob—you said you would, you know! I've come here to say to Smithy, to his face—Yaroooop!"

The Bounder sprang! It was really like a tiger's spring!

Billy Bunter, with a yell of affright, jumped back, and dodged behind Bob Cherry.

"Yaroooh! Keep him off!" he roared.

"Chuck it, Smithy!" gasped Bob. He shoved the infuriated Bounder back. "I never knew what that fat idiot was

WHERE THE CARS ROAR . . .

"Taut over the shuddering steering wheel, Bill Martyn, driving with all the reckless daring handed down to him from his family's generations of fighting men, knew that the Italians were creeping closer—that somehow he must find more speed!

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going to say, or I wouldn't have come—"

"I'll smash him!" roared the Bounder. "Get aside!"

"My dear chap—"

"Will you stand aside?"

"No! You see—"

"I'll shift you then!"

The Bounder came on, hitting out with right and left.

Bob Cherry's hands went up, and they went it hammer and tongs.

Billy Bunter in the passage blinked at the scrap in Study No. 4.

Bob was holding the Bounder back, but it was evidently not a safe spot for lingering!

"Yah! Cad! Sneak!" squeaked Bunter. "Landing it on another chap! Yah! I despise you, Smithy! Hear that! D-e-s-p-i-s-e, despise! Yah!"

And with that, Billy Bunter departed for safer spots, leaving Bob to deal with the infuriated Bounder: which, fortunately, Bob was quite able to do.

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.

Who Cares For Smithy?

"STICK to me, Toddy!" said Billy Bunter after prep that evening.

"No thanks!" answered Peter.

"Oh, really, Toddy—"

"You're too sticky for my taste!" said Peter, shaking his head. "What about a wash? I know you've washed once this term: but what about another?"

Billy Bunter during prep that evening had been devoting as much attention to bullseyes as to prep—perhaps a little more. There was no doubt that Bunter was considerably sticky.

So Peter misunderstood him—perhaps!

"You silly ass!" hooted Bunter. "I mean, stick to me when we go down to the Rag! That beast Smithy may jump at a fellow! He was fearfully wild at my telling him what I thought of him. You keep near me—"

"If I keep near you, I shall stick to you!" agreed Peter. "I'd rather give you a wide offing, old fat bean, unless you have your second wash this term."

"Beast! I mean, be a pal!" urged Bunter. "Look at what that cad Smithy's done! Pitching into a chap, booting him all over the shop: and then letting another chap take his gruel for him. I'm jolly well going to rub it in, Toddy. I'm not letting Smithy off! Booting a chap, and landing him in extra French! But you stick to me when we go down, Toddy! You can't handle Smithy—"

"Can't I?"

"No! But you could give him a bit of a tussle!" said Bunter. "Smithy could knock you out, old chap, but you could do him a lot of damage first. So that's all right! What I don't want is Smithy to pitch into me."

"Oh!" gasped Toddy.

"If he kicks up a row, you stand up to him!" said Bunter. "I'll hold your jacket, Toddy! I'll stand by you! I never was the chap to let down a pal! I say, Toddy, where are you going?"

"I'm going down to the Rag!"

"Wait for me!" howled Bunter, heaving himself out of his chair. "Didn't I ask you to stick to me, you beast—I mean, dear old fellow! Wait a minute!"

But Peter Todd did not wait a minute. He did not wait a second! He departed down the Remove passage.

Bunter rolled out hurriedly from Study No. 7, only in time to see Peter disappear down the Remove staircase.

"Beast!" hissed Bunter.

There were certain drawbacks in hitting back at a fellow like the Bounder. Bunter had scored in his visit to Study No. 4 before prep. He had told Smithy what he thought of him: and lived to tell the tale, as it were! But he had led rather a hunted life since.

He blinked uneasily up and down the passage. He had to pass the door of No. 4 to go down—and he had planned to pass it in company with Peter! But Peter had vanished: and Bunter tiptoed cautiously past that door!

But his caution booted not, for as the fat Owl tiptoed past, the study door opened and Smithy and Redwing came out.

"Ooooooooooh!" gasped Bunter, and he flew.

Bunter did not wait for Smithy to go into action! He went down the passage like a runaway locomotive, tore open the door of Study No. 1, and careered in.

Wharton, Nugent, and Bertie Vernon had finished prep there. They had risen from the table, and were sorting out their books to put away, when Bunter happened.

Crash!

The fat Owl was going too fast to stop.

Nugent, unfortunately, was directly in his path.

What seemed rather like a ten-ton lorry hit Nugent, and sent him spinning. He threw out his arms to save himself, grabbed Harry Wharton, and they both went over together.

Bertie Vernon jumped away, just in time to escape being added to the heap.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

He staggered from the shock! He gurgled for breath! But a red and angry face glaring in the study doorway electrified him into action. He bounded round the study table.

"I say, you fellows, keep him off!" he roared.

"Smithy!" called Redwing from the passage.

Smithy did not heed. He stamped into the study.

Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent sat up, spluttering for breath. Bertie Vernon quietly stepped in the Bounder's way.

"Stop!" he said curtly.

The Bounder's eyes glittered at him.

"I want Bunter! Get out of the way, you cur!"

"Get out of my study, you pub-crawling blackguard!"

"Here, stop that!" roared Harry Wharton, scrambling to his feet as the Bounder hurled himself at Vernon.

"Chuck it!" exclaimed Frank Nugent. "Do you think you can come and kick up your shindies in this study, Vernon-Smith?"

The Bounder did not heed. But he had to heed, when the two juniors grasped him by the arms and whirled him round to the door.

"Let go!" yelled the Bounder.

"Outside, you hooligan!" snapped Wharton.

And the Bounder went out, spinning. Tom Redwing caught him as he spun, or he would have crashed headlong. Redwing fairly dragged him away.

"He, he, he!" came a breathless giggle from Bunter. "I say, you fellows, that's the style! I say, Wharton, go after him and whop him!"

"You fat chump!"

"Oh, really, Wharton! I say, Vernon, you go after him and whop him!"

"You fat idiot!"

"I say, Nugent, you go after him and whop him!"

"You fat fozzler!"

"Well, you're a lot of funks in this study, and no mistake!" said Bunter, contemptuously. "I'm about the only man in the Form that stands up to Smithy, and tells him what we all think of him. I'm not afraid of Smithy, if you fellows are!"

"You podgy piffler, what did you bolt into this study for?" hooted Wharton.

"That beast Smithy was after me—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"I mean to say, I just stepped in to speak to you fellows after prep. I didn't know that Smithy was there! He never came out of his study as I was passing, and I shouldn't have cared if he had! Who's afraid of Smithy?"

"You howling chump!" said Harry. "You'd better steer clear of Smithy! Smithy bites!"

"Fat lot I care for Smithy!" said Bunter valorously. "I'd knock the cad down as soon as look at him! I despise him! I've told him so! I'll tell him so again! Look what he did—booting a chap, and landing him in extra French—I mean, blagging with those Highcliffe cads on Popper's Island, and putting it on that new chap! I'm standing up for you, Vernon old fellow."

"You blithering ass!" was Vernon's ungrateful reply.

"Oh, really, Vernon—"

"Roll out, you fat chump, before I help you out with my boot!" said Harry Wharton.

"I say, Smithy may be hanging about—"

"Well, who's afraid of Smithy?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast! I'm not afraid of Smithy! But I'm not going down to the Rag—I—I want to read your 'Holiday Annual,' old chap, and I—I'll sit here and read it! Smithy might look in my study. I mean, I rather like this armchair—it's more comfy than Toddy's."

"Ass!"

The three juniors went down, leaving Billy Bunter in the armchair. Whether he wanted to peruse that delightful volume, the 'Holiday Annual,' or not, Billy Bunter certainly wanted to keep out of the Bounder's way.

Fortunately, he had some bullseyes left. So he sat down and happily chewed bullseyes.

Ten minutes later, the study door reopened and a well-known face looked in.

Billy Bunter gave the newcomer a cheery blink.

"Hallo, Vernon!" he said. "Look here, like some bullseyes! I've got a lot—there was a whole pound in Russell's study: I mean, I had them from home in a parcel to-day. I got lots of parcels from home, old chap!"

The junior stepped into the study. On his looks he might have been either of the doubles of the Remove—at least, to the short-sighted Owl—but as he came to Vernon's study Bunter took it for granted that he was Vernon. So he rattled on cheerfully:

"Staying in the study, old fellow? Have some bullseyes? I say, why don't you lick that cad cousin of yours? You could do it! Smithy can't scrap! He's not got much pluck really!"

"Hasn't he?" gasped the newcomer.

"Not a spot!" said Bunter. "All round cad and worm. I licked him myself last term—I did really, Vernon, old chap! He begged for mercy before I let him off. Practically crawled at my feet!"

"Did he?"

"Yes, rotten funk! I could lick him with one hand tied behind my back. I

hardly care to soil my hands on the fellow though. He's low! Your side of the family may be all right, Vernon, but the Smiths are a low lot! I say, what do you want that cricket stump for, Vernon?"

Bunter did not get an answer to that question. But he did not need one. Vernon-Smith came towards him with a stride and grasped the back of his fat neck, hooking him out of the armchair.

Billy Bunter gave a wild yell of apprehension. The awful truth dawned on his fat brain. It was not Vernon coming back to the study! It was Vernon-Smith—looking for him!

"Oh crikey! I say, Smithy, leggo!" roared Bunter. "I say, old chap, I was only jij-jij-jog-joking, old fellow! I say—Yarooop!"

Plump! went Bunter back into the armchair, face down this time! Whack! came the cricket stump on the tightest trousers at Greyfriars.

Bunter's frantic yell woke the echoes of the Remove passage.

Whack, whack, whack, whack!

"Oh crikey! Yow-ow-ow! Beast—I mean, dear old chap—Yarooop! Dear old beast—Yooo-hooop! Oh crikey! Ow!"

Whack, whack, whack, whack!

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

"That's a tip!" said the Bounder grimly. And he pitched the cricket stump into a corner and strode out of the study, leaving Billy Bunter waking the echoes on his top notes!

THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER.

Billy Bunter Going Strong!

HARRY WHARTON frowned.

"It's rotten!" he said.

"Is it?" sneered the Bounder.

"Yes, it is!" snapped the captain of the Remove. "I'd have liked to put Vernon in the Form match this afternoon. I want to put the chap through his paces and size him up for the eleven. We want bowlers—and he looks like turning out as good a bowler as Inky."

"I dare say he could play the Fourth!" sneered Smithy. "That's about his mark."

"If he shapes anything like he looks he will play Rookwood and Highcliffe and St. Jim's," said the captain of the Remove. "I've got to try him out first, and he's got four detentions—all your fault."

"Go to Quelch and tell him who was really on Popper's Island last Wednesday!" said the Bounder jeeringly. "He would be glad to hear it! He started making a favourite of Vernon—he'd like to carry on with the good work!"

"Oh, chuck it!" said Harry. "I shall tell Quelch nothing—but you ought to tell him, and every man in the Form says the same."

"Hear, hear!" said Bob Cherry.

"I can see myself doing it!" said the Bounder bitterly. "If that cad borrows my name he can stand for what he did. He can go and sneak to Quelch if he likes! I shouldn't wonder if he did."

"You'd like him to, I dare say!" grunted Johnny Bull. "Look here, Smithy, you jolly well know that you ought to have had those detentions, not Vernon. If you owned up now Quelch could hardly take it to the Head—he would have to deal with you as he did with Vernon; he can't have two weights and two measures. So you'd be pretty safe from what you jolly well deserve."

"True, O king!" said Bob. "And it would be the decent thing, Smithy."

Vernon-Smith breathed hard.

"Put it plain," he said savagely. "You'd rather leave me out of the cricket than that cad—because he took one or two wickets at the nets."

"That's not so, and you know it!" said Harry Wharton. "But fair play's a jewel. Vernon would have to stand for what he did—spoofing Froggy in extra French—and you ought to stand for what you did! Vernon can't speak out—but you can, and you ought."

"I'll watch it!" sneered Vernon-Smith. And he turned his back on the Famous Five and stalked away, with a black brow.

It was Saturday morning in break. That afternoon the Remove were playing the Fourth. Since Bertie Vernon's exploits in games practice the captain of the Remove was very keen to try him out in a game. But the new junior's sentence—for his kinsman's sins—knocked that on the head.

"I say, you fellows!" Billy Bunter rolled up—the Bounder being safely gone. "I say, I wish you wouldn't jaw to that cad when I want to speak to you—"

"Roll away, barrel!"

"Oh, really, Wharton! I think you might tell a fellow how to spell a word! You make out that you spell better than I do."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Well, what's the word, fathead?" he asked.

"Consequences," said Bunter. "How many 'k's'?"

"How many whatter?"

"'K's.' Do you put in one or two?"

"Oh crumbs! I don't put in any, as a rule!"

"Well, that's rot, of course," said Bunter peevishly. "I know it begins with a 'k.' I'm not sure whether it's a 'k' or a 'q' in the middle. Which do you think it is?"

"A 'q,' fathead, and a 'c' at the beginning!"

"He, he, he! You can't pull my leg, old chap! I know it's a 'k' at the start, of course! Any fool knows that!"

"You ought to know, then!" agreed Wharton.

"But look here, do you think it's a 'q' in the middle?"

"Yes, ass!"

"Then I expect it's a 'k,' after all!" decided Bunter. "You don't know how to spell, Wharton. I've seen you spell blue with an 'e' instead of a double 'o.' But I say, you fellows, I'm going to make that cad Smithy sit up!"

"You piffing porpoise!" said Bob. "Let Smithy rip! He's dangerous."

"I'm jolly well going to rub it in!" said Bunter emphatically. "He can't punch a chap in the Form-room. I can dodge him afterwards. Besides, I shall expect you fellows to stand by a pal. You wait till he gets my next note in the Form-room. He, he, he!"

"Quelch put you in extra French last time, fathead!"

"He won't cop me this time," grinned Bunter. "I'm going to write it in print letters in case Quelch spots it—then he won't know my fist!"

"You don't think he may know the spelling?" asked Bob.

"That's why I'm going to be jolly careful about the spelling," explained Bunter. "Quelch makes out I can't spell, and if there was a mistake he might make out that it was me."

"You're going to be jolly careful with the spelling, with two 'k's' in consequences!" yelled Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That's it, old chap—no mistakes this time! I don't think Wharton ought to try to pull my leg, making out there is a 'q' in it when it's important like

this!" said Bunter. "I don't want extra French again. I can tell you, Smithy will be fearfully wild when he gets that note in class, and can't do anything, you know, under Quelch's eye."

"Better chuck it, you fat ass; Smithy will bite!"

"Who cares for the cad?" retorted Bunter. "Look what he did last night. I thought it was Vernon coming back to his study, and I was just saying that the Smiths were a low lot, and it turned out to be Smithy—"

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

"You can cackle!" hooted Bunter. "I'll jolly well show him whether he can whop a man on his bags like a prefect! You wait till we go into third school! I can tell you Smithy will be green with rage!"

And Billy Bunter rolled away, evidently with some crushing scheme in his fat brain for making the Bounder sit up for his sins.

Harry Wharton & Co. resumed discussing cricket matters, and dismissed Billy Bunter and his fatuous schemes of vengeance from their minds, till the bell rang for third school.

The fat Owl was grinning as he rolled into the Remove Room with the Form. He whispered to Peter Todd when the Remove were in their places.

"I say, Toddy—"

"Shurrup!"

"But, I say, old chap, I've got a note ready for Smithy; you watch his face when he gets it!" grinned Bunter.

"Are you talking in class, Bunter?" inquired Mr. Quelch.

"Eh? Oh, no, sir! I didn't speak! I was only saying to Toddy—"

"Silence!"

Third lesson was geography. Mr. Quelch had a large map of Europe outspread over the blackboard, pointing out the latest fashion in frontiers in Central Europe.

The gimlet eye being off Bunter, the fat Owl nudged Toddy.

"I say, old chap, pass this note along, and say it's for Smithy, will you?" he whispered.

"No, you ass! Do you want extra French again?"

"Quelch won't know this time, if he sees it. That's all right. I say, shove it along to Russell, and tell him to pass it on to Smithy!"

Mr. Quelch's head turned.

"Are you talking again, Bunter?" he asked, in an ominous tone.

"Oh, no, sir! I never said a word, sir! I never asked Toddy to do anything, did I, Toddy?"

Mr. Quelch turned from the map on the blackboard. He took a grip on his pointer in such a businesslike manner that it seemed to hint that he intended to use it for other purposes than merely pointing out things on a map.

"What did you ask Todd to do, Bunter?"

"Nothing, sir! It's nothing to do with a note or anything of that kind, sir!" said Bunter hurriedly. "I haven't got a note for Smithy here, sir, and I never wrote it in the Rag before we came into Form."

"Bless my soul!"

"I—I only asked Toddy how to pronounce Prague, sir. I mean, I never spoke to Toddy at all. I never said shove it along to Russell for Smithy, sir!"

Mr. Quelch came along the desks with the pointer in his hand and a grim look on his speaking countenance.

"You utterly obtuse and absurd boy!" he said. "Give me that note at once!"

"I—I haven't got any note, sir!" gasped Bunter, in great alarm. "There's nothing at all in my hand, sir!"

Bunter's fat paw was tightly clenched, and obviously contained something.

Mr. Quelch did not ask him to open it. He gave a swipe with the pointer which landed on fat knuckles, and then the fat paw came open quite suddenly.

So did Bunter's mouth at the same moment. From the mouth came an ear-splitting yell. From the paw came a crumpled paper.

Mr. Quelch picked up the paper.

Billy Bunter sucked his fat knuckles in anguish. The Remove master looked at the paper.

It was written in print letters, which Bunter had fondly hoped would conceal the authorship. It was very probable, however, that had it passed along the desks and then reached Quelch's eye, he would have traced its author by the spelling. Bunter had put altogether too many "k's" in "consequences."

Mr. Quelch stared at the paper.

His glance became fixed.

He gave a violent start.

All eyes in the Remove were on him. The juniors wondered what on earth the fatuous fat Owl could have put in his note this time to cause that extraordinary expression on the face of Henry Samuel Quelch.

For a long, long moment there was a breathless silence. Then Mr. Quelch ejaculated:

"Upon my word! Is it possible? Upon my word!"

His eyes shot over the class. They fixed first upon the face of Bertie Vernon, and then upon the face so like it of Herbert Vernon-Smith. Then his eyes fixed on the paper again.

The Remove sat breathless. What on earth had that fat ass put on that paper? Excitement and curiosity were at burning point. In the midst of a breathless silence, Mr. Quelch read that note over again.

"Beestly cad Smith! Who went blagging on Popper's Island and got another fellow to go to ekstra French? Who's afraid to own up? Who's cad enuff to let another fellow take the konsekwences? Who's a rotten worm? Who's a beestly blaggard? Who's too phunky to own up? Yah!"

It was no wonder that that extraordinary missive brought an extraordinary expression to the face of the master of the Remove!

THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER.

The Cat Out Of The Bag!

"VERNON-SMITH!"

The Bounder looked sullen. "Stand out before the Form!"

Vernon-Smith rose and stepped out. He was angry, sullen, and puzzled. This time he had done nothing; Bunter's note, whatever it was, had not even reached him.

"Vernon!"

Bertie Vernon started a little.

"Yes, sir!" he answered.

"You will stand out before the Form also!"

The new junior stepped out after his relative.

Something in Bunter's note clearly had concentrated Quelch's attention on the doubles of the Remove. So a good many fellows could now surmise to what Bunter had referred.

That note had been intended for

Smithy. It had reached Quelch! The fat was in the fire now!

"It appears," said Mr. Quelch, in a very quiet, but very dangerous tone, "that I have been deceived and deluded, and that another master has been deceived and deluded, by two boys of my Form."

There was a tense pause.

"It appears," went on Mr. Quelch, "that you two boys, taking advantage of the singular resemblance in your looks, have played a disrespectful trick, deceiving me and deceiving Monsieur Charpentier!"

The Bounder understood now, and his face set doggedly.

Bertie Vernon understood also, and

he flushed crimson. The word "deception" stung him more deeply than it stung the Bounder.

"Vernon-Smith!" Quelch's voice was deep. "Am I to understand that you induced this new boy—almost a stranger here—to practise this deception—to take your place in a detention class, while you—"

The Bounder's eyes flashed.

"No, sir, you're not to understand anything of the kind," he said, very distinctly. "If I'd known that the cheeky rotter was using my name and taking my place, I'd have booted him!"

(Continued on next page.)



COME INTO the OFFICE, BOYS - AND GIRLS!

Your Editor is always pleased to hear from his readers. Write to him: Editor of the "Magnet," The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

HOWDO, everybody?

By way of a change this week, I have to settle an argument. "How many Irish boys are there at Greyfriars?" inquires a loyal reader from Dublin. The answer is: five. In the Third Form there's Thomas O'Rourke; in the Remove, the redoubtable Micky Desmond; in the Upper Fourth, Patrick Fitzgerald; in the Fifth Form we find Terrence Fitzgerald, and in the Sixth, Patrick Gwynne. So my correspondent, who has been arguing with some of his chums that there are only four "Pats" at Greyfriars, is wrong.

J. P. WANTS TO STOP GROWING!

This is an extraordinary confession, you will admit, for most of us—especially in the boyhood stage—can't grow quickly enough or big enough. But J. P., of Reading, says that he's growing too tall. It's alarming him, he declares, although he feels perfectly fit. If my chum feels fit, I certainly advise him not to worry about growing. There's nothing he can do to prevent himself getting taller, anyway. Let Nature take its own course, and my correspondent will doubtless be thankful one day that he is tall.

A reader chum, who lives in Plymouth, writes to say that he suffers from a very common complaint—snoring—and he asks me if I can suggest a cure. I believe the cause of snoring is sleeping with one's mouth open. A handkerchief passed under the chin and tied on the top of one's head, if not comfortable, may perhaps be the means of creating the habit of keeping the mouth shut while asleep. I have also heard it said that a snoring person can be stopped by whistling. If my chum can get a self-sacrificing friend of his to sit by his bedside and whistle some

ditty every time he starts to snore, perhaps he will find this a pleasanter and more effective cure! I am afraid, however, the difficulty will be to find an individual to do the whistling.

There is such an interest in Mr. Frank Richards' yarns that correspondents want all the characters kept in view.

"What has become of Wun Lung, the Chinese junior in the Remove? Can't we have a story about him?" Also: "Is anything wrong with William Wibley, the japer? We don't seem to have heard of him for some time."

That is just the problem, chums. Don't think for one moment that these characters have been left in the background—they are waiting in the wings, as it were, ready for when Mr. Frank Richards gives them a call. It is absolutely impossible to keep all the characters in the foreground. But, of course, when I get a special reminder that some particular junior is in great demand, I try to meet the need. Don't, for one moment, think that if your favourite character has not been mentioned for a while he is totally forgotten. It's quite likely that he will be taking the leading role in a forthcoming yarn.

Well, I certainly haven't room to say a lot about next week's programme, chums. But that it's something good, you may be sure. First there is:

"THE KIDNAPPED CRICKETER!"

the next yarn in our present series featuring Vernon-Smith and his cousin and double. You will read of the Bounder's amazing scheme for "hitting back" at his rival, and the result of it. The smaller features follow as usual. A final word—place a standing order with your newsagent for the MAGNET right away.

YOUR EDITOR.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,633.

Tom Redwing jumped up, crimson. "Please let me speak, sir! Smithy never knew—never knew a word of it till afterwards! It was I who asked Vernon to do it!"

"You, Redwing!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir!" said Tom, his cheeks burning. "It was my idea, and I asked Vernon to do it! I—I never meant it as a deception, sir. It was just to keep Smithy out of a row! But Smithy never knew—he would have hated it if he'd known!"

"Vernon-Smith knew nothing of it, sir," said Bertie Vernon calmly. "He would not have agreed had he known."

"Oh!" said Mr. Quelch. The Bounder sneered savagely. Evidently, Quelch had been taking it for granted that he was at the bottom of the whole thing. He was a dog with a bad name; the blame was his, as a matter of course. But what Tom Redwing and Bertie Vernon had to say set that right, at all events.

There was another pause. In the silence, a fat whisper was heard.

"Oh crikey! I say, you fellows, Quelch has found it out! I wonder how he found it out?"

"Silence, Bunter!" Mr. Quelch fixed his eyes on Bertie; he seemed puzzled.

"It seems, Vernon, that you played this extraordinary trick on your relative's account. It was you I saw and caned in Class-room No. 10 on Wednesday, supposing you to be Vernon-Smith, as you had taken his place in the French class?"

"Yes, sir." "Upon my word!" said Mr. Quelch, and he paused again; then he went on: "It was not, then, you on Popper's Island that afternoon?"

"I told you I was not there, sir." "I am glad, at all events, that a boy of whom I had formed a good opinion was guilty only of a foolish trick of impersonation, and not of the conduct for which you have been punished, Vernon. But a deception practised on a master is a very serious matter. You are exonerated, Vernon, so far as Loder's report is concerned. But your punishment will stand. It is not too severe a punishment for what you have done."

"Very well, sir," said Vernon quietly. "You may go back to your place, Vernon."

Bertie went back to his place. "It was more my fault than Vernon's, sir," stammered Tom Redwing. "I—I asked him, and—and—"

"Quite so!" said Mr. Quelch grimly. "You will take the same punishment as Vernon, Redwing—detention for

four half-holidays and five hundred lines."

"Yes, sir," said Tom in a low voice. The Bounder stood with a sullen, sneering face under the stare of his Form-master's gimlet eyes.

It was all out now. It was known that it was he—Vernon-Smith—who had been on Popper's Island, who had been caught smoking and card-playing with the Highcliffe fellows. Now he had to face the consequences. What those consequences were going to be he did not know, but he had the hardihood to face the music. His face was sullen, sneering, with a touch of defiance in it.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked on anxiously as Quelch stood silent, as if undecided. They knew that the Bounder's fate was trembling in the balance. Bertie, as a new kid, only a few days in the school, had been let off lightly for his supposed offence, but the Bounder was an old offender. On the other hand, as Johnny Bull had sapiently remarked, a beak could not have two weights and two measures. The silence was long.

Mr. Quelch spoke at last. "Had I been aware of the facts when Loder of the Sixth Form made his report on Wednesday, Vernon-Smith, I should have taken you to your headmaster, to be expelled from this school," he said slowly, "but—"

The Bounder stood silent; his heart was beating painfully.

"But," went on Mr. Quelch, "a certain punishment was given to Vernon, on the supposition that he was the guilty party. I shall, therefore, award the same punishment to you, Vernon-Smith."

Smithy breathed again. "You will take four detentions and five hundred lines," said Mr. Quelch. "But"—he paused again—"I advise you, Vernon-Smith, to make the most of this chance and amend your conduct. I warn you that you are very unlikely to remain at Greyfriars unless you do so. Now go to your place."

The Bounder, in silence, went to his place. The tension in the Remove relaxed.

Billy Bunter blinked at his Form-master with uneasy apprehension through his big spectacles, but, to his great relief, Quelch took no further notice of him.

Geography was resumed in the Remove.

"I SAY, you fellows, how did Quelch find out?" asked Billy Bunter, when the Remove came out after third school.

"You howling ass—" said Bob Cherry.

"Did you fellows tell him?" asked Bunter.

"You blithering Owl, he got it from that fatheaded note!" hooted Bob.

"Oh! Think he did?" gasped Bunter. "Well, he might have; Quelch is fearfully sharp—sharp as a razor! Yes, come to think of it, I dare say he did—being so fearfully sharp! I say, you fellows"—Bunter blinked round in alarm—"is that beast Vernon, or Vernon-Smith? If it's Smithy, keep him off!"

It was Smithy. He grabbed Bunter by a fat neck, slewed him round, and kicked.

Bunter roared. Smithy walked away and left him to roar.

"Oh! Ow!" roared Bunter. "Wow! You beasts, that was Smithy! Why didn't you keep him off, you beasts?"

"Didn't you want him to boot you?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Eh? No, of course I didn't!"

"Why ask him, then?" "Ow! Beast! Wow!" Another junior came across towards Bunter, and the fat Owl blinked at him. "I say, you fellows, if that's Smithy coming back—"

"It's Vernon this time!" said Bob, laughing.

"Oh, all right, then!" said Bunter. "If it was Smithy I'd jolly well knock him spinning! I say, Vernon, old chap—Why, what—Leggo, you beast! Yaroop!"

Bertie Vernon grabbed a fat neck, just as Smithy had done, and slewed the fat Owl round, roaring. He landed his boot, and Bunter bellowed; then he, too, walked away, leaving Bunter to bellow.

"Yoo-hoop!" bellowed Bunter. "I say, you fellows—Whoop! What did that beast kick me for, I'd like to know? He's as boastly a beast as the other beast! What are you cackling at, you beasts?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I've a jolly good mind to bang their cheeky heads together!" roared Bunter.

"Good egg!" said Bob Cherry heartily. "We'll see you do it, and stand round and cheer! Hallo, hallo, hallo! Smithy! Vernon! This way! Bunter wants you both! Hurry up! Hallo! Where are you going, Bunter?"

Billy Bunter did not stop to explain where he was going.

He just went!

THE END.

(The next yarn in this splendid series is entitled: "THE KIDNAPPED CRICKETER!" You'll enjoy every line of it, chums!)

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HEADMASTER and HERO!

Uproariously Funny School Story of Jack Jolly & Co., the Cheery Chums of St. Sam's

"Look who's here!" Jack Jolly, of the St. Sam's Fourth, gasped out those words in tones of sheer amazement, as he swam through the swirling waters of the River Ripple. Fearless and Merry and Bright, who were with him, turned their eyes towards the diving-board. They barely blinked at what they saw.

Stalking down to the swimming pool from the changing-huts was a bearded figger in a bathing costume many sizes too large for him. It was Dr. Alfred Birchmell—the revered and majestic headmaster of St. Sam's!

"The Head!" gasped Fearless. "The Head in a bathing costume! What next?"

"Perhaps he's going to have his annual," grinned Merry. "It's probably a good deal overdue!"

"Ha, ha! Yes, rather!" Further speculation on the subject was stopped by the Head arriving at the edge of the swimming pool and giving a hail to the fellows in the water.

"Attention, everybody!" he yelled. "Oyez! Oyez! Be it known to all and sundry that the governors of St. Sam's have decreed that life-saving shall be taught at the swimming pool!"

"Grate pip!" "Who's going to teach us life-saving, sir?"

"Me, of course!" "Ha, ha, ha!"

The fellows in the water simply roared. The idea of Dr. Birchmell, who could swim as well as a brick, teaching others the art of life-saving struck them as rather comical. The Head, however, did not appear to see the funny side of it. He frowned fiercely.

"There will have to be a dickens of an improvement in your swimming if you boys are to do any good at life-saving," he remarked, grimly. "Now I want you to gather round underneath the diving-board and catch the pearls of wisdom as they fall from my lips."

"Oh, crums!" gasped Fearless. "You don't mean your false teeth, sir, by any chance, do you?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Silence!" roared the Head. "The lesson will begin. Now, the first thing you must remember in saving life in the water is to grab the person you are saving by the boko!"

"Don't you mean the ears, sir?" asked Merry. Dr. Birchmell glared.

"Now, who's giving this lesson—you or me?" he inquired. "I said boko—or, to put it vulgarly, nasal organ! And when you get it from me, you are getting it from one who nose!"

"Go hon, sir!" "Fact!" said the Head. "You can take it from me I'm a simply spiffing swimmer and a dabster at diving!"

"Bai Jove! You serprize me, Birchmell! You do really, what, what!"

All eyes were turned to the towpath, from the direction of which came the refined voice of the newcomer. It was Sir Frederick Funguss who stood there. The chairman of the St. Sam's governors was leaning elegantly on his gold-nobbed cane and tugging thoughtfully at his mistosh.

'Abso-bally-lutely serprizin', Birchmell, that you should be so good as

all that at divvin' an' swimmin' and life-savin'!" he cried. "Let's see you do it, my deah fellow!" "Eh?" "Dive in an' swim round an' rescue one of the boys, my good chap!" grinned Sir Frederick. "I insist!" "But—but I haven't brought my water-wings with me!" phaltered the Head. "Wha-a-at?" "I—I mean, I'm too tired!" gasped the Head, who looked as if he would

leaving the fellows in the water farly yelling. Jack Jolly swam across to the spot where he had disappeared, and dived under to rescue him. He soon brought the Head to the surf. Dr. Birchmell was puffing and blowing like a grampus and his frantick struggles churned the water around him into foam; but Jolly, who was an eggspert at life-saving, soon towed him to safety.

Amid loud cheers, rescuer and rescued waded out of the water. And then the onlookers had a big serprize. While the Head was out of his depth, he had been in a proper pannick. But the moment his feet touched terra firma again, he became as brave as a lion.

With a crafty gleem in his eyes, he suddenly seized Jolly by the neck just as though he was doing the rescuing instead of Jolly.

"Don't be frightened, Jolly!" he cried loudly. "You're in no danger now."

"Wha-a-at?" gasped Jack Jolly. "I have saved you from a watery grave, my boy, but don't trubble to thank me. It's all in the day's work to an eggspert life-saver like me!" said the Head, speaking loudly for Sir Frederick's benefit. And then, in a suppressed whisper, he added: "Mun's the word, Jolly! I'll treat you to doughnuts afterwards, if you'll keep quiet!"

While Jolly gasped, Sir Frederick joined the Head. He looked as though he could hardly believe his ears.

"Bai Jove!" he cried. "I thought it was the boy rescuin' you, Birchmell; but it seems I was mistaken. You, then, rescued the boy!"

"Why, of course, Sir Frederick!" said the Head, with a simpering smile. "Toppin' brave deed, I call it!" declared Sir Frederick. "I am glad, indeed, that you appointed you as life-savin' teachah. Prey get dressed, Birchmell, an' I'll take you to the village bunshop an' stand you a feed! You are a hero among headmastahs, what, what!"

And the chairman of the governors was as good as his word. He supplied free tuck at the village bunshop till Dr. Birchmell came near to busting. Unquestionably, Sir Frederick had come to the conclusion that the Head was a hero of the first water.

What the St. Sam's swimmers thought about him was a very different matter. But Dr. Birchmell didn't bother his head about them. Nor, for that matter, did they trubble any more about him.

They were only too pleased to return to the pleasures of the swimming-pool—no longer disturbed by the old buffer's unwelcome presence!

"Wooooooo!"

A feendish yell sounded across the rippling water. The next moment there was a tremendous splash.

Plonk! Swooooosh!

"Man overboard!" sang out Frank Fearless.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Head disappeared from sight



The GREY FRIARS HERALD

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EDITED BY HARRY WHARTON.

June 3rd, 1939.



"HAT TRICK" SAVED REMOVE FROM DEFEAT!

Says H. VERNON-SMITH

The match between the Remove and the Shell on Saturday provided the most exciting spot of cricket seen on Little Side for many a long day.

The Shell are older and bigger than us. Their venerable sage gives them the advantage of longer experience than we have been able to crowd into our young lives, and their better build enables them to slog the ball harder and bowl with more deadly speed.

What counted on Saturday was their bowling. Hobson and Stewart, both in brilliant form, found chinks in our armour with disconcerting regularity.

Wharton was dean bowled before he reached double figures, and rich stalwarts as Chery,

Brown, and your humble shared the same fate. We finished with a total of 78. The Shell had to be dismissed for 77 if we were to win.

An impossible task! So it seemed at first. It seemed still more impossible later when, with three wickets to fall, the Shell had actually scored 77 runs!

I have already expressed the opinion this season that Hurree Singh's bowling is the Remove's best asset. Am I a prophet? I'd have liked you all to be there to see for yourselves!

The dusky nabob rose to the occasion gloriously. In three balls he took those remaining three wickets—and that lovely "hat trick" gave us the victory that had seemed quite beyond our grasp!

HARRY WHARTON CALLING ALL FANS

Somebody who signs himself "Anti-Noise" has written to express his sympathy for me because I have to do my editorial work in Study No. 1 in the Remove passage.

As one who detests noise, I deeply commiserate with you," he says. "I can just imagine what it must be like to write articles and read MSS. to an accompaniment of cricket, study bumpings, and gramophones!"

Well, I'm grateful to my correspondent for his sympathy; but I hasten to add that in this instance I really don't think I deserve it!

The Remove passage, I admit, is not a place of sepulchral calm. On the other hand, it's certainly not so bad as "Anti-Noise" seems to think.

In the first place, there are no gramophones. Tom Brown has a radio which rattles the windows at times; but his study is at the other end of the passage, and I don't hear it much.

There are, of course, other noises. Bob Cherry has a habit of

whistling the tunes of the day rather piercingly; but he doesn't usually come to Study No. 1 to do it. There is also a comb-and-paper band that comes to life under Bolsover major's leadership at spasmodic intervals; but practice nights are few and far between, and I don't find Bolsy and his Boys much of a menace.

Nobody in the Remove—fortunately—follows Hoskins' example of practising the piano in his study. The one or two amateur pianists in our midst use the school music-room for this purpose. In fact, the only musician who is at all troublesome is Skinner. Skinner has a flute which he plays only when he wants to annoy his neighbours; and occasionally I do find him a nuisance. Skinner's flute, however, is a minor detail which I can bear with fortitude.

Ragging goes on in the passage at times, naturally; and frequently you get a noisy crowd on the landing talking cricket and school news.

On the whole, however, I find little cause for complaint. Most of the noises that penetrate the stout door of No. 1 are normal domestic sounds that simply form the customary background to my editorial work.

HARRY WHARTON.

TELEPHONE THOUGHT-READING! How It's Done!

By PETER HAZELDENE

The explanation of that thought-reading act I staged last week is quite a simple one. In fact, I'm surprised that nobody in the Remove has seen through it!

You will remember that Tom Brown selected a card out of a pack and rang up my sister to ask if the new "thought-reading" mistress at Cliff House could tell him what card it was. "Miss Jones"—I had given Brown the name—promptly came to the phone and told him quite rightly that it was the ten of diamonds.

How was it done? Here's the answer:

In actual fact, there is no new "thought-reading" mistress at Cliff House. The young lady who took over the phone from my sister was a friend of Marjorie's—Clara Trevlyn. I had previously arranged with Marjorie for Clara to play the part of the imaginary mistress, and I led Brown up the garden in getting him to phone Marjorie first.

"But how did Clara Trevlyn know the card, anyway?" you'll ask. That's easy!

I had previously supplied Marjorie with a code for all the cards in the pack. The ace of spades was "Miss Smith," the king "Miss Roberts," the two of clubs, "Miss Cartwright," and so on. The ten of diamonds, which Brown chose, "Miss Jones."

Naturally, I didn't mention the name of the supposed new mistress till I knew Brown's card. I couldn't! But as soon as I saw it was the ten of diamonds, all I had to do was to tell him to ask my sister for "Miss Jones."

"Miss Jones" in Marjorie's copy of the code was, of course, the ten of diamonds; and it only remained for her to call Clara and tell her to inform Brown that he had selected that card!

BUNTER 'THE ANGLER!'

Fishing No Solution to Tuck Shortage

When Bunter spotted Vernon-Smith and Redwing walk out of gates last Wednesday afternoon, loaded with fishing tackle and a big lunch basket, he swooped down on them like a hawk.

"I say, you fellows, going fishing?" he yapped.

"No, hunting," answered Smithy humorously.

"Then what are you carrying fishing-rod for?"

"To whip up our horses with, of course. Any more questions?" asked the Bounder cheerily. Bunter blinked at him suspiciously.

"You're going fishing, Smithy: that's the fact of the matter. Well, look here, I'll tell you what," he said, with a sudden burst of generosity. "I'll come with you and help you with the tuck."

"Thanks, but we shan't need any help, old fat man," said Redwing.

"We're going fishing—not feeding!"

"Oh, really, Redwing, don't be so beastly mean! You'll need someone to set out the beatings for you."

"Your mistake, old chap. We shan't need anyone like that, as we're not having tea!"

Bunter bestowed a fat wink on

the Remove anglers. "He, he, he! You don't fool me! I've got a pretty good idea of what's in that lunch basket. But don't let it worry you. I'll carry it for you if you like, and do the needful at the other end."

"Let the fat idiot carry it, then. Rody," grunted Vernon-Smith.

"We've told him there's no tuck in it, and if he still wants to carry it, it's his own lookout."

"Thanks, Smithy, old chap!" grinned Bunter, as he took the lunch basket and trotted beside the anglers.

"You may be jolly glad of me before the afternoon's out, anyway. Apart from the tea, I'm a tip-top fisherman. I may be able to help you with one or two expert hints."

So Bunter went fishing with Smithy and Redwing. He found it tiring work carrying the heavy lunch basket down to the Sark. But his exertions, he hoped, would be amply rewarded on arrival at the scene of operations.

Alas for the Owl's fond hopes! When they reached the river at last and Bunter fell on that lunch basket and opened it he had the shock of his life. Not a solitary eatable object of any kind did it contain! Only fishing

stools and angling odds and ends—that was all!

Bunter gazed at it and goggled. "I—I say, you fellows! Where's the tuck?"

"In my mackintosh pocket—all there is of it!" said Redwing, grinning.

"I've got two rolls and some butter. Nothing more!"

"Beasts!" roared Bunter. "How the dickens do you expect me to sur-

But Smithy wouldn't have that. No rolls-and-butter without fish was his idea! Reluctantly Bunter gathered brushwood and lit a fire; then, he helped with the fishing.

Strange as it may seem, Bunter was the only one to get a bite.

Both Smithy and Redwing were out of luck; they landed nothing. But Bunter had three separate catches. The first was an old boot, the second an empty petrol tin, and the third a real live fish!

It was the only fish they caught that afternoon, and Bunter had to cook it before he had the rolls-and-butter. It wasn't a very inviting-looking fish, either—a sort of stickle-back, all fins and knobs. Bunter, with a sniff, removed its interior and roasted it on the end of a stick.

He opened his mouth and shut his eyes and took a big, big bite.

That bite did it! Bunter gasped, spluttered, yelled, and clawed the fish from his mouth.

There is very little in the way of tuck that Bunter cannot eat, but that fish beat him!

Redwing offered him the rolls. Believe it or not, he declined them! He couldn't touch a thing till he got the taste of that fish from his mouth.

Bunter fled. And that's all there is to tell of the fat Owl's fishing expedition. He had been more successful than his hosts at the game—but he retired, all the same, a very "incomplete" angler!



PARTICULAR

Temple of the Fourth is just as particular about cricket pitches as he is about trousers. In both cases he insists on a perfect "crease."