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NO 119
VOL 4

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The Bounder of Greyfriars

A Splendid, Long,
Complete School Tale of
Harry Wharton & Co.

— BY —

FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Bounder Arrives.

"H ALLO, hallo, hallo! What the dickens is the matter with that chap?"

Bob Cherry was standing at the window, at the end of the Remove passage at Greyfriars, and looking out into the Close, when he uttered the exclamation. Bob Cherry's tone, and the expression of surprise upon his face, drew several other juniors to the spot at once.

"What chap?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Where?" queried Nugent.

Bob Cherry pointed out of the window.

"Look at him!"

The juniors glanced out of the window. It gave a view

of the old Close of Greyfriars, with its green elms, and the cricket-field in sight in the distance. Across the Close the juniors could see the lodge and the school gates; and from the direction of the gates was approaching the figure that had attracted Bob Cherry's attention.

And the moment the other juniors saw that figure, they, too, uttered exclamations of surprise.

"My only hat!" ejaculated Wharton.

"Something wrong with the chap," said Nugent. "Who is he? I've never seen him before."

"Must be a new chap!" said Mark Linley.

"I suppose so. But—"

"What's the matter with him?"

"The matterfulness is terrific," murmured Hurree Singh, the Nabob of Bhanipur, in his fearful and wonderful English.

And, indeed, there did seem to be something decidedly wrong with the stranger who was crossing the Close towards the house.

He was a fellow of about Wharton's own age, and perhaps a little taller, but not nearly so well-built or so well-developed. His weedy frame showed that he indulged little in athletic exercises, and that he was in all probability a stranger to the football and cricket-fields.

He was dressed very elegantly, however, in well-fitting clothes, with a silk hat and lavender kid gloves, and carried

a cane with a gold top. His watch-chain was of gold, too, and he wore a diamond tie-pin, the glitter of which could be seen from the window, though the youth was still at a good distance. There were rings on his fingers, too, of which the juniors caught the sparkle in the sun.

"A gorgeous bird, and no mistake," Bob Cherry remarked. "But—"

But it was not the gorgeousness of the stranger, striking enough as it was, that had attracted the attention and excited the surprise of the juniors.

There seemed to be something wrong with him—either he was ill, or—Wharton hardly liked to admit the alternative to his mind.

The youth was swaying unsteadily from side to side as he came on. Once he reeled, and only saved himself from falling by catching at a tree-trunk.

He remained holding on to the tree for some moments, while the juniors watched him curiously from the window.

What did it mean?

They wondered.

Then the youth started forward again, and approached the house with a curious, zigzagging step.

"My only hat!" murmured Nugent, in great astonishment. "I've seen Gosling walk like that, when he's been to the Pig and Whistle. But—"

"But this chap's a mere kid—it can't be that."

"Well—"

"Well, it's either that, or he's ill," said Bob Cherry. "I can't make it out. Let's go down and see if we can do anything for him."

"Right ho!"

"The right-hoffulness is terrific."

And Harry Wharton & Co., with puzzled and curious faces, turned away from the window, and descended the stairs.

The stranger had reached the steps of the School House by this time, and there he halted, gazing about him stupidly.

Several fellows who had caught sight of him in the Close came up, and stood round him, staring at him blankly.

Nothing quite like this had ever been seen before in the old Close of Greyfriars.

"My hat!" said Ogilvy, of the Remove. "What's that?"

"I say, you fellows, it must be the new chap," said Billy Bunter, who always knew everything. "I heard Mr. Quelch mention to Mr. Capper that there was a new chap coming to-day."

"What a lot of things you hear, Billy!"

"Oh, really, Brown—"

"This can't be a new chap for Greyfriars," said Tom Brown, the New Zealand junior, with a sniff of disgust.

"Look at the state he's in."

"Phew!"

"He's ill," said Russell.

Tom Brown snorted.

"Yes—same kind of illness that Gosling has, when he's been at the gin and water."

"It can't be possible!" exclaimed Hazeldene. "He's a mere kid. I say, kid, who are you, and where did you spring from?"

The youth was still holding on to the balustrade of the steps.

He turned a heavy glance upon Hazeldene.

"Is this Greyfriars?" he asked, in a thick voice.

"Yes."

"Oh! I'm Vernon-Smith!"

"Really?" grinned Hazeldene. "Sorry: I've never heard of you before. Are you coming into this school?"

"Yes. I—I—I'm Vernon-Smith—Herbert Tudor Vernon-Smith."

"Any more?" asked Bulstrode.

"Eh?"

"You're not Arthur Berkely Adolphus as well, by any chance?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Vernon-Smith stared stupidly at Bulstrode, evidently not understanding the burly Remove's pleasantry.

"Here, Wharton, here's a case for you!" exclaimed Hazeldene, as Harry Wharton and his comrades came out of the house.

"Here's a new kid for you to take under your wing."

"Better put him under the pump," said Bulstrode.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It might make him sober, anyway."

"Sober!" said Wharton.

"Look at the cad! You can see the state he's in."

Now that the chums of the Remove were close to the new fellow, there was no mistaking, certainly, the state he was in.

They looked at him with almost incredulous horror.

This was a new thing in their experience.

Men in a state of intoxication they had, unfortunately,

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seen; but a boy—and a boy only old enough to go into a junior form—

It was unbelievable.

But it was the case, all the same. This youth, who was certainly not more than fifteen years of age, if that, had been drinking.

"My hat!" murmured Wharton.

He was quite nonplussed for the moment.

The stranger came slowly up the steps of the house, the boys giving way for him to pass, and staring at him.

"Drunk, by Jove!" said Bulstrode.

"What! What is that?"

It was a sharp voice, and the juniors started a little as Mr. Quelch, the Form-master of the Remove, came out of the doorway.

Mr. Quelch glanced over the crowd of fellows with his clear, keen eyes, and then his glance rested upon Herbert Tudor Vernon Vernon-Smith.

Then he started.

"Ah! You are the new boy, I presume," he exclaimed.

"Are you Vernon-Smith?"

"Yes," said the youth thickly.

"Very good. But—" Mr. Quelch scanned the lad closely. "What is the matter with you? Are you ill?"

"I'm orright."

"You do not look all right. What is the matter with you?" demanded the Remove-master, in his deepest and sternest tones.

"N-n-n'thing."

Mr. Quelch gazed long and hard at Master Vernon-Smith.

Then, without a word more, but compressing his lips tightly, he grasped the boy by the shoulder, and marched him into the house.

Vernon-Smith made a slight attempt at resistance, but the strong grasp of the Remove-master forced him on, and he disappeared from the view of the astounded juniors.

They gazed at one another.

"My word!" said Nugent, at last.

"Great Scott!"

"Greyfriars is coming to something, and no mistake!"

"That chap was drunk!"

"Simply staggering."

"The staggerfulness was terrific."

Harry Wharton nodded.

"I can't make it out," he said. "There may have been some trick, you know; he may have had something shoved into his ginger-beer, for a jape."

"A pretty rotten sort of jape that would be!"

"I knew it to happen once. We don't want to be hard on him till we're certain. But if he's come here in that state of his own accord—"

"Order of the boot!" said Bob Cherry.

"Yes, rather!"

"And serve him right!"

And the juniors long discussed the strange occurrence. Nothing like that, certainly, had happened before in the history of Greyfriars, and they wondered what the outcome would be.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The New Boy Does not Go.

DR. LOCKE, the Head of Greyfriars, was sitting in his study.

There was a dark frown upon the usually kindly face of the doctor.

As a rule, the Head looked kindly and benevolent enough, and only at rare intervals his face would set in an expression of severity, when his anger was provoked by something that disturbed his serenity.

But now the Greyfriars fellows would hardly have known him.

His face was dark and frowning, and under his set brows his eyes were gleaming with a curious light, in which wrath and desperation were mingled.

An open letter was lying on the desk before him, and when the doctor's eyes fell upon it his brow grew still more dark.

He started out of a black reverie as a tap came at the door of the study.

With a hasty movement he slipped the letter into a drawer and closed it. Then, with a slight shake in his voice, he called out:

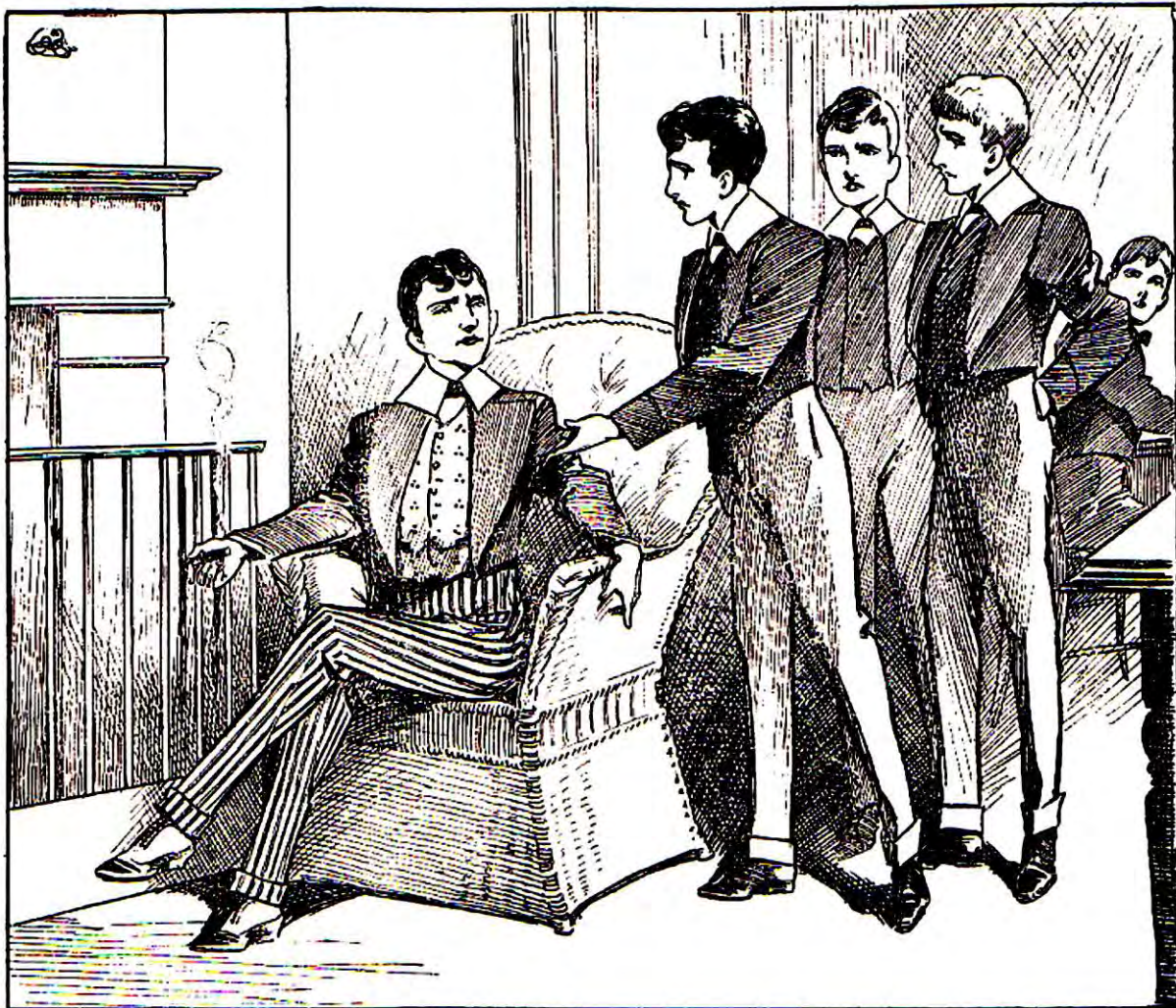
"Come in!"

The door opened, and Mr. Quelch entered, marching Master Vernon-Smith in before him, with a grasp on his collar which the young gentleman vainly tried to escape.

Dr. Locke looked at them, and rose to his feet.

Mr. Quelch closed the door, and marched the new boy up to the Head's desk.

Vernon-Smith gurgled faintly.



"You can't do as you like here, so throw that beastly thing away," said Harry. "I'm Wharton, Captain of the Remove."

"What—what does this mean, Mr. Quelch?" asked the Head, in amazement. "Who is this boy?"

"This is the new boy, sir."

"Oh! Vernon-Smith."

"Yes, sir."

The Head adjusted his glasses, and looked at the new boy. Master Vernon-Smith returned his gaze sullenly and half-defiantly.

"I was expecting you, Vernon-Smith," said the Head. "I have a letter from your father—"

"This boy, I believe, is to come into my Form, sir?" said the Remove-master.

"Quite so."

"Will you kindly look at him, sir, and note the state he is in?" said Mr. Quelch, in almost a sulphurous tone of suppressed indignation and disgust.

The Head started.

"I—I do not see—"

"He has been drinking, sir."

"Impossible!" ejaculated the Head.

"Look at him!"

Mr. Quelch released the new boy, who staggered and caught at the desk for support. The Head looked at him in horror and amazement.

"Vernon-Smith!" he exclaimed.

The boy stared at him.

"What is the matter with you?"

"Nothing."

"Is it possible that you have been—been consuming intoxicating liquor, sir?" thundered the Head.

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Vernon Smith looked at him sullenly without replying.

"Answer me, Vernon-Smith!"

"I—I—"

"Perhaps you have been the victim of a trick," said the Head, in a gentler tone. "That is possible, Mr. Quelch." The Remove-master gave a slight but expressive sniff. He did not think so for a moment. His opinion was that the new boy was a rank outsider—a young rascal who deserved to be flogged there and then and turned out of the school.

Mr. Quelch was a severe man, but not an unjust one. Probably his opinion of Master Vernon-Smith was one which others would share later.

"Now, Vernon-Smith," said the Head, "explain yourself, if you are able. Are you sufficiently collected to speak?"

The boy stared at him.

"I met a few friends at the station," he said. "We had some champagne."

The Head almost jumped.

"You—you had—had champagne?" he stammered.

"Yes."

"Dear me! Extraordinary!"

"I'm all right," said Vernon-Smith. "I'm only a little bit bosky."

"A little what?"

"Bosky."

And from the way Vernon-Smith made the announcement, it really seemed as if he were rather proud of the distinction.

NEXT
WEEK:

"THE CAD'S TRIAL."

A Splendid Tale of Harry Wharton & Co.
By FRANK RICHARDS.

"Am I to understand," gasped the Head, "that you—a boy of fifteen, are in the habit of drinking champagne?"

"I have it at home, when I like," said Vernon-Smith sullenly.

The Head made a helpless gesture.

"Extraordinary!" he gasped.

"The boy has had a peculiar training apparently," said Mr. Quelch. "He is certainly not fit to mix with the boys of Greyfriars."

"Ah—no—yes—"

"I suppose you will send him away, sir, as soon as he is in a fit condition to travel?" said Mr. Quelch, with a disdainful glance at Vernon-Smith.

The Head hesitated.

"Yes—er—no! Perhaps I can give him a chance."

Mr. Quelch looked at the Head in astonishment.

To allow the boy to remain after the exhibition he had made of himself seemed like one of the wildest impossibilities imaginable to the Remove-master.

He could only stare.

"Send me away!" ejaculated Master Vernon-Smith. "My governor would have something to say about that, I think."

"Silence, boy!"

"You ain't Head here," said Smith, with a resentful glance at Mr. Quelch.

The Remove-master gasped.

"I—I really do not understand this boy!" he ejaculated.

"Dr. Locke, is it possible that you think of allowing him to remain?"

The Head coloured.

"I must think it over, Mr. Quelch."

"Think of the example to the other boys, sir."

"I hope I know my duty, Mr. Quelch," said the Head, with an unusual sharpness of tone, and the Remove-master coloured in his turn.

"I beg your pardon, sir," he said quietly. "But—but I am so astounded by this amazing occurrence—"

"Quite so, Mr. Quelch. You may leave Master Vernon-Smith with me now."

"Certainly, sir."

Mr. Quelch left the room in a dazed state of mind. He could not understand the Head at all that afternoon. Had he been Head, Master Vernon-Smith would have been returning to the railway-station within ten minutes, under the charge of the school porter.

But Dr. Locke evidently thought differently.

The study door closed, and the Head remained silent for some minutes, his eyes fixed thoughtfully upon the new boy. Vernon-Smith was still holding on to the desk.

"You have acted in a foolish way, Smith," said the Head at last. "You have disgraced yourself and the school you have come to."

The new-boy was sullenly silent.

"You deserve to be sent straight back to your home," said the Head. "I hope, however, that for your own sake you will have sense enough to be careful never to let anything of this sort occur again."

Vernon-Smith did not answer.

"You will now go to your dormitory, and lie down," said the Head, ringing the bell. "You will not leave the dormitory till you are quite recovered from the effects of the drink you have so wickedly and foolishly consumed."

"I—"

"That is enough, Smith. But for certain considerations, I should be strongly tempted to take the advice of your future Form-master, and send you back to your father."

A sneer came upon the face of the new boy for a moment. But he dropped his eyes as the Head's glance turned sharply upon him.

Trotter, the school page, appeared in answer to the bell. He looked at Vernon-Smith out of the corners of his eyes.

"Trotter," said the Head, "you will show Master Vernon-Smith the way to the Remove dormitory. Pray assist him on the way, as he is not quite well—not quite himself."

"Yes, sir."

"You may go, Smith. You will not leave the dormitory until you are quite recovered."

And Vernon-Smith, leaning upon the page, left the study.

The door closed.

Then the mask of calmness that the Head had assumed during the interview fell, and his face grew darkly lined and troubled, almost haggard.

"What a terrible boy!" he muttered. "A worthy son of his father! Oh, and I cannot send him away from the school! I dare not."

The Head, rested his elbows on the desk before him, and his face sank into his hands.

For a long time he sat there in an attitude of the deepest dejection. Greyfriars would have been surprised if they could have seen their head-master at that moment.

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THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Shortage in No. 1 Study.

HARRY WHARTON & Co. went into No. 1 Study to tea, looking and feeling perplexed. The amazing state in which the new boy had arrived at Greyfriars was common talk; and when Mr. Quelch marched him off to the Head's study, the juniors had come to the conclusion that that would be the end of it.

But evidently it was not.

The new boy had not departed—he was at Greyfriars—evidently he was to remain at Greyfriars. Word had been given to the Renovites that the new boy was not quite well, that he was lying down in the Remove dormitory, and was not to be disturbed.

Whereat the juniors sniffed.

"I know the kind of illness he's got," Nugent remarked, as the chums of No. 1 came into their study. "Gosling gets it—and he lies down for it, too; I've seen him lying under the trees in the Close, once—three sheets in the wind."

Wharton nodded.

"It was pretty plain," he said. "But I suppose Smith has given some explanation. Some rotter might have put some stuff in his lemonade."

"I don't think so."

"As a matter of fact, he's not got a nice chivvy," said Harry. "It looked as if he was in the habit of indulging himself—and I shouldn't be surprised to learn that he was a glutton like Bunter, as well as a drinker—"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"And a smoker like Bulstrode, too. If so, we've got a jolly good specimen in the Form. But this is just the place to cure him."

"I don't know. There are chaps in the Sixth with just the same taste—Loder, and Ionides, and Carne, and the rest—and they might take him up to fag for them."

Wharton's brow darkened.

"Either he'll stop that sort of thing, or the Remove will get too hot to hold him," he said. "But go easy at first—he mayn't be to blame, and when it's a question of whether a kid of fifteen has been drinking, I think the poor rotter is entitled to the benefit of the doubt."

"Well, that's right."

"The rightfulness is terrific!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Get some coal out for the fire, Bunter."

Billy Bunter blinked doubtfully at the chums of the Remove.

"What are you going to have for tea?" he asked.

"Tea," replied Nugent.

"Oh, really, you know! I mean what are you going to have to eat?"

"What there is left."

"But there isn't anything left. Shall I cut down to the tuckshop, and get-in some grub?" asked Bunter. "I don't mind the trouble. I'd do anything to oblige fellows I like."

"Especially fetching in grub," grinned Nugent.

"Oh, really—"

"But, as a matter of fact, funds are short," said Nugent. "We're going to have a plain tea. There's bread and cheese—"

"There isn't. I finished up the bread and cheese immediately after school," said Bunter. "I got awfully peckish in afternoon lessons."

"You young porpoise! There's the half of the veal pie, then!"

"There isn't! I finished that a quarter of an hour ago."

"You cannibal! Then we've got nothing left but the seed-cake!" exclaimed Nugent, in disgust.

"Oh, really, Nugent, I—I—"

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"You haven't finished that, too, have you?" roared Nugent.

Billy Bunter blinked at him indignantly. "Of course I have! I took it into afternoon school with me, and ate it in the geography lesson. I suppose you didn't want me to faint from want of nourishment. You know I've got a delicate constitution, and can only keep going by taking plenty of grub."

Harry Wharton burst into a laugh. "That means that there's nothing left, I suppose," he exclaimed.

Nugent threw open the cupboard door, and looked into it wrathfully. There was certainly nothing to eat there.

"Nothing here," he said. "The honourable cupboard is in the same condition as that of the esteemed Mem-sahib Hubbard," remarked Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh, "when she proceeded there to obtain a boneful morsel for her canine companion."

"It's bare, and no mistake," said Wharton. He looked at his watch. "Luckily we're in time for tea in Hall."

"Come on, then," said Nugent, making for the door.

"I say you fellows—"

"Shut up, Bunter."

"But I say, I'm hungry; I want my tea, you know. Shall I cut down to the tuckshop and get some ham and eggs?"

"Certainly!" said Nugent, with a grin. "Good! How much shall I get?" asked the fat junior, rubbing his hands with anticipation. "You fellows can get the fire lighted and the cloth laid while I'm gone, and I'll jolly soon have 'em cooked when I get back. How much?"

"Oh, say a dozen eggs—"

"Better say two dozen, Nugent. You fellows will want some, too."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at. How much ham?"

"Oh, a pound!"

"Two pounds would be on the safe side."

"All right; two pounds, then."

"Good! I'll be back in a jiffy. Shall I bring a cake, too? Seed or plum?"

"Oh, both!"

"Any tarts?"

"Yes; three dozen."

"Good! Twopenny ones, I suppose?"

"Certainly."

"Jolly good! Lemme see, that's two dozen eggs—I think you said two dozen—"

"Just as you like," grinned Nugent. Wharton and Hurree Singh were chuckling, but Bunter could not see any cause for merriment.

"Two dozen eggs, two pounds of ham, a seed and a plum cake, three dozen tarts—twopenny ones," said Bunter.

"Good! Hand over the cash."

Nugent stared.

"What oash?"

"The cash for the grub. Mrs. Mumble won't give you tick for a lot like that, you know—in fact, she won't give me tick at all. She's a most unbusinesslike woman."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I can do it all under a sovereign," said Bunter.

"Go hon!"

"Well, hand over the cash then, and I'll buzz off."

"You'll have to buzz off without that," said Nugent, with a grin. "Of course, I understood that you were standing treat."

"What?"

"I've simply enumerated the things you can get if you like. You may as well add a dozen cream-puffs and some doughnuts. I like them."

"And some bananas for my esteemed self," said Hurree Singh.

"And a veal pie for me," said Wharton, laughing.

Bunter blinked at them.

"Oh, I say, you fellows—"

But the chums of the Remove did not stay to listen to what Bunter had to say. They went out of the study laughing, and downstairs to tea. Bunter ran after them on the stairs, greatly excited.

"I say, you fellows, I suppose you're only joking! You don't really want me to have tea in Hall, do you?"

"Not at all," said Wharton. "We'd rather you stayed out."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Wharton! I mean, I—I can't live on that kind of grub, you know," said Bunter, following them downstairs. "I want something decent to keep up my strength. Look here, suppose you chaps have tea in Hall, as you can stand it, and I'll have some at the tuckshop? I could do it on a couple of bob—"

"Go ahead, then."

"I'm short of money, you see, through being disappointed. THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 119.

about a postal-order. If one of you chaps will make me a temporary loan—"

"Haven't I told you that we're short of tin, ass?"

"Well, if you wanted to raise money on your cricket-bat, Wharton, I know a chap who would buy it at half-price."

Wharton turned on the fat junior, grasped him by the shoulders, and slammed him against the banisters with a suddenness that took the breath right out of Billy Bunter.

He wriggled in Wharton's grasp, blinking at him like a codfish.

"Ow! Groo! Yah!"

"Look here, you young burglar," said Wharton sternly.

"If you play any more of your tricks in that line, you'll get squashed. Mind, if you start selling anything in the study, we'll make you squirm. You savvy?"

"Ow! Oh, really—"

"Don't forget it, then!"

And Harry Wharton released the fat junior, who sank down gasping on the stairs, and the chums went on to the dining-room. Billy Bunter had sold Wharton's last bat, and there had been trouble, but Bunter realised that there would be more serious trouble this time if he sold the new one.

He grunted discontentedly.

"Beasts!" he murmured. "I've a jolly good mind to change into some other study. They've no right to starve me in this way. Beasts. Beasts!"

And Bunter picked himself up and grunted again.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Cake for Bunter.

BOB CHERRY grinned at Harry Wharton and his companions as they came into the dining-room. Bob was there, with Mark Linley and Wun Lung the Chinese, his study-mates.

"Same state?" he asked. "Stony?"

Wharton laughed.

"Not quite so bad as that," he replied, "but very near it. Billy Bunter has been in the study. You know what that means."

"Ha, ha! Yes."

"And as funds are low, we're coming down to tea."

"Same here. We're busted. Even Wun Lung, who's usually rolling in filthy lucre, hasn't a solitary half-crown to bless himself with," said Bob. "It's awfully reckless of Wun Lung, because I always rely upon him as a last resource."

The little Chinese grinned.

"Me sorry," he murmured.

"You see, he's been standing feeds to the Second Form ever since his minor came," Bob Cherry remarked. "That's where the money goes. Young Hop Hi is using up all his cash, and hence these tears—I mean, hence this taking tea in Hall with our beloved teachers."

"There's a great deal of jaw going on at this table," remarked Loder, the prefect, who had the honour of taking the head of the Remove table when Mr. Quelch was absent.

"Some of you shut up."

"Rotter!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"I never had such a crowd of young hooligans in my charge," said Loder, with a scowl along the table.

"My hat! And you haven't been a giddy prefect a fortnight!" said Nugent, under his breath. "Rats!"

"Keep your heads shut, you young ruffians!"

"Beast!" murmured Bob.

"Did you speak, Cherry?"

"Eh?"

"Did you speak?"

"Speak!"

"Don't repeat my words!" exclaimed the Sixth-Form bully savagely. "Did you speak or not? Yes or no?"

"I—"

"Answer me, Cherry!"

"I can't."

"What! Why can't you?"

"Not without repeating your words, and you've just told me not to," said Bob Cherry, with cool innocence. "I should have to say either yes or no, you know, and if I say either yes or no, I repeat your words, because you said yes or no, you know. Of course, I'll do as you like. I only want to know, you know—no larks."

A giggle ran up and down the Remove table while Bob Cherry was making this explanation, and Loder's face grew quite crimson.

Bob was looking perfectly innocent, but the prefect knew very well that the junior was "pulling his leg."

"Cherry, you will take fifty lines," said Loder, breathing hard through his nose.

"What for?"

"A hundred lines! Now answer my question. Did you speak?"

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"May I repeat your words?"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Silence! You may answer my question, Cherry."
 "Yes, I spoke," said Bob.
 "Ah! What did you say?"
 Bob Cherry hesitated.
 "Nothing particular, Loder."
 "Tell me what you said."
 "You see, I'd rather not. I—"
 "You will tell me, Cherry," said Loder, with a gleam in his eyes. The thought occurred to him that he had lighted upon some secret of the juniors, and he was determined to have it out into the light. "Tell me at once."
 "I'd rather not."
 "I order you to."
 "Oh, very well! I said you were a beast," said Bob Cherry resignedly.

There was a joyous chuckle up and down the table. Loder turned purple. He had got it now, and he realised too late that he would have done well to leave that inquiry unmade. "Cherry!" he gasped at last.
 "Yes."
 "You will take five hundred lines."
 "My only hat!"
 "Now, silence at table!"
 And Loder scowled savagely down the table, and the juniors were silent, save for an occasional chuckle, which the prefect pretended not to hear.
 Billy Bunter looked into the dining-room, and saw the weak tea and the bread-and-butter, and sniffed. But there was nothing up in the study, so he came in. Bread and scrape and wish-wash, as the juniors called the school tea, was better than nothing.

The fellows were allowed to have tea in their own studies if they liked, or to bring any delicacy they cared for into the dining-room. When they were out of funds they did neither—and they generally were out of funds towards the end of the week.

The Remove table was fuller and fuller at tea-time as the week grew older, and the diet there was sparer and more spare.

Bunter grunted discontentedly as he dropped into a seat beside Wharton.

"Nice stuff this is for chaps to eat!" he remarked.
 "It's good enough," said Wharton.
 Bunter snorted.
 "I want something a bit more solid than this," he growled.
 "It's all right for you fellows. You haven't got a delicate constitution to keep up."
 "Bunter!" rapped out the prefect.
 "Ye-es, Loder?"
 "Hold your tongue. There's too much jaw at this table."
 "Oh, really, Loder—"
 "Take fifty lines!"

Bunter grunted, and relapsed into silence. Loder had not long been a prefect, and his authority was new to him, and he was evidently spreading himself, as Bob Cherry would have put it, and enjoying it like a child with a new toy.

The fat junior ate bread-and-butter and frowned over his big spectacles. He looked up and down the table. Bulstrode was having his tea there, and he had a jar of marmalade. Skinner had a chunk of cake. There was nothing else on the table but bread-and-butter, except on Loder's plate. Loder had ham and eggs.

Bunter cast a longing glance at the ham and eggs, but they were far beyond his hopes. But he had a faint hope of getting some of the marmalade, or the cake.

"I say, Bulstrode, pass the marmalade, will you?" he said.
 "No," said Bulstrode promptly.
 "Oh, really, you know—"
 "Nothing to waste on a fat beast," said Bulstrode.
 "Will you pass the cake, Skinner?"
 "Not much," said Skinner.
 "I'll stand you some at the tuckshop after tea, Skinner."
 "Rats!"
 "I'm expecting a postal-order by the evening post—"
 "Bosh!"

Bunter gave it up. He ate bread-and-butter again, and eyed the other fellows' provisions hungrily. Loder was busy with ham and eggs. The Greyfriars' ventriloquist looked at him, and wondered if he dared, and hunger gave him unusual courage. Bunter cleared his throat, and proceeded to imitate Loder's voice.

"Skinner!"
 "Yes, Loder?" said Skinner, without a suspicion that it was not the prefect speaking.

Loder had just turned away to speak to Carne, who was passing the table going out. He did not hear a word now that was uttered at the Remove table. It was an excellent opportunity for Bunter, the ventriloquist, and he did not neglect it.

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"THE RYLCOMBE CADET CORPS." A Grand, Complete School Tale in THE EMPIRE LIBRARY. Price One Halfpenny.

"Skinner, pass the cake to Bunter at once!"
 Skinner gave a gasp of dismay.
 "Eh?"
 "Pass the cake to Bunter!"
 "But—"
 "Take fifty lines, Skinner!"
 Skinner stared blankly. Loder had not turned his head, but his voice was plain enough. Skinner, with a savage look, passed the cake to Bunter.
 "Thank you, Skinner!" said the Owl of the Remove.
 "Oh, rats!"

Billy Bunter did not mind Skinner's ungracious manner; he had the cake, and that was enough for him. He wired into the cake at express speed.

Harry Wharton, who had seen the trick, did not know whether to laugh or be angry. He tapped Bunter on the arm, and the fat junior looked up, with his mouth full.

"I—I'm sincerely sorry, Wharton, but I can't let you have any of the cake," he spluttered; "there isn't enough for me, and—"

"I don't want any cake, porpoise! No more of your tricks, you young cad, that's all!" said Harry, in a low voice. "You have no right to Skinner's cake!"

"Oh, really—"
 "Shut up, there!"

And there was silence at the Remove table again, save for the rapid munching of the jaws of William George Bunter as he devoured the cake.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Once too Often.

THERE was an unusual silence at the Remove table. Three or four of the juniors had detected the trick played by the Greyfriars' ventriloquist, but they did not feel called upon to give Bunter away.

The rest were simply amazed.
 Loder had always been a bully. Ever since he had become a prefect he had also been a high-handed tyrant. If he had made Skinner give him the cake, no one would have been surprised. But to make Skinner give it to Bunter was inexplicable.

The Removeites stared at Skinner and stared at Loder and stared at Bunter and stared at the cake. They did not have much opportunity for staring at the last-named, however. The cake was vanishing too rapidly.

Carne passed on to the door, and Loder looked round again, and went on with his tea. Bunter finished the cake to the last crumb.

Skinner sat scowling. He had lost his cake, and gained—as he believed—fifty lines. It was not pleasant for Skinner.

Billy Bunter blinked up and down the table. He had succeeded so well at the first essay that, like Alexander, he sighed for fresh worlds to conquer. And his hunger was not appeased. What would have been a good meal to another fellow was only a gentle appetiser to Bunter.

There was nothing left to raid but Bulstrode's marmalade, and Bunter cast an enterprising eye upon it.

Marmalade would make the bread-and-butter go down better, anyway, and there was an unlimited supply of bread-and-butter.

Loder was intent upon his plate, and Bunter decided it safe.

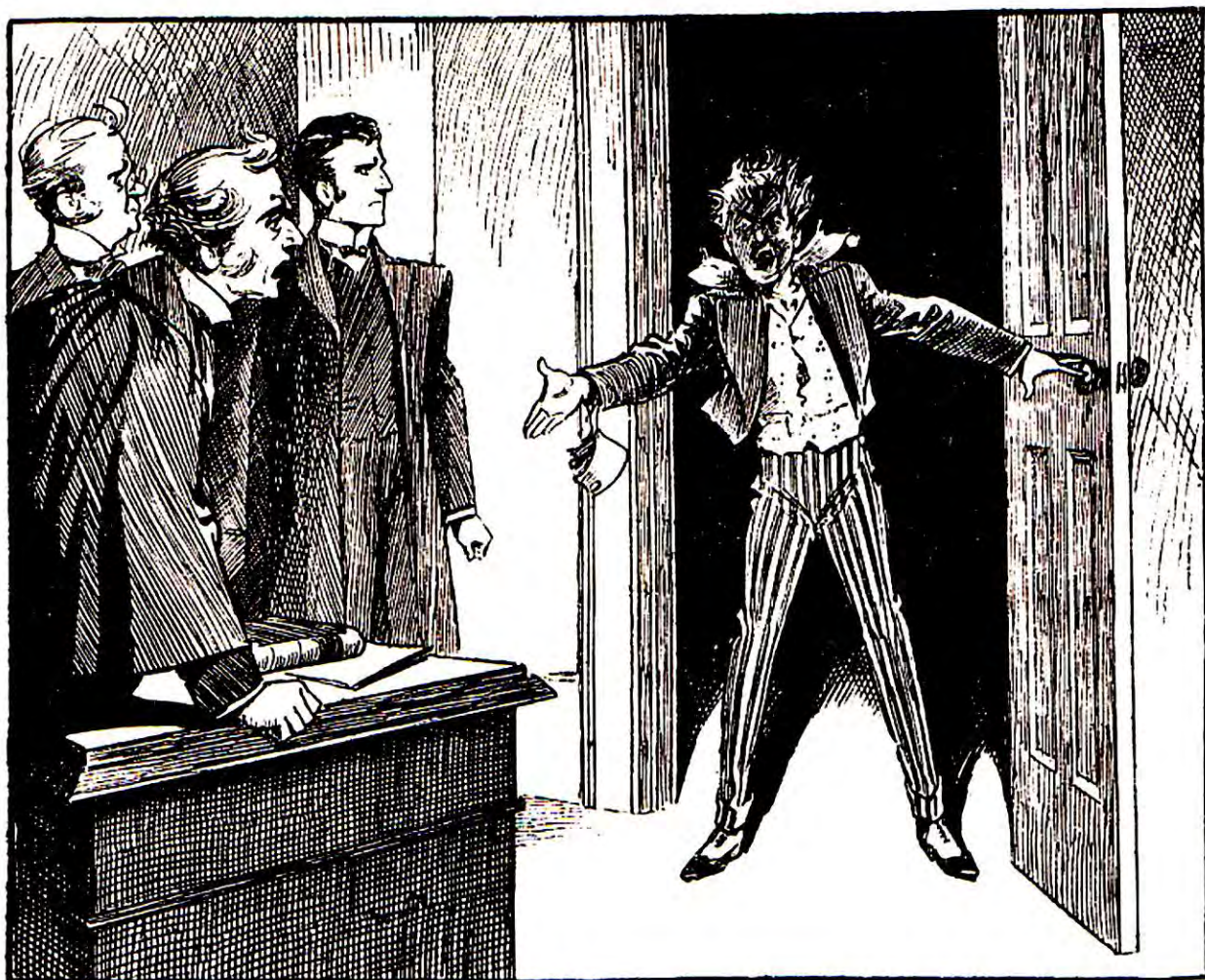
"Bulstrode!" rapped out the voice of the prefect.
 Bulstrode looked up.
 "Yes, Loder?"
 Loder stared at him.
 "I didn't speak," he said.
 Bulstrode stared, too.
 "You—you called me," he said.
 "Don't be an idiot! I didn't speak!"
 "But—"
 "Take fifty lines!"

Bulstrode shut his jaws hard. He was certain that Loder had spoken, but it was useless to argue with the prefect. He did not want to get an imposition of five hundred lines like Bob Cherry.

Bunter quaked for a minute, and waited. Wharton grasped his arm.

"Billy, stop it!"
 "Oh, really, Wharton—"
 "I tell you—"
 "I will keep order at this table!" said Loder. "Take a hundred lines, Wharton!"
 Harry bit his lip.

"Yes, Loder."
 "And now keep silence!"
 "Yes, Loder."
 "Bulstrode!"
 Bulstrode looked up as he heard his name again, but did



"I'm Vernon-Smith!" stuttered the new boy, stammering in his rage! "I've—I've been treated like this—like this by the Remove cads!"

not speak. Billy Bunter, with one eye nervously blinking at Loder, went on, imitating the prefect's voice.

"Bulstrode, pass the marmalade to Bunter!"

Bulstrode bit his lip hard.

"It's my marmalade!" he said rebelliously.

Loder glared at him.

"Will you be quiet, Bulstrode? I tell you I will not have this table like a crowd of hooligans on a beano! Take fifty lines!"

"Look here——"

"Bulstrode!"

"I'm jolly well not going to give Bunter my marmalade!" howled Bulstrode. "I'll appeal to the Head! It's my marmalade!"

"What are you talking about?"

"Marmalade!"

"Who told you to give it to Bunter?" said Loder. "I heard someone say so."

"You did!"

"What!"

"You did!"

"Bulstrode! Take——"

"I don't care!" howled Bulstrode. "You told me to give it to Bunter, and all the fellows will bear me out!"

"Yes; you did, Loder!" chorused the whole table.

Loder grew scarlet with anger.

"I said nothing of the sort!" he exclaimed. "Why should I tell Bulstrode to give Bunter his marmalade?"

"Well, you did!" exclaimed Skinner. "And you made me give my cake to the fat beast, too! It's a jolly shame!"

"Rotten!"

"Shame!"

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NEXT

WEEK:

"THE CAD'S TRIAL."

Loder almost gasped.

"Have you all gone mad?" he exclaimed. "I never spoke to Skinner about his cake!"

"Oh!"

"Draw it mild!"

The Remove were getting bolder. Each found courage in the noise made by the rest. The crowd felt their strength, as it were, and grew rebellious.

Loder glared at the noisy table.

"Hold your tongues!" he exclaimed fiercely.

"Well, you told Bulstrode——"

"You told Skinner——"

"I tell you——"

"You did! You did! You did!"

"You confounded brats——"

"Yah! You did!"

"Silence! I——"

"You do not seem to be keeping very good order at your table, Loder," said Wingate, of the Sixth, the captain of Greyfriars, coming along.

The prefect was gasping with rage.

"The brats have got some plot up amongst them!" he snarled. "One of them has been imitating my voice, I think, and the rest back him up!"

"Oh!"

"Rats!"

"He told Bulstrode——"

"He told Skinner——"

"Shut up!" said Wingate, and the Removes shut up. There was never any disputing of a command from the head of the Sixth. "Now then, what's the trouble? You explain, Wharton!"

A Splendid Tale of Harry Wharton & Co.
By FRANK RICHARDS.

Harry turned red.
 "If—if you don't mind, Wingate, I—I'd rather not!" he stammered.
 Wingate looked at him sharply.
 "Why not? You know the facts, I suppose?"
 "Ye-es!"
 Wingate understood. Wharton knew the facts only too well, and did not want to be called upon to betray the author of the joke.

"Well, you explain, Skinner!"
 "Loder told me to give my cake to Bunter," said Skinner. "Then he told Bulstrode to give his marmalade to Bunter. Now he says he didn't!"
 "I said nothing of the sort!" said Loder heatedly.
 "Oh! Oh! Oh! Draw it mild!"
 "That is not the way to speak to a prefect!" said Wingate reprovingly. "Bunter!"
 "Ye-es, Wingate?"
 "What have you done with the cake?"
 "I—I—I've eaten it, Wingate! I—I'm awfully hungry, you know, and there's no tea in the study, and—and the fellows treat me very meanly there, and—and—"
 "I believe I have heard that you are a ventriloquist, Bunter—"

"Oh, no; I—"
 "And very clever at imitating voices!"
 "I—I'm jolly clever, I know; but—but I can't imitate voices, and—"
 "Don't tell lies, Bunter!"
 "I—I'm not, you know. I—I wouldn't imitate Loder's voice for anything, and as for telling Skinner to give me his cake, I never thought of it. Besides—"
 "You young sweep!" exclaimed Skinner. "I've been done!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "It is a trick of Bunter's, Loder," said Wingate. "Bunter, you will come into my study, please!"
 "I—I haven't finished my tea, Wingate!"
 "You've finished the cake, though, and that's enough! Come!"
 "But—"

Wingate made a movement towards the fat junior, and Bunter jumped up in a hurry.
 "It's all right, Wingate; I'm coming!"
 And he went.

Five minutes later he came out of Wingate's study, and from the attitudes he assumed as he went down the passage, he appeared to be trying to tie himself into a series of knots.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Vernon-Smith is Bad Tempered.

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH sat up on the bed in the Remove dormitory.
 He was looking very flushed and untidy; his hair was rumpled, and his eyes were heavy with unrefreshing sleep.

He glared up and down the dormitory, rather than looked.

Vernon-Smith had awakened in a savage temper, which was not surprising, considering that he had been sleeping off the effects of drink.

He grunted to himself as he sat up.
 The sunset was red in the western sky, and the golden light gleamed on the panes of the dormitory windows, and fell in golden patches on the floor.

Vernon-Smith blinked at the windows, and blinked up and down the room.

"I wonder how long I've been here?" he muttered.
 And he growled under his breath.

The effect of the champagne had passed off as far as the fuddling of his head was concerned. The only effect that remained was in the state of utter mental and bodily discomfort.

His head was aching, his eyes were heavy, he felt sick and languid, and his temper was very raw.

"Something woke me up," he growled. "Hallo! What's that?"

A fat junior had entered the dormitory.
 It was doubtless the opening of the door that had awakened Vernon-Smith from his uneasy slumber.

He blinked at the newcomer.
 It was Billy Bunter, but Smith had not noticed him among the crowd of juniors on his arrival, so the Owl of the Remove was quite a stranger to him.

Bunter did not look at him. Bunter was groaning, and he undo his way to his washstand, and began to bathe his fat hands, which were very red. Vernon-Smith could guess that the fat junior had just been caned.

"Hallo!" he said.

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Billy Bunter blinked round through his big spectacles.

"Is that you, Nugent?" he said.
 "It's me."
 "Who's me?"
 "My name's Vernon-Smith."
 "Oh, the new chap! You should say 'It's I,' not 'It's me,'" said Bunter. "Where the dickens were you brought up, Smith?"

Vernon-Smith scowled.
 "Don't give me any of your cheek," he said, sliding off the bed, and sitting on the edge of it. "I'm not in a humour to stand it."

"Oh, rats! You're only a new chap," said Bunter. "Go and eat coke!"

Vernon-Smith rose from the bed, stepped towards Bunter, and dealt him a sounding smack on the side of the head, Billy Bunter gave a roar.

"Ow! Yow!"
 "Do you want another?" asked Smith, with a scowl. "If you do, you've only got to say so."

"Oh! Yow!" Bunter turned fiercely on the new boy.
 "Did you do that on purpose?" he demanded, in a truculent tone.

"Yes, I did!" said Vernon-Smith. "What about it?"
 "Oh, n-nothing," said Bunter. "I—I only wanted to know."

Vernon-Smith grunted, and turned away.
 Bunter blinked after him. He dried his hands on the towel, and looked thoughtfully at the new boy. Bunter did not very much resent the smack on the head. His mind was full of more important things.

"I say, Smith—" he began.
 "My name is Vernon-Smith."

"Of course—my mistake. I'm sincerely sorry. I was going to say that tea's over in Hall and I suppose you haven't had any?"

"No!" said Smith, scowling.
 "Well, I'll show you the way to the tuckshop if you like," said Bunter hospitably. "I always believe in looking after a new chap. I'm famous for it."

Vernon-Smith did not reply.
 "Coming to the tuckshop?" asked Billy Bunter, in the most friendly manner.

"No; I'm not hungry."
 "Well, that's curious, as you haven't had any tea," said Bunter, in astonishment. "I always got hungry, even without missing meals. Are you ill?"

"I'm feeling rather rocky."
 "Ah, that's the drink," said Bunter. "Fancy a chap of your age getting intoxicated! What an upbringing you must have had!"

"I do as I like at home," said Vernon-Smith savagely.
 "I suppose I've been a fool—the fellows led me on to take too much. But I shall do as I like. My father is a millionaire."

Bunter pricked up his ears.
 "Oh, really! A millionaire?"
 "Yes," said Vernon-Smith. "I should think you've heard of Smith, the Cotton King?"

"Yes, of course I have," agreed Bunter, though, as a matter of fact, he hadn't, and he was wondering what a cotton king might be like. "He's—he's awfully famous, isn't he?"

"Yes—in the City, anyway."

"I suppose he allows you lots of pocket-money?" said Bunter enviously.

"As much as I like."

"How ripping!" said the fat junior, with a sigh. "I'm kept awfully short, and the fellows in my study treat me meanly, too, so I have rather a rotten time. I'm a delicate chap, too, and need plenty of good, nourishing food to keep up my strength. Did you say you were coming to the tuckshop?"

"No, I didn't!"

"Ahem! Perhaps you wouldn't mind lending me a sovereign till to-morrow morning?" said Bunter blandly. "You see, the case stands like this: I'm expecting a postal-order, and owing to some delay in the post it hasn't arrived. It may be here to-night, but it's certain not to be later than to-morrow morning. If you wouldn't mind making me a small loan till it comes—"

"But I would!" said Vernon-Smith grimly.

"Oh! I—I don't mean exactly a loan; it would really be cashing the postal-order in advance. Of course, I should hand the postal-order over to you immediately it arrives."

"Oh, cheese it!"

"Ten shillings would just see me through—"

"Go and eat coke!"

"Five bob would be all right—"

"Pah!"

"Look here! Will you lend me a bob?" said Bunter desperately.

"No, I won't."

There wasn't anything undecided about Vernon-Smith's tone. He evidently meant what he said. Billy Bunter blinked at him in silence for a few moments. Vernon-Smith had filled a basin with water, and began to bathe his forehead.

"Well, of all the mean rotters, I think you take the cake!" said Bunter, convinced at last that there was nothing to be got from the new boy, and bethinking himself rather late that it was time he asserted his dignity and independence as a member of the Remove Form. "So you are coming into the Remove, are you? You'd be a disgrace to any Form in any school! A chap who arrives at school drunk—"

"Hold your tongue!" said Vernon-Smith savagely.

"Drunk and disorderly—"

"Get out of the room!"

"Yes, I'm likely to get out of my own dormitory at your orders!" said Bunter, blinking angrily. "You—you parvenu! You dirty, new rich—you mean outsider! Why—"

Billy Bunter got no further.

Vernon-Smith swept the sponge he was holding through the air, squeezing it at the same time, and a shower of cold water splashed into Bunter's face.

"Groo!" roared Bunter. "Ger-rooh!"

"Now get out!"

"Yow! I—I—"

Vernon-Smith ran towards him. Billy Bunter dodged out of the dormitory door into the passage. As he did so Vernon-Smith kicked, and his boot caught Bunter with considerable force.

"Yaroo!" roared Bunter.

He landed in the passage on his hands and knees.

Vernon-Smith slammed the door after him with a slam that rang half through the house.

Billy Bunter squirmed round and blinked at the dormitory door, but he did not venture to open it again. He picked himself up slowly and painfully, and limped away downstairs, to relate his wrongs to an unsympathetic Remove.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Vernon-Smith Does Not Smoke.

A SHOWER of rain had driven the cricketers indoors. Remove fellows hung about the passages and the common-room, staring out of the windows, and making uncomplimentary remarks about the weather.

Harry Wharton had started a practice match with the Remove team. Greyfriars were soon meeting St. Jim's on the cricket-field, and Harry was anxious to get his side into the finest possible form.

Even Nugent, the placid and good-tempered, growled as he looked out of the window of the common-room, and saw the rain beating down on the pitch.

"Rotten!" he said.

"Beastly!" agreed Bob Cherry. "It will soon be over, though."

"No more cricket to-day."

"No; but to-morrow—"

"Blow to-morrow!" said Nugent crossly.

And Bob Cherry laughed.

"It's rotten!" said Wharton. "Never mind! There's one thing, we're in jolly good form. We beat Rylcombe Grammar School, and they were a good team."

"Yes, that's so."

"And we'll beat St. Jim's, or give them a hard tussle, anyway. But what are we going to do? No more cricket to-day."

"'Nother hour of daylight, too," growled Tom Brown.

"Now, in New Zealand—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"In New Zealand—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Brown had no chance to finish. When he said, "Now, in New Zealand," the fellows always knew what was coming, and this time they weren't taking any. Tom Brown joined good-humouredly in the laugh.

"What do you say to leap-frog up and down the passage?" suggested Skinner.

Wharton shook his head.

"Too much row."

"We've done it before."

"Yes, but Quelch is in now, and Quelch isn't in the best of tempers. Something's annoyed him."

"The new fellow, I suppose," said Nugent.

"Most likely. We had better not make too much row," said Harry. "I saw Quelch go into his study, and he was looking awfully worried and waxy. I—"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Let's bump Bunter," suggested Ogilvy.

"Oh, really, Ogilvy—"

"He ought to be bumped, you know, for his rotten trick this tea-time."

"I—I say, you fellows, don't play the goat, you know. I'm suffering fearfully. That beast Wingate laid it on like—like

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anything. My hands are aching dreadfully. And then that new beast—"

"Have you been falling foul of the Vernon-Smith?" asked Bob Cherry, laughing.

"Well, he's kicked me out of the dorm."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at. It hurts. I think you fellows ought to rag him. Fancy kicking a chap out of his own dorm."

"Why didn't you lick him, Bunter?"

"Well, you see, I—I was afraid I might hurt him too much," said Bunter. "If I got into one of my fearful tempers and went for him he might be seriously hurt. Now—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I think a Form ragging is the right thing. He's a horrid beast, you know—drinks, and wakes up in a bad temper, like a grown-up man. I don't think he ought to be allowed to stay in the school. He says his father is a millionaire, and he has as much pocket-money as he likes."

"Then you'd better chum up with him, Bunter; he will suit you."

"Oh, he's awfully mean. He cut up rusty over a small loan I mentioned to him—simply cashing a postal-order in advance. He wouldn't do it."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here he comes."

Vernon-Smith entered the common-room.

He glanced round the room with a scowling brow, evidently still suffering in his temper from the effects of the champagne. The juniors looked at him curiously enough.

A lad of under fifteen who indulged in champagne, and ventured to arrive at the school while under its influence, was something of a curiosity.

There had been all sorts and conditions of new boys at Greyfriars, but never one exactly like Herbert Vernon-Smith before.

Vernon-Smith glanced round him, and walked up to the fire. Summer as it was, there was a fire in the common-room, for the evening was rainy and chilly. Vernon-Smith sat down in the easiest chair he could find, and put his feet on the fender. He occupied the exact centre of the hearth, apparently believing himself fully entitled to as much space as he desired.

The Removites saw him fumbling in his pockets, and watched him curiously.

He had not spoken a word to anyone in the room, and apparently had no desire to do so. They wondered what he was going to do.

He drew a leather case from his pocket, opened it, and disclosed a row of cheroots. He took a matchbox from another pocket.

The juniors gasped.

Lawless youths, with a desperate sense of wickedness and adventure, sometimes smoked cigarettes in the privacy of their studies, or behind the wood-shed, or out in the woods. But in the common-room, where a prefect or a master might enter at any moment—and cheroots.

It was incredible.

They could only stare.

"He's rotting us!" murmured Nugent. "He doesn't mean to smoke."

Wharton's brow darkened.

"If he does—"

He broke off.

The new junior had struck a match and lighted a cheroot.

There was no further doubt about his intentions now. He was smoking the cheroot, and a steady column of blue smoke rose.

"My only hat!" muttered Bob Cherry.

"The giddy boulder!"

"Smoking!"

"And here!"

"Suppose Quelch came in!"

"Or Wingate!"

"Phew!"

Some of the fellows looked at Wharton now inquiringly. Harry Wharton was head boy of the Remove, and captain of the Form, a position which gave him some of the powers—and the duties—of a monitor.

He felt that he ought to interfere.

If a master came in and found the absurd fellow smoking, he would certainly single out the Form captain for a reprimand if he were present.

Wharton crossed over to the new boy, and tapped him on the shoulder. Vernon-Smith blew out a cloud of smoke, and turned his head, with a far from pleasant look.

"Well?" he said.

"You must not smoke here," said Harry.

"Eh?"

"You mustn't smoke here."

"Pah!"

Wharton's cheeks flushed. The new boy had a contemptuous way of saying "Pah!" which would have annoyed a more patient fellow than Harry. Harry could be patient; but his temper was naturally very quick.

"I suppose you don't know the ropes yet," he said. "As you're a new kid, I'll explain to you. Boys here are not allowed to smoke. Fellows who go in for sports don't want to, because it spoils their wind. The other fellows—the slackers—aren't allowed to. If a prefect came in and caught you, there would be a row."

"I shall do as I like."

"You can't do as you like here. I'm Wharton, head of the Remove. You belong to the Remove, don't you?"

"If you mean the Lower Fourth, yes."

"Well, I should get into a row if I allowed smoking here," said Wharton. "I have to step anything of that sort, as Form captain. Do you see?"

The fellows round wondered at Wharton's quietness and patience. Harry was keeping his temper very well in hand.

But it was lost on Vernon-Smith. He did not even remove the cheroot from his lips while he was speaking.

"It's all right," he said. "I'm used to smoking—I always smoke at home. The pater lets me do as I like."

"You can't smoke here."

"I can do as I like. The Head is an old friend of my pater's, and I assure you that he won't interfere with me," said Vernon-Smith, with a grin.

"Nonsense! Will you put that cheroot away?"

"No, I won't."

Harry Wharton's eyes gleamed.

"I've asked you to do it," he said. "Now I tell you to. Put that cheroot away."

"I won't!"

"Very well, then!"

Wharton stretched out his hand and jerked the cheroot from the new boy's lips, and threw it into the fire.

Vernon-Smith sprang to his feet with an exclamation of rage.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Wharton is Reprimanded.

VERNON-SMITH clenched his hands, and his face fairly flamed as he looked at Harry Wharton. For a moment it looked as if he would fling himself upon the captain of the Remove, and the Remove fellows crowded round in joyous anticipation of a fight.

A contest between the athletic Wharton and the woody son of a millionaire was likely to end in a terrible licking for Vernon-Smith, and every fellow there would have been pleased to see it.

The insolence of the new boy was intolerable. Even Bulstrode and his friends, who were usually against Wharton, were with him now. The new boy badly wanted putting into his place.

Perhaps it dawned upon Vernon-Smith, too, that an attack upon the sturdy junior before him would end very badly for himself.

He dropped his clenched hands to his sides.

"You bound!" he exclaimed. "How dare you?"

"You will get worse than that if you start smoking again," said Harry quietly. "I don't want to be hard on you, as I can see you're unused to decent surroundings. But you can't play the blackguard here."

Vernon-Smith was trembling with rage.

Wharton waited a moment, and then turned on his heel and rejoined his chums. Vernon-Smith sat down again.

"Nice specimen," murmured Bob Cherry. "What a horrid reek of tobacco smoke! That chap would turn the place into a blessed bar-room if we let him."

"Rather!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific."

"I can't understand his being allowed to stay," said Harry.

"His father may be a millionaire, but that wouldn't influence Dr. Locke in any way. He wouldn't pay more than the ordinary fees we all pay; and besides, the Head wouldn't be influenced by that sort of thing. I can't catch on."

"We shall have a handful with him, I think."

"Looks like it."

"I suggest the playfulness of the esteemed chess," said Hurree Singh Jamset Ram Singh, producing a box and board. "I will take you three esteemed kids playfully."

"Right you are!"

The nabob was a past-master of the noble game of chess, and he frequently played the three Removes together—Wharton, Cherry, and Nugent being allowed to unite their wits against him—seldom with success. The only fellow at Greyfriars who could equal Hurree Singh at the noble game was the little Chinese, Wun Lung.

The famous four were soon buried deep in the absorbing interest of chess.

Harry Wharton forgot all about the new boy as he chased Hurree Singh's king over the board, with the advice and assistance of Nugent and Bob Cherry.

Hurree Singh was hard pressed as the game grew on, but he extricated himself from a difficult position with great skill, and bade defiance to the enemy.

Wharton wrinkled his brows.

"I thought I had you then," he remarked.

"The closeness of the esteemed shave was great," grinned Hurree Singh. "The all-rightfulness is now terrific."

"We'll settle you yet," said Bob.

Hurree Singh chuckled.

"The settlefulness is on my honourable side, as my esteemed chums are now mate in four moves."

"Oh, rats!" said Bob Cherry warmly.

"It is the honourable fact."

"Blessed if I can see it!" said Nugent.

Hurree Singh smiled gently. The three chums wrinkled their brows over the board, trying to see how Hurree Singh had them mate in four. It was a problem they could not puzzle out. Meanwhile, Vernon-Smith had lighted up a fresh cheroot, and Harry had quite forgotten his existence.

Fellows who noticed his action looked over towards Wharton, but no one felt called upon to interrupt a chess problem. Wharton was not likely to take it kindly if his attention was called off the game to the new fellow.

But it was unfortunate. While the three heads were bent anxiously over the chess-board Mr. Quelch entered the room.

The Remove-master paused with a kindly smile to look at the game of chess. He liked to see his boys play that game, which, as a recreation for a quiet hour, and as a training for the intellect, cannot be equalled by any other.

The boys rose to their feet, but Mr. Quelch signed to them to go on with the game.

"Don't stop for me," he said. "I will look on. You have a most interesting position here."

"Yes, sir," said Wharton; "Inky—I mean Hurree Singh—says we are mate in four, sir, but I can't see it."

The Remove-master smiled.

"Yes, you cannot help yourself now."

"How so, sir?"

"When Hurree Singh has moved his knight to king's fourth—"

"Ah!"

Just then Mr. Quelch caught the scent of tobacco smoke. He started, and turned round, sniffing. He caught sight of the blue smoke rising over the back of the armchair, and stood petrified. Vernon-Smith was invisible from where the Form-master stood, only the crown of his head showing over the back of the chair.

Wharton did not notice him for the moment.

"You've won, Inky," he said. "We'll try another game—"

"Wharton!"

Harry started at the sharpness of the Remove-master's tone.

"Yes, sir!"

"Someone is smoking in this room!"

Wharton turned from the chess-table. He started as he saw the smoke. It had not occurred to him that Vernon-Smith had started again.

"I—I'm sorry, sir! I—"

"As Form captain, Wharton, you know very well that it is your duty to stop anything of this kind," said Mr. Quelch sternly.

"I—I know, sir. But—"

"I am surprised, Wharton—surprised and disappointed!" said Mr. Quelch, and without waiting for any rejoinder he strode across the room towards the offending junior.

Wharton stood with a flushed face and clouded brow.

It was not pleasant to be thus reprimanded in public—and he could see from some sly grins near him that some of the fellows enjoyed his discomfiture, too. But worse than that was the thought that Mr. Quelch considered him as having failed in his duty.

Mr. Quelch grasped the new boy by the shoulder, and jerked him out of the chair—so suddenly that the smoker almost swallowed his cheroot.

Vernon-Smith gasped and yelled. The cheroot had burned short, and the end was in his mouth, and was burning him.

"Ow!" he gasped. "Yaroo! Yah!"

He spat it out furiously.

Then he turned upon the Form-master with a savage scowl. Mr. Quelch's grip was still on his collar, and Vernon-Smith tried to jerk himself loose, without success.

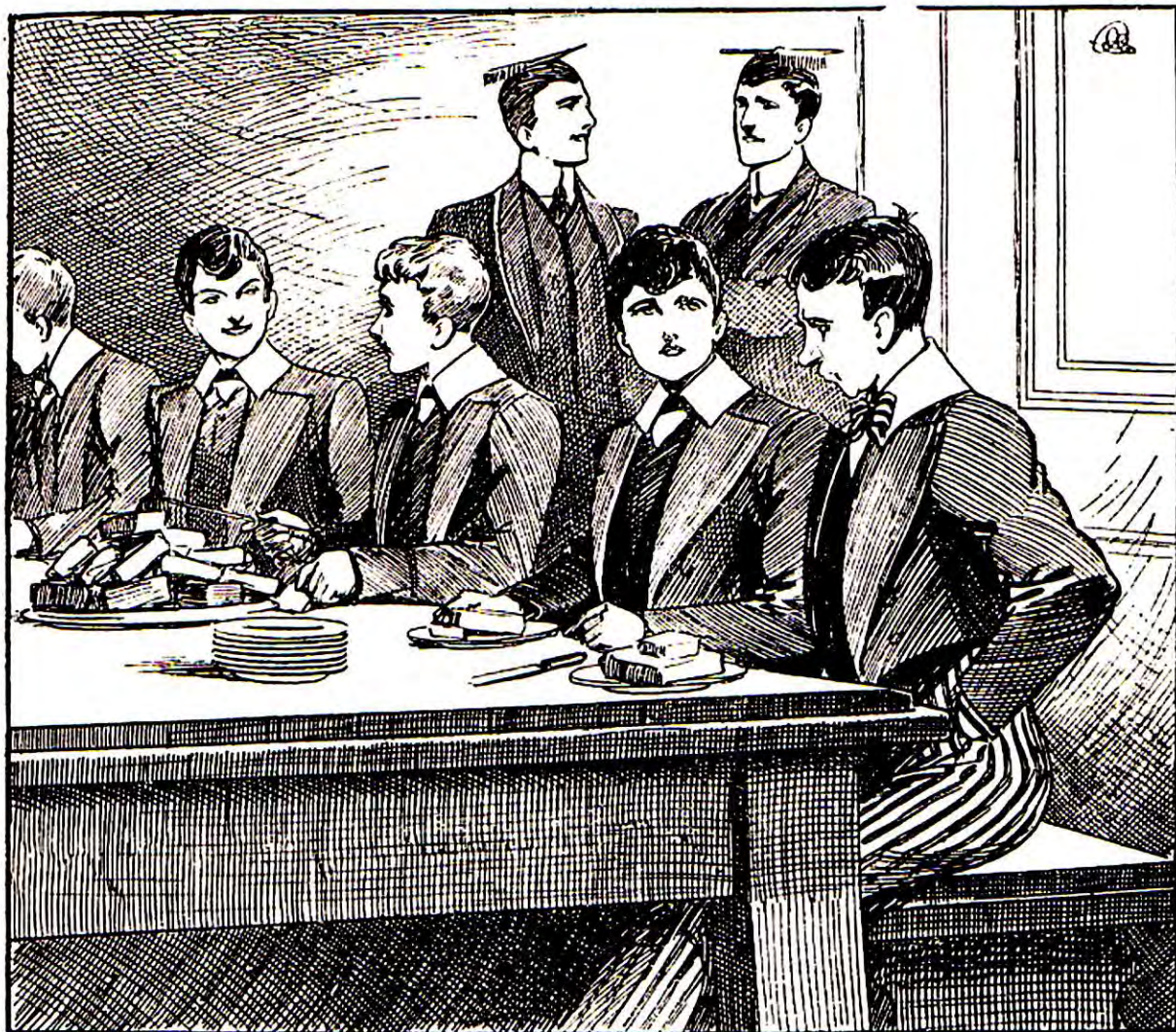
"Boy," thundered the Remove-master, "what does this mean? I find you smoking—smoking cheroots—in the junior common-room."

"I always smoke, sir."

"What?"

"My pater lets me smoke."

"I will not give any opinion upon your father's conduct, Vernon-Smith, in allowing a boy of your age to smoke



"Do you really eat that stuff?" said Vernon-Smith, with a sniff.

cheroots. In fact, I feel a strong doubt of the truth of your statement. But, in any case, you should know that you cannot smoke here. If it were any other boy in my Form, I should cane him soundly. If I do not give you the severest caning, it is because you are a new boy, and apparently totally untrained. Have you any more tobacco about you?"

"Ye-e-ea."

"You will call your masters 'sir' while you are at Greyfriars," said Mr. Quelch, in a tone that implied that he did not think Master Vernon-Smith would be at Greyfriars very long.

"Yes, sir."

"Show me what tobacco you have."

Vernon-Smith took out his case.

"Open it!"

Vernon-Smith made a restive movement. The Form-master's grip tightened upon his collar. He opened the case sullenly.

"Very good. Throw those cheroots into the fire."

"What!"

"You heard me, Smith."

"They cost sevenpence each, sir."

"I am sorry you should waste your money so, and that you should have so much money to waste," said Mr. Quelch tartly. "Throw those cheroots into the fire instantly."

Vernon-Smith hesitated a moment, then he sullenly

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obeyed. The valuable smokes dropped into the glowing coals.

"Give me that case," said Mr. Quelch; "I will have it sent to your home. You have no use for such an article here."

"But—"

"Obey me directly!"

Vernon-Smith handed over the case.

"And now," said Mr. Quelch sternly, "listen to me! You have twice acted in an utterly disgraceful manner, although you have been at Greyfriars only a few hours. Don't let anything of the sort happen again. Mind, if I find you in any transgression of the rules of the school again, I shall not allow you to plead ignorance as an excuse. I shall punish you severely."

And Mr. Quelch released the new boy.

Vernon-Smith scowled malignantly. The Remove-master turned to the door. As he passed Wharton he paused to speak.

"I am sorry to see that you cannot maintain proper discipline, Wharton," he said. "It is your duty to put an instant stop to anything of this sort, and you are aware of it. I hope you will do better in future."

Wharton had nothing to say. Mr. Quelch left the room, leaving the captain of the Remove standing with a clouded brow, and his hands thrust deep into his trousers pockets.

A Splendid Tale of Harry Wharton & Co.
By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Bad Luck for Billy.

BOB CHERRY drew a deep breath. "My hat!" he murmured. "Quelch is waxy, and no mistake!"

"What ho!"

"Mad as a hatter!"

"And our immaculate paragon of a Form-captain has been hauled over the coals at last," said Bulstrode, with his unpleasant sneer. "I wondered how long he would be able to keep always on the right side of Quelch."

Harry did not speak.

Bob Cherry, however, turned wrathfully upon the bully of the Remove.

"Hold your tongue!" he exclaimed. "You cad!"

Bulstrode shrugged his shoulders.

"Rats! It's about time Wharton had a sample of Quelch's jaw. We've all had it in our time, and now it's his turn."

"Rotter! Dry up!"

Bulstrode laughed unpleasantly and walked away, still chuckling. He had enjoyed the situation. Wharton glanced at Bob with a faint smile.

"Never mind him, Bob," he said. "I don't. Bulstrode doesn't worry me. Only—only Quelch was right. I haven't done my duty, and that's the long and the short of it."

"Well, you couldn't see that wretched cad out of the back of your head," said Nugent. "Quelch doesn't know that you stopped him smoking once, and I suppose it's no good explaining. But I think it would be a good idea to give the rotter a licking now, to teach him not to play any of his beastly tricks here again."

"My hat," said Bob Cherry, with a glare at Vernon-Smith. "I've a jolly good mind to wipe up the floor with him myself!"

"And I'll jolly well help you!" exclaimed Tom Brown.

Vernon-Smith scowled savagely, and with a quick movement picked up the heavy iron poker from the grate.

"You'd better keep off!" he exclaimed. "If you touch me I'll brain some of you!"

"You rat!" said Bob contemptuously. "If I wanted to touch you that poker wouldn't stop me. Look here, Wharton, the cad ought to be ragged."

Harry shook his head.

"Quelch has talked to him, and that's enough," he said.

"But look here, Vernon-Smith. You can see you've got me into a row over your rotten smoking. It's not allowed here, as I explained to you. You had better chuck it for good."

Vernon-Smith gritted his teeth.

"I sha'n't!" he said.

Wharton looked at him steadily.

"Do you mean to say that you're going to smoke again, after what Quelch has said?" he demanded.

"Yes."

"Very well. Now, listen to me," said Harry, between his teeth. "I've given you a chance, and Quelch has given you a chance. If you're cad enough to keep on after this, you'd better look out for squalls. Mind, if I catch you smoking again, any time or anywhere, I'll give you a licking on the spot. Do you understand?"

"You'd better not touch me."

Wharton laughed contemptuously.

"Do you think I'm afraid of you, you weedy fool? Mind, I mean every word I say. The next time I find you smoking, I'll give you such a dressing that you'll remember it for weeks. And now, put that poker down."

"I won't!"

Wharton advanced towards him, his fists clenched and his eyes blazing. He had had enough of the new boy's insolence, and he did not mean to stand any more of it.

"Put that poker down!" he repeated.

Vernon-Smith met his look doggedly. His grasp tightened on the poker. He looked as if he would use it, too, if Harry laid hands on him. Bob Cherry made a forward movement. Harry waved him back.

"I'll deal with this chap," he said. "He's going to learn discipline. Now, then, Vernon-Smith, put that poker down, or I'll take it away from you, and give you the licking of your life into the bargain."

For a moment longer Vernon-Smith hesitated. Then, as Harry strode towards him, the poker went down into the grate with a resounding clang.

Wharton nodded shortly and turned away.

Vernon-Smith looked at him with a glance of almost poisonous hatred.

The captain of the Remove had made a bitter enemy of the new boy; not that Wharton cared whether he was friend or foe.

Vernon-Smith glanced round at the grinning faces of the

Removites, and flushed crimson. He moved towards the door.

"I say, you fellows, why don't you bump the cad?" said Billy Bunter, mindful of the treatment he had received in the dormitory. "He wants a lesson, you know. He's a rank outsider, and horribly mean. Bump him!"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"Oh, really—"

Vernon-Smith left the room. Bunter had a weakness for "going for" a fellow when he was down, but he did not care to lead the assault on Vernon-Smith. A hiss from most of the juniors followed the new boy, but no more active demonstration.

Billy Bunter pulled at Wharton's sleeve. The captain of the Remove glanced down at the fat junior impatiently.

"What do you want, Bunter?"

"That rotter kicked me."

"Serve you right."

"Oh, really, Wharton, I think you ought to bump him!"

"We'll bump you instead," said Bob Cherry genially, and he laid his sinewy hands upon the Owl of the Remove.

"Ow! Ow! Yow! Help!"

Bob sat the fat junior on the floor, and left him blinking there. Meanwhile, Vernon-Smith had gone up to the Remove dormitory.

His box had been taken up there. Vernon-Smith entered the room, now dusky with the fall of evening.

He went straight to his box, opened it, and groped among the contents. Then he drew out a brown wooden box.

It was a box of cheroots.

With an unpleasant grin the new boy opened the box, took out a cheroot, and struck a match.

He sat on the bed and smoked.

Vernon-Smith did not really want to smoke, and his pretence of enjoying a smoke was simply humbug. Tobacco does not agree with the constitution at fifteen, if at any time; and if Vernon-Smith had told the truth, he would far rather have had a box of chocolates than a box of cheroots.

But Vernon-Smith was determined to smoke, and all the more determined because the Form-master had forbidden him to do so. That was his way. Vernon-Smith was, as a matter of fact, the most complete boulder Greyfriars had ever seen.

He did not venture to take his smokes down to the common-room, for he knew there would be trouble with Wharton at once. He sat on the bed and smoked.

He had left the door ajar, and he did not notice that a spectacled face blinked in at the door. Billy Bunter had noticed the new fellow sneak off, and he had jumped to the conclusion that Vernon-Smith had a feed in his box.

The fat junior blinked in at the door, expecting to see the new boy bolting tarts and dough-nuts and cake, and was astounded to see him smoking once more.

The gasp of surprise he gave reached Vernon-Smith's ears.

The new junior looked round, scowled at the sight of Bunter's fat face, and caught a pillow from the bed. Before the Owl of the Remove could dodge, the pillow flew through the air, and it caught Bunter under the chin and sent him flying backwards.

He crashed down in the passage with a wild yell.

But he only remained there a second. He picked himself up, gasping, and staggered away, fearing that Vernon-Smith was about to follow up his attack.

He dashed along the passage and down the stairs, and dashed right into the arms of a prefect who was coming up.

Unfortunately for Bunter, it was Loder, the worst-tempered prefect in the school.

Loder staggered, and caught hold of the banisters.

"You young ass!" he roared.

"Oh, I'm sincerely sorry, Loder!"

"Take that, you dolt!"

"Ow! Leggo!"

Loder had caught the fat junior by the collar, and was boxing his ears right and left with the other hand.

"Now, you fat fool, what were you bolting downstairs in that way for?" he exclaimed.

"Ow! That new beast was after me—"

"There is no one after you, you cowardly rat."

Billy Bunter blinked round as Loder released him.

"Oh! I—I thought he was! He chucked the pillow at me because I caught him smoking in the dorm. Of course, I'm not going to sneak about him, but—"

Loder did not allow him to finish. He shook him till his teeth chattered.

"Ow! S-s-s-stop!" stammered Bunter. "You'll m-m-make my s-s-spectacles fall off, and if they get broken you'll have to pay for 'em."

"Who was smoking in the dormitory?" demanded Loder.

As a prefect, it was his duty to put down anything of the sort with a heavy hand. As a matter of fact, Loder was one of the "smartest" of the "smart set" in the Sixth, and it was an open secret that he smoked in his own study, and that he kept a bottle of whisky in his locker. But Loder, like many of us, had no mercy for his own failings in others.

"I—I won't speak," said Bunter. "The fellows would have it up against me for whole terms if I told you I caught even such a rat as Vernon-Smith smoking. I—"

"That will do!" Loder threw the fat junior away from him, and Bunter bumped down on the stairs. The prefect strode on towards the dormitory. Billy Bunter sat up and gasped.

"Well, he'll get a licking now, and serve him jolly well right," he exclaimed. "I haven't sneaked about him, either—he can't say I have—but Loder seems to guess! And a jolly good thing, too!"

THE TENTH CHAPTER. A Prize for the Prefect.

LODER opened the door of the Remove dormitory, and looked in.

Vernon-Smith was finishing the cheroot. He looked up at the prefect, with a glance of inquiry and half-defiance. He had not seen Loder before, but he guessed that he must belong to an upper Form.

The prefect looked at him curiously, and sniffed. The scent from the cheroot was very pleasant. It was a good one; Vernon-Smith at least had value for his money in that way. Loder's expression changed a little.

He closed the door, and came over towards the new junior. Vernon-Smith eyed him uneasily.

"You're Vernon-Smith?" asked Loder.

"Yes."

"The new kid in the Remove?"

"Yes."

"And this, I suppose, is a little habit of yours?" asked Loder.

"I smoke at home."

"Good! Hand me those cheroots."

Vernon-Smith's hand closed on the box on the bed beside him.

"They're mine," he said.

"Not at all," said Loder, with a grin. "They're mine. Kids are not allowed to smoke here, and they're confiscated. Do you understand?"

"No, I don't."

"Perhaps that will make you understand!" said Loder, dealing the new boy a blow on the side of the head that sent him rolling off the bed on the floor.

Vernon-Smith gave a roar of pain and rage.

He leaped up, claspings his hand to his head, and made a movement as if he would hurl himself upon the prefect.

But Loder gave him no time.

He struck out with his other hand, and the open palm came on the other side of Vernon-Smith's head with a crack like a pistol-shot.

The new junior reeled, and crashed on the floor.

This time he was not in such a hurry to rise.

He got up with a groan of pain, and sat on the floor, claspings his whirling head with both hands, and staring stupidly at the prefect.

Loder looked down at him grimly. Vernon-Smith was reduced to quiescence, if not to order, by those two terrible smacks. It was dawning upon the fat's mind that he could not hope to deal with a fellow nearly twice his size, and one who had no scruple whatever about taking the fullest advantage of his superior strength.

"Well?" said Loder, with a grin. "Do you want some more?"

Vernon-Smith groaned.

"You'll understand, now, that I'm a prefect, and that a prefect's orders have to be obeyed!" said Loder. "Got that?"

"Oh! Oh!"

Loder picked up the box of cheroots. He smelt them, and gave a grin of satisfaction, and slipped the box into the pocket of the loose jacket he was wearing.

"Have you got any more of these?" he asked.

"Oh!"

"Answer me, you worm!"

"Ow! Yes."

"Good! Get up and turn out your box. It's my duty as a prefect to see that you don't make a beast of yourself. Turn out your box."

"Oh!"

Loder grasped the box and turned it over on its side. The contents rolled out in heaps on the floor.

Vernon-Smith uttered an exclamation of rage, and staggered up.

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NEXT WEEK: "THE CAD'S TRIAL"

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ONE
PENNY.

Clothes and boots, shirts and collars and ties and socks, all sorts and conditions of articles, rolled over the floor of the dormitory.

"You hound!" he exclaimed.

"Eh? What?"

"Let my box alone."

Loder reached out towards him, but Vernon-Smith had learned wisdom now. He dodged, and promptly placed a bed between him and the prefect.

Loder did not pursue him. He turned his attention to the articles that had streamed out of the box.

There was another box of cheroots, a box of cigars, and several packets of cigarettes. Loder collected them, with a grin of satisfaction. He was going to "confiscate" them; but it was extremely probable that after confiscation they would be smoked in Loder's study by the prefect and his chums.

"My hat! Champagne!" he suddenly exclaimed.

Two bottles packed in straw had rolled out with the rest.

Loder could scarcely believe his eyes.

Even the "smart set" in the Sixth seldom went as far as champagne in their excesses, and never within the precincts of the school.

For a junior to bring champagne to the school in his box was so astounding that Loder could only stare.

"Well, my hat!" he ejaculated, at last. "You're a queer fish. Your people must be jolly proud of you, at home, I should think."

"That's my champagne," growled Vernon-Smith.

Loder laughed.

"Not at all; your mistake. It's confiscated."

"I'll appeal to the Head."

"Ha, ha, ha! My dear dummy, you'd be sacked from the school at once if the Head knew you had brought booze here in your box. I'm really letting you off awfully lightly in only confiscating the stuff."

"Look here—"

Loder put the bottles under his arm. He looked through the contents of the box again, and found a great many eatables, but these he left alone.

"Now, I'll give you a word of advice, Vernon-Smith," he said.

"I don't want it."

"You're going to have it all the same. Smoking isn't good for kids; drinking isn't good for anybody. Chuck it. If this were known to the Head you'd be expelled, on your first day at Greyfriars. Mind, you'll never see any of this stuff again, but out of kindness to you, as a new boy, I shall—er—destroy it all, and say nothing about the matter."

Loder had his own reasons for not wishing to report the matter officially, but that he did not explain to Vernon-Smith.

The new boy watched him savagely as he went to the door.

"You'd better not take my things away!" he exclaimed.

Loder did not reply.

"You hear me!" said Vernon-Smith savagely. "I'll appeal to the Head, and—"

Loder looked round.

"You understand, kid, that you'd be sacked if the Head knew you had intoxicating liquor in your box," he said.

"The Head won't sack me."

"Eh? Why shouldn't he?"

"Because he can't," said Vernon-Smith defiantly. "He doesn't want to offend my father."

"You rotten young purse-proud cad!" said Loder. "Do you think the Head of Greyfriars cares a rap for your father's millions? Made by swindling, too, and starving poor wretches in Lancashire cotton mills, I believe. He's the blessed cotton king, isn't he? And made his money out of a corner in cotton, the dirty outsider. You young fool, the marvel is that the son of such a rotter is admitted to Greyfriars at all."

"It isn't that. It's not the money—"

"I suppose your pater's an old chum of the Head's—eh?" said Loder sarcastically. "Don't be a fool, Smith; that's my advice."

And the prefect left the dormitory.

He hurried down to the Sixth Form passage with his prizes, and carried them into Carne's study. Carne and Ionides, who were there, stared at him.

"What on earth have you got there?" asked Carne, in amazement.

"Cigars, cheroots, cigarettes, and champagne."

"Great Scott!"

"Where did you get them?" exclaimed Ionides. "Why, you have four or five pounds' worth of things there. Have you come into a fortune, Loder?"

The Greek senior spoke a little spitefully. He was the

richest fellow in the Sixth, and liked the position. He did not want to have a rival high-roller in the Form.

Loder chuckled.

"No. These are confiscations. Where do you think I found 'em?"

"Can't guess."

"In a junior's box."

"Great Columbus!"

"It's the new kid in the Remove," grinned Loder. "He's the son of a giddy millionaire, you know, and these show what his private tastes are."

"Jolly good taste, too," said Carne. "Why, that's real Merry Widow; and the smokes, too, are ripping."

"Yes; I've looked in to ask you fellows to a little smoke this evening," grinned Loder. "I've confiscated this stuff; but I've promised Vernon-Smith not to report him, as he's a new boy and I want to let him off lightly. Of course, if I don't report the matter I can't deliver up these things to the Head."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"So we've got to get rid of them somehow."

"Good!" grinned Ionides. "We'll help you to get rid of them."

"What-ho!" chuckled Carne.

And the two seniors followed the prefect into his study.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Ragged.

VERNON-SMITH did not join the Form again till supper-time. By that time he was hungry, and he came into Hall when the juniors had assembled there. Supper at Greyfriars was a very simple meal, and Vernon-Smith looked at the plain bread and cheese, and sniffed in great disdain.

Harry Wharton glanced at him. He had had rubs with the new fellow already; but all the same he was disposed to help him. Harry had not forgotten his own first term at Greyfriars, and how he had found a loyal and patient friend, whose loyalty and patience had been put to many a severe test, too, in those days. Wharton was disposed to do all he could to make a thorny path smooth for the new Removeite.

"Here's a seat, Smith," he said, as cordially as he could, when the new boy came up to the Form table.

Smith nodded curtly, and sat down.

"Do you really eat that stuff?" he asked, with a sniff.

"Eh! What stuff?"

"That!" said Vernon-Smith, with a disparaging glance towards the huge chunks of bread and butter and cheese.

Plain as the fare was, it was disappearing rapidly enough before the attacks of the hungry Removeites.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Yes, that's our supper," he said.

"Pah! I can't eat it."

"I'm afraid you'll have nothing else, if you can't," said Harry gravely. "It's jolly good, you know, though it's not gorgeous. Plain but wholesome."

"I want something better."

Wharton fell into silence. He had nothing to say to that. Wingate of the Sixth was at the head of the Remove table. Vernon-Smith rose.

"Are you in charge here?" he asked.

Wingate stared at him.

"Yes," he said.

"Well, I want some supper."

"Pass Smith the bread and cheese, Cherry."

"Certainly, Wingate."

"I don't want any bread and cheese," said Vernon-Smith sullenly.

"There is nothing else for you."

"Then I jolly well won't have any."

"You can suit yourself about that, of course," said Wingate. "Sit down now, and hold your tongue, or you'll get a licking, and you won't have any choice about that."

Vernon-Smith sat down.

He ate nothing. After supper, however, when the Remove went into the junior common-room to while away the interval that remained before bedtime, Vernon-Smith went up to the Form dormitory. He had plenty to eat in his box, and he intended to make his supper there.

"Blessed if I can make that fellow out," said Bob Cherry. "He seems to think he can do as he likes here. I wonder what kind of a time his people have with him at home."

"A pretty lively one, I should think," Nugent remarked.

"Fancy a chap being ass enough to leave his supper out of silly spite."

"Most likely he's got some grub somewhere," said Bob shrewdly. "I don't suppose he would go to bed hungry. If he hadn't anything else, bread and cheese would be good enough for his lordship, I think."

Billy Bunter picked up his ears.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, buzz off, Bunter!"

"But, I say, if the chap's got a feed, he ought to be made to share it round—"

"Rats!"

"Suppose we go and—"

"Cheese it!" said Bob, and he walked away.

Billy Bunter blinked angrily.

"I'm jolly well going to see if the chap's got a feed on his own," he muttered. "The rotter! He ought to stand it all round. I hate meanness in a chap. I say, Snoop, the new chap's got a feed on in the dorm."

"How do you know?" asked Snoop.

"Well, Cherry says so, and I think so too. Suppose we go and make him share out?"

"Good egg! let's take some of the fellows, in case he cuts up rusty," said Snoop cautiously. "He's a dangerous beast. You remember how he handled that poker in the common-room; and he wouldn't put it down for one of us as he did for Wharton."

"Let's ask Bulstrode and Skinner and Stott."

"Good."

Bulstrode and Skinner and Stott were asked, and they entered into the plan with all their hearts. The five juniors crept up to the Remove dormitory. The door was closed, but a light was gleaming under it.

"He's there," said Bulstrode, with a grin.

"Yes, rather."

Bulstrode opened the dormitory door quietly.

The gas was alight, and it showed the figure of the new junior, seated on a couple of pillows beside his open box. Vernon-Smith had packed the things back again since Loder's visit, and the eatables were on top.

Vernon-Smith had opened several packages, and was eating; and the good things that were spread out in view there made Billy Bunter's mouth water.

The new junior was evidently not limited as to cash. He had large cakes, bags of tarts, buns and biscuits, steak-pies and ham patties, jellies in glass and jar, jam and marmalade, and a dozen other things.

The juniors stared at the sight.

"My hat!" said Bulstrode. "That chap's people must be rich."

"Come on," muttered Bunter.

Vernon-Smith looked round abruptly at the sound of voices. He scowled at the sight of the Removeites.

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Billy Bunter frowned discontentedly over his big spectacles. Bulstrode was having his tea opposite, and he had a jar of marmalade; while Skinner had a chunk of cake.

"Hallo!" said Skinner affably. "We've come."
"Eh! What do you mean?"
"You wanted us to come to this little feed, didn't you?" asked Skinner, with an air of great astonishment.
"No, I didn't."
"What nice manners," said Snoop. "No beating about the bush, either. This chap will be a credit to Greyfriars—I don't think!"
"You didn't want us to come, Smithy?" asked Skinner.
"No, and the sooner you get out, the better I shall like it!" snapped Vernon-Smith, as he unfastened the string of a new packet.
"That's unfortunate," said Skinner, in his blandest tone.
"You see, we've come. We haven't come for nothing, have we, chaps?"
"Not much!"
"We've come to feed with you, Smithy."
"Well, you can't!"
"Now, ask us nicely."
"Rats!"
"That won't do. We can't feed with you without being invited," said Skinner persuasively. "Now, give us a graceful invitation."
"Oh, get out!"

"Very well, then I shall have to issue the invitations. Bulstrode, will you do Smithy the honour of supping with him?"
"Certainly," grinned Bulstrode. "Will you, Skinner?"
"Certainly." Will you, Snoopey?"
"Certainly."
"And you, Stott?"
"Certainly."
"Good. I needn't ask Bunter, because he'd feed with a dog in a kennel rather than not feed at all," remarked Skinner.
"Oh, really, Skinner—"
"Well, now we're all invited, the next thing is to feed," said Skinner. "Come on. Sit down and make yourselves at home."
"What-ho!"
"Don't stand on ceremony. Sit on the floor."
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Hand out the grub, Smith."
"My name's Vernon-Smith," said the new junior, with a scowl.
"Never mind your name now; it's the grub we want. Hand it over."
"I won't! I'm not going to give you anything," said

Vernon-Smith. "I don't like any of you. I don't like this school, either."

"That's awfully rough on Greyfriars!" grinned Bulstrode.

"Unsay those cruel words, Smithy!" implored Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Leave my things alone, you fat young thief!" howled Vernon-Smith, as Billy Bunter, without wasting time in words, helped himself to a whole steak-pie.

"Oh, really, Smith—"

"Give me that back!"

"Do you want this jelly back too?" asked Bulstrode.

"Yes, hang you!"

"Here you are, then."

"Ow!" roared Vernon-Smith, as Bulstrode slammed the jelly in his face.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Here's some ginger-pop, too," remarked Stott, pouring a bottle over Vernon-Smith's head, as he tried to scrape the jelly off his face.

"And a tart," said Skinner, slamming one upon Smith's right ear.

"Ow oh! Pah! Grooch!"

Vernon-Smith staggered away, scraping himself, scarlet with vexation and rage. The five juniors chuckled, and started on the provisions in earnest.

Vernon-Smith looked at them with fury in his gaze.

"Let my things alone!" he shrieked.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Cads! Thieves!"

Vernon-Smith could contain himself no longer. He rushed among the feasters, hitting and kicking out on all sides.

There was a yell from the feasters.

They had not expected that. Bulstrode roared as Vernon-Smith's foot crashed upon his ribs, and Bunter shrieked as he rolled over under a powerful clump on the side of the head.

"Collar him!" yelled Stott.

Bulstrode scrambled up savagely.

"I'll jolly soon collar the cad."

"Hands off! I—"

"Down him!"

Vernon-Smith was collared, and promptly downed. He was pretty severely pummelled, too, in the process, for the juniors were the roughest fellows in the Remove, and they were hurt by Vernon-Smith's savage kicking.

"Now rag the beast!" gasped Skinner.

And Vernon-Smith was ragged.

They bumped him, they rolled him over, and they plastered him with jam and marmalade, and they poured ginger-beer and lemonade over him.

Vernon-Smith struggled and fought like a tiger, scratching and biting and screaming, and the ragers handled him still more roughly than they had intended in consequence.

"My hat!" gasped Bulstrode, wiping a great red score down his face, which was bleeding freely. "What a regular wild beast!"

"Ow!" groaned Bunter. "He's kicked my shins."

"Serve you right."

"Ow! Oh, really—"

"There, I think he's had enough," said Bulstrode, spurning the new boy away with his foot. "Now, go and clean yourself, you cad; and remember that a chap who gets a big feed to himself, and doesn't ask anybody to it, is pretty certain to catch it hot at Greyfriars. And you'll learn, too, to fight without biting or scratching, or your life won't be worth living at Greyfriars. Now get out."

Vernon-Smith scrambled to his feet.

He presented a really terrible appearance, with his clothes in utter disorder, and soaked and sticky with ginger-beer, jam, and marmalade and jelly. His hair was a sticky mop, his face a ghastly spectacle.

The juniors grinned as they looked at him.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Skinner. "He ought to be looking through a horse-collar at a fair. That's what he's suitable for."

"I'm going to the Head!" shrieked the new boy.

"Ha, ha, ha! The Head will like to see you in that state."

"I'm going—"

"Oh, rats! We know you wouldn't dare, and you'd get a licking if you did!" said Bulstrode contemptuously. "Get out!"

The new boy gave the juniors a wild glare, and rushed from the room, slamming the door after him violently.

Snoop looked uneasily at his companions.

"Suppose he does go to the Head!" he faltered.

Bulstrode sniffed.

"He wouldn't dare!"

"But—"

"Rats! Let's get on with the feed."

"Yes, rather," said Billy Bunter.

And they went on with it.

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THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

The Sneak.

"GOODNESS gracious! Bless my soul! What is that?" Dr. Locke uttered the exclamations in blank amazement.

He was seated in his study, talking with Mr. Quelch of the Remove, and Mr. Capper, the master of the Upper Fourth Form, when the door was suddenly flung open, and a wild figure rushed into the room.

The Head jumped up in amazement and consternation.

"What—what—"

The figure halted before his desk.

For some moments, as it stood there panting, the Head failed to recognise Vernon-Smith.

The new boy was in a terrible state, and his features were almost hidden under a clinging mass of jelly and jam.

"Bless my soul!"

"Who are you, boy?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch sternly, rising from his seat.

"I—I—I—"

"Ah, it is the new junior."

"I—I'm Vernon-Smith!" stammered the new boy, stammering in his rage. "I've been treated like this—like this—"

The Head adjusted his glasses.

"Ah, I am afraid this is a case of ragging, Mr. Quelch," he said. "Most unusual, however, for the boy to come here in this state. Most extraordinary!"

"I have been treated like this—"

"Calm yourself, Smith!"

"I—I—"

Vernon-Smith's voice trailed off in a howl of fury.

He stood before the three masters, shaking with passion. Mr. Quelch fixed a stern glance upon him. Whatever had been done to Vernon-Smith, he had no right to give way to his temper in this manner in the presence of his Head-master.

"Be quiet, Smith," said the Remove-master coldly. "Calm yourself at once."

"I—I—"

"Silence!"

"Dear me, this is most extraordinary!" said the Head, with a worried look. "Who has used you in this shameful way, Smith?"

"The Remove cads!"

"And—and what did you do?"

"Nothing. I wouldn't share my feed with them, that's all."

"Ah, that was injudicious, if you allowed them to see that you had a treat. However, an outrage of this kind must be punished," said the Head. "You see to that, Mr. Quelch?"

"Certainly, sir, as Smith has acquainted us with the matter," said the Remove-master, with a contemptuous glance at the new junior.

"I will leave it in your hands, Mr. Quelch."

"Very well, sir."

The Remove-master signed to Vernon-Smith to follow him from the study. The new boy did so, still quivering with rage.

The door closed behind them, and the Head, with a worried look, resumed his conversation with Mr. Capper, but his random remarks showed that his thoughts were elsewhere.

In the passage outside, Mr. Quelch stopped and looked directly at Vernon-Smith.

"Listen to me, Smith," he said. "I speak more as a friend than as a master. You seem to have foolishly provoked your Form-fellows. They have used you very roughly, but I cannot think that you were not to blame, too. Before this affair goes any further, I will give you a piece of advice. The Form will regard you as a tell-tale if I take up the matter. If you choose, I will drop it now, and they need never know you came to the Head. This is a most unusual step for me to take, but I suggest it for your own sake—for the sake of your future career in the Lower Fourth."

Vernon-Smith ground his teeth.

"They've got to be punished!" he exclaimed. "I—I'll go to the Head—"

Mr. Quelch's brow darkened.

"That is enough, Smith. Come!"

"They're in the Remove dormitory, sir," said Vernon-Smith sullenly.

"Very good," said Mr. Quelch, compressing his lips.

He strode away to the stairs.

ANSWERS

Vernon-Smith followed him upstairs, scowling savagely under his coating of jam and other stickiness.

The fact that he had "sneaked" to bring about the punishment of the ragers made no difference to him.

Mr. Quelch reached the door of the Remove dormitory.

There was a gleam of light under the door, and a sound of cheerful voices from within. Bulstrode & Co. were enjoying themselves.

The Remove-master opened the door.

For the moment the revellers in the raided feast did not observe him, and the Form-master stood looking in upon the scene with a stern brow.

Bulstrode had just filled a glass with ginger-beer, and he held it up for a toast.

"Here's to the founder of the feast!" he exclaimed.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The Bounder of Greyfriars."

"Good!" said Skinner. "Of all the unspeakable bounders that ever bounded, I think Vernon-Smith is the unspeakablest."

"Well, that's a good word!" grinned Snoot.

"It describes the Smith animal."

"Hear, hear!"

"Well, here's to the Bounder of Greyfriars, and may he soon be kicked out of the school," said Bulstrode.

"Hear, hear!"

"I say, you fellows— Oh!"

Bunter broke off, and the glass dropped from Bulstrode's hand, as the Remove-master strode into the room, with the sticky Vernon-Smith behind him.

"There they are," said Vernon-Smith, savagely, pointing with a jammy finger at the dismayed revellers.

"I have told you," said Mr. Quelch, addressing the new boy, "to speak to your masters more respectfully. You should address me as sir. The next time you fail to do so, I shall cane you severely."

Vernon-Smith scowled. Mr. Quelch turned to the feasters, who had all risen to their feet, looking very disconcerted. Bulstrode tried to brave it out, but the others were full of dismay.

"This boy complains of ill-usage," said Mr. Quelch. "It appears that you have placed him in this disgusting state—you, Bulstrode, and the rest."

"It was a j-joke, sir!" stammered Bulstrode, with a deadly glance at Vernon-Smith.

"It is the kind of joke that cannot be allowed to pass unpunished," said the Form-master, but less angrily than the juniors expected. It occurred to Bulstrode that Mr. Quelch liked Vernon-Smith no more than they did, and only meant to punish the ragging because it was his bounden duty to do so.

"We are sorry, sir," said Bulstrode, with unusual humility. "I suppose we went too far, sir; but he's such an awful bounder, sir!"

"Awful, sir!" said the others.

"We can't tell you what an unspeakable cad he is, sir, as that would be sneaking," said Skinner. "But if you knew—"

"He's a rank outsider, sir!"

"I cannot enter into that," said Mr. Quelch. "You have no right to use any boy like this, and I have no resource but to punish you. You will each write out a hundred lines of Virgil, and bring them to me on Saturday."

The juniors gasped.

They had expected a severe caning, if not a flogging, when they saw the sticky junior returning with a Form-master to denounce them.

The punishment, which was no worse than sometimes fell to their lot for carelessness in prep, was a surprise and a relief. It was evident that the Remove-master was dealing with them as lightly as he could.

"Yes, sir," said Bulstrode, with a deep breath.

"Certainly, sir!" said Skinner. "We're willing to submit to any punishment you think fit, sir. You don't know what an awful cad the fellow is."

"I shall expect the lines on Saturday," said the Form-master, turning towards the door.

Vernon-Smith seemed scarcely able to believe his ears; but as the Form-master reached the door, he burst out:

"You are going to cane them!"

"What did I tell you just now, Smith?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, fixing his sternest glance upon the new boy.

Vernon-Smith shrunk back.

"I'm sorry, sir; but—but you are going to cane them?"

"You have heard my sentence," said the Remove-master frowning.

"But it's unfair!" exclaimed Vernon-Smith. "They've taken my grub, and ruined my clothes. I won't have it! They ought to be flogged."

"Smith!"

"I don't care!" yelled Smith. "I'll complain to my father. I—"

"Hold your tongue, Smith, and follow me to my study."

"I won't!"

Mr. Quelch did not say any more. It was not a time for the MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 119.

NEXT WEEK: "THE CAD'S TRIAL."

EVERY TUESDAY, The "Magnet" LIBRARY, ONE PENNY.

for words, but for actions. His grasp closed like a vice on Vernon-Smith's collar, and the new boy was jerked out of the dormitory. The juniors heard his voice squeaking an ineffectual protest as he was marched away.

They looked at one another with almost frightened glances.

"My only hat!" murmured Skinner. "Did you ever hear of such a chap?"

"He must be off his rocker."

"Well, he's going to catch it hot now," said Bulstrode, reseating himself on a bolster. "Let's get on with the feed."

The others looked doubtful.

"It's all right," said Bulstrode. "Quelch said nothing about the feed, and we're at liberty to go on if we like. I'm going on, for one."

And he did; and the others followed his example. And the juniors had finished a feast that was more plentiful than wholesome by the time the Remove came to bed.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Smith Declines to Get Up.

VERNON-SMITH came into the dormitory with the rest of the Form at bed-time. He did not speak to Bulstrode or the others, or even look at them.

His face was white, and his eyes gleaming. He was seen to squeeze his hands in a convulsive sort of way every now and then. There was no doubt that he had had a caning in Mr. Quelch's study that he was not likely to forget for a long time.

The Remove grinned over that feed in the dormitory at Vernon-Smith's expense, and without his consent. Vernon-Smith had come off badly all round, but no one seemed to feel any sympathy for him.

Harry Wharton & Co., though they already disliked him, let him alone. And to some of the Removites who proposed a ragging, Harry remarked that the Bounder had had enough—which was generally agreed to.

But Billy Bunter never could let well alone. Strong in the knowledge of the Bounder's unpopularity, Billy Bunter thought it was time to crow over him, which he proceeded to do when Vernon-Smith was undressing himself.

"I think the beast ought to be chucked in a blanket, or frog-marched," said Bunter, blinking round through his spectacles. "He's a disgrace to Greyfriars."

"Shut up, Bunter!" said Wharton.

"Oh, really, Wharton! He's an awful bounder! Fancy having a big feed in his box and never asking a chap if he's got a mouth."

"They needn't ask you that question, Billy," Tom Brown remarked. "Yours is big enough to be seen."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And can generally be seen in full going order," Bob Cherry remarked.

"Oh, really, Cherry! Look here, I think the rotter ought to be bumped! Who's going to lend me a hand to bump him?"

"Shut up!"

"Cheese it!"

"Go to bed!"

"He's such a cad, and— Ow!"

Billy Bunter ceased suddenly as a pillow swept through the air, and knocked him flat on his back.

It was hurled by Vernon-Smith, who seemed to have had enough of the fat junior's polite remarks by that time.

"Oh!" roared Bunter, as he bumped on the floor. "Ow! You beast! Who threw that pillow?"

"Ha, ha, ha! It was the Bounder!"

"Go for him, Billy!"

"I'll be your second."

"Smash him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter scrambled wrathfully to his feet. Vernon-Smith stood with clenched fists, and as Bunter got up, the new boy promptly knocked him down again.

"Oh! Ow!"

Bunter sat up this time, instead of rising, and blinked dazedly at the new boy.

"You—rotter!" he gasped. "Wharton! Nugent! Rescue!"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Rats, Billy! You can fight your own battles, can't you? It's man to man, and that's fair play."

"Ow! The beast hit me when I wasn't looking!"

"Rats!"

"Now I'm injured, and can't go on. I—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Vernon-Smith turned away with a sneer, and went to

bed, and Billy Bunter picked himself up ruefully. He blinked indignantly at the juniors, who were shouting with laughter.

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at!" he growled. "If you're not going to rag the fellow, I don't care. Upon the whole, I think he's had enough, and I won't touch him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I should very likely injure the beast if I got into one of my fearful tempers," said Bunter. "I'll let him off."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And Bunter rolled into bed, to an accompaniment of howls of laughter. Wingate looked into the dormitory.

"Not so much row here! All in? Good-night!"

And the lights were turned out.

The Remove dropped off to sleep one by one, but it was long before Herbert Vernon-Smith was asleep.

The aching in his palms was too severe. Mr. Quelch had not spared the rod on that occasion, and Vernon-Smith was likely to remember the caning for some time to come.

Clang! clang! clang!

That was the sound that woke Vernon-Smith when, as it seemed to him, he had but just closed his eyes. As a matter of fact, he had slept eight hours.

Vernon-Smith opened his eyes, and blinked along the dormitory.

The morning sunlight was streaming in at the window, and the juniors were already turning out of bed.

Vernon-Smith had no desire to do anything of the kind himself, and no intention of doing it. He snuggled the bed-clothes round him, turned his head on the pillow, and closed his eyes again.

The clang of the rising-bell died away.

"I say, you fellows," came a sleepy voice from Billy Bunter's bed. "I think Gossy is ringing too early this morning. His clock's wrong."

"Get up, Billy."

"Would one of you chaps mind cutting out into the Close and looking up at the clock-tower?"

"It's a quarter to seven by my watch, Billy."

"I believe your watch is fast."

"Oh, tumble up!"

"You see—Oh!"

Bunter rolled out of bed with the kind assistance of Bob Cherry's foot, and bumped on the floor in a tangle of bed-clothes, and roared.

"Can I give you any further help?" asked Bob Cherry cheerfully.

"Ow! Beast!"

Harry Wharton crossed over to Vernon-Smith's bed, where the new boy was settling down to slumber again. He tapped the junior on the shoulder, and Smith opened his eyes.

"Better turn out now," said Harry, kindly enough.

"The rising-bell's gone."

"I'm sleepy."

"We have to get up at this time, you know."

"I don't at home," growled Vernon-Smith. "I get up at what time I like."

Wharton wondered what kind of a household that of the Vernon-Smith's might be; but from Smith's pasty complexion and generally weedy look, he could quite believe that the new boy had been in the habit of keeping what hours he liked.

"That won't do here," said Wharton. "We have to turn out at rising-bell—half-past six in summer. You'll find it all right when you're up."

"I'm not going to get up."

"But you must, Smith."

"Mind your own business," said Vernon-Smith savagely. Harry bit his lip. It was certainly hard to do the Bunder of Greyfriars any kindness.

"Oh, kick him out, Harry!" said Bob Cherry impatiently. Harry shrugged his shoulders.

"Let him lie," he replied. "It's not my business, as he says. He can argue it out with the prefects."

And Wharton crossed himself. The Form went down, most of them glancing back curiously at Vernon-Smith, who was still tucked up in bed.

"There are squalls in store for that chap," Nugent remarked.

"Serve him right!"

"Yes, rather!"

And the chums of the Remove went for a run in the fresh keen air of the Close before breakfast. When the Remove came into the dining-hall for breakfast, Mr. Quelch was at the head of the table, and his keen eye noted at once the absence of Vernon-Smith.

"Where is Smith?" he said. "Why does he not come in to breakfast?"

The question was addressed to no one in particular, so THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 119.

no one replied. Mr. Quelch then turned to Harry Wharton, as captain of the Form.

"Where is Smith, Wharton?"

"I don't know, sir, unless he's in the dorm."

"Do you mean to say that he has not come down yet?" exclaimed the Remove-master, in astonishment.

"I haven't seen him down, sir."

"Someone should have awakened him if he did not hear the rising-bell," said Mr. Quelch, with a reproving glance at Wharton.

Harry bit his lip, but he said nothing. But Bob Cherry burst out:

"He was awake, sir."

"Oh! Then he heard the rising-bell. This is very curious! Go and see if he is in the dormitory now. Wharton, and tell him to come down at once."

"Yes, sir."

Harry rose unwillingly from the table. He disliked the duty; the post of Form-captain had its drawbacks as well as its advantages. But there was, of course, nothing to be said when he had received an order from his Form-master.

He went up to the dormitory. Vernon-Smith was asleep, and Harry shook him to awaken him.

The new boy blinked up at him.

"Let me alone!" he growled.

"Mr. Quelch has sent me—"

"Hang Mr. Quelch!"

"To tell you to come down at once."

"I won't!"

Wharton's brows contracted.

"Don't be a fool, Smith!" he said. "Can't you see that it's madness to buck against a master like this? If you don't come down, Quelch will send a couple of prefects to make you come."

"I won't come!"

"Very well."

Wharton quitted the dormitory, and went downstairs. Mr. Quelch glanced up at him as he came into the dining-room, and so did all the Remove, and many of the fellows from the other tables.

"Where is Smith, Wharton?" asked the Remove-master, and there was a ring of deep sternness in his voice.

Wharton coloured awkwardly.

"He isn't coming, sir."

Mr. Quelch stared.

"Is not coming, Wharton! What do you mean?"

"He doesn't seem to understand that he's got to get up, sir," said Wharton, putting it as gently for Vernon-Smith as he could.

Mr. Quelch's brow darkened ominously.

"He will soon be made to understand it, then!" he exclaimed. "Loder, Courtney, kindly step up to the Remove dormitory and bring Smith down at once."

"Certainly, sir," said the two prefects.

And they left the dining-room, and there was a hush of expectation, and even Billy Bunter neglected to eat in the general excitement.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Brought Down.

L ODER grinned as he tramped up the stairs, and Courtney looked perplexed. Courtney was a good-natured fellow, and he felt sorry for the new junior who had placed himself in so awkward a position. Loder did not. Loder had spent a merry hour or two the previous evening with his friends in his study, over the confiscated champagne and smokes—with the result that Loder had a villainous headache that morning, and a villainous temper to match. And Loder looked quite pleased as he went upstairs. Vernon-Smith would offer him a certain amount of relief; Loder wanted to wreak the effects of the champagne and cigars upon somebody.

"The kid must be dotty," Courtney remarked.

"A spoiled brat!" said Loder. "The son of a giddy millionaire who made his money suddenly, you know."

"He'll get himself into trouble here."

"He's got," grinned Loder.

They entered the Remove dormitory.

Vernon-Smith was wide awake now, and looking out. He looked at the two Sixth-Formers, and felt a qualm of uneasiness. But he did not stir.

"Come, kid," said the good-natured Courtney. "You've got to get up. Bundle out."

His good-natured tone was wasted on Vernon-Smith. The latter quite mistook it.

"I won't," he said.

"Come, come."

"Out you get," said Loder.

"I'm not going to get up."

Loder came up to the bed, grasped Vernon-Smith and the bedclothes together, and hurled them all over the floor across the bed.

Vernon-Smith gave a gasping yell as he humped down, hurting himself considerably. He scrambled out of the bedclothes and stood panting.

"You hound!" he gasped.

"Get into your clothes."

"I won't."

Courtney rubbed his nose thoughtfully.

"We can't dress him," he remarked.

"Let me alone," snarled Vernon-Smith. "Mind your own business, you beasts. I'm not going to stay in this rotten school unless I choose."

"I don't suppose you'll have much choice about staying if you keep on as you've begun," grinned Loder. "Get into your things."

"Sha'n't."

"Then you'll come down as you are."

"Loder," exclaimed Courtney, aghast, as the prefect seized the struggling new boy; "you can't take him down like that!"

"Like that" was certainly a rather startling state for anybody to go down in. Vernon-Smith was clad in a suit of highly-coloured silk pyjamas.

"Mr. Quelch said bring him down at once," said Loder. "We shall get the sharp edge of his tongue if we go down without the cub."

"I know, but—"

"Do you feel inclined to dress him?" sneered Loder.

"No, but—"

"Lend a hand, then."

"But—"

"Lend a hand, you ass!" roared Loder.

He needed assistance, for Vernon-Smith was kicking and struggling like a wild cat.

Courtney caught hold of his wrists, and grasped them tightly.

"Will you dress yourself, Smith?" he asked.

"No, I won't!" yelled Smith.

"Come on," said Loder.

"Oh, all right!"

And Vernon-Smith was borne, struggling and kicking, to the door, and out into the passage, and so on down the stairs. The noise of the scuffling reached the dining-room before the prefects did, and the boys all craned their necks round to the door.

There was a buzz of excitement as the two seniors came staggering in at the doorway with the pyjama-clad form in their arms.

They rushed Vernon-Smith up to the Remove table amid a general titter.

Mr. Quelch rose to his feet.

He seemed scarcely able to believe his eyes.

"What—what does this mean?" he exclaimed.

"Here he is, sir!" gasped Loder. "We've had a job with him, sir."

"But—in this state—"

"He refused to dress himself, sir."

"Put him down."

Vernon-Smith was put upon his feet.

He stood gasping for breath and shaking with passion, and an absurd figure enough he made in his pyjamas.

Mr. Quelch turned a stern glance upon him.

"Smith, go back to the dormitory and dress yourself at once, and then come down here immediately."

A refusal was on Vernon-Smith's lips.

But the stern brow of the Form-master quelled him, and he remembered, too, the caning of the previous evening, from which his hands were still aching.

"Yes, sir," he muttered. And he shuffled with his bare feet out of the dining-room.

Mr. Quelch glanced along the grinning table.

"Silence, boys!"

And his look was enough to cause silence.

Breakfast finished in a state of tension. But when the boys were once outside in the hall, there was an excited discussion of what had happened.

"Here he comes!" exclaimed Temple, of the Upper Fourth.

"Here comes the boulder!"

Vernon-Smith was descending the stairs, dressed at last, and looking very savage and sullen.

He went into the dining-room with a scowling brow, and met Mr. Quelch at the door. The Form-master signed to him to stop.

"Vernon-Smith, I shall report your conduct to the head-master," he said. "It is too serious for me to deal with. Now, you may have your breakfast."

The juniors who heard the words glanced at Vernon-Smith, expecting to see him blench. The threat of being taken before the Head was generally enough to unnerve the most impudent—and after Vernon-Smith's conduct there could be little doubt that he would be expelled from the school.

But Vernon-Smith did not seem at all scared. The sullen cloud on his face gave way for the moment into a grin.

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Then he went on to the breakfast-table, and Mr. Quelch, looking very puzzled, left the room. The juniors looked puzzled too.

"Well, he's clothed, but he's not in his right mind," grinned Bob Cherry. "I suppose he doesn't care whether he's expelled or not."

And the others agreed that that must be it.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Not Flogged.

D R. LOCKE was looking very clouded during prayers that morning, and many of the fellows noticed it. Some of them remarked upon it as they left chapel, and wondered what was "up" with the Head.

The Greyfriars fellows were all very much attached to their head-master, and most of them felt concerned at the idea that he might be seely, as they put it.

Mr. Quelch joined the Head as he re-entered the School House.

"I have a rather important matter to speak to you about, sir," he remarked.

The Head's face clouded more deeply.

"I hope it is not about Smith of the Remove?" he said.

"I am sorry—it is, sir."

"Is it imperative to mention it to me?"

"Certainly, sir."

The Head paused.

"I leave the boy in your hands, Mr. Quelch," he said slowly. "I do not desire to come into contact with him myself. Surely you can deal with the matter, whatever it is, without calling me into it."

Mr. Quelch flushed a little.

"It is a case of direct disobedience," he said.

"Yes?"

"The boy has refused to obey my direct commands."

"Well, you have the power in your hands to maintain discipline in your own Form, Mr. Quelch," said the Head, a little calmly.

"Yes, but—"

"Please do so without appealing to me unless absolutely necessary."

"I think the boy unfit to remain at Greyfriars," said the Remove-master abruptly. "He is utterly undisciplined."

"Give him discipline, then."

"You intend that he shall remain?"

"Most decidedly."

"Very well, sir," said the Remove-master, biting his lip.

The doctor's face was very worried.

"I wish to—give the boy a chance," he said. "He has had no training—or, rather, he has had a very bad training. He has been allowed to run wild and do exactly as he pleased at home. His father has sent him here. Surely we ought to make some effort before sending him away again."

"Certainly, sir. But I fail to see any good in the boy."

"There is good in every boy, Mr. Quelch."

"Perhaps you are right, sir—in any case, it is for you to order," said the Remove-master. "If I am at liberty to send him to you to be flogged, I may be able to deal with him. I caned him most severely last night, and this morning he was guilty of the most outrageous disobedience."

"He is a strange lad."

"He has a bad heart, I think, and continual severity to a boy is not pleasant to me, even if he deserves it, sir. His own people have allowed him to grow into this state, and it is hard that others should have to cure him," said the Remove-master, with some warmth. "But we will leave it at that. I will at least be patient and do my best with him."

"Thank you, Mr. Quelch. I may say," went on the Head, with some hesitation, "that I have reasons—very particular reasons—for wishing to make the best of this boy, and to make it possible for him to remain at Greyfriars."

"Very well, sir." And Mr. Quelch left the Head.

The Remove-master's respect for the Head was very deep indeed, but he could not help feeling puzzled and annoyed. In his opinion Vernon-Smith was more suitable for a reformatory than a public school, but the will of the Head was law.

When the Remove assembled in their class-room they did not expect to see Vernon-Smith take his place in the Form.

But he came in a few minutes after the rest, looking sullen, but without any sign of having been punished.

Bob Cherry drew a deep breath.

"He's still here," he murmured.

"And late," said Nugent.

"Quelch will squash him!"

But Mr. Quelch did not "squash him." He glanced from his desk at the new boy as he came into the Form-room.

"Take your place," he said, "beside Snop."

Vernon-Smith went to the rear Form and sat down.

The morning's work commenced.

Mr. Quelch, as was natural, devoted more attention to the new boy than to the others. He wanted to see what kind of knowledge he had, to give him a suitable place in the Form. The boy had been put into the Remove by the Head without consultation with the Form-master, and from that Mr. Quelch naturally supposed that he was fitted for the rank he was given in the school.

The Remove-master had a surprise in store for him.

The ignorance of Master Vernon-Smith was on a par with his impudence.

He was older than the average lad in the Lower Fourth or Remove; but his attainments seemed more suitable for the Second Form, if not the First.

It was not only that he could not construe the simplest sentence, but in such matters as spelling and simple arithmetic he was exceedingly deficient.

Some of the Remove giggled at his blunders, and others looked indignant. There were duffers in the Remove, such as Billy Bunter. But even Bunter could get through the Form's work in some fashion or other.

Vernon-Smith could not tackle it at all.

And more than that, he had no desire to do so.

It was evident that he took no interest in his own education whatever, and regarded the work of the class-room as an unmitigated bore and nuisance.

Mr. Quelch wore a worried look after an hour of Herbert Vernon-Smith.

"It is extraordinary that the boy should have been put in the Remove," he murmured. "I should hardly have placed him as high as the Third. Yet he is certainly too big to be put in the Second. Greyfriars is no place for him."

Vernon-Smith looked more and more sullen as lessons proceeded. He felt that he was looking ridiculous in the eyes of the other fellows, but this did not make him buck up; it simply irritated him.

"Dear me!" ejaculated Mr. Quelch, when Vernon-Smith confided to him that he "believed" Lisbon was the capital of Spain. "Have you been to school before, Smith?"

"No, sir; I've had a tutor."

"A curious tutor, I must say, who allowed you to remain in a state of such dense ignorance!" exclaimed the Remove-master.

"I only worked when I chose," said Vernon-Smith sulkily. "I don't want to do lessons every day!"

"Don't be ridiculous, boy!" said Mr. Quelch sharply.

"I'm sick of it!" said Vernon-Smith. "I never thought school would be like this, or I wouldn't have come."

Mr. Quelch gasped.

"Silence, Smith!"

"Pah!"

"Boy!"

"I've had enough of it!" growled Vernon-Smith.

Mr. Quelch took up his pointer.

"Stand out here, Smith."

Vernon-Smith eyed the pointer, and eyed Mr. Quelch warily.

"What for?" he demanded.

"Stand out here!" almost shouted the Form-master.

The new boy slowly went out before the class.

"Now hold out your hand!"

Vernon-Smith put both his hands behind him and clasped them there deliberately.

The Form-master could scarcely believe his eyes, and the Form could scarcely believe theirs, either.

"My only hat!" murmured Wharton. "This is a queer merchant!"

"The queerfulness is terrific," muttered Hurree Singh.

Mr. Quelch found his voice at last.

"Will you obey me, boy?"

"I'm not going to be caned!"

"Will you hold out your hand, or shall I send you into the head-master to be flogged?" said Mr. Quelch.

"I won't be caned!"

Mr. Quelch went to his desk and wrote a note, folded it, and handed it to the new boy, who took it in a rather uncertain way.

"Take that to the head-master," said Mr. Quelch.

The new boy grinned.

"Very well, sir."

He left the class-room.

The lessons went on; Mr. Quelch wearing a very harassed look, and a flush in his face. The boys were very careful; both because the Remove-master was in no humour to be trifled with, and because they were sorry for the awkwardness of his position. They knew that he wanted Vernon-Smith to be sent away from the school, and he had evidently been over-ruled in that matter by the Head's authority.

They waited curiously, too, for the return of Vernon-Smith. They had no doubt that he would come back squirming and wriggling, and no one felt sorry for him. A jape was all

very well in its way, but deliberate disrespect to a master was considered "rotten bad form," and rightly, too.

Five minutes later Vernon-Smith re-entered the Form-room and went to his place.

The boys could have gasped as they looked at him. For the lurking grin was still on his face, and he showed no signs whatever of having been punished.

Mr. Quelch looked at him long and hard. Then he compressed his lips, but said nothing. What his thoughts were the Remove could not guess. But he let Vernon-Smith severely alone for the rest of that morning.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Bounder Does Not Play Cricket.

IT was Wednesday afternoon, a half-holiday, and a glorious May day. The Greyfriars fellows looked cheerful enough when they turned out after dinner.

Vernon-Smith turned out into the Close by himself. He was glad enough to escape the class-room for the afternoon, but he did not quite know what to do with himself. As he stood on the steps looking out Frank Nugent came up to him, with a notebook and pencil in his hand.

Vernon-Smith looked at him inquiringly.

"Are you in the cricket club?" asked Nugent.

"The what?"

"The Form cricket club. If so, I'll take your subscription now—I'm treasurer."

"No, I'm not," growled Vernon-Smith. "I don't play cricket."

Frank sniffed.

"You look as if you don't," he said, closing the notebook with a snap. "Well, you can't please us better than by keeping outside the club; but we thought we ought to give you the chance."

"Thank you for nothing!"

"But you'll have to play cricket here," said Frank. "Physical exercise here is as compulsory as Latin and French. You can keep outside the junior clubs if you like, but you'll have to put in a couple of hours at the nets every half-holiday, and half an hour a day in addition."

"I jolly well won't!"

Nugent laughed.

"You'll have to, you ass!" he said.

He walked away. Vernon-Smith lounged on the steps. Most of the Remove were going out in flannels, only too glad of the glorious weather, after the rain of the previous evening, and the chance of a dry wicket.

Vernon-Smith felt no envy as he watched them; his lip curled in a sneer. Exercise of any sort did not appeal to him.

He felt a tap on the shoulder as he stood there. Harry Wharton & Co., resplendent in white flannels, with their bats under their arms, were coming out.

"Coming down to the nets?" asked Wharton cheerily.

Vernon-Smith shook his head.

"You'd better come, Smith. It will do you good, and it's a glorious day. Have you ever played cricket?"

"No."

"Then I'll give you some coaching at the start."

"I don't want it."

"But you must play," explained Wharton. "Now, be a reasonable chap, and come down before you're forced to."

"I won't."

"You can't get out of it. Loder is looking after the practice to-day, and he's not a good-tempered chap."

"I don't care."

Wharton shrugged his shoulders and left him. Loder was certainly not a "good-tempered chap" at any time; and less than ever this afternoon. Loder's idea of passing a half-holiday was to visit a distant racecourse, or to smoke and play cards at an inn up the river. His duty as a prefect held him in this afternoon, and he was savage in consequence. He was the last fellow it was safe to trifle with under the circumstances.

"Coming out, Loder?" asked Carne, passing the prefect in the hall, as he came downstairs with Ionides of the Sixth.

Loder shook his head angrily.

"Can't he said. 'I've got to dry-nurse those brats.'"

Carne laughed.

"Well, it isn't all lavender to be a prefect," he remarked. "Come on, Ionides! You'll find us up the river when you're through with the cubs, Loder!"

"Oh, all right!"

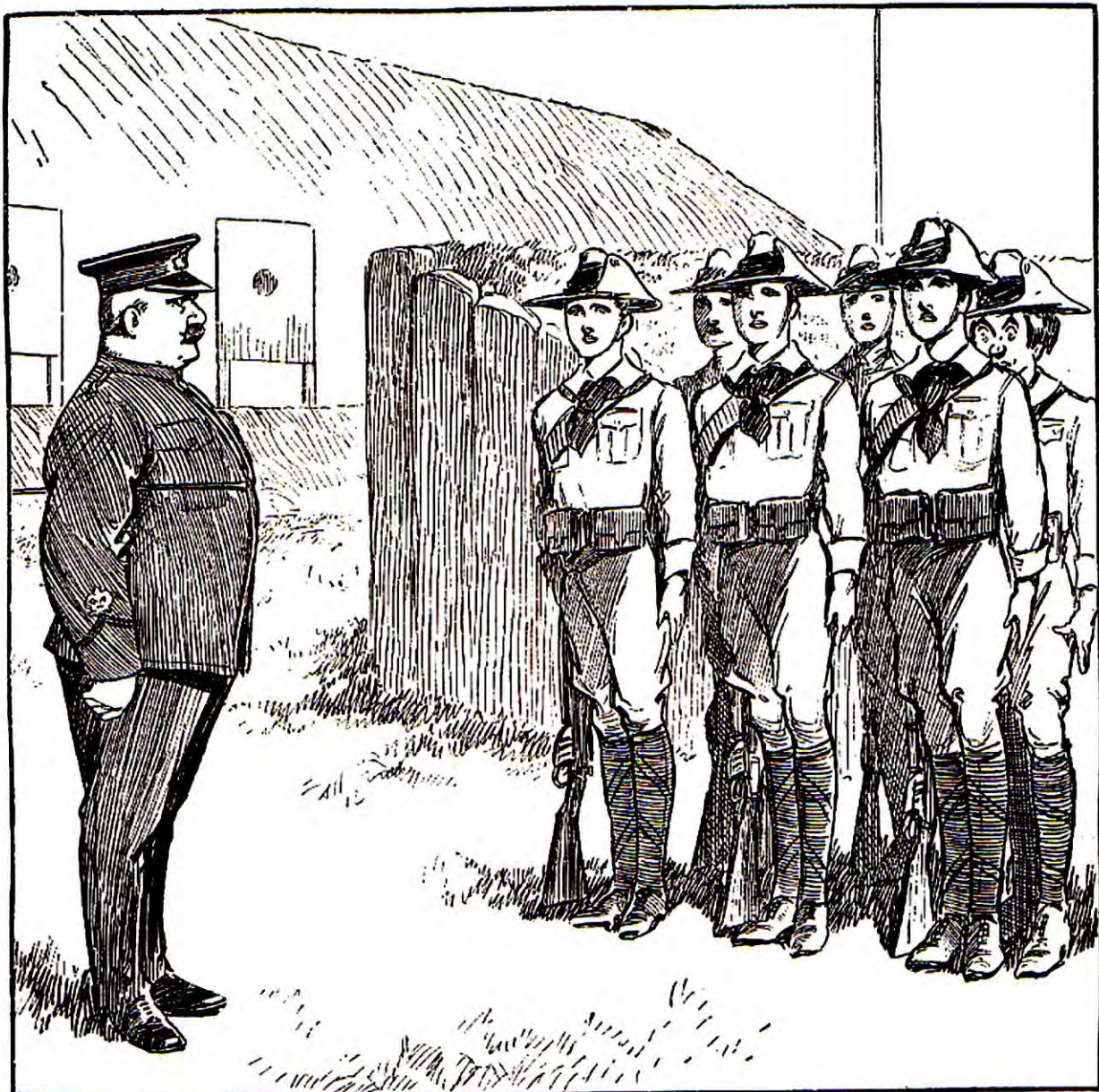
Carne and Ionides walked away laughing. Loder came striding out of the House, and almost ran into Vernon-Smith. He stopped to look at him.

"Get down to the cricket-field!" he snapped.

"I—"

"Don't make me tell you twice!"

And Loder strode on.



"The third man from the head," bellowed Sergeant-major Benians, "draw back them feet!"

"I-I can't, sir!" faltered Jimmy Preston, "they-they're not mine!"

(An amusing incident from the long complete school tale of Gordon Gay & Co., entitled "The Rylcombe Cadet Corps," in "The Empire Library." Now on sale. Price One Halfpenny.)

Most of the juniors were already at practice—Remove and Upper Fourth. Bowling, batting, and fielding comprised the practice, and most of the Remove were in very efficient form. Wingate strolled up as Loder sat outside the pavilion, with only one eye on the practice.

"How are the youngsters getting on, Loder?" asked the captain of Greyfriars cheerily.

"Oh, so-so!" said Loder.

"There's a new kid in the Remove, who looks as if he'd be all the better for a turn at the stumps," said Wingate.

"Smith, I think his name is. Is he here?"

"Yes."

"I don't see him," said the Greyfriars captain, with his eye scanning the groups of white-clad figures.

"I told him to come."

"Well, he hasn't come," said Wingate, with some emphasis. "I should recommend you to see that he does come, Loder."

And Wingate walked away. Loder snapped his teeth. It had hardly been a reprimand; but several fellows were

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grinning, and Loder could not answer the head prefect and captain with the angry words he would have liked to utter. He had forgotten all about Vernon-Smith; but now he determined to let the new boy feel the weight of his wrath for having been the cause of that talking-to from the school captain.

"Where's the new cub, Wharton?" he called out. "That fellow Smith?"

"I don't know, Loder!"

"Go and find him, then!"

"There he is!" exclaimed Bulstrode suddenly, as a figure in a straw hat passed within view.

It was that of Herbert Vernon-Smith.

Loder called to him:

"Smith! Come here!"

Vernon-Smith looked round, and came up unwillingly. The prefect greeted him with an angry scowl.

"Didn't I tell you to come down to the cricket?" he demanded.

"Yes; you did!"

NEXT WEEK: "THE CAD'S TRIAL."

A Splendid Tale of Harry Wharton & Co.
By FRANK RICHARDS.

"Then why didn't you come?"
 "I didn't want to!"
 Loder gasped at this reply.
 "You—you didn't want to!" he exclaimed, hardly able to believe his ears. "I told you to come, and you didn't come because you didn't want to?"
 "That's it!"
 "Are you mad?"
 "I'm not going to play cricket?"
 Loder did not say any more. He reached out, and gave the new boy a tremendous box on the ear, and Vernon-Smith staggered and fell in the grass.
 Some of the boys murmured. Vernon-Smith deserved a licking, if anybody ever did, but Loder's blow was brutal. The prefects were allowed to cane the juniors, within limits; but a blow on the ear was quite forbidden.
 The murmur made the prefect glance round savagely.
 "Do you cubs want some of the same?" he demanded.
 The juniors made no reply. Harry Wharton ran to help Vernon-Smith to his feet. The new boy pushed him rudely away, and staggered up.
 "Now get on to the pitch, you whelp!" said Loder. "Do you think I've got time to be bothered with you? Give him some bowling, Wharton!"
 "Right!"
 "I won't!"
 "Come on, kid!" muttered Wharton, putting his arm through Vernon-Smith's, and almost dragging him to the wickets. "Don't play the goat!"
 Vernon-Smith jerked himself loose.
 "I won't play!"
 "You must!" Wharton thrust the ball into his hand.
 "Now, bowl here—"
 "I won't!"
 Loder strode upon the field.
 "Will you do as I tell you?" he roared.
 "No; I won't!"
 Loder caught a stump from the ground, and advanced savagely upon the junior. Vernon-Smith gritted his teeth, and raising the hand that held the cricket-ball, he hurled it with all his force at Loder, and took to his heels.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

Looking for Smith.

LODER gave a sharp cry, and fell forward upon his face as if he had been shot. It had happened so suddenly that no one had time to stretch out a hand to catch him. The prefect fell into the grass like a log.
 Vernon-Smith dashed away at top speed.
 He vanished among the elms.
 "Good Heavens!" muttered Harry Wharton.
 He dropped on his knees in the grass beside the prefect. Loder groaned, and tried to rise, and sank into the grass again. Wharton raised him to a sitting posture.
 There was a big bruise, rapidly darkening, on Loder's forehead, where the missile had struck him.
 The prefect was dazed and stupid for some minutes. Wharton called out to Bob Cherry, who dashed off, and returned with a straw hat full of water from the fountain.
 Harry dashed the cold water into Loder's face, and bathed his forehead with it. The prefect gasped for breath.
 "Thanks, Wharton!" he muttered. "Did—that that young sweep throw the ball at me?"
 "Yes."
 "The mad young rascal! He might have brained me!"
 Loder staggered to his feet, and wiped his face with his handkerchief. He was deadly pale now, save where the bruise showed up dark and blue.
 "Where is the kid?"
 "Bunked!" said Bob Cherry.
 Loder nodded, and walked away, calling back to Harry Wharton to tell Wingate what had happened, to explain his absence from the cricket-field. As he went into the School House he met Mr. Quelch, and the Remove-master stared at him in astonishment.
 "Good heavens, Loder, what has happened?" he exclaimed.
 "It's that cub, sir—I—I beg your pardon—it's the new Remove kid!"
 "He has not caused you that injury, surely?"
 "Yes, sir."
 "In what way?"
 "Throwing a cricket-ball at my head, sir, because I was making him practise. He says he doesn't want to play cricket," said Loder.
 Mr. Quelch's jaw set hard.
 "I can scarcely credit the actions of that boy!" he exclaimed. "I assure you, Loder, that he shall be adequately punished for this. You had better go in and lie down."
 "Yes, sir."

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"THE RYLCOMBE CADET CORPS." A Grand, Complete School Tale in THE EMPIRE LIBRARY. Price One Halfpenny.

Mr. Quelch strode down to the cricket-field. He found Wingate there, looking very grave and worried. The captain of the school came up to meet the Remove-master.
 "That young beggar's broken out again, sir," he said.
 "He's just downed Loder with a cricket-ball."
 "Yes; I have just spoken to Loder. Where is Smith?"
 "He seems to have vanished."
 "He will vanish for good shortly, I think," said Mr. Quelch grimly. "He must be found and brought back at once! Do any of you boys know where he is gone?"
 There was a general shaking of heads.
 "No, sir."
 "He must be found at once! Wharton, I leave it to you, as Form captain, to find him and bring him to me!"
 "Ye-es, sir."
 And Mr. Quelch walked away. Harry Wharton exchanged a far from happy look with his chums. The task imposed upon him was far from agreeable.
 "I shall have to cut the cricket," he remarked. "The young ass bolted towards the gates! He must have gone out."
 "Looks like it."
 "Any of you coming with me?"
 "Yes, rather!" said Bob Cherry. "He won't come back to be licked, if he can help it, and you'll want assistance."
 Harry Wharton smiled grimly.
 "I think I could manage that weedy waster alone," he said; "but I'll be glad to have you chaps with me. Let's get off!"
 Bob Cherry and Nugent, Hurree Singh and Mark Linley went with the Remove captain as he left the cricket-field. Still in their cricketing garb, they hunted round the quad, and the gym, for Vernon-Smith, and found him not.
 Then Wharton inquired of Gosling, the porter, and learned that he had seen Vernon-Smith leave the school, running. The new boy had evidently gone out, thinking it best to give Loder a wide berth after what he had done.
 "He mayn't intend coming back at all," Bob Cherry suggested, as the chums of the Remove turned out of the gates.
 Wharton shook his head.
 "I don't believe he intends to run away, kid. He's just bolted to keep clear of Loder. But, anyway, we've got to fetch him back."
 And the Removes started in pursuit of the boulder of Greyfriars. The task was not particularly congenial to any of them, but they had no choice but to obey the Form-master's order—at all events, in Wharton's case. And his chums naturally wanted to help him, as the thing had to be done.
 Wharton stopped in the lane to look up and down.
 "Where is the rotter likely to make for, I wonder?" he muttered.
 "Anywhere to get out of Loder's way," grinned Bob Cherry. "Let's try the village. If we draw that blank, we can try the fields and the wood."
 "Good!"
 The Greyfriars juniors strode away towards the village at a good speed.
 As they passed the bend in the lane, Bob Cherry uttered an exclamation, and pointed ahead.
 "Hallo, hallo, hallo! There he is!"
 "Yes, rather!"
 "Buck up, kids, and we've got him!"
 Vernon-Smith was about a hundred yards ahead, tramping on. The juniors broke into a run, and as they did so Vernon-Smith looked round.
 He scowled at the sight of the running juniors. Their pace and their looks left him in no doubt as to what they wanted. He broke into a run himself.
 "Stop!" shouted Wharton.
 "Belay!" yelled Bob Cherry. "We've come to see you home, you ass!"
 Vernon-Smith increased his speed. What the juniors meant to do with him he did not know, and he evidently did not want to find out by coming to close quarters.
 He ran headlong into the village, and the juniors lost sight of him.
 Bob Cherry chuckled.
 "We'll have him in a minute!" he panted.
 "What-ho!"
 The juniors came sweeping down into the irregular village street, past the big, old elm outside the Golden Fleece Inn. But Vernon-Smith was not in sight.
 "In the tuckshop, most likely!" said Nugent.
 "Let's look!"
 They looked into Uncle Clegg's tuckshop. The old man was behind the counter, and he looked at them with a grin of welcome.
 "Come in, young gents!"
 "No pop to-day," said Bob Cherry. "We're looking for somebody. Has a chap just dodged in here?"

"No, Master Cherry."
 "Sure—a weedy chap, with a face like a hatchet and a nose like a turnip?" explained Bob Cherry.
 "No one ain't been in, Master Cherry."
 "That settles it."
 The juniors trooped out again.
 "He can't have gone in there," said Mark Linley, with a nod of the head towards the Golden Fleece.
 Wharton's brow grew grave.
 "Well, as a matter of fact, considering his personal habits, it's a more likely place than the tuckshop," he remarked.
 "Shall we look?"
 "He'd better, I think," said Harry, after a few moments' hesitation. "The place is out of bounds, of course; but Mr. Quelch said Vernon-Smith was to be brought back. Come on!"

And Harry entered the inn, followed by his comrades. He found himself in a bar, partitioned off from a similar one next to it, and in the next one he caught sight of a school cap.

"There he is!"
 There was a sound of a hurriedly-slammed door, and the next moment the juniors were out of the inn, and tearing after Vernon-Smith, who had dashed down the path beside the inn into the long garden at the back.

A man in shirt-sleeves yelled to them as they rushed through the garden, but they paid no heed. They ran on, after the panting figure of the Bounder.

The end of the garden gave upon the towing-path beside the Sark. The Bounder scrambled over the gate, and rolled upon the towing-path, and stopped in the reeds beside the water, narrowly escaping rolling into the river itself.

"My hat!" gasped Bob Cherry. "This is as good as hare-and-hounds! After him!"
 "Hurrah!"

The juniors came whooping out on the towing-path as Vernon-Smith scrambled from the reeds, dishevelled and furious.

"Here he is!"
 "Collar him!"
 And five pairs of hands grasped the panting Bounder before he could make an effort to flee.

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER. Taken Back.

"LET me go! You hounds! Let me go!"
 "Rats!"
 "Chuck it, you ass!"
 "Cheese it, I tell you!"

"Let go!" shrieked Vernon-Smith, struggling violently. His clenched fist came violently in contact with Harry Wharton's face, and the captain of the Remove staggered back. Vernon-Smith strove to wrench himself loose from the grasp of the others.

"Don't let him get away!" gasped Harry, as he reeled against a tree, his head singing.

"Not much!" said Bob Cherry grimly.
 "Down with the cad!"
 "Let go—Oh!"

Vernon-Smith rolled on the towing-path with the juniors sprawling over him.

He was pinned down by their weight. He struggled feebly still, gasping for breath. His face was dark with rage.

Harry Wharton recovered himself.
 "You cad!" he said, in a concentrated voice. "Stop that fooling! We've got orders to take you back to Greyfriars."
 "I won't go!"

"Won't you? We'll see," said Harry, between his teeth. "You're coming back with us. You'll either walk quietly, or we'll give you the frog's-march. You can take your choice."

"Hang you, I won't go!"
 "Yank the sulky brute up."
 Vernon-Smith was jerked upon his feet. He began to struggle again, gritting his teeth with rage.

"Now, will you come quietly?"
 "No," yelled Vernon-Smith; "I won't come at all unless I choose. I'll make my pater speak to the Head, too, and get you all sacked."

"Don't be a fool. Come on!"
 "I won't stir a step."
 "Then you'll get stirred," said Nugent.

And Bob Cherry chuckled.
 "In fact, there will be stirring times, Smithy," he remarked.

"Let me go, you cads!"
 "Not this evening; some other evening," hummed Bob Cherry.

"Frog's-march him!" said Harry shortly.
 "What-ho!"
 "The what-ho-fulness is terrific."

With a junior grasping each an arm or a leg, Vernon-Smith was frog-marched along the towing-path. The

juniors did not care to go back through the inn garden, but there was another way back to the lane across the fields.

Vernon-Smith still struggled furiously, and the juniors had all their work cut out to keep him from wrenching loose.

"Bump him!" said Harry grimly.
 He had wasted enough kindness on the Bounder. It was a time for drastic measures now. And they were drastic. The frog's-march, with the bumping thrown in, was a new experience to Vernon-Smith, and to judge by his wild roars not a delightful one.

Every time he struggled with his captors he was allowed to bump heavily upon the ground, and after half a dozen bumps he was breathless, blown, and willing to come to terms.

"Stop it!" he panted. "Stop it, you fiends!"
 "Nice flow of language he has, hasn't he?" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Stop it!"

"Will you walk quietly if we let you get up?" said Harry.

"Yes," gasped the prisoner.
 "Put the brute on his legs."

"Better keep hold of him, though," said Nugent, disdainfully.

"Yes, rather! You and Bob keep hold of his arms, and the others walk behind and keep an eye on him," said Harry.

"Right you are!"
 With Bob Cherry and Frank Nugent grasping either arm, the Bounder of Greyfriars was marched on, with a sullen and savage brow.

The juniors crossed the field into Friardale Lane, and tramped on towards the school, the captured junior tramping sullenly in their midst.

Vernon-Smith cast angry and anxious glances from side to side as he walked, as if still looking for a chance to escape.

"Is the fellow hurt?" he exclaimed at last.
 "Whom do you mean?"

"The fellow I threw the ball at?"

"Loder? Yes," said Harry.

"I mean, is he much hurt?" asked Vernon-Smith. "I didn't mean to injure him, only I wasn't going to have him lick me."

"It would have served you right," said Nugent hotly.

"Loder is a bit careless how and where he hits, but you wanted a licking badly. And only a thoroughgoing rotten cad would fling a cricket-ball at a fellow's head."

"Only yourself, in fact, Smithy," said Bob Cherry.

"He is hurt?" asked the new junior, and the shade of anxiety deepened on his brow, and the juniors saw that the fear was in his mind that he had inflicted a serious injury upon the prefect.

"Nothing serious," said Harry, willing to relieve his mind at once. "It's a bad bruise, and Loder will have a bad headache, I expect, for some time. That is all. Only it won't be safe for you to go near him."

Vernon-Smith grinned slightly.

"I thought so," he replied. "Only if he touches me I shall call in the Head."

"Haven't you even a rag of decency?" asked Bob Cherry wonderingly. "Don't you know that a fellow isn't supposed to sneak to the masters?"

"I shall please myself."

"Then it's pretty safe to say that you won't please anybody else," said Nugent. "You ought to be ashamed of yourself. I never came up against such a rotten rank outsider. One thing's jolly certain, though—you'll be expelled from Greyfriars for this, and it'll be a good riddance."

Vernon-Smith sneered.

"I shall not be expelled," he said. "That's more than the Head himself could do."

Nugent stared at him.

"Off your rocker?" he asked pleasantly.

"You'll see."

"Oh, come on!" said Bob Cherry. "Don't talk to the brute. He makes me sick."

"I'll make you sicker before I've done with you, if you don't let me go," said Vernon-Smith, with a snarl.

"We'll risk it," said Nugent, with a grin.

And the prisoner was marched on.

The juniors came in sight of Greyfriars, and as they marched Vernon-Smith in at the gates, a crowd of fellows gathered round to stare at them. Vernon-Smith's action was known by this time all over the school, and the general commentary passed upon him as he came in showed what the view was of it.

"Cad!"

"Coward!"

"Rotter!"

"Outsider!"

Vernon-Smith heard those remarks, and many others of the same sort, and he cast round a glare of defiance.

"The cad will be expelled, that's one comfort," said Hazeldene.

"Yes, he'll be sacked after this."

"It's a dead cert."

"Jolly good riddance."

"Never saw such a waster."

"Bump him, you chaps!"

"That's all right," said Wharton. "The Head will give him what he's been asking for, I expect, without our giving him any more."

"Faith, and it's right you are!" grinned Micky Desmond. "I wouldn't be the rotten bouncer for a great deal when he gets before the Head."

"What-ho!"

The juniors marched Vernon-Smith into the School House. The prisoner made no resistance now. In the doorway the Remove-master was waiting.

His face set grimly at the sight of the Bouncer.

"Ah, you have found him, Wharton!" he said.

"Yes, sir."

"Where was he?"

"In the—the village, sir."

"Very good. Vernon-Smith, follow me," said Mr. Quelch.

"You may release him, boys."

"Yes, sir."

The Form-master strode away towards the Head's study. Vernon-Smith did not move. Mr. Quelch turned his head in astonishment.

"Smith, I told you to follow me!"

Smith's brow set doggedly, and he did not move. Mr. Quelch strode back, and grasped him by the collar. The temper of the Remove-master was perilously near entirely giving way at that moment.

"Come!" said Mr. Quelch angrily.

And he jerked the new junior along the passage.

"Let me go!" growled Vernon-Smith.

"Come, you wretched boy!"

Mr. Quelch put pressure on, and Vernon-Smith was marched away. He resisted savagely, his evil temper in a flame now. For a moment there was an unseemly struggle between the amazed Form-master and the recalcitrant junior, and then Mr. Quelch reeled against the wall with a cry of pain. The new boy had kicked his shins.

"Oh!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

Vernon-Smith had time for nothing more. With a single bound Harry Wharton was upon him, and he rolled on the floor under a swinging right-hander.

THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER.

Mr. Quelch Resigns.

HARRY WHARTON put his foot upon Vernon-Smith's chest, and pinned him down. Mr. Quelch had turned quite pale with pain, and he was gasping for breath as he leaned against the wall.

"Oh!" he murmured again.

"I hope you're not much hurt, sir," said Harry. "I didn't see what the cad meant to do, or I'd have collared him."

"Thank you, Wharton," said Mr. Quelch, with quivering lips, controlling any other outward expression of the pain he felt. "It is—is nothing. Please keep hold of that—that extraordinary boy, and bring him to the Head's study. Lend Wharton your assistance, Cherry."

"Certainly, sir."

Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry grasped Vernon-Smith's arms, and jerked him to his feet.

Vernon-Smith made no resistance now. Harry's heavy blow had made his head reel and ring, and he was too dazed to do anything but blink at the juniors.

Mr. Quelch limped on towards the Head's study.

The Form-master's face was pale and set.

He had stood all that he meant to stand from Herbert Vernon-Smith, and he thought that the Head could not possibly say him nay when he suggested that the new boy should be sent away, after what had happened.

He tapped at the Head's door and entered.

Dr. Locke was seated at his desk, and his brow was clouded. He had a pen in his hand, but he was not writing.

He glanced with a troubled expression at the Remove-master.

"What is it, Mr. Quelch?"

"I am sorry to trouble you again, Dr. Locke, on the same troublesome subject," said Mr. Quelch finally. "It is Vernon-Smith."

The Head's brow grew darker.

"Really, Mr. Quelch—"

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"Really, sir, I have no alternative but to bring the matter to you. The wretched boy has assaulted a prefect in a brutal and dangerous way, and now has kicked me, sir—kicked me, his Form-master!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, his voice rising as he spoke.

Mr. Quelch was usually the most quiet and self-contained of men, but what had happened might have excited anyone. His voice was almost shrill now.

The Head looked aghast.

"Mr. Quelch! Is it possible?"

"It is not only possible, but true, sir. Bring that boy in, Wharton. Thank you; you may go."

Wharton and Bob Cherry marched the Bouncer in, stood him in front of the Head's desk, and quietly left the study, shutting the door after them.

There was no doubt in their minds as to what would be the result of his interview with the Head. Dr. Locke had been strangely lenient with the young ruffian so far. But the greatest leniency must have an end. Vernon-Smith was booked for the sack, as Bob Cherry put it; there could be no possible doubt about it, in the minds of the juniors.

But in Mr. Quelch's mind there crept a doubt, as he looked at the troubled and harassed face of the doctor.

Dr. Locke glanced at the sullen-faced boy, then at Mr. Quelch, and then back again at Herbert Vernon-Smith.

"What have you to say, Smith?" he asked, at last.

"I won't be bullied," said Vernon-Smith sulkily.

"Boy! That is not the way to answer!"

Vernon-Smith was silent.

"You—you have assaulted your Form-master," said the Head slowly. "Such an action is almost incredible. I begin to think that you must be weak in your head, Smith. Can you realise the enormity of what you have done?"

Vernon-Smith did not reply.

"In the first place, you will beg Mr. Quelch's pardon at once," said Dr. Locke, "otherwise I shall have no alternative but to expel you."

Mr. Quelch started.

The Head's words hinted of a possibility that Vernon-Smith would not be expelled after all, and such a possibility the Remove-master very naturally regarded as something very like an insult to himself.

He made a step forward.

"Is it possible, Dr. Locke—" he began.

The Head made a gesture almost beseeching.

"Pray do not say anything further yet, Mr. Quelch," he said. "I desire to speak to this wretched boy. Vernon-Smith, do you not realise that you have acted in a perfectly outrageous and wicked manner?"

The boy made a sullen movement.

Dr. Locke waited for him to reply, but no word came from the sullen, sneering lips of the Bouncer of Greyfriars.

"Smith! I command you to answer me! Beg Mr. Quelch's pardon at once for what you have done," said the Head, but his voice was more persuasive than commanding.

Vernon-Smith broke his sullen silence at last.

"I beg your pardon, sir," he said sulkily.

"You see, Mr. Quelch, he is sorry."

"He does not look sorry," said Mr. Quelch grimly.

"I am sure he will realise what his conduct is like," said the Head, "I shall talk further to him on the subject, too. For the present you may go, Smith."

Vernon-Smith left the study without another word.

Mr. Quelch stood silent as the door closed. His shins were still aching painfully, and his temper, naturally enough, was in its most acid state.

Dr. Locke looked at him almost appealingly.

"After what has happened, Mr. Quelch, I hardly like to ask you to have patience still with that wretched boy," he said, in a low voice.

The Remove-master was silent.

"It seems like asking too much," said the Head, "but—but I want to give him a chance, Mr. Quelch. I know it is asking a great deal of you."

"It is asking too much," said the Remove-master stiffly.

"You are master here, and have every right to admit anybody you choose to the school. But I have a right to retire from the post I hold if it is not compatible with my personal dignity to retain it. I shall have the painful duty of placing my resignation in your hands, sir."

Dr. Locke started.

"Mr. Quelch!" he exclaimed, as the Remove-master turned towards the door. "You—you are not in earnest?"

"Quite in earnest, sir."

"We have been together many years," said Dr. Locke, in an agitated voice. "You are my right-hand man in the management of the school. I have never contemplated your leaving me, Mr. Quelch, and it has always been my desire that when I retired from Greyfriars, you should succeed me here as head-master."

The Remove-master bowed.

"Thank you, sir!"
"But—but now—"

"Please don't imagine that I desire to dictate in any way," said the Remove-master, looking very much distressed. "But you see how impossible my position is. Unless my authority is backed up by the head-master, how am I to keep order in my Form?"

"I know it. But—"
"The Remove are the most unruly Form in Greyfriars, but I have them well in hand. The harm the example of a boy like Smith may do is incalculable. The wilder spirits in the Form will follow his example, there will be insubordination and insolence from one end of the Remove to the other," said Mr. Quelch. "How is it to be kept in check? By expelling some offender who has been led astray by this wretched boy—by visiting Smith's sins upon the head of one less guilty, sir?"

The Head almost groaned.
"The boy may not be so bad as you think, Mr. Quelch. The example of the other boys may improve him. He may learn better ways—"

"He is more likely to teach evil ones."
"Yet there is a chance—"
"You forget, sir, that he has assaulted me, his master, and before half a dozen of the boys of my Form."

"I know; it is unpardonable."
"Either he must go, sir, or I must," said Mr. Quelch firmly. "I do not desire to place you in any difficulties. I will remain till I am replaced. I will do anything to meet your wishes, except remain in charge permanently of a Form of which Vernon-Smith is allowed to be a member."

The Head bowed his face into his hands.
"I cannot understand your reasons for wishing to keep this savage—this hooligan—at Greyfriars, sir," said Mr. Quelch. "But I cannot remain if he does. That is all, sir."

"You don't understand," groaned the Head. "No! Do you think I want him to stay? Don't you see that I would gladly be rid of the wretch—if I could?"

Mr. Quelch looked astounded.
"I—I— Pardon me, sir, I don't quite follow," he said. "I suppose you, as head-master, are at liberty to expel a refractory pupil if you wish. The governing body would certainly never interfere in such a matter."

"The governors of the school would not interfere, Mr. Quelch—certainly. But—"

"There could be no other interference, sir, I suppose?" said the Remove-master wondering.

"The boy's father—"
"His father!"
"Yes."

"I cannot see that his father deserves much consideration, after the way he has evidently trained the boy; or, rather, failed to train him," said Mr. Quelch hotly. "He had no right to send such an unmitigated young blackguard to a decent school, in the first place. I should certainly not trouble my head in the least about Mr. Vernon-Smith's views in the matter."

"But I must."
"Must!" repeated Mr. Quelch, looking at the Head of Greyfriars as though he suspected he had taken leave of his senses. "Did you say must?"

"Yes. I cannot send this boy away."

"Cannot, sir?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"Because I dare not!"

And Dr. Locke, as he uttered the words, allowed his head to sink into his hands again, with a groan.

THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER. The Head's Secret.

"BECAUSE I dare not!"
It seemed to Mr. Quelch that it could not have been the doctor who uttered those words; that they were the utterance of some mechanism cunningly contrived to imitate the human voice, so broken and unreal was the tone, and so utterly unexpected was such a statement from the lips of the Head of Greyfriars.

But it was the Head who had spoken.
He had uttered the words; and that he only too seriously and miserably meant them was shown by his attitude.

Mr. Quelch gazed at the bowed head, and a pang shot through him as he did so. He realised that here was something he had not guessed—had never fathomed—some secret he had not suspected the existence of.

"Good heavens, sir!" he exclaimed, starting forward. "What do you mean?"

Dr. Locke raised a haggard face to the view of the Form-master. His face seemed to have grown years older.

"I mean what I say," he said, in a broken voice. "I dare not send Vernon-Smith away from Greyfriars without his father's consent."

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NEXT
WEEK:

"THE CAD'S TRIAL."

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ONE
PENNY.

"Why not, in the name of wonder?"
"Because I dare not offend his father."

"But why—why?"
"Samuel Vernon-Smith could ruin me if he chose."

Again Mr. Quelch could not believe his ears.
"Ruin!" he repeated dazedly. "Ruin you!"

"Yes."
"Is it possible?"

"It is true."
The Head spoke in a tone of concentrated misery that went straight to the Form-master's heart, and he realised that it must be true.

"This is terrible, sir," he said, after an awkward pause.

"I have found it so."
"I will not ask you to tell me any of the circumstances, sir, but—but is it as bad as you imagine?" asked Mr. Quelch incredulously.

Dr. Locke nodded.
"I am in his hands, Mr. Quelch. I need not explain how. That does not matter, and the story is not a pleasant one to me. I think you know me well enough," went on the doctor, raising his head very erect, proudly—"I think you know me well enough, Quelch, to be sure that I have not done anything that should have placed me in the power of a scoundrel—nothing, I mean, to tarnish my personal honour, or to render me unfit for the post I hold as Head-master of Greyfriars College."

"I am sure of that, sir," said the Remove-master quietly.
"Thank you, Quelch. Mr. Vernon-Smith has a hold upon me—one I cannot escape, at present at least—and he demands that I should receive his son at Greyfriars," said the Head, in an agitated voice. "I should not have taken the boy—or, having taken him, I should have sent him away immediately he showed what an utter young blackguard he was—but—but for the fact that I am not free in the matter."

"Mr. Vernon-Smith insists, then, that he shall remain?"

"He is adamant on that point. His wishes his son to be brought up in what he considers a swell manner," said the Head. "That is the very elegant expression he used to me in speaking of it. He is a vulgar and coarse man, but a very clever man, Mr. Quelch. With all his wealth, he could not get an utterly unlicked cub like his son into Eton or Harrow or Winchester. But he has a hold upon me, and he has compelled me to receive him."

"But—but—"
"It is infamous, I know—"
"It is blackmail," said the Remove-master.

Dr. Locke bowed his head.
"It amounts to that," he said. "I cannot help myself. I received the boy, but though I knew something of him, I never expected such an utter young rascal as he has turned out to be. But what am I to do?"

"If matters are really as serious as you think—"

"There is no doubt on that point."

"Then I do not know what to say."
"If it comes about that the example of this boy really causes harm in the school, there will be only one course for me to take," said Dr. Locke. "I shall expel him, and resign my position as Head of Greyfriars immediately."

"Resign, sir!"
"I should have no alternative. I do not want the name of the school to be mixed with mine in the disgrace Mr. Smith would bring upon me. I should save Greyfriars as much as I could. But you will understand that I wish to try every resource before resorting to so desperate a step."

"Undoubtedly."
"That is why I have asked you, Mr. Quelch, to be as patient as possible with the boy," said the Head.

"Does he—does the boy know of this hold his father has over you, sir?"

"Yes," said the Head quietly. "When you sent him in to me for a flogging this morning, he threw it in my face, and I did not touch him."

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips.

"It is a terrible position, sir."
"You see, Mr. Quelch, that I must not come into contact with the boy. He is reckless and wicked enough to defy me, and I am helpless, unless I resign my position and make an open quarrel with the Smiths. I shall stave that off as long as I can, Mr. Quelch. I have my wife to think of, and my sister, and my little daughter." The Head drew a deep and bitter breath.

There was a short silence.
The Head broke it.

"Now you know the position, Mr. Quelch, and you can decide what you will do. I would have confided this to no one but you. You, I know, I can trust with my secret. If you wish to go, I will not say another word against it. If

you care to remain and help me, for the sake of our old friendship, I shall be grateful."

"My decision is already made, sir," said the Remove-master quietly. "I shall remain."

"Thank you, Quelch."

"I will do the best I can with the boy, sir; and, at all events, I will deal with him alone, without calling you into the matter," said the Form-master. "I will do my best, and if there is a grain of good in the young ruffian, I will try to bring it to light."

Mr. Quelch quitted the study.

His brow was pained and very thoughtful as he walked slowly away. The position in which the Head had confessed himself to be was a terrible one, and Mr. Quelch's heart had gone out to his chief.

But was the position so serious as the Head believed? Whether it was or not, one thing was certain. Vernon-Smith was to remain at Greyfriars, and Mr. Quelch had to make up his mind to make the best of it.

The new junior was in the hall as the Remove-master came by on his way to his study. There were several of the Removites near at hand, and they caught their breath, prepared for a burst of thunder.

That Mr. Quelch was about to tell the Bounder that he was expelled, that he had better get his box packed, no one doubted for a moment.

The only doubt was whether the Bounder would be expelled in public before the assembled school, or whether he would be allowed to leave Greyfriars quietly.

That was a point upon which there was some speculation; but as to the expulsion itself, no one doubted for a moment.

But Mr. Quelch did not speak to the new fellow; did not even glance at him, in fact. He went straight into his study and closed the door.

The fellows stared at one another.

"What on earth does that mean?" muttered Bob Cherry.

"Quelch hasn't said a word."

"Can't catch on," said Tom Brown. "One thing's certain, the Bounder is going to get the order of the push."

"The certainfulness is terrific."

Vernon-Smith looked at the juniors with a bitter sneer.

"I shan't be expelled," he said, "and I shall do as I like here. Dr. Locke won't send me away."

"Why won't he?" demanded half a dozen voices.

"Because he can't!"

"Oh, don't talk rot!"

The Bounder sneered.

"Well, you'll see."

And he walked away with a shrug of the shoulders—a shrug that very nearly made Bob Cherry stride after him and knock him flying. The Removites looked at one another with curious expressions.

"There can't be anything in it," said Nugent, at last.

"Of course there can't," said Mark Linley.

"But why isn't he gone, then?"

"Oh, he's going!"

"He's going, right enough."

And so they all agreed. And yet there was a certain amount of anxiety and uneasiness in their tones. The juniors felt by a kind of instinct that there was more in the matter than was allowed to reach their eyes.

THE TWENTY-FIRST CHAPTER.

The Bounder Stays.

THE Remove were in a strange state of uncertainty. The conduct of the Bounder, and the question, whether he would be expelled or not, dominated every other interest. Even the prospect of the cricket match with St. Jim's paled in comparison. Tom Merry & Co., of St. Jim's, might or might not be defeated, but was the Bounder to be expelled, or was he to remain at Greyfriars?

The Remove took the matter very much to heart.

The Bounder was in that Form—a fact which the fellows in other Forms were not slow to remind them. Nugent minor, of the Second Form, openly declared that they wouldn't have such an unspeakable cad in the Second. Temple, Dabney & Co., of the Upper Fourth, snifted loftily over the matter, and wondered—aloud—what Greyfriars was coming to, when Remove kids chucked cricket-balls at prefects, and kicked the shins of their Form-masters—deliberately identifying the Bounder with the Form which repudiated him, for the cheerful purpose of exasperating Wharton & Co., a purpose which they duly achieved.

There were more Form scimmages on that question in a single evening than there had been during a fortnight previously, which is saying a great deal.

Was the Bounder to stay or go?

As Nugent put it, in poetical language, was the scutcheon of the Remove to be snatched and its glorious folds to be dragged in the mire?

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"THE RYLCOMBE CADET CORPS." A Grand, Complete School Tale in THE EMPIRE LIBRARY. Price One Halfpenny.

Or, as Bob Cherry remarked, was the Form to be disgraced by a rank rotter?

"One thing's jolly certain," said Tom Brown, "if he stays, we'll take his education in hand ourselves, and see that he improves."

"Good egg!"

"But he won't stay!" said a dozen voices.

But the most assertive of the asserters were beginning to have their doubts as the evening wore on, and nothing was said about Vernon-Smith's departure.

The Bounder knew how eagerly and earnestly his departure was desired, and the disagreeable and sneering smile intensified on his unprepossessing face as the evening wore on.

Nugent remarked that he looked like a chap who held the trumps, and Nugent was quite right.

The juniors were mystified.

Vernon-Smith had done enough to be expelled a half-dozen times, and yet—here he was, sneering and triumphant.

Was it true—as he had boasted—that for some unknown reason the Head could not send him away from Greyfriars?

The juniors frowned wrathfully at the thought.

If he were a relation of an influential governor, or something of that sort, it might be very awkward for the Head to get rid of him, and Vernon-Smith was quite enough to take the fullest advantage of anything like that.

Bedtime came, and Vernon-Smith went to bed with the Remove.

"He's going to be expelled before the whole school in the morning," was the confident prediction of several fellows.

Vernon-Smith heard them, and grinned.

The next morning Vernon-Smith turned out with the rest at rising-bell. It might be in his power to remain at Greyfriars against the Head's will, but there was nothing to prevent a prefect from thrashing him if he remained in bed late, as he had learned.

And so Vernon-Smith showed the first sign of grace; he turned out with the rest, and was at his place at the breakfast-table with the rest at the usual time. The boys wondered how Mr. Quelch would treat him.

Mr. Quelch did not even look at him. The coffee-urn could not have been more unconscious of the Bounder's presence than Mr. Quelch seemed to be.

After breakfast, the juniors discussed the matter in groups in the passages and the Close.

"The Bounder's not gone yet," said Skinner.

"He'll be expelled after prayers," said Bob Cherry confidently. "That's the most convenient time for anything of that sort."

"Looks to me as if the beast's right, and he's not going."

"Rot!"

But Bob Cherry spoke with less emphasis than he had used the night before.

After prayers there was no call to the school to witness an expulsion. The boys went into the class-rooms as usual, and Vernon-Smith took his place in the Remove with the rest of the Form.

There could be no further doubt about it.

He was not to be expelled.

The juniors could not blink the disagreeable truth any longer. The Bounder was not to be expelled—he was to remain at Greyfriars—and, apparently, he was not to be even flogged. The juniors could not understand it. It was a deep mystery to them; but there was no doubting the fact any longer. Vernon-Smith, after his outrageous actions, was to remain a member of the Remove.

There was a great deal of suppressed indignation in the Form. It was bottled up during morning lessons, but when the boys were dismissed, it found a free vent.

"Then the cad's staying," said Nugent.

"The unspeakable rotter!"

"It's a disgrace to the Form."

"And to the school."

"The disgracefulness is terrific."

"There ought to be a protest."

"Somebody ought to speak to the Head."

"Shame!"

The Bounder stood with a disagreeable grin on his face, looking at the indignant juniors. Far from friendly glances were turned upon him.

But for the fact that there were masters close at hand, he would probably have been seized and ragged at that moment.

"Well," he said, with a sneer, "I was right, you see. I'm staying."

"Rotter!"

"Worm!"

"And I'll jolly well stay as long as I like!" said the Bounder, between his teeth. "And I'll make some of you sorry for yourselves before I've done with you!"

"Listen to the cad!" said Bob Cherry. "My only hat! I've a jolly good mind to put it straight to Quelch, and tell him it's a shame to let the cad stick here."

"Yes, rather."

"Quech can't do anything more than the Head can!" said Vernon-Smith, with a sneer.

Wharton sat his teeth, and strode straight up to the new boy.

Vernon-Smith made a backward step, but Wharton did not touch him. That was not his intention, as yet, at all events.

"I don't know how it is you're not expelled, you miserable cad," said Wharton quietly. "You ought to be, and you know it. The Head has his own reasons, I suppose, and it's no business of ours. But this is our business. You shan't speak in that caddish way of either the Head or Mr. Quech."

"I'll do as I like."

"You won't. You'll speak respectfully of the Head, who's a good old sport, and of Mr. Quech, who's our Form-master. The other masters you can slang as much as you like. Mind, I'm not joking with you. Speak of either of them again in the way you've done, and I'll knock you flying!"

"Hear, hear!"

Wharton meant every word he said, as his gleaming and angry eyes told even more plainly than his voice.

The Bounder was silent and scowling.

"And more than that," went on the captain of the Remove. "I may as well finish while I'm on the subject. We shan't allow any more of your rotting. For some reason, the Head chooses not to sack you. But you're not going to disgrace Greyfriars, and you're not going to give the other Forms an excuse for turning up their noses at the Remove. Do you understand me?"

"I shall please myself."

"You will please us," said Wharton coolly. "If you start

pleasing yourself in these matters, you won't be pleased with the result, I can tell you. Mind, at the first sign of kicking over the traces, we'll rag it out of you; and when the Remove start ragging, it's something not easy or gentle, I can tell you. That's a fair warning. If you choose to try to play the game, we'll try to get used to you and give you a chance. If you begin any more of your caddish tricks, we'll rag you till you'll be as glad to get out of Greyfriars as if it were a fiery furnace. That's all."

And Wharton strode away without another word or look to the cad of the Remove.

"And we all back Wharton up," added Bob Cherry. "Remember that. Try to play the game, and we'll give you a chance."

The Bounder did not reply.

He remained standing sullenly silent as the Remove trooped out into the sunny Close, and there was a dark scowl upon his face.

He had plenty of food for thought as he slouched away at last with a dark brow, and his hands thrust deep into his pockets.

The Head could not sack him. Mr. Quech was bound to tolerate him in the Form. But he had to deal now with the Remove itself, and unless he mended his ways things were likely to go hard with the Bounder of Greyfriars.

THE END.

(Another Long Complete Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. next Tuesday, entitled: "The Cad's Trial." Please order your copy of The "Magnet" Library in advance. Price One Penny.)

The First Chapters of a New Serial.

STANLEY DARE

The Boy Detective



INTRODUCTION.

Stanley Dare, having just returned from a trip to Australia, is staying at an hotel in Deal, when a man comes to him, grievously wounded, with a story of a girl being in danger of her life. The stranger collapses into unconsciousness before he has time to go into details, and the young detective is left with no clue to the mystery except the torn scrap of a note written on the back of an envelope. He investigates the case, however, and almost loses his life in the process, being left to drown on the Goodwin Sands by some ruffians whose enmity he has incurred, he knows not how. He manages to reach the shore, however. Meanwhile Professor MacAndrew, a great friend of the young detective's, becomes alarmed at his absence and makes inquiries at the hotel.

A Strange Adventure—A Grip of Iron.

"I dinna like it," Professor MacAndrew muttered. "Tao be sure he has often enough been awa' for days at a time when engaged on a case, and I havena kenned whaur he was. But this case is different frae others, and—well, I canna explain my feelings even tao myself, but I hae forebodings."

The result of the professor's "forebodings," and his determination to try and find out what had become of Stanley Dare, was that he determined to pay another visit to Thorn-dyke Lodge, where he thought it possible that the young detective may have gone on the previous night.

He did not intend, however, to call in the ordinary way, as he foresaw that if Dare had come to any harm he would certainly not learn anything by such plain tactics. The house-keeper was an honest, simple soul, and if any suspicious circumstances had come within her knowledge she would probably be ready enough to talk about it.

On reaching the neighbourhood of the lodge he found that the wall which enclosed the grounds was bounded on two sides by a narrow lane. There was an old wooden garden gate let into the wall about a couple of hundred yards up this lane, but it was very evidently seldom used, for the wood was green and the rusty latch could scarcely be lifted.

It was not locked, an oversight to be accounted for by the fact that a disused gate is usually forgotten, and in this case there was the more reason for such forgetfulness in that the inner side was completely overgrown with ivy.

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MacAndrew forced his way through the ivy, taking care to disturb it as little as possible during the process. He was facing the back of the house. The whole of the garden was in a neglected condition, and overgrown with rank weeds. He walked boldly towards the house—for nothing was to be gained by any attempt at concealment now—and rapped at the garden door, hoping that it would be the housekeeper who would answer the summons.

But, unfortunately, it was the manservant Finlay who opened the door to him, and, on seeing who it was, bestowed a look on him that was the reverse of agreeable.

"Well, and what do you want?" he began. Then, pretending that he had not at first recognised the visitor, he checked himself, and continued: "I really beg your pardon. Professor MacAndrew, I believe? I was under the impression that it must be some tradesman's boy or insurance tout, as you knocked at the back door. It is customary," he added, with a covert sneer, "for visitors to Mr. Thorn-dyke to come to the front door."

The professor flushed angrily at the sarcasm, but under the circumstances he could not resent it.

"I didna wish tao trouble your master if it could be avoided," he said. "I want just to leave a message wi' my friend, Mr. Dare—"

"Your friend is not here, sir."

"Indeed, is that sae," replied the Scotsman calmly. "Weel, weel, I thocht I'd be sure tao find him here, for he wants tao

see Mr. Thorndyke on particular business. But I'll leave the message w' Mr. Thorndyke, and he can give it tae him, for I'm thinking that Mr. Dare will sure tae call here—in time."

"If you will write the message down I will see that Mr. Dare gets it—when he comes."

"I'll no write it," said MacAndrew. "I'll just give it tae Mr. Thorndyke in person."

"Mr. Thorndyke will not see anybody this morning," replied Finlay.

"Mebbe he'd see me," persisted MacAndrew. "Just tak' my name up tae him."

"I have received my orders, sir," was Finlay's answer, still delivered in his smooth, oily tones, "and I cannot venture to disobey them. Mr. Thorndyke will not see anybody."

"Verra weel," said the professor. "I'll need tae wait here until Mr. Dare arrives, and give him the message myself."

"I'm really very sorry," Finlay rubbed his hands together softly, and his voice was more oily than ever. "But it is strictly against my master's orders that anyone whom he is unable to see in person should remain either in the house or grounds. I very much fear that you will have to wait for your friend outside our gates, sir."

"Ye needna fear on my account," retorted Professor MacAndrew. "I'm going to wait in the grounds. There's an interesting auld bit o' wall built in the mair modern one, I observed, and I'll just pass a pleasant hour or twa in examining it."

There was a glint in Finlay's beady eyes which showed that he had reached the limits of his patience, and that his servile manner was now all a sham. But his tones were still quite smooth when he spoke again.

"I regret, sir, that what you propose is impossible. I must request that you quit these grounds at once."

"Not at the word of a servant," replied MacAndrew, facing the other in a manner that caused the fellow to draw back very suddenly. "Go up to your master and inform him that I am here. If he has a will of his own"—the professor paused to give full effect to these words—"he will not refuse to see me."

There was a look of fear and hate in the manservant's eyes as he raised them for a moment to the professor's face. But he dropped them again almost instantly, and without a word turned and made his way to the interior of the house.

No sooner was he out of sight than MacAndrew darted to a side window at which he had caught a glimpse of the housekeeper, and tapped softly on the pane. The woman opened the window.

"Do you wish to see me, sir?" she asked.

"I wish to ask if my friend, Mr. Dare—the young gentleman who was with me when I last called—came here at any time last night or early this morning?"

"I have not seen him, sir," was the reply; "but surely Finlay would have told you."

"Finlay didna seem owre anxious to gie information," said the professor, "and he informed me that as Mr. Thorndyke had refused to see anybody, I was tae quit the grounds instantly. I have refused tae dae so until I am told by Mr. Thorndyke himself."

"I can't understand what has come over my master during the past twenty-four hours," pursued the housekeeper, who appeared to be very much troubled. "Finlay is very much worried about him, too."

"Indeed!" interposed MacAndrew drily.

"Yes, sir. Mr. Thorndyke had arranged to go away to-day, so Finlay told me, on one of those journeys that he often takes so sudden like, but this morning he shut himself up in his room and refused to see anybody."

"Indeed!" replied the professor.

"A rough-looking man came here this morning early, wanting to see him particularly," went on the housekeeper, "but after a long talk with Finlay he had to go away without seeing him."

"Ah, he had a long talk w' Finlay, did he?"

"Yes, sir. I can't quite understand all

that's been going on here lately. I can't explain, but it seems to me there's some mystery—"

She did not finish, but shook her head in a sad and troubled way. The professor took one of his cards from its case, and scribbling the name of the hotel upon it, handed it to the woman.

"If you see or hear anything that you think is suspicious going on in this hoose," he said, "or if you think that your master or anybody else that happens tae be on the premises is in any sort o' danger, come at once tae me at the South-down Hotel. Ye'll dae that noo?"

"Yes, sir; I certainly will."

"Finlay is a lang time gone, so when he comes down again tell him that I've decided not tae wait. I'm ganging oot by the sma' gate, the same way that I came in."

The next moment he was striding through the tangled undergrowth that covered the grounds, and having reached the small gate, opened it and passed out. But he came in again a couple of minutes later, and, screened by the ivy, made his way to a thick clump of Persian lilacs, behind which he ensconced himself, completely hidden from view.

A quarter of an hour passed, and then he saw the manservant crossing the grounds from the house. He was expecting him. Finlay paused in front of the gate, and then shot one of the rusty bolts into its socket.

"I'll have this gate blocked up," he snarled, "so that no cursed interfering busybodies can come spying about here when they're not wanted. That fool of a Scotsman seems to be suspicious. What made him come back here with that cock-and-bull story about leaving a message for his friend Dare? He hasn't seen his 'freend' Dare"—he mimicked the Scotsman's pronunciation of the word—"this morning, I know, and he is not likely ever to see him again."

The words, uttered so callously, yet evidently meaning that the young detective was no longer alive, struck a chill into the listener's heart. The professor would have liked to spring out upon the fellow, grip him by the throat, and force him to tell what he knew.

But he restrained himself. The time for that had not come yet. Besides, Professor MacAndrew had such a strong belief in Stanley Dare's skill, and his ability to get himself out of a "tight place," that he required more proof than the bare statement of a man like Finlay—whom he believed to be an unprincipled scoundrel—before he could feel certain that the young detective was really no longer in the land of the living.

That he had fallen into some trap, and that he was perhaps at that moment in extreme peril, he did believe, and somehow he could not shake off the feeling that he was shut up in some room of Thorndyke Lodge. It was quite possible for him to have come there, or been brought there, during the night without the housekeeper seeing him. These were MacAndrew's reflections; but, as we know, they were very wide of the mark.

Suddenly from the house there came a succession of the most appalling cries that MacAndrew had ever heard in his life. They were human cries in a man's deep, harsh tones, but there was something animal-like about them, too. The professor had had some grim experiences in the course of his life, but it struck him that he was in touch with one now that was going to put all others in the shade.

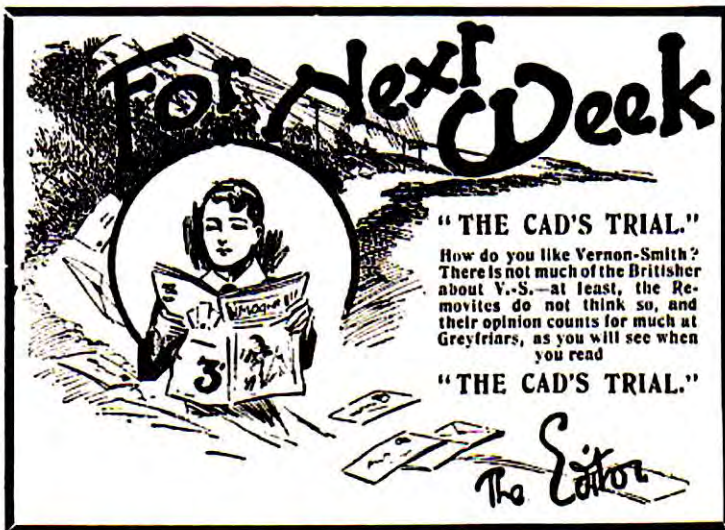
"Thank goodness it wasna Stanley's voice," he said to himself. "But, all the same, if he's come tae harm I'll not rest till I've brocht his murderers tae the gallows!"

When Finlay heard the cries he had turned with a white and startled face, and stared at one of the upper windows of the house. Then, with an oath upon his livid lips, he had dashed off at a run, and presently disappeared from view through the doorway at which MacAndrew had presented himself.

"I'll hae to see this business through," muttered the professor. "If I only had weapon. Ah, this'll do fine!"

He picked up an old, rusty, long-handled gardener's spade, worn down until the ironwork that was left would scarcely have sufficed to make a respectable hoe. But it would make a formidable weapon at close quarters.

(Another long instalment of this story next Tuesday.)



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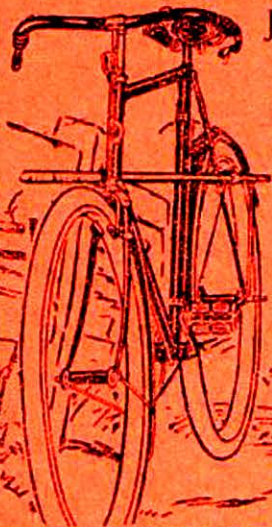
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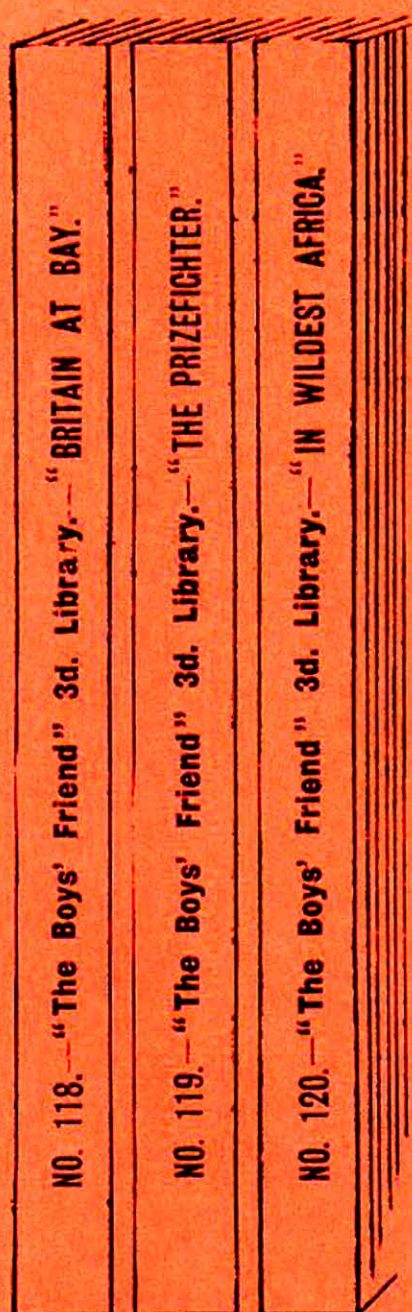
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